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FRESH Starts Bioplastic Recycling Project

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If you’ve eaten at the Debut or Dreyfus University Center dining halls, then you may recall out of those clear plastic cups that have “compostable” and “made from corn” written on them. You may also remember just simply throwing those cups in the garbage.

Students’ confusion about the recyclable corn bioplastic cups (or PLA cups, short for polylactic acid) will be put to rest this year, as the university has recently jump-started a recycling campaign for them.

FRESH (Focused Research Effort for Sustainable Habitats), a project of the Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technology (WIST), is headlining the PLA recycling project. This project will include collecting, rinsing, and storing all discarded corn products from the DUC and Debut dining centers.

Vaneta Kratz, graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and FRESH’s Project Manager, began the project after hearing about the idea from Paul Fowler, the Executive Director of WIST.

“Well, maybe if you had a student-run organization under WIST implement a recycling program for this and run the whole advertising campaign and really spread the word... then that would be a great way for students to get involved and have WIST become wider known on campus,” Kratz said.

Right now the project is set up as a demonstration to gauge the environmental sustainability as well as the economic feasibility of such a recycling campaign on campus. UWSP has already been using PLA products for two years, so Kratz claims that FRESH is trying to make more efficiently use products the campus already purchases.

“So what we’re focusing on is getting the full sustainable potential out of these products that the campus is already paying a lot more money for versus traditional products made of petroleum-based plastics,” Kratz said.

The university currently uses PLA products from the company Eco Products, but will be getting their PLA products from Earth Choice after those supplies run out. Both products will be recycled in the same manner.

A more sustainable campus

FRESH’s current role at UWSP is to collect, rinse and store all PLA products that are collected on campus. The plastics are then sent to WRR Environmental Services, an Eau Claire-based company that takes over the chemical recycling process called hydrolysis. Hydrolysis involves taking the PLA and breaking it down into its original components.

The university currently uses PLA products from the company Eco Products, but will be getting their PLA products from Earth Choice after those supplies run out. Both products will be recycled in the same manner.

Decisive year for national student movement

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The student movement in the U.S. is spearheaded by two organizations of relevance to Wisconsin students: the immediate one is the United Council of UW Students, our state-wide student association. Founded at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1960, it is not only the largest and oldest in the country, representing 152,000 students—it is also the highest funded.

The second organization is the USSA, or the United States Student Association. It is the oldest, largest, and “most inclusive” national student association, founded at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1947. The inclusivity is visible, and it goes above the identities of its membership. For USSA inclusivity is a goal, an issue and a tactic—it is a way of life.

On the week of July 22-27, over a hundred students and USSA staff attended USSA’s 64th yearly congress, hosted at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee. The gathering came at a critical time for the student movement in the United States and in the world.

At the convention, students from several Wisconsin campuses joined students from other statewide student associations and direct-member campuses in Oregon, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Washington, California, and the host state to select the incoming leadership and set the organization’s platform and agenda for the year. Some changes to USSA’s internal structure were also proposed.

Tiffany Dena Loftin ran for the Vice President seat unopposed. After a mildly competitive two-way race, the Presidential seat swung strongly in favor of Victor Sanchez Jr. Both Loftin and Sanchez attended the University of California-Santa Cruz.

“We have the ability to change the conversation in Washington, and students are certainly ready,” Sanchez said after his victory.

Vice President Loftin commented on the experience of a Historically Black University or College hosting the Congress, stating that “the persona and hospitality of students at a HBCU is different from every other campus, so much so that I felt more awoken by history to believe in change today.”

“It was the best thing in my organizing career so far, working with students to defeat barriers to higher education on land that used to belong to a plantation,” Loftin said.

Among the resolutions approved were the adoption of national Pell Grant and TRIO lobbying campaigns. Both of these campaigns deal directly with the diminishing of government investment in education. TRIO programs are federal student services programs that assist folks from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as people with disabilities and non-traditional, low-income and first-generation students.

A UW System report issued this week stated that it will need to, among other things, eliminate 51 full-time positions under Governor Walker’s current two-year budget. Adding to state budget cuts to education across the country, debt ceiling compromises between President Obama and Congress will shift roughly $125 billion of federal student loans funds from subsidized to unsubsidized for this academic year, forcing students to pay for accrued interest on loans during their college years.

