

THE OAK K

"The contemporary newspaper for the contemporary student."

SPECIAL

EARTH DAY 1990

EDITION

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EARTH DAY CELEBRATES

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

By Edward Bromley

"In the middle of the 20th century, we saw our planet from space for the first time... From space, we see a small and fragile ball dominated not by human activity and edifice but by a pattern of clouds, oceans, greenery, and soils. Humanity's inability to fit its doings into that pattern is changing planetary systems, fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards. This new reality, from which there is no escape, must be recognized -- and managed... From space, we can see and study the Earth as an organism whose health of all its parts." from Our Common Future by the World Commission on Environment and Development.

Twenty years ago, when strong college movements were common, a group of

college students decided to set a day to recognize environmental problems. This day was recognized by about every major university that year, and was soon known as Earth Day.

Because of so much interest in the Earth's ecology, Earth Day has become the biggest demonstration in history. It is estimated that 20 million people have participated in the event* across America.

This year is the 20th anniversary of Earth

Day, and is to be internationally celebrated instead of just in America, like the original event. It is predicted that over 100 million people will take part in this much needed look at how we are managing the planet we live on. Earth Day will allow everyone to do his or her part in saving mother Earth.



WESTVACO DONATES TREES

The Oak K staff would like to thank the Westvaco Corporation for providing free of charge the seedlings being distributed today. THANKS!!!

Westvaco, a pulp and paper industry located right here in Western Kentucky, has been strongly committed to protecting the environment. Since the first Earth Day twenty years ago, the paper industry has invested \$6 billion in equipment to improve environmental quality.

In a speech to the American Paper Institute's annual

See WESTVACO, p.12

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SAVE OUR PLANET

By Stephen Borders and
Lori Spear

The following is a list of some things you and your parents can do to help save our planet:

Don't waste water by leaving the water running while you brush your teeth.

Turn the lights and the TV off when you're out of the room.

Use washable rags instead of paper towels for cleaning up around the house.

Save kitchen scraps for composting.

Buy groceries in brown paper bags instead of plastic, and then use them as garbage can liners.

Put up bird houses and baths and feed the birds.

Pull weeds and learn about natural insect controls instead of using herbicides.

Plant short, dense shrubs close to your home's foundation to help insulate against cold.

Plant trees to shade your house and reduce energy used to cool it.

Don't litter.

Drive sensibly; don't waste gas.

Keep your car tuned

up and your tires properly inflated.

Keep your wheels in alignment to save your tires.

Use the stairs instead of an elevator.

Ask that your burger be wrapped in paper instead of a foam carton.

Avoid plastics.

Use both sides of paper sheets.

Take showers rather than baths.

Don't let the nose run when you wash the car; wash your car with a bucket of soapy water.

Buy organic foods to discourage pesticide use.

Buy foods without additives and preservatives.

Use biodegradable soaps and detergents.

Use rechargeable batteries.

Educate yourself and others on environmental issues.

OZONE DEPLETION REACHING

DANGEROUS LEVELS

By Todd Walker

In 1973, chemist F. Sherwood Rowland discovered that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) deplete stratospheric ozone, the planet's shield against harmful solar radiation. CFCs are used in insulation, refrigerators, foam packaging materials, aerosol sprays, and a variety of other products. Alarmed by the potential health hazards of ozone depletion, several European nations and the United States have called for a total phaseout of CFCs by the year 2000. At this time

there is only one hole in the ozone layer that could cause actual damage to human life. This hole is located over an unpopulated area in the Southern Hemisphere. People who are concerned about the environment and do not want to see the hole in the ozone layer grow, should minimize their use of CFCs immediately.

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ENDANGERED SPECIES: Has man passed limits of acceptability?

By Michelle Roberts

Animal Rights Activists go on and on about the senseless slaughter of animals. They are often ignored and/or ridiculed, even though they are right, to a point.

Let us start with the dodo, an unattractive, but fascinating bird. When explorers first came to the new lands, they killed this large, flightless animal for food. Later, this progressed into a hunt for feathers and stuffed dodos for museums. Now this bird is no more.

Moving along, we come to the American buffalo. This mighty creature once roamed the plains in a number of about 500 million. Then man began to "progress" and its number went down to about 5 million. Now he exists in only a few herds on wildlife reservations.

