Greyhounds Go Green

A Photo Essay

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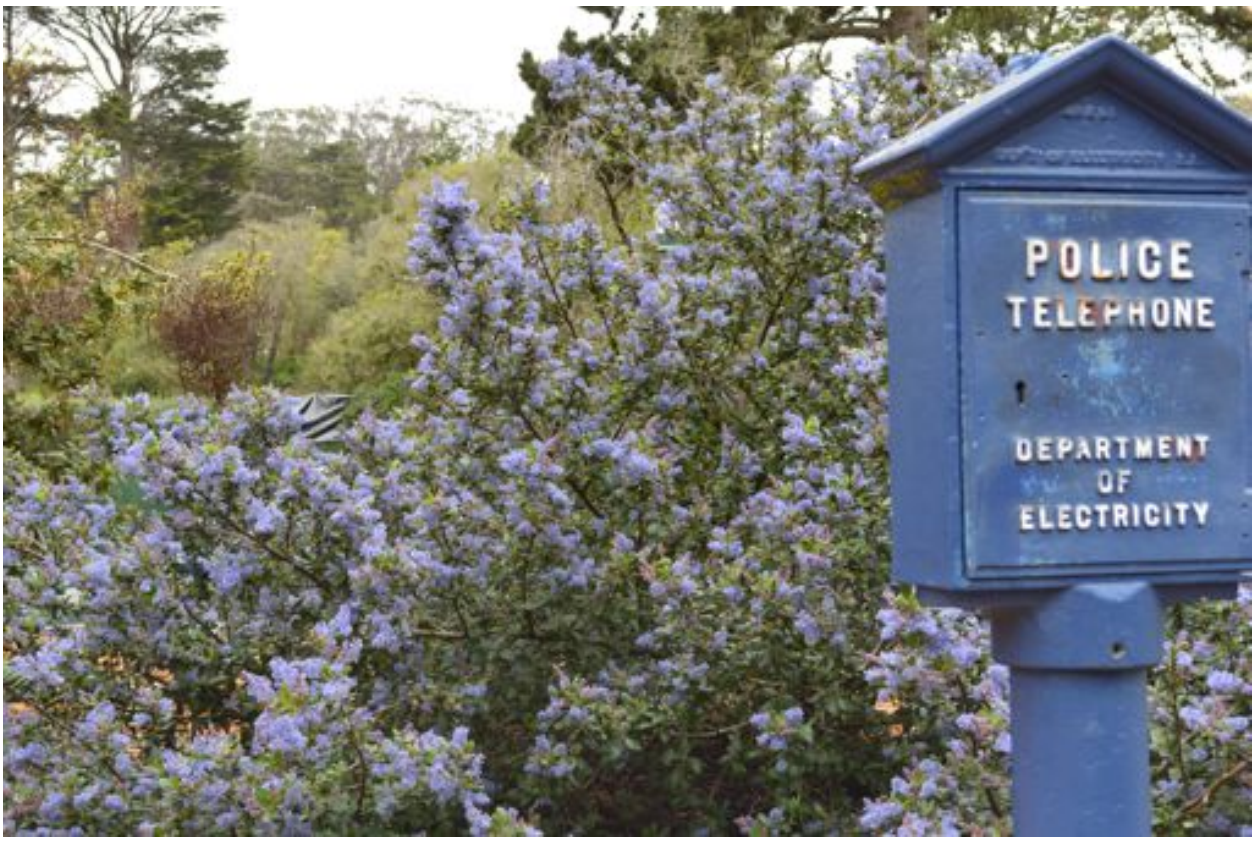


Photo By: Anthony Landi

Society functions based on laws that legislative branch members wrote. These same laws are enforced by our police officers. While there are some who disobey laws, most men and women follow them, which allows us to collectively function without succumbing to complete chaos.

What about the environment, though? One can be fined for littering, or dumping waste, but we constantly emit CO2 into the environment, recycle infrequently and use up resources without a single thought about the future. We are, in fact, residents of this planet, and thus, we should be taking better care of it. So why then, do we not better police ourselves with the environment? Do we not care about our planet?

