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History Corner: Earth Day's Birth by Rebecca C. Glasscock

In April of 1970, UK biologist Dr. Wayne Davis (1930-2017) told several hundred students that he doubted the earth could survive "more than a decade" without a massive attack on the forces destroying the environment. And U.S. Senator (Kentucky) Marlow Cook (1926-2016) urged about 1200 UK students to take a leading role in fighting environmental pollution, telling them to be militant but patient. And what had spawned this rhetoric? The poor duck coated in crude oil played a key role.

In January of 1969, an oil well blowout occurred off the coast of Santa Barbara. At the time, it was the largest oil spill in U.S. waters (today, it ranks as the 13th largest). Soon an oil slick, about the size of Chicago, was coating the beaches of wealthy Santa Barbara. Thousands of birds were killed as were an unknown number of sea mammals. Restrictions on offshore drilling were soon imposed.

The public was horrified by the pictures of the dead and dying birds. Public awareness of environmental problems was already on the rise. Concerns about nuclear testing and the potential for accidents were high. The problems of leaded gasoline were becoming all too apparent. And books about the environment, most particularly Aldo Leopold's 1949 *A Sand County Almanac* and Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring*, served as watershed moments in environmental awareness.

The stage was set. U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin witnessed the Santa Barbara tragedy. His initial vision was to organize campus teach-ins to raise awareness of the environment. A date for the teach-ins was set – April 22, 1970 – and Denis Hayes was hired to organize the teach-ins. Beyond their wildest dreams, on April 22nd, 10% of the U.S. population (about 20 million) turned out to raise their voices against 150 years of industrial development that had left a legacy of serious harm to human health and the environment.

President Nixon and the country's political leaders could hardly ignore the call for change. The 1970s became the decade of the environment, with the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and laws such as OSHA, the Clean Air Act, RCRA, and the Clean Water Act being signed into law. DDT was banned as was lead in gasoline.

Meanwhile, Earth Day 1970 became and continues to be the largest secular day of protest in the world. By 1990, about 200 million in 141 countries participated in Earth Day. This celebration paved the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In 2000, hundreds of millions in 184 countries participated and in 2020, over one billion people from around the world celebrated this beautiful planet and pled for additional protections.

Throughout the years, Lexingtonians have participated in various Earth Day events. For example, in 1980, Woodland Park was the site of the Earth Day celebration. In 1990, an Earth Day Festival at Shillito Park drew thousands. In April of 1994, an Earth Capsule made of recyclable materials was buried at McDonnell Springs. An Earth Day event that resonated with me was held in the late 1990s. UK's Greenthumb and other environmental organizations hosted an event near the current location of the baseball field. The best bumpersticker I've ever seen was distributed. It read: Nuanaarpoq (Inuit): to take inordinate pleasure in the extravagant joy of being alive!



Photo: Duck with thick coat of crude oil,
Carbinteria State Beach

WE ENCOURAGE THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO SIGN UP
FOR THE EARTH MONTH ECOCHALLENGE AT
ECOCHALLENGE.ORG

WHATS COMING UP, BUTTERCUPS!

- END OF APRIL: Planting of our Neighborhood Tree Initiative. Let's keep increasing our canopy!
- MAY 18th: PPNA Annual Plant Sale and Craft Fair. Please start getting your plant starts ready, and if you would like to display your crafts, it's a \$20 dollar fee for all crafts people to take part in the event. 9 A.M. - 2 P.M.-ish
- JUNE 22: Summer Solstice Picnic on Saturday.
- AUGUST 9-11: Annual Neighborhood Yardsale (Please note, per neighborhood request, Sunday is now added to the slate. You don't have to participate in all three days, but this gives everyone an opportunity to do different days if they would like.)

PLASTIC REDUCTION IN OUR HOME

In the continuation of how we can reduce the waste output in our home, one of the largest contributions we can do is simply stop buying so much plastic. The vast majority of plastic that we use, and put into our Rosie recycling containers, is headed to the landfills, and the reality is we probably only recycle about 5% of all of our plastic waste (in fact, did you know that it's more expensive to recycle plastic than it is to make plastic.) Yet, we now know that microplastics, PFAs (highly toxic fluorinated "forever chemicals"), and PVAs (water-soluble synthetic polymers, or liquid plastic) are in our water sources, in the air, and in the ground, and as more and more studies are being done on this, the correlation between our health and the ingestion of these plastics is becoming more of a focal point. So, it's no longer a matter of simply recycling plastics, it's a matter of eliminating them entirely from our homes by finding better alternatives (maybe not perfect alternatives, but a step in a different holistic direction.) In the vein of continuing this year's Earth Day theme of plastic reduction, we wanted to focus on simple things you can do immediately around your house to curb one's plastic consumption.