See Movement on page 4
Study finds at least 8% of UWSP drivers on cell phones

A recent study conducted by UWSP students found that 8.4% of drivers on campus were actively using a cell phone. Over three-quarters of those found on their phone were engaged in a phone call while driving. Approximately twenty percent were actively using a cell phone while driving. The study also found that 25.3% of drivers actively using a cell phone failed to use turn signal properly while 17.2% of drivers who were not actively using a cell phone did so. The effect of cell phone use seemed to play out differently for male and female drivers. Among males, using a cell phone was not associated with a significantly higher rate of inadequate turn signal use. Among females, however, those who used a cell phone were significantly more likely to fail to use turn signal than those who did not use a cell phone (27.1% vs. 13.6%, respectively).

In summary, the study found that one is most likely to use a cell phone while driving if between the ages of 16 and 25 and female. As to the possible outcome of cell phone use, the findings are in line with previous research: using cell phones while driving leads to poorer driving.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) 18% in 2009 of all fatalities in distraction-related crashes are linked to cell phones. Research has also suggested that using a cell phone while driving has an impact on the driver’s reaction time to a degree that is equivalent to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08%. If anything can be said, it is that everyone has the power to reduce the amount of distracted driving instances by avoiding the use of their cell phones in the car. Drive safely!

“According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) (2009), 18% of all fatalities in distraction-related crashes are linked to cell phones.”

FRESH/PLA can be used for multiple purposes

Continued from page 2

Fierce partisan battles raged this summer

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Wisconsin’s turbulent political weather from this spring did not come to a wane over the summer. The state saw an unprecedented recall campaign against nine state senators from both parties. In addition to the recalls, the legislature passed two controversial pieces of legislation involving voter identification and concealed carry, as well as the state’s highly contentious biennium budget, all of which passed largely along party lines.

In July, Republicans were successful in holding the majority in the state senate after Democrats were able to recall only two of the six Republican state senators they targeted, Sen. Randy Hopper of Fon du Lac, and Sen. Dan Kapanke of La Crosse. Overall, six Republicans and three Democrats had faced recall elections. All three Democrats had won their respective elections.

The recall elections were a direct result from February when Governor Walker introduced his budget repair bill that would close the state’s budget deficit largely with benefit cuts to state workers, and restrain their rights to collectively bargain for anything but wages. This sparked outrage around the state resulting in record-setting protests at the state capitol in Madison that had persisted for weeks.

In an effort to raise public awareness, and perhaps defeat the bill, all 14 Democratic senators left the state for over three weeks, preventing a quorum from being established and thus a vote on the bill. Republican lawmakers were at a loss for how to get them to come back to the state, trying to limit their state access to copy machines and parking spaces, to withholding lawmakers’ paychecks unless they picked them up in person.

Eventually, Republicans stripped all fiscal elements from the Budget Repair Bill, thus removing the 20-member quorum requirement in the Senate. The bill was passed 18-1 in the senate and 53-42 in the assembly.

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin openly supported the recall process of Republican senators who had voted for the bill, while independent groups worked on recalling Democratic senators for leaving the state.

The state constitution and state law says that only those lawmakers who have served at least one year of their term are eligible for the recall process. Those groups wishing to initiate recall procedures had 60 days to gather signatures equaling at least 25% of the voter the governor received in that district during the last gubernatorial election.

See Battles on pg. 4
Wisconsin residents will start having to show a photo ID when they go to the polls with beginning the spring primary next year. Governor Walker signed the Wisconsin Voter ID into law this May saying, "Protecting the integrity of our elections is central to ensuring our government has the full faith and confidence of the citizens it represents."

Commonly held acceptable forms of identification include a Wisconsin DOT-issued drivers license or ID, a military ID and a U.S. passport. University-issued ID cards from Wisconsin-acccredited schools can also be used if they have a date of issue and expiration, as well as the signature of student, none of which are currently featured on UWSP ID cards.

Voter ID

Governor Walker and Republican legislators stated that requiring a photo ID to vote would protect against the threat of voter fraud from interfering in elections. "If you need an ID to buy cold medicine, it's reasonable to require it to vote," Walker said.

Democrats counter saying this bill fixes a problem that does not exist. They also claim it will improperly deny the right to vote to vulnerable demographics that do not readily have access to acceptable IDs, namely the elderly, students, shut-ins and minorities, all of which tend to vote Democratic during elections.