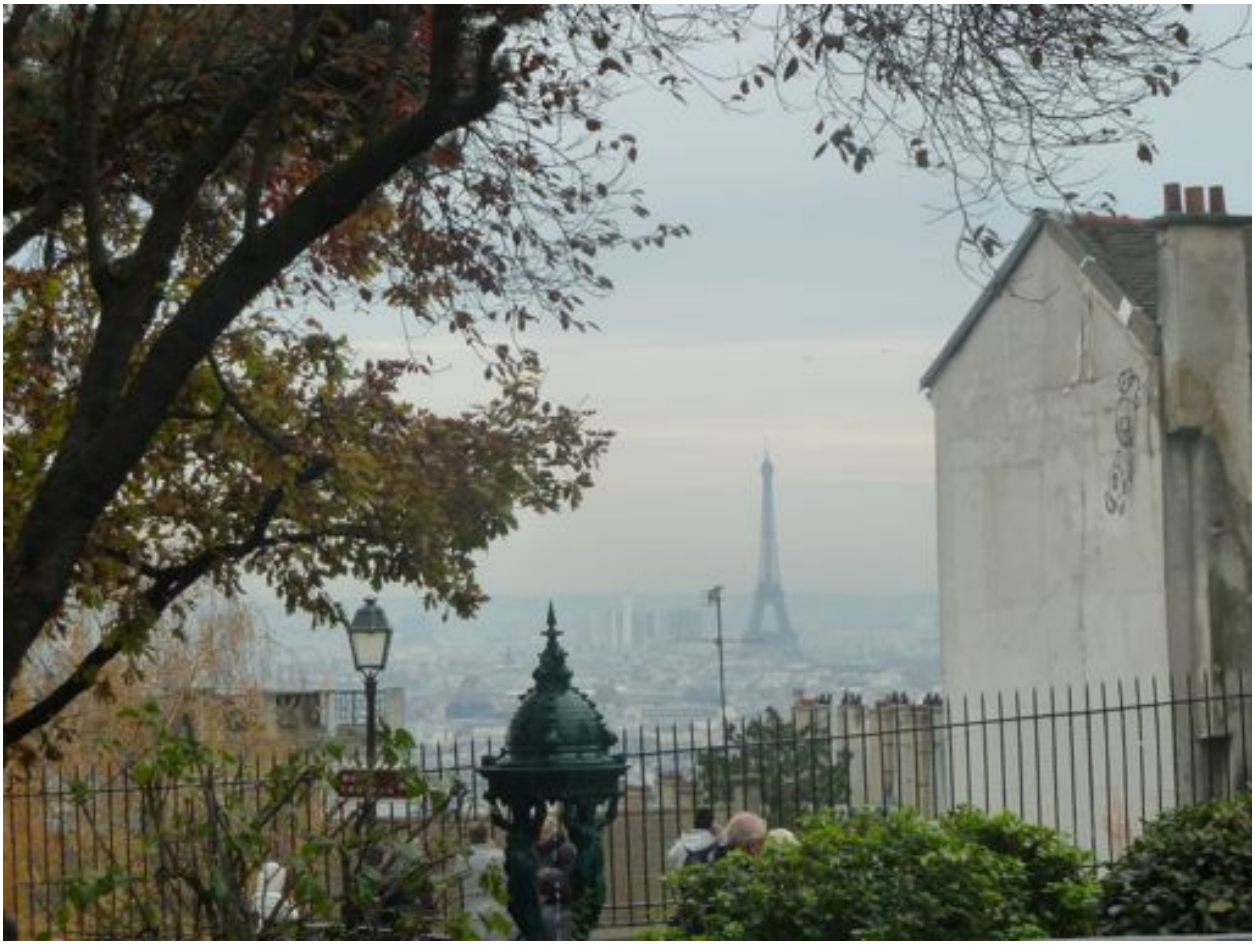