- 1 - Consider changing out your plastic food containers to glass. Our grandmothers knew best when it came to these storage containers. Pyrex is the leader in this industry. Glass far outshines the use of plastic containers, not only in how you use it and store it, but its longevity over time without it breaking down on a molecular level.
- 2- Consider reusable sandwich bags. Approximately 9.71 million Americans use 21 or more sandwich bags within a week's time. Do the math on that plastic waste! Some great companies that offer reusable sandwich bags made out of PEVA (which supposedly does not have forever chemicals) are Qinline reusable, Ideatech, RE(zip), Stasher, and Homelux Theory. The upfront cost may seem a lot, but you can reuse them over and over again. During a national plastic sandwich baggie study, it was found that 11 types of baggies from major producers (such as Great Value, Meijers, Target, and Walgreens) showed high levels of PFAs in them, which goes without saying leads to contamination of the food within them. Fun fact though: Ziploc and their parent company SC Johnson has committed to trying to remove PFAs from their products, showcasing that the broader industry is aware of the consumer trend to eradicate PFAs and the like from their consumer goods.

- 3- Consider DIY Dishwasher and Laundry Detergent Soap. Recent studies have shown that almost all washing pods and laundry sheets are made up of PVAs. It is estimated that 20 billion dishwasher, laundry pods, and sheets are used each year, 75% of which will pour PVAs into our waterways. Nearly all leading brands, conventional and natural, use PVAs for their ingredients. In 2022 16 nonprofit groups tried to remove PVAs from consumer packaged goods, but were denied by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who claimed it was not technically a microplastic. The strange reasoning behind this was that the consumer sees microplastics, and so it becomes more of a tangible waste program, whereas liquid plastics are invisible to the eye, and ergo less of a tangible concern. Erica Cirino, a communications manager at Plastic Pollution Coalition gives a great analogy on this, "Think about what happens when you mix salt with water, just because you can't see all the tiny grains of salt in the water as they dissolve doesn't mean the salt doesn't exist." Since there are no regulations on PVAs, nor any set standards, PVAs continue to move silently up the food chain, and as recent studies have shown have been found in human breast milk. So...what can we do? Well luckily laundry detergent has been around for way longer than plastic, and there are so many good DIY recipes online. Here is a simple laundry detergent from DIYnatural.com:
- 4.5 ounces shaved bar soap (Kirk's Castile Soap is perfect for this, and it is made in Kentucky).
 - 14 ounces borax (which is essentially a high concentration of salt); and
 - 14 ounces washing soda.

Thoroughly stir together for several minutes and enjoy the results. Store in a sealed container (preferably not plastic as that would defeat the purpose) with a small scoop. For a variety of dishwasher soap recipes, check out tipsbulletin.com/homemade-dishwasher-soap for 10 different soap recipes to choose from.

HOW TO ORDER A PENSACOLA PARK EMBLEM

Please visit our website www.pensacolapark.org to order any emblems, or write us at pensacolapark@gmail.com. Payment is via paypal, check, or cash. There are three types of emblems you can order:

- Flag. Comes in three colors: 2'x3' Black, Green, Red (\$85)
- Metal Plaque. Comes in two sizes: 8x8 (\$165) and 5x5 (\$80)
- Stickers. Comes in eight different colors (\$2 each)



PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO PENSACOLA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

As an organization we do not currently collect any neighborhood association dues, instead we function off of grants, fundraisers, and donations from the neighborhood. Donations allow us to go after matching grants, buy trees to increase our canopy, improve street conditions, throw community events, and be able to print this newsletter. If you would like to donate, you can either:
(1) Drop off Cash or Check to 143 Goodrich Ave (Green Mailbox) / (2) Use Paypal @ pensacolapark@gmail.com

ABOUT PENSACOLA PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY AND PENSACOLA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Pensacola Park Preservation Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 formed by Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association in order to bring together residents and businesses located in the Pensacola Park Nationally Registered Historic Boundary, for the common good of (1) preserving the historic integrity and resources of the area; (2) creating an environment that promotes sustainable and appropriate growth for the neighborhood; (3) providing historic education and assistance to those in the Pensacola Park Neighborhood for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic homes, structures, and landscapes; and (4) Unifying and being representative of all the original streets in the Pensacola Park Historic boundary. Also check us out online at www.pensacolapark.org, and follow us on Facebook @ Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association.

If you have any questions or would like to submit topics or op-eds to Pensacola Park Post, please feel free to write us at pensacolapark@gmail.com. If you would like to stop receiving the free monthly post, please write us and put "stop post" in the heading, along with your physical address. Thank you.

Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA) and Pensacola Park Preservation Society (PPPS), our nonprofit. PPNA/PPPS represent ALL streets in Pensacola Park Historic District, including: Goodrich, Lackwanna, Nicholasville, Norfolk, Penmoken, Pensacola, Rosemont, Suburban, and Wabash.