The giant panda of China also used to exist in large numbers, but the gradual destruction of the bamboo forests it desperately needs to survive is killing it off. Also the bald eagle, America's proud

symbol, is threatened by the progress of man.

In Africa, rhinos are killed for their horns, apes and gorillas are killed for their heads and hands, and the elephant is still hunted for its ivory.

Many of these animals are killed needlessly, but for some, the killing at first was a necessity.

The buffalo almost completely supported the American Indians. It gave them food to eat, the clothes they wore, and the homes in which

See SPECIES, p.7

NAME

THAT

TREE!

by Laura Ernstberger

The Oak K staff has teamed up with Westvaco to give away 700 oak tree seedlings to the L.O.H.S. students. In a year, a single tree absorbs 26 lbs. of carbon dioxide, a major cause of the ozone break-up. By planting one tree, you are helping the environment. There are even adoption papers for your seedling. Imagine! Little insert name here, which you raised from a seedling, is helping to clean up the air!

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I pledge to be a good parent to my seedling;
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so that future generations will know the
beauty of a tree.

_____ signature

_____ witness

by Laura Ernstberger



DEFORESTATION: Can the destruction be stopped?

By Sarah Williamson

Did you know 49 million acres of rain forest are destroyed or degraded each year? This equals one and a half football fields EACH SECOND. This is a scary thought. Trees are vital for maintaining the earth's oxygen and carbon dioxide balance. They moderate our climate, and they prevent floods and soil erosion. Forests recycle and purify many sources of water. One-fourth of all prescribed medication in the United States is derived from raw materials found in

the rain forest. Deforestation contributes to the greenhouse effect, and it reduces vegetation that would otherwise draw carbon dioxide from the air. Approximately 1000 plant and animal species become extinct each year due to the rain forest destruction. Migratory birds are losing their winter homes. Now there is a drastic increase of the insect population because the migratory birds ate the insects.

The clearing of the Amazon rain forest provides pasture for cattle in Central

America. However, McDonald's will not purchase any beef from rain forest land. McDonald's has now started a policy in purchasing only United States, Canadian, and European (EEC) beef.

There is no one definite solution to totally alter deforestation or the effects of it. Planting trees is an immediate way to detain the consequences of deforestation. For each tree that is planted, the carbon dioxide produced by burning a ton of coal can be neutralized. When purchasing food for the family or pets, poultry or seafood could be used instead of beef. If possible, do not buy products made from tropical hardwoods. These are just a few things everyone can do to help stop the destruction of the great Amazonian rain forest.

For more information on deforestation, please contact:

American Forestry Association
Global Relief
P.O. Box 2000
Washington D.C.
20013

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BRUTAL SLAUGHTER FOR IVORY CAN BE STOPPED

By: Robert Weber

Guess what? An elephant was just murdered. That's right, somewhere on the vast plains of Central Africa a harmless elephant was just mowed down by AK-47 fire. Approximately every ten minutes one of these gentle beasts is killed. Why? Simply because it has ivory tusks.

For hundreds, even thousands of years, there has been a demand for ivory for the purpose of carving it into jewelry, figurines, piano keys and numerous other things. But now, there is another lure to ivory, money, lots and lots of money. Ivory smuggling is a very lucrative business. Poachers can sell the elephant tusks to local business men for less than \$50, but the business dealers sell them for three times the cost and the price goes higher and higher. The final destination on the long road of ivory smuggling is most likely the markets of Japan and Hong Kong, the world's largest ivory consumers.

Many of the legal carving businesses in the Far East are unaware of the fact that they

are carving illicit tusks. This is true because of the fact that in many cases, the illegal ivory passes through the hands of corrupt government officials who, of course, make a profit.

Okay, enough with the business end of elephant poaching, let's get to the heart of the matter, the actual poaching. Some of the poachers are starving, illiterate villagers who kill the beasts for food and much-needed money. The majority, though, are greedy, cold-blooded killers. Many bands of poachers operate with the precision of a crack military unit. They travel in groups of ten, armed with automatic assault rifles. They come up on a herd of elephants and pour hundreds of bullets into these creatures. They then hastily cut the tusks off of the carcasses with axes or chainsaws and leave the rest to rot.