"Republicans will spend millions of taxpayer dollars to expand government and deny voters their rights," said Mike Tate, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair. "They have limited rights rather than expanding them."

Following the passage of this legislation, the state will issue free identification cards to anyone who requests one, provided they do not already have a state-issued drivers license or identification card that is currently valid.

Concealed Carry

The state legislature repealed the state ban on the concealed carry of handguns, becoming the 49th state to do so. This leaves Illinois as the lone state prohibiting concealed carry.

Residents wishing to carry will have to undergo a training course and obtain a permit, which will allow them to carry concealed weapons in most public buildings. This includes establishments that serve liquor as long as that person does not consume any. Businesses can post a sign at their entrance indicating that weapons are not permitted if they choose to.

Proponents of the bill championed the passage, claiming that it was a constitutional right and is necessary for citizens to adequately protect themselves. The campaign to get the bill passed had been ongoing for years but had been stymied by Gov. Jim Doyle and Democrats in the legislature.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) said the passage was "a great victory for the lone people of Wisconsin and for the 2nd Amendment."

Opponents counter, fearing more guns will only result in more gun violence. Sen. Spencer Coggs (D-Milwaukee), who voted against the bill, said, "The solution is less guns, not more guns."

Battles/Campuses deal with concealed carry

The Pointer

news

Decisive year for national student movement

Continued from page 3

The austerity, privatization and deregulation maneuvers sweeping the United Kingdom are an issue of concern, as well as a threat of financial loss in terms of economic responsibility and recovery. However, according to a House of Lords (UK) study, for every £1 invested in higher education, the British economy expands by £2.6, including an immediate return of £1.2 trillion in recent years in support of the state's educational agenda. Proponents argue that access to higher education for these students is the best way to get a return on society's investment on their K-12 education.

As of today, the California State Assembly and Governor Brown ratified and signed into law the state's version of the DREAM Act, which gives limited access to financial aid and undocumented students but does not offer a pathway to citizenship. Even though the DREAM Act has recently fallen short of a U.S. Senate vote (after passing the House of Representatives) again, the passage of this state law is a paramount victory for student organizers in California.

Also in attendance at the USSA Congress was Angus Johnston. Decades-long USSA member and alumnus, Johnston is one of the leading contemporary voices of student activism and a professor at the City University of New York.

Currently, "the student movement in the United States is in a position of amazing strength," said Johnston. "It is building incredible relations with labor and other organizations; the student body in the U.S. is more likely to be first-generation, more likely to be female, non-traditional, students of color, working class, openly gay; have a disability... it is more representative of the people of the U.S. than it has ever been."

There is an incredible power in that, he stressed. "If the students represent the state population, they cannot be dismissed by media and politicians as ivory tower brats separated from society's issues," Johnston said.

Referring to student activism in Wisconsin and California, Johnston concluded, "We are headed to a very exciting time. There is more student power around than in decades. The question is: are you going to win? My answer is yes."

As attendants arrived at the convention, news stories emerged about Norway's Anders Behring Breivik, a man with reported ties to fundamentalist, Christian, racist, pro-gun rights, anti-Islam and anti-immigration organizations. Breivik followed his bombing of the Prime Minister's office but does not offer a pathway to citizenship. Even though the DREAM Act has recently missed a U.S. Senate vote (after passing the House of Representatives) again, the passage of this state law is a paramount victory for student organizers in California.

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The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point football team kicked off the 2011 season with a nail-biting as both defenses combined to allow just 14 points.

Two of the Pointers' three field goals came in the third quarter. With 27 seconds left in the fourth quarter, senior kicker Jered Fohrman put the game's final margin of 8-6 on it, "It's good momentum going into the Pink Game against Platteville."

Saturday's game versus Platteville will mark the second straight year that Stevens Point has held the Pink Game. The Pointers will don pink uniforms in honor of those who suffer from breast cancer. The jerseys will be auctioned off during the game and proceeds will go towards funding for breast cancer research. Kickoff is scheduled for 1 p.m.
FYI: Three World Cups happened this summer

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COMMENTARY

Few people in the U.S. might have noticed, but this summer was a seriously thrilling one for the world’s sport, soccer, or—as Clausewitz once said: “diplomacy by other means.” The Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) held not one World Cup this summer, but three.