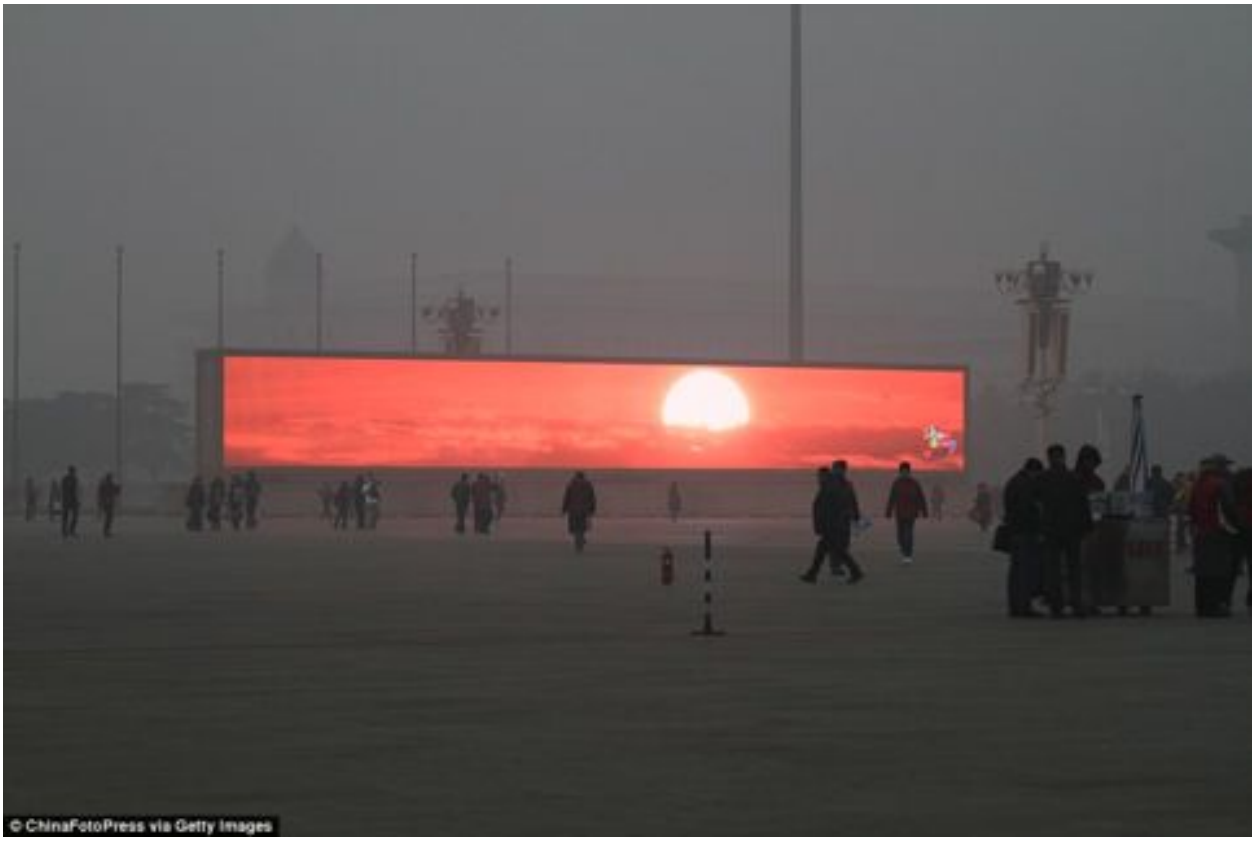


