

Pioneers Park activities cater to children

Earth Day is for everyone, but the 20th Anniversary Earth Day celebration at Pioneers Park on Sunday was especially for the young.

A full afternoon of events began with opening ceremonies in the Pinewood Bowl. Speakers at the ceremonies emphasized that "everything can't be done at once" when it comes to cleaning up our environment.

Speakers included Mayor Bill Harris, Sen. James Exon, Former Mayor Helen Boosalis, Biologist Dr. Paul Johnsgard and State Poet Bill Kloefkorn.

Exon urged everyone to "keep up the pressure to clean up the environment."

Kloefkorn said people may not see the results of their efforts within their lifetime, but still must think of the state of the Earth for their children and grandchildren.

Environmental groups such as Ecology Now and area schools are pushing to involve children early in efforts to save the Earth, and children were everywhere Sunday. Hundreds of sunburned children ran around in Earth Day T-shirts proudly showing their "save-the-earth" art to parents and grandparents.

Games were scheduled all day so that even the youngest children could take an active part in Earth Day.

Earth Day shopping bags decorated by area grade school students were handed out to hold the many pamphlets available about energy conservation, endangered species, environmentally safe products and every other environmental cause.

Ecology Now sponsored an essay contest for high school students in Lincoln and the winners were honored in the opening ceremonies. Their theme was "Earth Day is every day."

But adults swarmed the park too, avidly collecting information from the 42 exhibitors in the tents. Many showed their support by signing petitions and discussing issues with other environmentalists.

There was great interest in the products such as "Envirobag," a canvas bag to be used in place of grocery bags and other plastic store bags to help reduce waste in landfills.

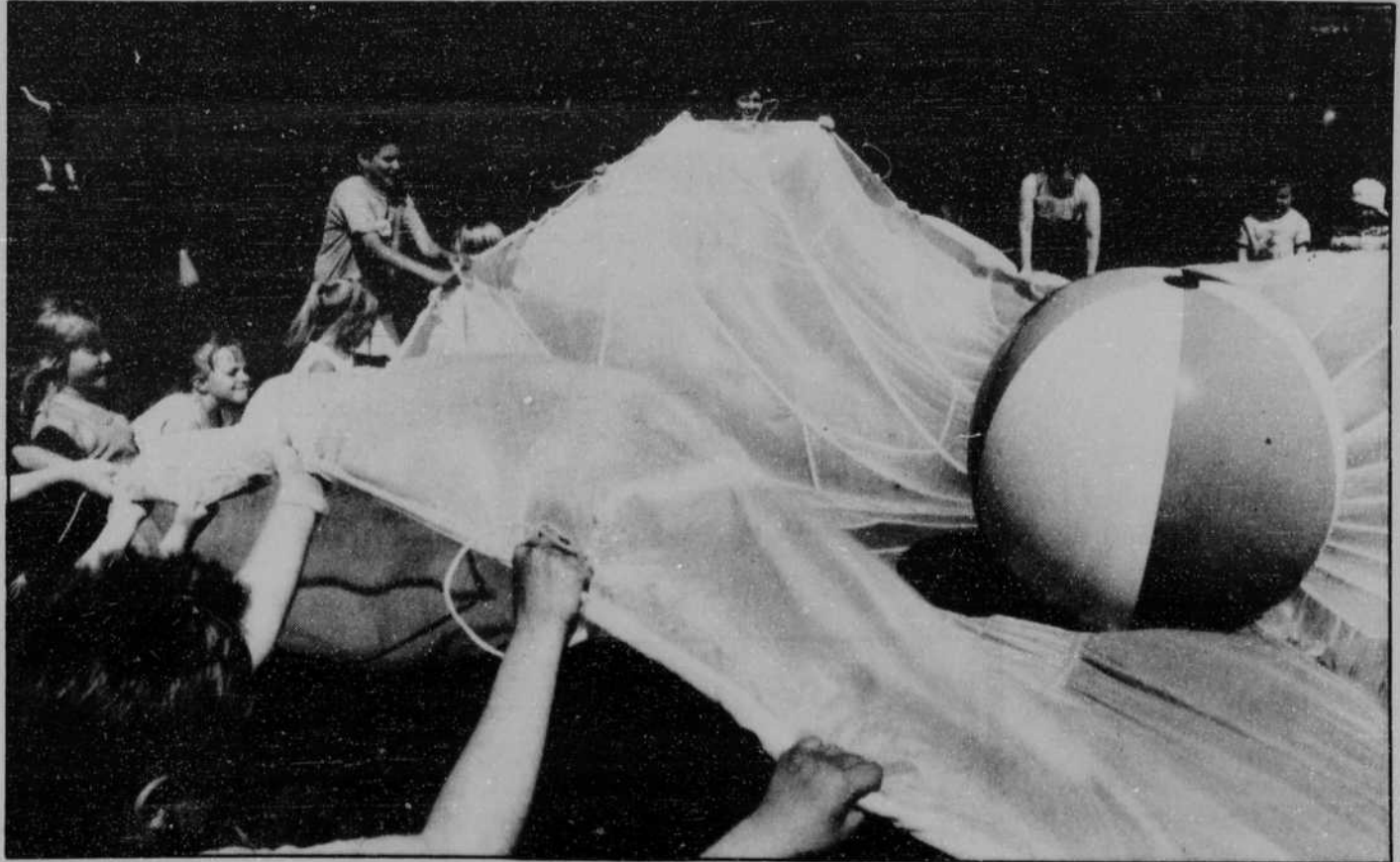
GE also had a popular product with its "Compax Energy Efficient Light Bulbs," which last six years and use 75 percent less energy than ordinary incandescent bulbs.

