

EARTH DAY = OUR DAY

**The use-it-and-discard-it mentality
becoming obsolete, thank goodness**

Earth Day, a 38-year-old worldwide observance with a special Clark County connection, has a different feel this year.

Chances are, you're part of the reason for that something different.

Next Tuesday, April 22, is the official Earth Day, with events linked to it getting under way this weekend in Clark County and across the globe. But the array of events isn't why it's not the same this year.

And Earth Day doesn't feel different because of the special Clark County connection, as proud as we are of the fact that Camas native and Clark College graduate Denis Hayes was the national coordinator for the first Earth Day. The late Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis., who launched Earth Day in 1970, picked Hayes for the top staff job. Today, Hayes is president of the Bullitt Foundation in Seattle.

The reason Earth Day 2008 feels different is because concerns about the need for environmentalism and Earth stewardship have taken a giant leap across a chasm. That gulf once separated environmental activists, scientists, college students, liberal politicians etc. from the far greater numbers of people for whom those concerns didn't seem all that threatening.

But more of us are becoming environmentalists and doing something about our carbon footprints, consumption of non-renewable resources and the whole use-it-and-discard-it mentality.

Take your pick of motivating factors for the increased awareness: world politics and their effect on oil prices; declining runs of non-hatchery salmon; Al Gore's movie; the growing realization that all these plastic water bottles and plastic grocery bags require

oil to make and will never decompose; a presidential campaign in which all three finalists — Barack Obama, John McCain and Hillary Clinton — promise to make climate change a higher priority than has the current occupant.

Jay Manning, the Democratic director of the state Department of Ecology, notes that the DOE was created the same year as the first Earth Day, with the support of Republican Gov. Dan Evans. (For a link to events statewide: www.ecy.wa.gov/earthday/index.html) Locally, there's plenty going on in connection with Earth Day, which has essentially be-

come Earth Week. For example:

■ 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Salmon Creek Park/Klineline Pond, the county, Clark Public Utilities and Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation are sponsoring a tree-planting, garlic-removal and other activities.

■ One of numerous free collections of household hazardous waste, electronics and block foam, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Clark College parking lot, west side of Fort Vancouver Way. (For collections through Nov. 12 around the county, see www.co.clark.wa.us/recycle/waste/index.html and click on "Free Collection Events.")

■ Earth-friendly crafts, booths, games and face painting plus demonstrations on container gardening and use of recycled items as garden art, composting and tree planting, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Marshall Community Center, 1900 E. McLoughlin Blvd. (www.ci.vancouver.wa.us/parks-recreation and click on "Free Earth Day Fun.")

■ Free electronics disposal, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Fred Meyer, 11325 S.E. Mill Plain Blvd., \$5 charge for computer monitors. No TVs, microwaves or copy machines.

*More of us
are doing
something
about our
carbon
footprints.*