Even if we might have missed them, World Cups are no small thing for folks around the globe—let alone three.

I was lucky to be visiting Mexico City as one of the three FIFA World Cups kicked off. Mexico hosted the 2011 FIFA Under-17 World Cup; Colombia hosted the Under-20 World Cup; and the 2011 FIFA Women’s World Cup was held in Germany, as U.S. soccer fans remember with mild disdain, after barely losing the title to the Japanese team and falling into second place.

The Cote d'Ivoire team became the star of Africa during the U-17 World Cup, demonstrating their talent through Souleymane Coulibaly’s record-matching nine goals.

One of the most exciting moments of these World Cups was the story of Julio Gomez, the star player in the Mexican Under-17 team. After demonstrating his skill and class, Gomez was injured during a semi-final game against Germany. He came back onto the pitch with a bandaged head and scored the winning goal of the match, thereby taking Mexico into the final against Uruguay.

Throughout the tournament, the touch, style and technique with which Brazil’s players maneuvered their way through their enemy’s ranks was simply fun to watch.

Brazil found its match in the final game, however, as Portugal relentlessly pushed back every time Brazil scored. With Oscar’s hat-trick shot during added extra time, the Brazilians secured the victory, taking the title with a final score of 3-2.

Soccer fans in the U.S. might remember the 2011 FIFA Women’s World Cup, as our team made it to the final. Despite the sound work and solidarity displayed by the USA, particularly our stars Hope Solo and Abby Wambach, Japanese heroine Homare Sawa stepped into a perfect play and, at the last minute of extra time, evened the score, thus leading into a penalty shoot-off. This turned the tables in her country’s favor, and Japan walked away with the trophy.

The Pointer
A day in the life of a freshman

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The first day at college for a freshman can be nerve-wracking, exciting, and ever so crazy. The Pointer was able to see it all. Following two freshmen exploring their way through a new place is nothing short of interesting.

Freshmen often come into college with a picture of it in their head of what they think it will be like. "The things I picture most about college life are big frat parties and lecture halls where the teacher seems a mile away, probably because that is how movies portray a 'typical college,'" said Dana Thompson, freshman graphic design major.

Many freshmen also come into college knowing very few or no people at all. "I was sitting by myself in my room, on Facebook in the first moments I had in college. It was pouring outside so nobody really wanted to go outside, so I was stuck in my room," Doney said. However, being stuck inside the dorms for a while made meeting new people that much more easy.

Boxes, bags, refrigerators, and all other dorm room necessities fill the sidewalks of the dorms this weekend, as new students move in.

"The best part of my day was meeting my roommate and our hall mates. We went bowling down the hallway with a little plastic bowling set. Then, a few brave souls went body bowling with a blanket. It was by far the best icebreaker ever," Thompson said.

The first night of college can be an experience for many freshmen. Doney spent the night hanging out with the new friends that he made in his dorm. Thompson went over to her friend's house to meet some upperclassmen.

The ability to meet new people at Stevens Point is something that surprised both Doney and Thompson the most.

"A lot of people are extremely friendly here. I mean, how many places can you turn to the person next to you, whom you've never met before, and just start talking to them?" Doney said.

"I mean, how many places can you turn to the person next to you, whom you've never met before, and just start talking to them?" Doney said.

"The real college life sometimes isn't what freshmen have imagined it to be, but that's not always a bad thing. Saturday was a rainy day here in Stevens Point and that caused a few changes in plans for some people. "I was sitting by myself in my room, on Facebook in the first moments I had in college. It was pouring outside so nobody really wanted to go outside, so I was stuck in my room," Doney said. However, being stuck inside the dorms for a while made meeting new people that much more easy.

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"The thing I am most nervous about is staying organized. In high school, our teachers still chased us around to remind us of our make-up math test for the following morning," Thompson said.

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"I know my roommate just from Facebook. We were both partnered with different girls; we actually lived in different dorms. She wanted a new roommate and my roommate could no longer attend UWSP so we were both in need of a change," Thompson said.

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New Suites offer luxury, privacy to students

DAN NECKAR

When alumni reminisce about their days of living on campus, they usually think about the cramped dorm rooms, the outdated buildings and the horrors of sharing a bathroom with forty other students.