So, there it is, a very brief overview of the poaching business. What can be done? Well, determined patrols of anti-poaching units roam the plains in search of the killers with orders to shoot to kill. Also

international organizations are attempting to impose a ban on all ivory trade. But, nonetheless, another elephant will be mutilated in the time it takes you to read this paper.

So, what can you do to help? Don't purchase ivory for ornamental reasons. This is just a start and it may seem pretty drastic and you may not want to stop buying ivory, but it may just save an elephant.

LITTER DAMAGES POCKETBOOK

By Clay Wagner

Littering is a growing problem in the state of Kentucky. The litter problem has cost the state millions of dollars to clean up the mess. The inability of people to dispose of waste in a proper waste receptical has caused our state highways to become polluted and very unattractive.

Several youth groups such as the Boy Scouts have volunteered all over the state to clean up our highways. Several programs such as Adopt-a-Highway have been started to aid in the clean up operation. See Litter/pg. 8

PLANTING TREES DECREASES POLLUTION AND MORE.

Pollution and global warming are serious threats to life as we know it. Scientists do not agree that they have arrived, but they are certainly on the way. Carbon dioxide is entering our atmosphere in great amounts and the greatest cause of this is the burning of fossil fuels. This results in the decreasing amount of trees in the Amazon and other rain forests. The tropical rain forests have long been under assault by loggers seeking valuable mahogany, rosewood, and other hardwoods. The demand for wood has grown so great that loggers no longer take selected trees, but instead remove all the trees in a particular area. Loggers are not the only ones taking wood from the forests. About 1.5 billion people in developing countries depend on firewood as their principal source of energy, especially in the tropics where the poor are chopping down trees faster than they can be regrown. At this time, this is a minor problem; it is likely to become very serious ahead and these trees need to be replaced and soon.

The clearing of rain forests is reinforcing the greenhouse effect and adding to pollution in five ways:

- 1) The burning of trees adds substantially to the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- 2) The decay of unburned vegetation produces carbon dioxide and methane.
- 3) The killing of the trees and other vegetation decreases the rate of removal of carbon dioxide from the air by photosynthesis.
- 4) The unburned vegetation stimulates a massive invasion of termites which produce large amounts of methane.
- 5) The use of cleared land as pasture adds to generation of methane, because bacteria in the digestive system of cattle produce large amounts of this gas.

There is also a great need for trees in the cities. Many large cities are becoming polluted through the use of cars and factories. Andy Lipkis is the founder of a nonprofit corporation call TreePeople. Lipkis is in the vanguard of a burgeoning campaign to



cure what ails America's cities by filling them up with greeneries. During the past decade, he has overseen the planting of some 2 million trees in Los Angeles alone. By one count, TreePeople's efforts have resulted in the planting of more than 200 million trees around the world. The U.S. Forest Service suggests that planting the right trees in the right area can improve city life.

The action is not limited to the urban scene. The American Forestry Association (AFA) is promoting Global ReLeaf, a campaign to plant 100 million trees nationwide by 1992, in part to offset global warming. In his State of the Union address, President George Bush proposed planting a billion trees annually for the next ten years. If that many
See Trees pg. 12

OIL SPILLS BECOMING TOO COMMON IN TODAY'S WORLD

By Jim Kerins

As we the people of Earth near the end of the twentieth century, we are plagued with many environment-destroying oil spills during our campaign to conserve and protect for a better tomorrow. These oil spills not only destroy wildlife and offset the balance of the foodchain, they also threaten to close down fisheries and other businesses that deal with the ocean.

Among the most "famous" oil spills of our time is the incident involving the tanker EXXON VALDEZ, which occurred on March 24, 1989, in Prince William Sound in Alaska. The spill resulted in 11 million gallons of crude oil from the Alaskan Pipeline released into the water. 42 million gallons were saved. The spill caused the deaths of more than 36,000 seabirds and 150 bald eagles. Cleanup of the spill is still incomplete.

With more and more oil spills occurring lately, countries with ties in

the oil the oil industry should develop new ways for oil spill cleanup.

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*SPECIES

they lived. Even the hooves and horns were used, boiled down for glue to hold weapons together.

