

Earth Day Returns

Remember Earth Day? Twenty years ago when most of us were in elementary school and didn't even know what MBA meant, Denis Hayes dropped out of Harvard Law School to coordinate an important national event that focused on the environment. This was the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. It was a nationwide patchwork of demonstrations and community activities that involved 20 million Americans. It was an immediate success but has since lost some momentum. In the '70s, citizens demanded and Congress passed new legislation—like the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. In the '80s, we seemed to struggle with enforcing these laws and following through on protecting the environment.

Recognizing the rising and very public ecological problems—like stuffed landfills and depleted virgin timber—Dennis Hayes and others are organizing another event to start the '90s with a renewed concern for the earth. So, if you missed the last Earth Day, here's another chance. To mark the twenty-year anniversary, a second Earth Day is on April 22, 1990. This time it will be global because the earth seems smaller, and the problems seem larger. Think of the global ramifications of ozone depletion, acid rain, or disappearing rain forests. Earth Day is expanded beyond the U.S. to involve 115 other countries—including China, Kenya and our new buddies: Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. "The point is not an event, but launching a decade of environmental activism," said Christina Dresser, Executive Director of Palo Alto, California based Earth Day 1990. Earth Day will not simply be an opportunity to wear tie-dye and listen to the Dead, but it is intended to educate us about the way our lifestyles impact on the world. Desired changes range from better waste disposal habits to steering investors and consumers towards companies sensitive to the environment.

You don't have to drop out of HBS to get involved. A group of students from different Harvard schools (the College, Law, Kennedy, Medical, Divinity, and Education Schools) have joined to form the Harvard Environmental Network. HBS is not yet active with this group, but is in the process of getting started. The Harvard Environmental Network hopes to raise each individual's awareness and to encourage Harvard students, faculty and staff to take small steps to reduce our use of natural resources and creation of waste. The scope of activities range from campus speakers, to a Trash Ball, to a march on Boston Common, where other Earth Day celebrations are taking place on April 22.

The Harvard Environmental Network has created a twelve week program to encourage individuals to make small changes which will have a positive ecological impact. Dubbed Earthsteps '90, the program establishes a theme for each of the twelve weeks from February 4 to April 22. Every week, members of the Harvard community will be encouraged to examine and modify one of their habits which harms the environment. For example, avoid unnecessary packaging, buy in bulk, and bring your own reusable shopping bag to the store.

The theme for February is Energy and Conservation. The first week starting February 4 focuses on heating. According to the Earthworks Group, 40% of the energy you use in your home is for heat. Another study by Worldwatch indicates that home heating is responsible for spewing 350 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere every year—which means over a billion tons of the most prevalent greenhouse gas, CO₂. On a more personal note, think of how expensive it is to heat Harvard's dorms, class rooms and offices. Who pays for the heat? It comes out of our term bills and paychecks (the Executive Management Programs can't pay for everything!) We are encouraged to:

- contact Harvard Operations or Harvard Real Estate (if the heat is too high in our buildings) as opposed to opening windows.
- request energy audits on dorm rooms/offices from the electric utilities. Audits are provided free of charge.
- cut heat waste with weatherstripping and auto-timer thermostats.

If you want to get more involved in Earth Day, come to the first organizational meeting of the HBS branch of the Harvard Environmental Network on Wednesday, January 30 at 4 pm in Aldrich 211. The purpose is to arrange activities and get speakers. If you cannot attend but are interested, contact Henrik Jones at 3- 8664.

Also, every student will get an Earth Day pledge card in his/her mail box tomorrow. This is a personal way for each of us to notice how our habits impact on the earth. It can be mailed back to the Earth Day headquarters in Boston or put in the box in front of Baker 20.

In the spirit of Earth Day, there is a lot of paper recycling activity on campus now.

In addition to the bins by the mail boxes, Soldiers Field is also starting a program. These programs need your support to be successful. The administration is concerned that recycling habits will fizzle, leaving the administration with an inefficient waste system. So please keep that paper coming. Even ding letters can be recycled.

There will be a different Earthstep each week starting in February. Look for weekly updates in the Harbus. Until next week, keep it clean.