Beginning this fall, students have another alternative to look forward to. The Suites@2011 offer spacious suite-style housing with four bedrooms and a complete kitchen and living room complete with furniture.

The new building also features numerous community kitchens with dining and lounge areas, elevators, recreation and study areas and soundproof rehearsal spaces for musicians.

Hall Director Christina Lorge-Grover said that the demand for the suites came from the students, and that other University of Wisconsin Schools have been offering this style of housing for years.

"I think that Stevens Point was one of the only UW schools left that didn't have an apartment-style resident hall. It's something that's becoming expected," said Lorge-Grover, who is eager to accommodate a wide range of students on campus.

Lange-Grover said the suites offer a different style of living to please students who have not had their needs met in the past. Upperclassmen graduate students, non-traditional students and those transferring from other institutions will inhabit the new building.

The suites also make pushes towards greater environmental sustainability. Much of the materials such as wood, carpet and glass are recycled and recovered from within Wisconsin. Lorge-Grover estimated that the suites project has created approximately 200 jobs since its inception.

Assistant to the Director Scott Strand knows what it's like to make the transition into this building from the other dorms. Strand lived in Hyer Hall, the smallest residence hall on campus until it was demolished to make room for the suites. The original Hyer Hall was built in 1963.

He said that having his own bathroom was the greatest perk, and he was happy he wouldn't have to put up with the antics of sharing a restroom in the old dorms.

Strand said that the new look impresses people as soon as they walk through the door.

"As soon as they came into the building and saw the lobby, they instantly were captivated by the building. It's brand new and it's beautiful and it's not like a traditional residence hall. I feel very fortunate to be here," Strand said.

Tracy Vogt is a student who recently moved into the suites, and she said she enjoys the freedom of having her own place with a full kitchen, where she chooses her meals.

While Vogt says the new suites have less of a communal feeling than the traditional halls where residents kept their doors wide open, her suitemates have all had very positive reactions to the new building.

"When everyone comes in and sees the view, there are a lot of 'wows,'" Vogt said. Students wishing to live in the suites next year can do so in the spring during residence hall sign-ups.
Living in the dorms means living in a small place. Working with such a small place can be difficult, but here’s some ways that you can make your in a small place. Working with such a second grade to college, or the shirt that hasn’t been in style since the 90s and never will be again, no matter that hasn’t been in style since the 90s and never will be again, no matter you bring, the more space you’ll stuff you bring, the more space you’ll need to bring everything to college. You’re paying a lot to study at college, so you should be most studying space will actually make you want to study.

1. LIGHT IT UP. The florescent lights in the dorms don’t necessarily scream out homely or comforting. Buy some of your own lights. Buy desk lamps, string Christmas lights around the room, even try a lava lamp.

2. BE ARTSY. Let’s face it, we don’t have any money to spend on paintings or anything to decorate our walls. So, why not do it yourself? Who cares if you’re not any good and it looks terrible? You can just say that it’s modern art and has some deep, philosophical meaning.

3. DON’T BE A HOARDER. Contrary to what you believe, you don’t need to bring the birthday card your best friend made you in second grade to college, or the shirt you’re looking for a witty and inspiring book to read, check out “Vive La Revolution” by frequent Guardian and Independent columnist, and renowned BBC comedian, Mark Steel. Imagine Eddie Izzard’s stand-up “Dress to Kill,” except about the French Revolution and as told by one of today’s funniest historians, or most brilliant comedians. Steel’s expertise on the subject comes clear, yet lacks anypretense or armchair monotony. His lecture is truly written for anybody. The flow and narrative make the reader insatiable, regardless of background. Steel’s insight and unapologetic defense of the revolution offer a fascinat-ing and hilarious account of one of its most remarkable events. Although chronologically ordered and well-flowing, this is no ordinary retelling of the French Revolution, its principles or legacies. Instead, the French Revolution is presented from the perspective of the 1880s French working class to the international working class today with immediate prescience. The book is incredibly well-researched, panoramic and ground view of the revolution is enveloped by some of the most interesting facts about it you would have never otherwise learned: quotes from journals (one of which, refuting the possibility of a revolution in 1887, is quickly followed by Paul Marat, Maximilien Robespierre, Benjamin Franklin and more).

