



The First Earth Day

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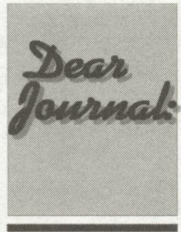
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The First Earth Day

The first Earth Day was initiated in San Francisco with the help of Dave Brower on March 21, 1970 – the Vernal Equinox (not April 22). Earth Day continues to be celebrated by the United Nations on the Equinox – Nature's special day when

Spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere. Please let the world know that San Francisco (the City of St. Francis) was the birthplace of the true Earth Day [www.earthsitesite.org].

John McConnell
Ridgewood, New York

WTO Protests: A New Revolution

The World Trade Organization is trying to establish a corporate plutocracy. Already, the world's top 200 companies have twice the assets of 80 percent of the world's people. Global corporations represent a new empire.

The American Revolution occurred because of crown-chartered corporate abuse – a "remote tyranny" in Thomas Jefferson's words. To see the protests in Seattle as an isolated event (as did most of the media) is to look at the battles of Concord and Lexington as meaningless skirmishes.

Paul Hawken
Sausalito, California

Author-activist Paul Hawken has written an extraordinary essay on the historic Battle in Seattle. The article was published simultaneously in nearly a dozen eco-magazines and may be read in its entirety on the Journal's website [www.earthisland.org/journal].

Police States and Self-Defense

"Beyond the WTO Riots: The US Prepares for War in the Cities" (Spring 2000) about the US military evolving into a National Police force prompts comment.

Throughout history, authoritarian governments have created public acceptance of increased controls and weakened rights with the ploy of enacting measures that are said to be "for our protection."

Demonstrators in Seattle were forbidden to wear gas masks or other defensive gear for protection against police tactics. If anyone is to be against guns and gun violence, it is important to have integrity and demand that the disarming NOT be unilateral but bilateral. "Anti-Gun" must mean anti-military and police weapons as well.

As the WTO, IMF and the World Bank kill democracy with a thousand cuts, people will react negatively. The top enforcement entity of WTO policies, the US military, which lives and breathes violence, expects violent resistance. Hence, urban warfare training. Giving up guns is not for the People's safety but, unfortunately, for the safety of oppressors.

John Jonik
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Foxes, Birds and Humans

In your Spring 2000 story on foxes versus clapper rails, the controversy pitting survival of wild populations against the moral imperative to interact humanely seems as false as the one pitting jobs against the environment.

If we had the wits to really protect our watersheds and their habitats from being destroyed by quick-profit seekers, we wouldn't face the predicament of deciding which is worse – inflicting shock and pain on individual animals or risking the loss of threatened populations.

For my part, I pray for humility: for love of life over love of money; for accepting we are part of nature, not overlords; for the wisdom to allow nature to lead in repairing the biosphere; for patience in helping the process.

Audubon and ProPAW should heed Granny D (Spring 2000) and help escort the twin viral ideas (that money is speech and corporations are persons) out of the room.

Kurt Volckmar
Garberville, California

Extreme Weather Lawsuits

Litigation should be brought against oil corporations on behalf of Extreme Weather Event (EWE) victims. The recent devastation in France, Venezuela, Vietnam and other places now makes such litigation a win-win situation.

The US federal government currently is preparing analogous litigation against the gun industry. The feds should be encouraged to join a determined legal action against all corporations responsible for climate destabilization.

The 1997 Dakota-Manitoba floods and the enormous North Korean EWE devastations of 1995-97 were so unlikely mathematically as to "establish beyond a reasonable doubt" that those events were not part of a natural cycle. Vietnam has suffered a once-a-century EWE catastrophe each year for the past three years – a statistical one-in-a-million likelihood. Thus, our database for such litigation is several times more persuasive than just a couple of years ago.

Ponderosa Pine (Keith Lampe)
Thailand

Aim High! Never Compromise!

President Clinton's October 13, 1999 directive to "save" 40 million acres won't stop cutting in your national forests by a single board-foot. The directive may apply only to unroaded, high-elevation forests that timber corporations don't want anyway.

Fellow conservationists, where is the will to win? With less than five percent of our original forests left, we must start saving what's left and restoring everything that has been lost. It's time we started fighting as if our lives (and the lives of our children) depended on it. Because, ultimately, they do.

Tim Hermach, Executive Director
Native Forest Council
Eugene, Oregon

The Gene Factory

In a few years, the entire human genome will be published on the Internet. Some will try to improve it by deliberately creating mutations. Many will see reprogramming human nature as desirable. To that end, DNA will become the most potent drug of the future. Potions to promote intelligence and charisma will be joined by elixirs to eliminate alcoholism and homosexuality.

Living things are now defined as an ensemble of chemical scripts. Biotechnology is based on a novel proposition that the whole is less than the sum of its parts. These parts, called genes, are twists on the DNA coil. Life is very subtle. Attempts to manage its nuances by tweaking its nucleic acid spinal cord are likely to provoke unintended consequences. Genetic engineering inherently disrupts organic coherence. We know what happens when the genetic code disintegrates in nature: It fragments into viruses, spilt-off segments of DNA wrapped in protein.

The industrialization of life cannot be stopped. The control-oriented will see it as an affirmation of our destiny to consciously direct evolution. The more philosophical will see it as a deadly seduction, distorting the whole by morphing its parts.

Within a generation, biotechnology will claim the power to clinically evaluate intellectual and personal qualities. Soon each person will have to choose whether to trust the instinctive wisdom of the body or the artificial intelligence of the lab. This choice can only be based on intuition. Mother Nature will impartially judge the result.

Tom Falvey
San Diego, California

Land to the Natives

All over the world, opposing groups of humans are fighting over pieces of land that they both claim, neither group willing to give in to the other. There is a simple, equitable solution: Both groups should withdraw, and give the land back to the wildlife they stole it from!

Human beings think that we have the right to dominate every square inch of the Earth. That is the basic reason why we are losing, worldwide, about 100 species per day. Although we all know from basic biology that we are totally dependent on other species, we still refuse to give those species the right to live in their own habitat.

Remember the song "We are the world"? People from all over the globe came together in the service of the world's children. The world's wildlife is in even more need than those children! I can't think of a more appropriate or important gesture than to start giving back some of the habitat that we so arrogantly took from them.

Michael J. Vandeman, Ph.D.
Berkeley, California