



GREEN TO THE MAX

Senior's environmental efforts permeate JMU BY KATIE HUDSON ('10)

EMILY THOMAS ('09) is taking "going green" to a whole new level. As the student representative to the new Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World, Thomas serves the ISNW Campus Accessibility Committee. She is an integrated science and technology major with an environment concentration. She also founded JMU's No Drive Day as a freshman and is co-founder of the Clean Energy Coalition.

The coalition, which is a grouping of many of JMU's Earth-friendly clubs, helped sponsor the Village Green Wars, where students competed to conserve the most energy in nine Village residence halls.

Thomas' enthusiasm for the environment started at an early age. "I've recycled since I can remember," she says. But it was not until her freshman year at JMU that she decided to really become involved with environmentalism.

After a professor recommended she attend a climate conference at Yale University, Thomas quickly became enthralled with green efforts. "I was so inspired after the conference; I knew I wanted to be a part of something big," she explains.

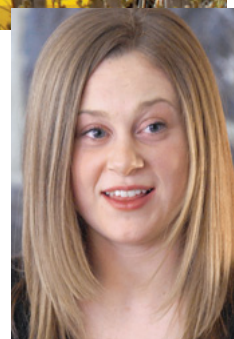
Soon after, she met now-ISNW director, C.J. Brodrick Hartman. "Emily has really furthered the campus environmental efforts at JMU. She uses scientific evidence and criti-

cal thinking rather than just advocating 'green trends,'" Hartman explains.

Those qualities helped Thomas organize No Drive Day. The program — which proved to be a major success — worked with the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation to raise awareness about excessive automobile use. JMU has since sponsored several No Drive Days.

Thomas sees scientific evidence as a way "to debunk green myths. There are too many conflicting ideas out there, and the only way to really find the right one is through education and knowledge." Thomas has analyzed the cradle-to-cradle costs and benefits of a hybrid car purchase versus a highly efficient and low-emissions conventional vehicle.

Surprisingly, the best part of Thomas' current work with ISNW doesn't involve scientific evidence. "The greatest thing is seeing other people get excited and informed when it comes to helping the environment," she says. Thomas hopes to continue that feeling after graduation. "My dream is to research renewable resources and implement tangible ideas that can really change the environment for the better."



Inset: Emily Thomas ('09), helped organize JMU's first No Drive Day while she was a freshman. The event raises awareness about excessive automobile use.

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