

Happy EARTH DAY!

by Laurie A. Rich

Earth Day worked because of the spontaneous response at the grassroots level. We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and local communities that participated. That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself. ~Gaylord Nelson

April 22, 2010 will mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, and according to www.earthday.net, more than 1 billion of us around the world will participate in activities celebrating the planet. Earth Day is now the biggest annual "civic secular event" in the world.

How did it all begin? Like many great movements throughout history, it started with an idea. It came from then-US Senator Gaylord Nelson, who had spent from 1962 to 1969 trying to raise awareness about the degradation of the environment. Taking his cue from the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations and teach-ins, he decided to organize the same sort of protest – but this time, for the environment. In the Fall of 1969, he announced that on April 22, 1970, there would be a grassroots demonstration for the environment; the news media picked it up, and Earth Day was born. Over 20 million people – from high school and college students to mothers with children, to rock stars, scientists and senators – took to the streets.

I was one of them, and it changed my life. What I learned then made me dedicate most of my career to improving the environment. And, while there is so much left to do, a great deal has been accomplished in the past 40 years. The first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species acts. This is work that is worth celebrating.

One billion people will do just that during the week of April 22nd. Here in the Hudson Valley, you, too, can celebrate.



The biggest 40th anniversary Earth Day celebration in the Hudson Valley will be held by the Dutchess County Fairgrounds, in Rhinebeck, on Saturday, April 24, and Sunday, April 25. It's a full-blown Earth Day festival, with hands-on, interactive, family-friendly activities, educational programs, music, exhibits by "green" companies and non-profit organizations from all over the Hudson Valley, and much more.

Something for Everyone

The Hudson Valley 40th Anniversary Earth Day Celebration will have something for everyone, including:

- Tree plantings
- Musicians for Clean Air concert
- Recycling event: bring your E-waste, compact fluorescent lightbulbs, and paper documents for shredding
- Exhibits and hands-on activities by environmental groups
- Seed saving and composting clinics
- Eco-author readings, and book signings (kids' books, too)
- Shows and hands-on activities for kids
- GPS earthcaching treasure hunt
- The Fairgrounds' first-ever farmers' market
- Hudson Valley chefs' organic and vegetarian cooking demonstrations and tastings
- An Educational Presentation Series on a wide variety of topics
- Cool creations—make 'em and take 'em home at the Makers' Square and Swappalooza
- Hayrides and animals-for-kids shows and displays
- Hall of Clean Energy and Green Vendors Exhibition
- Yoga, Tai Chi and CPR classes

With more activities being added every day.

Lowering the Fairgrounds Carbon Footprint

Thanks to two of the Celebration's event sponsors—Covanta Hudson Valley Renewable Energy and Royal Carting Service Company—in conjunction with the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency, the Hudson Valley 40th Anniversary Earth Day Celebration will be a Zero Landfill Event. No solid waste generated during the two-day event will end up in a landfill.

Dates: Saturday and Sunday, April 24th & 25th, 2010

Hours: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Cost to the Public is minimal: \$5/adult. Children under 12 and seniors over 65 attend at no charge.

For More Information: email Laurie Rich, Coordinator of the Earth Day Celebration at:

LRich@frontiernet.net, or call: 845.876.6330; or visit www.hudsonvalleyearthday.blogspot.com

Where to Go to Learn More About Earth Day

Google "Earth Day 2010" and you'll find that there are 90.5 million ways for you to learn more about Earth Day – the largest secular civic event on our planet.

At the very top of the list is the Earth Day Network, www.earthday.net – with good reason. It has 17,000 partners and organizations around the world, in 174 countries. It's the go-to site to learn what's happening on Earth Day 2010 across the globe.

In addition to visiting www.earthday.net, or coming to the Hudson Valley 40th Anniversary Earth Day Celebration at the Fairgrounds, you can learn more about the history of Earth Day by visiting:

Earthlink: History of Earth Day by Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day: <http://earthday.envirolink.org/history.html>

US EPA: Environmental Progress: <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/history.htm>

Planet Green: Know Your Green Environmental History: <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/games-quizzes/green-environmental-history-quiz>

Laurie A. Rich is an environmental sustainability and strategic marketing specialist who works with companies and organizations within the Hudson Valley and across the country. She serves as the Coordinator of the Dutchess County Fairgrounds' "Hudson Valley 40th Earth Day Celebration," and its Green Initiative.