

Earth Day celebrations achieve maturity

by Jackie Skaluba

Social commentators and those compelled to label, categorize and file neatly away, have more or less unanimously labled the 1980's as the 'me decade.' Now the decade of sushi and insider trading and bumperstickers proclaiming whoever 'dies with the most toys wins' is over. What will the 1990's bring?

Already they are being compared unfavorably with the sixties and seventies, the decades of social consciousness; but is it really necessary to relive the past to discover the greatness of the future?

The sixties and seventies were decades of passion, with the flower children preaching the gospel of 'free love' and the bonfires stoked with bras and draftcards. We embraced our causes and championed the rights of men, women, children, animals, the earth.

Now spring is approaching with soft, whispered steps and warm caresses to awaken the

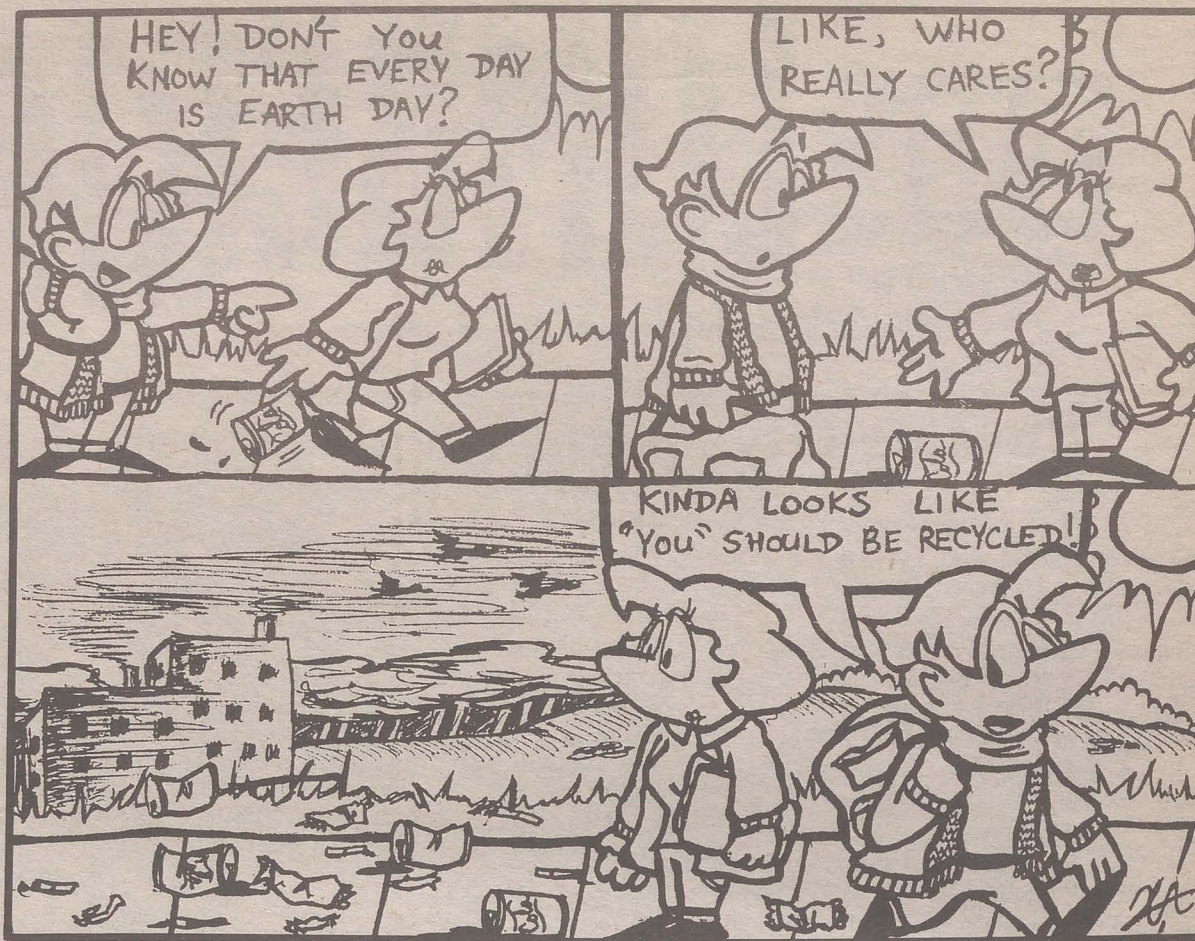
hibernating North, preparing the way for another Earth Day. Yet, instead of embracing the day, we merely acknowledge it and then continue on our way; apparently unchanged.

