



SEALOEarth
Serene Environment And Life On Earth

A world in which all people participate in the stewardship of planet Earth.

Newsletter

Earth Day 2014

The environmentally focused activities in Westford were spread out throughout the week in celebration of Earth Day. On April 19th, SEALOEarth volunteers picked up trash and recyclables in public places enjoyed by all.

The second SEALOEarth Earth Day Festival was held indoors on Saturday, April 26th at the JV Fletcher Library. Videos related to the importance of frogs in the ecosystem and the role of wolves were screened.

There were several presentations from local groups. The President of the Environment Club, David Rosenberg, a Junior at Westford Academy, spoke about their work at the local level. Dr. Bill Harman spoke about the Westford Conservation Trust. Suraj Rajiv, a fifth grader at Day School, confidently presented his team's work on their foam-free initiative in Westford. Mr. Gerry DiBello from Groton talked about the invasive plants in New England.

The winners of the global essay contest organized by SEALOEarth were announced at the festival. The submitted essays came from four countries across three continents and were graded by outstanding teachers from Westford Schools. The winning essay from the youth category, written by Jan Pawlowski, a nineteen year old student at College de Saussure from Geneva, Switzerland titled "Bring me back my spring" was read by Ms. Rebecca Ingerslev, an English Teacher at Westford Academy. It can be watched on the internet ([https://www.youtube.com/user/sealoearth/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/sealoeearth/videos)).



Bring me back my spring



Jan Stanislaw Pawlowski (19)

Geneva, Switzerland

Between the grey fields and the dead trees stood an ancient house. It had been built at the beginning of the 21st century and it still stood there, contrasting with the new lofts and eco-houses that had sprung throughout the century. In what seemed to have been a flourishing garden many decades ago, leaves were dropping in a brackish pool. A lonely statue of Demeter surrounded by two ash trees was guarding this peaceful yard. The backdoor opened and an old man came out carrying a bucket and a rake. “Monday”, he muttered, “Monday is gardening. A pointless occupation for a pointless day.” and he started whistling, raking and weeding. He took special care of the statue, cleaning the bust and the pedestal from all the fallen leaves. He dug with his right hand in a patch of dark soil and took a seed out. “Look at you, you’re not natural, I shouldn’t be planting you.” The day went on and his bucket slowly filled with leaves and weeds. The sun was setting when the old man sank into an armchair. “I should be planting tulips at this time of the year...” His arms started to shake and a shiver went down his spine. An old lady was looking at him from the yard door. She turned back to the house, smiled and greeted a kid. “Grandpa, what were you doing in the garden all day long?” the kid asked. The answer came painfully, “I was wasting my time: gardening.” The grandfather reached for something in his pocket, pointed at a pile of logs and then showed his grandson what he had in his pocket “Do you see those logs? They come from a cherry tree I had to chop this summer because of the

acid rain. This seed comes from its brother and it is the last one I have.” The kid watched the small seed with amazement. “How old is it?” “More than twenty years old I believe and it can still grow.” “This is great grandpa’! Why do you say it’s pointless?” The old man sighed and sunk deeper in his armchair. “I could plant it, maybe a tree will grow but it will never bear flowers or fruit.” “I don’t understand, I’ve never seen a tree with flowers or fruit.” “It’s a long story, let’s go into my study I’ll show you something.”

The old man slowly climbed the staircase leading to his room. Once in front of the door he took out a small key and unlocked it. The room was dark and dusty and bookcases filled every corner. The old man approached the only bare wall in the study. A painting was hanging on the wall, it showed a bee foraging an orchid for nectar. The flower was painted in a colourful way, showing the artist’s love of nature, and each detail of the bee, from its hairs to its wing was perfectly reproduced. “Do you know what this is son?” he pointed at the flower and then the bee. The kid shook his head. “This insect here is a bee. It went extinct thirty-four years ago. This flower is a bee orchid; its petals mimic the shape of bee to attract them.” The old man started to search the drawers of his desk and found a small glass box. A bee had been trapped inside. “Here, Sebastian, look at that poor dead insect, you’ll never see any alive.” His grandson received the box in his open palms, drew his eyes to it and started to turn it around with great care. “It’s beautiful! Tell me Grandpa’, why did they disappear? Couldn’t we stop it?” The grandfather answered slowly while seated in his armchair: “They were weakened by an illness and the climate changes but we continued to exploit them without letting them rest. They were one of the innocent victims of the ecological and economical crisis we suffered in the beginning of the 21st century. Do you want me to explain the whole story? It is a long one, I warn you.” The kid lay down on the rug and was quiet. “Yes, I want to know why no one saved them.” His grandfather took a deep breath, smiled and started speaking.

“Firstly you have to understand why bees were of great importance to mankind. Bees are natural pollinators, flowers

attract them with nectar, they drink it and in return they take some of the flowers' pollen. They carry it on their hairs and bring it to the next flower. While the bee is looking for the nectar, the pollen she carried fertilizes the flower and maybe it will germinate and bear fruit. The fruit itself carries the seeds of the plant inside and when it falls on the ground a new plant may sprout. It's quite easy: no bees, no fruit, no seeds: the plant will disappear.