In Steel’s words, taken from his “Introduction to the U.S. Edition”: “The French Revolution may be worth people in the U.S. taking a look at now, not to learn that it began in 1789 or to marvel at the beauty of Marie Antoinette’s gowns, but because it suggests that at certain times, the most apparently invincible can be curtailed by a crowd armed with the will to realize its own potential.”

“For the international working class today, The book is truly written for anybody. The flow and narrative make the reader insatiable, regardless of background. Steel’s expertise on the subject comes clear, yet lacks any pretense or armchair monotony. His introduction shatters academia and its traditional snobbery; it refutes the way in which the revolution has been negatively portrayed by the political economy of education, which would prefer we didn’t know the instances in which concentrated power can be challenged by organized masses. Steel alerts us that if these examples of successful social change cannot be sufficiently concealed, contemporary education can at least present events like the French Revolution as atrocities, possibly well-intentioned but inevitably turned into terror, blood and tyranny.

You can sense the stereotypical British dry wit in each page, although his sordid sense of humor retains the ability to surprise with spontaneous “f-word” paybacks and raunchy end-of-the-paragraph one-liners. This is a hilarious, fascinating and unique look at the French Revolution and the people who made it.

At times goofy and always on-point, Steel’s insight and unapologetic defense of the revolution offer the everyday people of today a powerfully relevant look at an erroneously discounted event. It was very difficult to put down, and definitely a great read.

“Vive La Revolution” Book Review
MICHAEL WILSON
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If you’re looking for a witty and inspiring book to read, check out ‘Vive La Revolution’ by frequent Guardian and Independent columnist, and renowned BBC comedian, Mark Steel. Imagine Eddie Izzard’s stand-up ‘Dress to Kill,’ except about the French Revolution and as told by one of today’s funniest historians, or most brilliant comedians. Steel’s expertise on the subject comes clear, yet lacks any of background. Steel’s expertise on the subject comes clear, yet lacks any pretense or armchair monotony. His introduction shatters academia and its traditional snobbery; it refutes the way in which the revolution has been negatively portrayed by the political economy of education, which would prefer we didn’t know the instances in which concentrated power can be challenged by organized masses. Steel alerts us that if these examples of successful social change cannot be sufficiently concealed, contemporary education can at least present events like the French Revolution as atrocities, possibly well-intentioned but inevitably turned into terror, blood and tyranny.

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pointlife

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It Is Time To Put Real Criminals In Jail

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The decision by federal regulators to file a suit against the financial institutions that created the toxic mortgage-backed securities that plunged the country into The Great Recession is a step in the right direction, but sadly will not provide the disincentive to employees of the financial institutions from trying to skirt the already weak regulations in place and causing the next financial catastrophe.

Nearly three years after the biggest collapse in our financial system since The Great Depression, not one individual is sitting in jail for their role in the collapse. Not one.

The only reason Bernie Madoff is in jail for his role in an entirely different Ponzi scheme was because he stole from other rich people. The banks only stole money from the poor schmucks they could lure in with low introductory rates, only to rapidly inflate their payments later and bankrupt them. Our financial institution acted like an anglerfish whose prey strayed too close to its shiny light of salvation in a sinister abyss.

Until the federal government starts to indict the individuals who were responsible for the mess we are still trying to drag ourselves out of, we are only going to see this vicious cycle repeat time after time.

These banks give colossal bonuses to their top executives, who are ultimately accountable for their companies' actions. In 2009, the year after the financial crisis, Morgan Stanley gave out $14 billion to their employees in salaries and bonuses. Goldman Sachs, the great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, as dubbed by Matt Taibbi, gave out over $16 billion - $4.7 billion in the first quarter of 2009 alone.

Let that fact sink in for a second. Months after forcing the federal government to save AIG so it would not lose billions on credit default swaps (essentially insurance) they had purchased on mortgage backed securities that they themselves created, and knew were absolutely worthless, they were giving out $4.7 billion to their employees in compensation for their performance.

"Great job guys. We nearly destroyed the world economy. Now lets go celebrate with a weekend in the Hamptons."

If that is not a WTF moment I don't know what is.

Ultimately, these banks may be forced to pay back a portion of the money they received when Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac purchased these securities, and they may even be fined millions of dollars. But they have a history of gladly paying these minuscule fines while continuing to make money hand over fist.

