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Green and Greener Get Your Green On

By Dave Rochlin and Katy Foreman

Dave: So who the heck were all of those people at the ClimatePath movie/launch party night at the Rheem Theater last month?

Katy: I know, it was great to have such a big turnout. People don't think of this area as very "green," but we aren't alone and local residents are working hard to make our community more sustainable.

Dave: Seriously. I had no idea so many people locally were so passionate. One of the things I noticed though is the "Big Green Umbrella" under which people operate. I had conversations about saving Mount Diablo, water usage, rainforests, ridge line development, Boy Scout urban tree planting, local produce, smart cars, creeks, and even Chevron's solar investments. Everyone seems to have a particular cause....and a lot to say about it.

Katy: It's true - the "green" movement can seem overwhelming until you find a niche that you're most passionate about. Like my latest pet-cause: greener, safer landscaping. Those little gas powered motors in blowers and mowers seem small, but are major polluters...and don't even get me started on the poisons sprayed around houses and lawns. I know, I know, this is a topic for another article.

Dave: Indeed it is. This one is about finding your green niche here in Lamorinda. There are active groups in both Moraga (sustainablemoraga.org) and Lafayette (sustainablelafayette.net) that can help you. They organize everything from battery pickups to film nights, and even a monthly green drink events to secretly plot the further greening of our area. They are always looking for fresh ideas. You can sign up to stay informed on their respective websites. Hey what about a "Sustainable Orinda" group?

Katy: Sounds like a challenge. There is no formal "Sustainable Orinda" group (yet), but the city is certainly getting involved in Earth day activities, with several events taking place on Saturday April 18th. It will be a morning of clean up and creek restoration (meet in Theatre Square at 9AM, or email OrindaInAction@gmail.com for more details). Bring your work boots!

Personally, I'll be walking over to the Lafayette Earth Day Festival, which focuses on "going local" this year. It's happening Sunday, April 19th at Stanley Middle School from 11-4. Over 50 groups will be there to talk about community supported agriculture, local green shopping, transportation, creating local energy, and community initiatives. The details are on the Sustainable Lafayette website.

Dave: Hmm, a metaphorical salad bar of local green initiatives....it should be a great weekend to match up with whatever interests you. I do have to confess that I actually hate the idea of Earth Day. I know it raises awareness, but just making symbolic changes for the day really doesn't solve much.

Katy: I know how you feel, but a lot of changes I've made have started with deciding to do it on a single day. Sometimes biking to work once, or eating one meat-free meal is all it takes to get you into a new habit. Plus they have live music!

Dave: So what else can you do to get involved and pursue your green passion locally?

Katy: Good question! If you're a business, you can get involved in your local Chamber's green efforts, or even become certified as a Bay Area Green Business. Of course businesses can also measure their carbon footprint and become climate

neutral with our help...just email me. But green isn't just for adults, thankfully. A bay-area-wide group called EarthTeam is working with high schools to support greening their facilities and educating students. Lots of resources are available at earthteam.net. Campo's group - the Lorax Club - aside from having my favorite name, has a really cool list of action items for April at <http://campo08.com/earth/> Everything from bringing your own coffee cup to seeking out drought-tolerant plants. I was not this sophisticated as a teen...

Dave : Yeah well....I'm not that sophisticated NOW. A famous man (OK maybe a KFOG disc jockey) once said "If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own." So if you don't find a group working on what you care about, go out and start one of your own. Before you know it, you'll be manning your own booth at Earth Day, and getting others to join in.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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