

# UNLV will soon have Environmental Studies Program

By Rick Nielsen

Dr. Jim Deacon is having a baby. As absurd as it may sound his baby is the new Environmental Studies Program (ESP), which is about to become a reality.

Originally the idea belonged to Deacon and Craig Walton of the Philosophy Department. The two recognized the need to implement this type of program, and decided to take action.

Though it has taken the collaboration of a planning committee consisting of key members of faculty from several departments, Deacon's enthusiasm and pride make it crystal clear that he gives it (ESP) the same love and care as he would his own child.

The Environmental Studies Program already has been recommended for approval by the chancellor's office and is being forwarded to the Board of Regents.

"At this point the prospects of approval are excellent, and it appears that ESP could become a reality by next fall," Deacon said.

Community support is also contributing momentum in favor of ESP. Several organizations are eagerly expressing their support by promising scholarship funds for

the program. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Hard Rock Cafe, Students Conscious of Protecting the Environment (SCOPE), and Solar Earthenergy Alliance all head the list at the present time.

According to the ESP proposed catalog entry, "the ESP is designed to provide students with a general understanding of the environmental challenges facing our world, with the basic skills essential for success in a career in the environment arena, and with a depth of understanding in at least one area of emphasis."

"The ESP will help educate the leaders we need to guide Southern Nevada into the twenty-first century," said President of UNLV Robert Maxson.

This being an interdisciplinary program, it naturally leads into a wide range of fields. The focus of study will be dependent upon the individual student, but the following are examples of possibilities: environmental policy and planning, environmental education, pollution control, and others.

"Students majoring in environmental studies will complete a

minimum of 122 credit hours, with 40 credits in course numbered 300 or above, and must achieve a grade point average of 2.5. Students must also complete a minimum of 30 credits in residence following admission to the program," is quoted from the proposed catalog.

Deacon, in a statement on his feelings about the program said, "Our goal is to develop the realization in students that our world is too complex for us ever to be able to manage. What we can hope to manage is people, their attitudes, aspirations and understanding, of

the world about them, as well as themselves." One student who is strongly in favor of the program is Tanya Otero. She is Deacon's assistant, and undeclared in her major. She aspires to be one of the first students to enroll and graduate from the program.



Jim Deacon, chair of Environmental Studies Program (ESP) Planning Committee. photo by Rick Nielsen

## 'Sun' day drivers everyday

By Rick Nielsen

Douglas Cobb is a "sun" day driver everyday and darn proud of it.

At the 1980 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn., he exhibited and demonstrated his solar golf cart by escorting dignitaries around the Fair.

Cobb is now president of his own company, Solar Car Corporation (SCC).

On April 9, Cobb stopped at UNLV on his way to the first annual Eco-Expo, an exposition of over 1,000 exhibitors of environmentally sound technologies. He just happened to have one of his solar electric autos with him.

His company was established in June of 1989 to develop, manufacture and market solar electric and solar electric hybrid vehicles. Hybrids have the addition of small auxiliary engines, usually fueled by alternative fuels such as propane or natural gas.

The car he was demonstrating in front of the engineering building was the Solar Electric Festiva, a state-of-the-art solar electric car. The car is a Ford Festiva with the engine removed and the motor system totally revamped by SCC. The car is powered by ten, 12-volt batteries, with solar panels to help recharge them. Life expectancy for batteries is

from two to six years, depending on the kind and extent of their use.

The car uses off-the-shelf parts that are readily available. All retrofit parts are under warranty for one year.

The Solar Festiva has excellent road handling and balance with top speed around 60 mph, and acceleration even a race car driver can appreciate. The range is 50 to 70 miles depending on conditions and speed. The hybrid models have greater range.

The car costs about \$22,000 right now, but the goal of the company is to reduce that to between \$10,000 and \$12,000 by means of their new 14,000 sq. ft. warehouse, which is soon to become a factory to produce the cars.

"Thomas Edison tried 10,000 filaments before he found the right

one. This type of technology requires the same type of dedication to perfect," Cobb said.

The SCC is also concerned about mass transit and are hoping to show off their new mass transit alternative multi-use stretch van at the Eco Expo, but the prototype was temporarily delayed in production.

According to Cobb, there is now a city ordinance in Los Angeles requiring corporations to provide mass transportation to their employees in order to reduce emissions and reduce cars on the road. Cobb made mention of one corporation that he said failed to obey and were fined \$250,000.

"With the price of our 12-seat stretch van at around \$50,000, they could have bought five," Cobb said.



Electric powered Ford Festiva. photo by Morgan Fisher

## A future in the sun

by Rick Nielsen

Bill Billings has been interested in solar energy for a long time. He holds a degree in passive solar design from Red Rocks College in Colorado, but his attitude about solar energy is far from passive.

Since the late '70s he has been experimenting with and building different types of solar concepts. In 1978 on the University of Denver's campus he designed and built a solar house which is still functioning today.

Billings came to Las Vegas in 1986, recognizing the potential Nevada held for solar energies.

His new company, Solar Earthenergy Alliance (SEA), is dedicated to inform and educate the public about the advances and capabilities of "alternative energies," especially in Nevada. The company is basically in its infancy. It already has major plans and goals to increase both awareness, and education, as well as construction and use of all environmentally sensitive buildings and products.

A major breakthrough in the solar industry has just been discovered by Southern California Edison and Texas Instruments. Essentially a perfected "clean solar cell," it will allow solar energy to be produced cheaper, cleaner and more efficiently than ever before.

Billings said that, with the new emissions laws and the realization of the use of solar energy and solar electric cars, the country needs to concentrate on mass production of electricity. He said what most people are unaware of is, "it is not only

possible, but very realistic to produce all of the United States' electrical needs by using present solar technology."

According to Billings, Nevada is an ideal location for this production. Billings said that an area approximately the size of the test site would suffice to generate the amount of electricity used last year in the United States.

The expanding solar industry is going to create many new jobs, and Nevada is the only state to blend economic and environmental factors into the purchase price of electricity, putting Nevada at the head of the list where expansion is concerned.

Also of great interest and bearing are SEA's plans to open their new Eco-Store. Soon to be opened and located at 810 Commerce, the store will sell energy efficient products such as light bulbs and low-flow toilets, and promote the use of products that save and protect the environment.

SEA is one of the supporters of the Environmental Studies Program at UNLV, and is selling T-shirts, hand bags, and buttons, with a percentage of the proceeds going to the scholarship fund and SCOPE. The items were displayed last week in the MSU lobby.

Before departing for his exhibit at Clark County Fair in Logandale Friday, Billings said it was his goal to let everybody know that it is possible to produce electricity, and build and design homes from solar technologies, making way for a cleaner planet.

## Philosophy professor to lecture at UNLV

Dr. Holmes Rolston III, a philosophy professor at Colorado State University, will lecture at UNLV on Thursday, April 18.

Rolston's lecture, titled "Values in Nature," is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in Room 116 of John S. Wright Hall.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Rolston, who specializes in environmental ethics, earned his doctorate degree at the University of Edinburgh. He also has degrees from Davidson College, Union Theological Seminary and the University of Pittsburgh.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**  
**Wendy Eileen Finmark!**  
**You're legal!**  
 Love, Jennie.