Photo By: Anthony Landi

We tend to turn a blind eye toward the damage we're doing to the planet. Take Paris, for example. Though Paris is an objectively picturesque city, the Eiffel Tower can scarcely be seen through the smog where this particular shot was taken—a mere half mile away. In what should have been a proud view from which one of man's most triumphant architectural monuments can be seen, a vague sense of shame fills the viewer instead.

Should we not be outraged by the flagrant damage we're doing to the atmosphere?



Even more disheartening is this photograph from Beijing. The city, now regarded as one of the world's most vital financial arenas, is so densely polluted with smog that the sunrise must be telecast—the particles choking the air won't let sunlight through. In fact, some of the worst recorded air pollution was documented in Beijing in 2013—on January 12th, the air quality index reached 775, exceeding the limits of the scale by 275 points.[1] This statistic seems like something out of a science fiction film, though it's reality. The smog is caused by factories and from the coal that is burned to produce the goods we enjoy here in America. Though this pollution isn't being created first-hand in the States, our demand for mass produced goods is destroying our planet.

Photo By: Victoria Sluko

The problems outlined abroad are also prevalent domestically, here in the States. Take Pittsburg, for example. At night, its cityscape spans for miles, the bright lights from the buildings radiating through the night sky and bouncing off the rivers it caresses with its tall industrial buildings and powerful, steel bridges. But dusk holds a powerful secret, telling only those who are acutely aware. The clouds that hang heavy in the night sky are indicative of a brewing storm—though not one from Mother Nature. Instead, they hold stories of air pollution, so much so that people living in the area are twice as likely to develop cancer because of the pollutants in the air they breathe. Emissions from diesel fuel, formaldehyde, carbon tetrachloride, and benzene cause a hazy smog to fill the air, rain or shine[1]. Still, the pollutants are not exclusive to the air; reports indicate that in 2010, 31.1 million pounds of toxic waste was dumped in the Ohio River and 2.6 million pounds were discharged into the Monongahela[2].

[1] Atkin, Emily. "Pittsburgh's Unique Air Pollution Makes its Residents More Susceptible To Cancer, Study

[2] Hopey, Don. "Region's Rivers are Some of Nation's Most Polluted," *Pittsburgh's Post-Gazzette,* March 23, 2012.

Photo By: Unknown

The air pollution in Los Angeles is even more dramatic. The sprawling West Coast city has been ranked the American city with the worst air quality 13 out of the past 14 years[3]. This is due to the lack of readily accessible public transport, and the resulting high amount of cars on the road. The pollution from these motor vehicles is trapped over the city in what's called "atmospheric inversion."

The results of this inversion can be seen most readily in the photograph above. The Hollywood sign is one of the most emblematic pieces of American pop-culture. However, on days with smog, or "heavy fog" as some Los Angeles natives like to call it, the sign is obscured beneath a dense layer of haze. Rather than being appalled, most people take it as just another reality of life in the big city and it goes unabated.

[3] Neporent, Liz, "Los Angeles Tops 'Dirty Air' List for 13th Time in 14 Years," *ABC News*, April 24, 2013.