The country laments. In the past Earth Day was an occasion of stirring rallies, massive, marching crowds and John Denver songs.

Do not be deceived. Although we are no longer a nation of environmental evangelists, we are converts just the same. Like those souls drawn to the podium by Billy Graham's empowering voice -- we are forever changed. Instead of preaching loudly on the street corners, we're quietly recycling.

The crowds that gather on Earth Day may be smaller; however, that doesn't mean that we care any less, we're busy at home bundling newspapers, peeling labels off tin cans and crushing plastic milk jugs.

America honors the day quietly and with fewer banners. John has a new song and we're busy recycling.



Letter to the editor...

Dear Editor:

I am a concerned citizen of the city of Alpena. I have been discontented about the proposed Waste to Energy Resource System's garbage burning being placed here.

They claim that this trash burner will not pollute our environment in the local paper. Yet they have shown us no evidence of how they are going to accomplish this task.

I believe there are many unanswered questions that need to

be resolved. From what I heard, a public hearing is the last thing that WERS would like to happen. Are they hiding something?

If you want a chance to voice your concerns and opinions on this incinerator issue, I urge you to write to the following address:

Mr. Dennis Armbuster
Senior Engineer
Air Quality
P.O. Box 30028
Lansing, MI 48909

Thank you for your time,
Curt E. Spigelmyre

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Community forum examines issues

by Paula Taylor

The National Issues Forum (NIF), for the uninitiated, is a grass roots approach to problems affecting our nation. In the tradition of the town meeting, it brings together members of the community for discussion or debate of an issue of national consequence. The NIF format provides those in attendance with a brief history to illuminate the problem. Then some choices are also provided as solutions.

At the March 26th gathering the NIF topic was Regaining the Competitive Edge: Are We Up To The Job? The turn out was small but, oddly enough, there was a good cross section of participants from business, educators and students both new and returning and myself as the media.

Stimulating productivity is the key to our "regaining the competitive edge". The literature provided gave us three choices: motivating the work force, improving the basic skills for the bottom third, or upgrading

the workforce.

Our group felt there were enough programs in place to improve the skills of the bottom third. The problem with these programs is they don't produce a level of employment that will provide a standard of living that is as good as welfare.

Our choice was a two prong approach. We felt that industry has created the poor work ethic now prevalent in our workplace by not providing incentives to the rank and file worker for a job well done. Industry has also used the government as a quota system to promote and reward the underskilled and underprivileged to positions formally attainable only through the merit system.

We recommended the return of the merit system and incentives to be on the job and do a good job with advancement based on performance and attendance. We were not advocating a return to the sweatshop mentality, just capitalism tempered with

socialism.

The education faction in our group felt the bottom two thirds of the students in the K-12 system are currently not targeted by educators. The top third are encouraged and directed toward college; however every graduating senior is not going to college.

Industry has set a standard of seventh grade level for employment in the past. This group of people has been squeezed out of the workforce in recent years with little or no opportunity to regain the previous level of employment. They were left out of the education process and now contribute to our growing welfare/chronically unemployable.

The education system must instill in our young people the concept that a skill is a useful tool toward employment and that continuing employment will very probably mean continuing education. As for those outside the K-12 system an opportunity and incentives must be created for new skills to be developed.

ACC's first Earth Day Fair hopes to raise awareness

by Yvonne LaFave

What exactly is ACC doing to combat the destruction of planet earth? On April 20, ACC will host an Earth Day Fair with the intent to enlighten area residents about recycling and precycling.

Explains Carlene Przykucki, ACC's Director of Public Information, "The Fair is an opportunity to call attention to and raise awareness of earth-care topics."

The Fair will be the first of its kind at ACC, and Przykucki says, "We plan to focus on what the average person can do to become involved with caring for the planet."

WAIR will co-host the Fair, and will provide remote broadcasts between ACC and North Central Michigan Community College in Traverse City, which will be holding a similar event.

The Fair will consist of exhibits, demonstrations, various video presentations, and information sessions. The Earth Day Fair will take place in the Besser Technical Center between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m..

Przykucki adds, "We invite the community to join in and find out what can be done. The possibilities are exciting."

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The LBJ Staff