Other activities included ongoing nature hikes, bird banding demonstrations, Pioneers Park Prairie Hikes and tethered hot air balloon rides. There also was a temporary recycling center set up for the day.

The 87-degree temperature attracted 5,000 people, according to Lincoln police estimates, although not all took part in the festivities.

Boosalis said when she was involved in the first Earth Day celebration 20 years ago, there were only a handful of people who took initiative and lead the way for succeeding generations.

-Jennifer Johnson



Joe Heinze/Daily Nebraskan

Above: Parents and children join in on parachute games on Earth Day at Pioneers Park Sunday.

Right: Mabel Ott of Chet Ager Nature Center demonstrates bird banding.



Melissa McReynolds/Daily Nebraskan

THE POWER money and, therefore, the government will never meet the ecological crisis. Petitioning them with teach-ins, marches and protests will be far more futile and dangerous than it has been with poverty, women's liberation, Vietnam or civil rights. Ecological reorganization strikes at the very wallet of world power, for it will be necessary to totally restructure man's environment, an unprofitable venture.

Being peaceful by nature, a genuine pacifist, I fear we may be forced to burn down the world we've got in order to get a better one. In the face of this, I find it aggravating to see concerned students only debating better ways to bury garbage. The issue is survival. . . Earth . . . Love it or leave it?

John B. Dzerk

-Daily Nebraskan May 1, 1970

Music, ecology mix

Bands contribute time for cause



Global awareness took a melodic turn at the Broyhill Plaza on Saturday night as music met ecology at the Earth Day Concert. Sponsored by UPC, KRNU (90.3 FM) and the Earth Day Coalition, four local musical acts donated their time and equipment to celebrate Earth Day 1990 and promote saving the planet.

Lincoln's C Street Gypsies took the stage first with their brand of blues-rock. As passing cyclists stopped to watch and spectators took up position around the rim of the Broyhill Fountain, several energetic listeners danced near the doors of the Nebraska Union while the Gypsies warmed up the crowd. Greetings of "Happy Earth Day" floated through the Plaza, while banners and slogans such as "Think Globally and Act Locally," and "It's not just a day; it's a way of life" reminded of the spirit behind the music.

On a less harmonic level, spectators repeatedly were reminded not to walk in the empty fountain.

As dusk fell, the popular Omaha band The Acorns took over. Besides old favorites like "Yes, Virginia," the band tried out new material on the crowd.

While listening to the groups perform, spectators could munch on such ecological treats as organically grown Nebraska popcorn and chocolate cookies with espresso beans from the Ecology Now concession, supplied at a discount by Open Harvest, 2637 Randolph St.

Ecology Now also provided information sheets on ecological issues and newsletters for the public. Earth Day ravers also had the opportunity to sign petitions asking, among other things, for a more comprehensive recycling program in Lincoln, including the collection of paper and glass besides aluminum cans.

After The Acorns, Brian Gerkenmeyer kept the concert moving with a solo guitar act before the final band, Such Sweet Thunder, brought the audience dancing in

the dark to the concert's conclusion.

"Green" definitely was the mood throughout the concert, from the glow-in-the-dark necklaces of the children running through the crowd, to the metallic sheen of the dresses of the high school prom-goers making their way to the union.

Matters of global consequence aside, the concert was not without its problems. Passing prom kings and queens got their share of heckling from the crowd.

And although the mood at the concert was one of concern for the earth, only a few steps away litter spotted the parking lot. Ironically, aluminum cans stuck out of a trash bin -- right next to an aluminum recycling container.

Despite its down notes, the Earth Day Concert ended in good feelings after 11:30 p.m. with the crowd dancing around the stage, and listener Jessica Logan's hope that "Everybody, including myself, would think about it more often than one day."

-William Rudolph