The oooh, at first, was used for food, and so it was for many animals that are either endangered or extinct. Man, himself, is an animal, and like other animals, his strongest instinct is that of survival. Killing animals for food, clothing, or shelter, is acceptable; it is the senseless destruction of creatures that pose no threat or have no useful value that some people find shameful.

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THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT: Our Earth...A future desert?

By Melinda Purvig

Everyday the earth is growing hotter. This is a result of the greenhouse effect. It occurs because waste gases are trapped in the atmosphere. While sunlight is let in, dangerous rays can't escape. This results in global warming.

In the near future this can cause almost unpeearable temperatures. It can cause many plants to die. It may also bring an increase in hurricanes.

Some climatologists predict that in a few centuries, glaciers in the North and South Poles will melt. This will leave coastal cities underwater.

There is no doubt that the temperature is rising. The temperatures rose as much between 1960 and 1980 as it did from 1880 to 1960.

Some things that seem harmless are major contributors to the greenhouse effect. Some such things are hair products, aerosol sprays, air

conditioners, hot showers, and cars.

Air conditioners and refrigerators use CFC chemicals. These chemicals destroy the ozone layer, as well as contribute to the greenhouse effect.

However, the worst contributor to the greenhouse effect is deforestation. This is

because the rain forests absorb most of the carbon dioxide. Too much carbon dioxide puts pressure on the planet.

Although the greenhouse effect is definitely occurring, it can still be slowed down. Environmental groups suggest that people use alternate sources of energy. One such source is solar power. People can also save fuel and energy. They can cut down on carbon dioxide emissions by driving less and by keeping their thermostats lower. One important thing people can do is plant trees.

*LITTER

One solution to the problem is recycling. Some of the trash on the road can be recycled, such as paper, plastic, and aluminum cans. Cleaning up and recycling can be profitable to you as well as the environment.



SAVING WATER IS PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

By Jennifer Snow and
Eddie Bromley

Water, the Earth's most plentiful element and the substance upon which all life depends, is running out.

While over three fourths of the Earth is covered with water, only two percent of this is suitable for drinking. One half of this two percent comes from lakes, rivers, and other such sources and the other half is taken from groundwater. But the groundwater and lakes and rivers are becoming contaminated with pesticides, chemical waste, and solid refuse materials.

On a local level, the river that supplies water to most of McCracken County has been accused of being the second worst in the nation due to dumping and leakage of hazardous

chemicals into groundwater supply. It is suspected that the Ohio River is fed by 15 chemical landfills, 3 underground nuclear storage facilities, and 15 million toilets daily between the cities of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and Paducah.

At these high rates, global water shortage would seem to be right around the corner, and local depletion of clean water sources less than a step away. But there are many remedies, if not total cures for the "disease" that has stricken water supply. On a personal level, many things may be done to conserve what is left of the functional water supply. For instance, repairing water leaks in toilets and faucets can save over 50 gallons a week in the home.

Installing faucet aerators or "low-flow" faucets saves 50% of the 3-5 gallons that pour from regular faucets. Also, flushing the toilet fewer times saves much water. If 33% of all Americans were to flush the toilet one less time every day, billions of gallons of water could be saved. Taking a short shower daily as opposed to a long bath saves about 30 gallons per person. Employing a broom to clean a driveway instead of a hose saves over 100 gallons of water.

See WATER, p. 12

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PESTICIDES-WHAT ARE THEY DESTROYING?

by Sharon Gordon

Pesticides and chemicals are being used to destroy bugs, but what else are they destroying? These toxic chemicals build up inside of the tissues of animals, and then when that animal is eaten, higher quantities of these poisons are built up in the body.

Farm animals are known to carry higher concentrations of these toxic chemicals because they are fed foods that have been heavily sprayed or otherwise contaminated. This means that anything coming from nature has a very good chance of being infected with these poisonous pesticides and chemicals.

To help save the animal and plant populations from being poisoned, contact your state representative and request that some limitations be set for the use of pesticides in our country.



PEPSI CANS: The choice of a new generation!

By Heather Williams

Recycling, a process that was introduced in the 1960's, is now a growing industry in the United States. The land is becoming overrun with trash, and landfills and dumps are filling up. More and more people are turning to recycling as their answer. Glass, aluminum, steel, and paper can be recycled to make new items. Even some plastics and rubber can be processed and used again. Degradable plastics aren't recyclable though. Some plastics even decompose on their own.