Now I'll tell you how we lost those incredible nature workers. Bees used to live in well-organized colonies that we called beehives. Man had used them since the dawn of time. At first we only looked for the wax and the honey they produced and we stole it from them. But with the industrialisation that started three hundred years ago we found they had added value. In the Middle Ages there weren't any problems with pollination because the fields were surrounded with forests where bees had their hives. When man started to cut the forests and sow gigantic fields the plants needed bees to pollinate them. The beekeepers took their hives across whole countries to lend them to farmers in the flowering season. Hives started to die out in the end of the 19th century but it was never on such a large scale as it happened in 1998 in France. The illnesses and parasites spread faster because the hives were left weakened after the long trips the beekeepers made them go on. The situation worsened in the United States in the winters from 2007 to 2009. Almost all of the States' colonies died that winter and no one knew why exactly. Some said it was because of an illness, some others said because of travel but neither side could prove it. It took the scientists ten years to solve the problem and find an appropriate cure but in 2019 half of the world's beehives had long disappeared. The cure worked well for a time and it looked like a miracle... Sadly as with every medicine it only worked for a short period. Four years after they discovered the cure a new illness appeared and killed in just one winter ninety per cent of remaining bees.

This slaughter could have been avoided if the governments had listened to the scientists when they finally found the cure. The head researcher told them: "This is not a miracle, this is not the end of the colonies' disappearance, this is just a temporary

medicine for the most dangerous of our bees' illnesses. If we don't stop exhausting those insects another illness will appear and it will kill them all before we're able to find a new remedy." Sadly they didn't listen to them and companies continued to rush them all around the globe because the farmers paid a lot of money for those bees, even more now that there were only a few of them left.

The Massive Colony Collapse Disorder of 2023 destroyed most western beehives. Even my bees died and I had only a few hives hidden in the countryside. As of today they still haven't found a cure but it doesn't matter anymore, there are no wild or domesticated bees anywhere on earth. The four years that followed this mass-extinction were the worst of my life. There were neither fresh vegetables nor fruit. The famine killed millions of people around the world and because only cereal like wheat or rice were left, malnutrition killed another few million. Politicians found scapegoats, nobody listened to the scientists and GMO-companies made billions out of self-pollinating vegetables and fruit. Do you understand how it happened now?" The boy slowly rose shaking with distress and started sobbing a little. He snuggled in his grandfather's arms. "How can we bring them back Grandpa'? Is there any way?"

The grandfather looked closely at his grandson in the eyes and told him: "Listen carefully, there is always a way of repairing a mistake but you have to be strong and patient. I know that a laboratory kept a few hives in an isolated place. You have to ask them to release a colony and see if it survives. There are many people that wouldn't like to see the bees come back. Now you're too young but I'll remind you when you grow up." "I promise you Grandpa'! I'll find a way to bring our bees back." The old man hugged him tightly and whispered: "I trust you son, you'll bring the spring and the wild flowers back."

Bibliography:

<http://www.beeculture.com/> [March 2014]

BBC documentary: "Who killed the honey bee"

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8467746.stm> [March 2014]

Save the Earth, Save the Humanity



Anurag Pathak (9)

New Jersey, USA

Saving earth is important to me because if we do not save the earth now it will become a wasteland. I do not want to live in a wasteland which is why I am always ready to help. People wonder if a nine year old can make a difference and help save the earth. But I believe there is no age limit. There are many things a nine year old like me can do every day to help keep our earth green. In my eyes saving the earth is respecting the things around us, making small simple correct choices.

When I get up in the morning I make sure that I do not waste water by taking long showers. I turn off the faucet when not in use. I make a particular point to turn off the light when I leave the room. My mother packs lunch for me in a lunchbox which is a re-usable metal container.

Our school teaches us the importance of recycling. There are recycle bins in every class room. We children know which recycle items to be discarded in the recycle trash and regular trash. In our school, two years ago there was a project that everybody participated. The project was called “cool the earth”. We were given small booklets which had simple actions for us to follow. These simple actions were the ways to save the energy. After we complete the actions from the booklet, we submitted it to “cool the earth helpers”. The fun part for us was that we got prizes. My prize was a pack of tomato seeds. I was so happy and could not wait for spring to come.

The next spring, I sowed the seeds in my backyard garden. I took help of my older brother who has a passion for gardening. He showed me the steps to take in order to get the tomato seeds planted. I watered the area every other day. After few days, I saw seedling coming out from the soil. This was a great exciting moment for me. The seedlings turned into small plants. I saw flowers growing on the plants. The flowers turned into small tomatoes. They were first green then turned into yellow followed by red. I was surprised to see they were my favorite cherry red tomatoes. This event inspired me to be nature friendly and I have started taking keen interest in gardening. I also learned to make compost. This is a natural way of recycling the waste.

Our teacher continued on the lessons taught by ‘cool the earth’ project and kept us motivated and connected to the topic. She educated us to limit the use of plastic. I now appreciate the fact that plastic cannot be destroyed. Can you imagine if we keep on making more and more plastic our earth will get covered with plastic? In 2012, US generated around 14 million tons of plastic in different forms like containers, utensils, etc.

I believe we all should contribute and keep our earth green. We can increase the awareness by doing posters, writing articles, special projects in schools. I think there should be a compulsory subject “keep the earth green” in our syllabus.

As a 4th grader, I am taking full responsibility and doing my part. I also take a note and let my friends and family know the importance of small everyday contributions we can do to keep the earth clean and beautiful for us and for our next generations. We owe a clean earth to them! Let us not waste a single moment anymore and spread the word.

Please send your valuable feedback to:

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