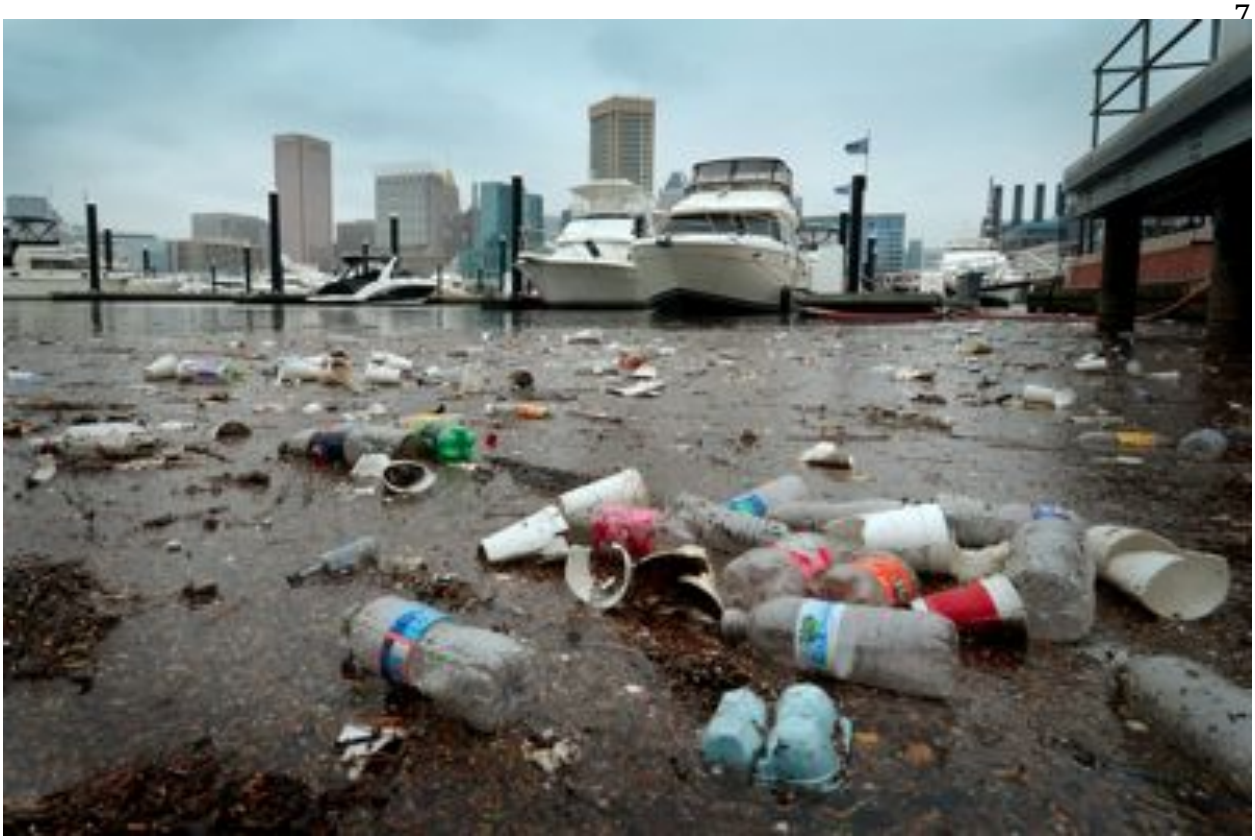


Photo By: Maximillian Franz

It is no great secret that Loyola's home city of Baltimore is the source of the most polluted air on the East Coast. Of every 100,000 deaths in Baltimore, 130 are caused by air pollution, a higher number than any other city in America. The American Lung Association gave Baltimore a grade of an "F" on their annual State of the Air report in 2013[4]. The Inner Harbor, one of the largest tourist sites in Baltimore, seems like the perfect background for any traveler's photo—serene water with boats on the edge of a strong and industrial city, no fence or gate blocking the water that was once so vital for the city's trade and economy. But this lack of protection from the water might not be the safest decision for the people of Baltimore. Tests of the Harbor water have shown that it contains over five times the safe limit of bacteria for human contact. Levels this high would make ocean water at a beach un-swimmable, but there are no restrictions or warnings posted at the popular Baltimore destination[5].

What is also not a great secret is our apathy toward the ways in which we as a Loyola community affect the environment through our daily actions. And not just our immediate environment—given that the atmosphere knows no boundaries or borderlines, the pollutants that we put into the air in Baltimore affects the air everywhere.

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[4] "State of the Air 2013," *American Lung Association,* 2013.

[5] Yanchullis, Kate. "Inner Harbor Water: Unsafe Bacteria Levels, Test Shows," *News 21,* July 16, 2010.