There are four ways to deal with garbage. First, it can be buried. Second, it can be burned. Third, it can be recycled. Fourth, less garbage can be made in the first place. Since there aren't many more places to bury it, and burning it causes

air pollution, (although controlled burning trash can generate power) and people aren't going to slow down, recycling looks like the best way to deal with it. Aluminum is usually the most common item to be recycled. Communities sometimes turn it into a small, money-making project. The price usually ranges about .37 a pound. It takes approximately 24 cans to make a pound. One advantage to this is that recycled aluminum is sometimes better than the original.

It is wonderful that

See CANS, p. 12

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ACID RAIN: ENVIRONMENTAL HOLOCAUST

by: Tim Black

Acid rain is one of the many destructive factors that promotes environmental degradation in the world today. In actuality, acid rain is a phrase which refers to all abnormally acidic precipitation, not only rain. It is due mainly to the combustion of certain fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) and the resultant emission of oxides of nitrogen and sulfur into the atmosphere. These emissions mostly come from such industrial sites as power plants, ore smelters, and automobile exhausts, but natural sources like volcanic activity are also to blame. These pollutants then dissolve into atmospheric moisture, producing nitric and sulfuric acids, and are thus precipitated.

Acid rain kills large quantities of fish. In urban areas, acid rain accelerates the erosion of marble and cement structures. Acidic water corrodes drinking water pipes, gradually releasing poisonous materials such as asbestos and lead into needed water. Acid

rain currently seems to have no significant effects on agricultural crops. Furthermore, acidic deposits at present levels may even fertilize the soil by providing needed nitrogen and sulfur.

Emissions of nitrogen and sulfur oxides are expected to increase as power plants turn to coal as a source of energy. Control technology can cope with sulfur oxide emissions, but only at a great cost. A long-term solution to the problem of acid rain should eventually combine conservation, advanced technology, and regulation of air pollution.



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meeting in New York last month, John Luke, CEO of Westvaco, expressed his industry's position as one committed to improving and protecting the environment. He categorized accomplishments in several areas as "environmental pillars" of the paper industry's operation.

The first pillar is forest resource. The paper industry is renewing US forests by planting over 2 billion seedlings each year. The annual growth rate exceeds rate of removal by almost 20%. The papermaking process emits 250 million tons of carbon dioxide each year; however, the industry's trees consume 1 billion tons of carbon dioxide - a 4 to 1 ratio. Research and development are producing superior specimens that grow taller, straighter, and faster.

In other areas, the paper industry has reduced, in the last twenty years, water usage by 40%, air emissions by 80%, and oil consumption by 59%. Within the next 5 years, Luke predicts the paper industry will be

recovering 40% of all paper consumed in this country for reuse. The industry also works to improve wildlife habitat on industry lands, and many companies employ their own teams of wildlife biologists.

The paper industry is also involved in community projects to further enhance quality of human life in our country. It promotes recreation on company lands, adopts schools, supports literacy programs, and helps in emergency situations such as the Hurricane Hugo disaster clean-up, just to name a few.

The paper industry realizes its success and future lie in its ability to protect and enhance its very livelihood - our trees!!

*CANS

some neighborhoods do small jobs like collecting materials to be recycled. A great way to start is just by saving old Pepsi cans, newspapers, or glass bottles; and you can take them to a company that will recycle them. Not only does it help our environment, it is an economical way to earn a few extra dollars.

*WATER

Concerning the halt of water pollution, there are also numerous things that the average American can do to help. Buying fewer plastic and styrofoam goods can reduce PCBs (highly toxic organic chemicals) in water supply. Reducing litter keeps trash from finding its way into streams and rivers.

By taking simple steps, water can be conserved for use by future generations. Thinking before letting water slip away for no real reason guarantees that our children and grandchildren will have.

*TREES

trees survived to maturity, they would significantly reduce air pollution and combat global warming, which some scientists attribute to the nearly six billion tons of carbon dioxide we add to the atmosphere every year through the combustion of coal, petroleum products, and wood.

More work is needed to combat air pollution and retard global warming