Goldman was fined $550 million in 2010 by the Securities and Exchange Commission for its involvement in the subprime mortgage mess it made billions off of. That is the largest fine ever imposed by the SEC. What is $580 million to a company that made a profit of $8.35 billion while still giving out $15.4 billion in compensation in 2010 alone?

And that is where the root of the problem lies. A fine is merely a slap on the wrist to the banks. They will gladly take them while making boatloads of cash and their employees are handsomely rewarded for their efforts.

Until those individuals who were at the heart of the financial crisis start spending time in a federal "pound me in the ass prison," this cycle of financial crises will only continue unabated; only next time they will only try to push their luck further, knowing the consequences will not be extreme enough to deter them from the profits and bonuses that await them.

Have an opinion?
Share it with us at:
pointer@uwsp.edu

Submit your own on images of the week to us by email, on facebook or twitter, and they could appear in next week's issue.
Les Johnson
Stevens Point Alumnus '77

If These Dorm Walls Could Talk
A Pointer Alumnus' recounting of dorm days past

The Knutzen Hall staff of 1976 poses for a pic in their very dated attire.

Photo submitted by Les Johnson

If late at night when you are worrying about that mid-term you have in the morning for Sociology and can’t sleep, have you wondered what tales the walls of your dorm room could tell? What was life like for the Pointers that lived in your dorm room? Indeed, they all studied, partied and experimented like you, but what was life like back in, say in the 70s?

Let’s turn back the clock a bit. This is the location: Knutzen Hall; the timeframe: 1974-1977. At the time, Knutzen housed 230 post-adolescent males. Not a good idea by the university, but what was life like in a small space led to way too much creativity and insanity.

You may have heard from your parents there were no cell phones, DVDs or computers, and we walked five miles uphill both ways to class in a blizzard. We had an intercom system and one phone at the end of the hallway. Your friends called the main desk and you were paged in your room to go pick up the phone at the end of the hallway to receive your call.

The showers were gang showers. No individual stalls, just one big room. Our room doors were always open to see and chat with passers-by. The door was only closed when you really needed to study.

Everyone was given a nickname like Crane, Buke, Mongo, Chief, Spider, Zo, Corn Dog and Tut, to name a few. I now realize those nicknames were to protect the guilty. We had visitation hours—no women after midnight or before 7:00 a.m. If you wanted to spend the night with another floor-mate, you would be placed face down on one of the beds and your bottom would be exposed to the ritual of the “Black Ass.” Indelible black markers and shoe polish would be applied as a badge of affection from your wing mates.

Attempting to fight your way out of the mob of 15 to 20 young men, you would be restrained and dragged into a room. You there would be placed face down on one of the beds and you bottom would be exposed to the ritual of the “Black Ass.” Indelible black markers and shoe polish would be applied as a badge of affection from your wing mates. It was always fun the next day to appear in the shower to display your symbol of care and love from your wing.

I don’t want you to think that we were not responsible young adults. Everyone showed each other on their birthdays. Returning from the dining hall (Debey) you would be greeted by the members of your wing. You knew what was about to happen because instinctively you would turn to run down the stairwell but it would be blocked by other wing mates.

Returning to the floor, we realized the gun fight that was about to proceed could be potentially dangerous.

Thinking back to words from our mothers about “shooting our eyes out,” we ran to the bookstore. There we purchased chemistry goggles to protect our eyes. Back at Knutzen we spent the afternoon playing cops and robbers shooting each other. The next morning in the shower we proudly displayed our welts from the pellets to each other and no one shot their eye out.

Later I became a Resident Advisor (RA) to further develop my sense of responsibility and leadership. One night after returning from an evening at Ella’s (did I mention pitchers were $1.25) with two other RAs, we ran into the RA on duty making rounds at 2:00 a.m. The four of us made small talk until one of us came up with the idea how much fun it would be to frighten our fellow RAs.

Grabbing our bathrobes and a towel we reconvened outside my room. One of my colleagues brought his rather large hunting knife as an accessory. He thought it would be a nice touch to our plans. The university, feeling responsibility and leadership, one of our wing mates. It was always fun the next day to appear in the shower to display your symbol of care and love from your wing.

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Looking around campus, take a moment and explore your history as a Pointer.

And the next time you see us alumni in our 50s walking around campus, take a moment and explore your history as a Pointer.

The showers were gang showers. No individual stalls, just one big room.