

Annual Earth Day celebration held at San Lorenzo Park

Earth Day



Local
Columnist

M.L. Fischer

Tie dyes, bike shorts, and cargo pants mingled in San Lorenzo Park on Sunday for the annual Earth Day celebration. Several thousand visitors wandered through or chose to spend the warm, sunny day, hanging out, eating healthy munchies, and listening to the bands.

The event drew about 70 exhibitors. Most were local environmental and advocacy groups, plus a mix of vendors and food concessions. There were a few bead and jewelry places, a tie dye stand, some natural lotions, solar installations, and the perennial chiropractic tables.

Vendors and exhibitors started arriving at 8:30, so Cal-PIRG could direct them to their assigned spots. When, after a wait, the Cal-PIRG people didn't show, everyone poured in and started claiming preferred spots. By the 11 AM opening, everyone was in place, and exhibitors were wandering around, checking out their neighbors and chatting with people they may not have seen since last year.

As in past years, the bulk of the environmental and vending went on down by the river. On the upper level bands played throughout the day, groups like Tuesday Morning, Green Light District, and Shady Groove. On the lower level there was an open microphone, and entertainers and speakers alternated throughout the day.

One of the few booths on the upper level was Ecology Action. Situated at the end of the parking lot, they arranged themselves into three sections. One promoted Bike to Work Day, and gave people the opportunity to try an electric bike. They also had a composting booth, and one that dealt with recycling



M.L. Fischer/For the Register-Pajaronian

Visitors to the Earth Day celebration mingle among exhibits on Sunday. R-P 4-22-02

waste products, such as oil, and promoting alternatives to pest poisons.

Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation was giving away tiny seedling, such as redwoods and big leaf maples. These proved popular; almost everyone was carrying one.

I was working the Ventana Wilderness Alliance booth, promoting the upcoming wilderness bills that will soon hit the House and Senate. We were between the Sierra Club and the Valley Women's Club of the San Lorenzo Valley. They've been involved in protecting the San Lorenzo and Lompico watersheds.

One group had a sign reading, "The drug war is a war on people of color." They were protesting our failed drug policy in Columbia. In fact, a common theme this year was the protesting of various current U.S. policies. The Santa Cruz Peacemakers were against globalization and our current approach to terrorism. Earth First! summed up their theme for this year with a call for "Global

Harmony." The Environmental Council was working on something called the Corporate Three Strikes Initiative, aimed at corporations that fail to act as responsible citizens.

Several organizations were passing around a petition to save old growth forests, always a major issue at any Earth Day event. Naturally, Planned Parenthood and Zero Population Growth were pointing out that all conservation measures will ultimately fail if our populations continues to grow at the present rate.

There were also a number of local issues represented. A group opposed to the widening of Highway 1 was passing out a brochure with two photos. One showed a two lane traffic jam on Highway 1 at Branciforte, and the other a four lane on Highway 85 at Winchester. They were both equally impacted, and the caption asked how long it would take the first to look like the second. The answer was about three years.

The Santa Cruz Service Corps.

is working to hire the homeless and give them a "safe place to sleep." Another group advocates homeless camp sites, and the Second Harvest Food Bank is still feeding people. The local Surfrider Foundation is still monitoring pollution along our beaches and looking for help.

A couple of unfamiliar groups were present. The Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Santa Cruz was selling bottled water, and Santa Cruz Art and Revolution, a street theater group, was trying to attract artists and supporters.

The California Organic Farmers and the Hemp product advocates were promoting sustainable agriculture.

The days was upbeat, with all the various groups being very supportive of each other, signing petitions, discussing local, national and global issues, and just having a good time on this particular day on this particular Earth.

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Meade Fischer is a local resident and regular columnist for the Register-Pajaronian.