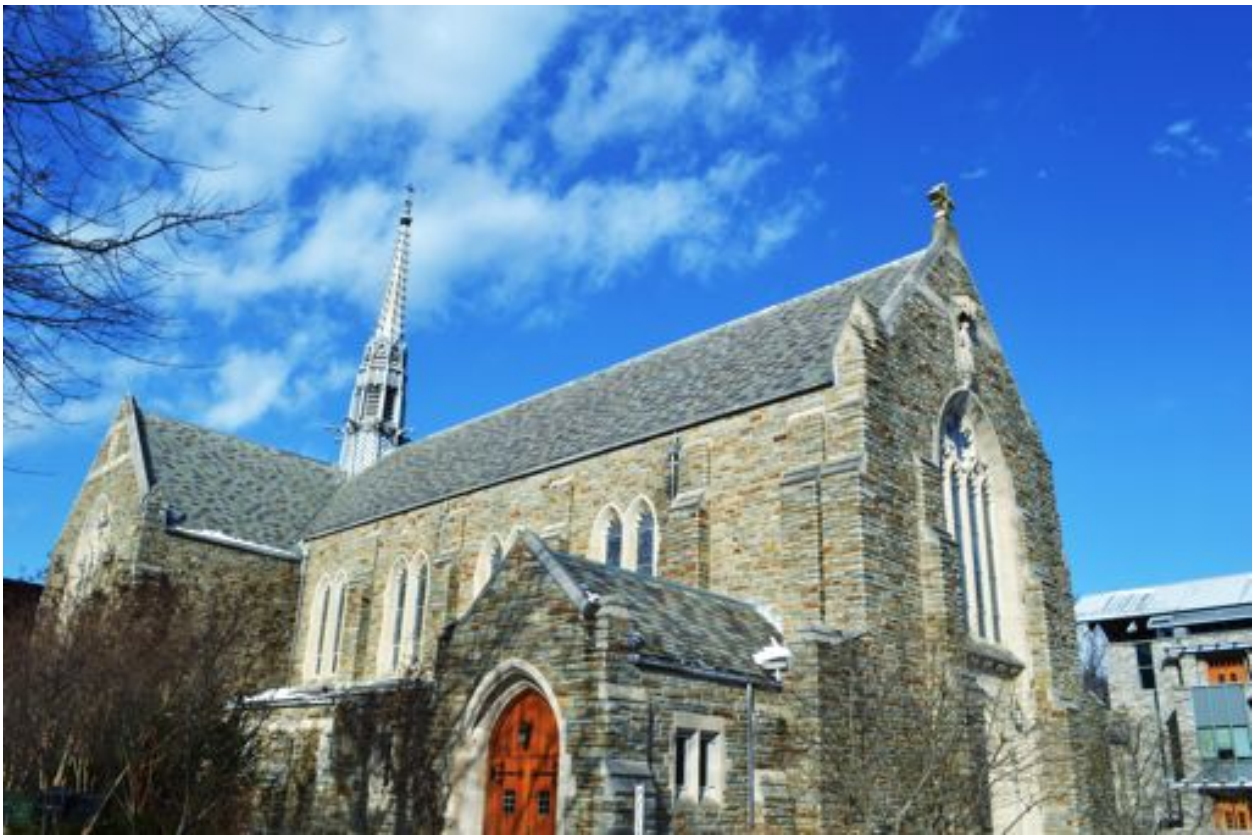

Photo By: Anthony Landi

Loyola is a beautiful place. Our green quad, our old stone buildings, and our brick-paved paths make for a pleasant place to live. Even if it may seem that Loyola is in a perfect bubble, we are still using so much energy every day. Loyola's sustainability board has done its duty to enable and promote various ways of green living. According to the Energy Management Plan[6], Loyola is managing temperatures in buildings and classrooms in an efficient way, using biodegradable and eco-friendly plastics in dining services, using energy efficient bulbs in many light fixtures and sensor lighting in areas where feasible, and offers various recycling areas around campus. In addition, Loyola is also involved in large projects, such as the geothermal heating and cooling system in Flannery Hall and the Solar Array installed on Butler Hall. Also, Loyola is looking into low flow flushing toilets and purchasing energy star compliances when necessary.

Loyola's Sustainability Board plans to make Loyola as eco-friendly as possible, but none of it will work without your help. Turn off your lights before you go to bed. Do your laundry in cold water and air dry some clothes. Turn off school computers at the end of the day. Use the stairs instead of the elevator sometimes. Walk around campus instead of driving. Keep your windows closed when the air or heat is in use. Unplug appliance or power cords as much as possible. Keep Loyola beautiful; do your part to keep it green.

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[6] Yates, M. "Energy Management Policies and Procedures" Loyola University Maryland, January 2009.

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