



Times-News

Festival Celebrates the Earth's Birthday

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David Weintraub

ECO NOTES



My dad just celebrated his 80th birthday. Since I wasn't able to be with him, I crafted him a little treasure chest to let him know how much he meant to me.

We've had our issues over the years and don't always see eye to eye, but I've always admired his courage to stand up for what he believed in, even if it wasn't popular. He'll be in town when this column appears, so I can say it in person. (Thanks, Dad.)

In a sense, I always thought that Earth Day was a birthday. A time to treasure what the Earth means to us since we are of the earth and will return to it when our time is up. I don't always see eye to eye with our planet and the destructive forces it unleashes, but it's the only planet I have. David Weintraub

The web of life that we humans are connected to is a fragile mosaic. The radiation in the air and water from natural and unnatural sources might not be of such a concern if it weren't compounded by a myriad of assaults we're exposed to every day from coal ash in the water and air, chemical fertilizers and pesticides in our watersheds, silt and sediment carrying heavy metals and chemicals into every body of water around us, and preservatives in our food. Being bombarded from all directions doesn't make for a healthy planet, nor a healthy species.

When we talk about celebrating our Earth, we're talking about stewardship. It's not about fancy solar panels on our roofs or a car that drives 100 miles on electricity (but built and shipped with prodigious amounts of coal). It's about what kind of footprint we leave behind. Our community is blessed with many success stories where concerned citizens made a difference, such as the congregants of Holy Family Church who rebuilt a buffer along Boylston Creek to help ease a growing silt problem, the Hendersonville Rotary Club's efforts to clean Mud Creek and the students at Blue Ridge Community College monitoring their streams and lakes and so much more.

This year's Earth Day Festival celebrates all manner of stewardship of our land, water and air. It features a Watershed Festival that includes a portable living stream, enviroscapes, fresh-water turtles, fishing games and pond dipping; a Green Olympics that includes recycling games and a solar pizza box oven competition, live music featuring some of the best musicians in WNC — including the Atomic Sisterhood, Pam and Don McMahon, Carol Deurmit, Ellen Trnka, Tom Fisch, the Flat Rock Playhouse YouTheatre "Rising Stars" and Jenny Arch; a Bulb Exchange program to help people change out their coal wasting incandescents to CFLs; a children's recycled art area; sustainability workshops on everything from low-cost solar to raising chickens and bee-keeping; green vendors from throughout the region; delicious, healthy food brought to you by the Hendersonville Community Co-op; the presentation of ECO's first Green Business Award and much more.

There are many great things going on Saturday — hopefully you'll spend some of the day with us at Blue Ridge Community College to rediscover why you live here and why it's important to protect it. Earth Day is everyone's birthday — you, me, my dad and the other species that share our precious planet with us. Let's make this one special.

David Weintraub is Executive Director of ECO, the Environmental and Conservation Organization, which is dedicated to protecting the mountain region's natural heritage. ECO can be reached at (828) 692-0385 or online at www.eco-wnc.org.