



Bernie Mastrangel (left) and Liz Golemba sport one of the more popular Earth Day T-shirts available at support for Earth Day with pins (below) available at Dave's Comic Book Store in Royal Oak. Changes in Birmingham. You also can show your

photos by BILL HANSEN

Fashion conscious put style into Earth Day 20

By Debbie Sklar
special writer

April 22, 1990, marks the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. The original challenge was to awaken the nation and world to environmental problems and prevent further destruction.

The ground swell of enthusiasm 20 years ago resulted in the passage of most of the major environmental legislation of the 1970s, such as the clean air act.

Even though progress has been made, Earth is not the happy healthy planet we'd all like it to be. The environmental problems we face today are more far-reaching than ever imagined . . . and getting worse.

And believe it or not, the fashion industry has found a niche helping "clean up" the environment by keeping the message in the forefront and the backside.

Remember when a group of the world's most famous rock stars got together to produce the mega hit "We Are the World?" Remember the white T-shirts and sweat shirts they wore on the video that pleaded us to "Feed the World?"

At it's the Ritz on Maple in downtown Birmingham, owners Frank and Debbie Curuso are marketing some hip T-shirts that exhort people to "Save Our Planet."

"Right now we just have T-shirts," Debbie said, "but eventually we want to carry a whole line of clothing to promote the conservation of our planet."

"We want people to know how vital it is that we start recognizing that we have to do something to save our planet before it's too late," said Frank. "We need and want to get the message out about world peace."

THE STORE has "Save Our Planet" T-Shirts (\$18) in a vari-

ety of colors. The pictures on the front are painted by Royal Oak artist Dave Higgins. Higgins also has created and designed the store's 15th anniversary shopping bag, decorated with such symbols as the peace sign, the ark which stands for life, the heart for love and the sun for light.

If it's items representing wild animals, birds or just the great outdoors, then the place you want to visit is around the block on South Bates. Wild Wings Gallery has everything from sweat shirts (\$25) with lions plastered across the chest to T-shirts (\$15) with wolves on them.

Manager Jerome Meldrum said the "all of a sudden interest in saving the planet and the animals of the planet" has become more and more the "thing to do" for the past few years. Even celebrities are getting into the act of promoting certain causes and wildlife/conservation societies, he said.

"When a celebrity promotes something whether it's a cereal or the Audubon Society, the general public listens," he said. "For some reason, they hold a magical spell over the general public. Over the past few years, it's been geared toward saving our precious planet."

And only a hop, skip, and a jump away from Wild Wings is the '60s style shop, Changes, on East Maple, where peace signs and the dye abound.

OWNER BOB Kosak said the peace sign symbol has evolved into a fashion statement for two reasons, "one because it's a great symbol and two because it's not just for kids to wear anymore."

Kosak has been carrying T-shirts with peace signs on them for more than five years, but only recently have they become popular again.

"People are into them," he said. "They want to make a

statement and they feel that by sporting a T-shirt with a peace sign plastered on the front does it. With all this save the world and peace on earth, there's not a better symbol to express that."

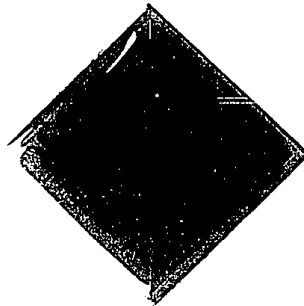
"When someone throws on a T-shirt that has a peace sign across the chest, they're not only making a fashion statement but a political statement."

Another T-shirt saying related to Earth Day available at Changes is "War is not healthy for children and other living things." Prices for T-shirts start at \$15.

And a couple of miles down North Woodward in the happening city of Royal Oak, special Earth Day fashion pins can be found at Dave's Comics and Collectibles.

Dave's on South Washington in the downtown area, has green and silver square buttons that sport the saying "Earth Day 1990" with a picture of a map of the earth for \$5.

"I think items like this are great," said owner Dave Hutzel. "Personally, I think our planet needs a lot of help. People have gotta wake up and smell the coffee before it's too late."



Radio daze: Tuning into today's (literary) sounds

By Tim Smith
staff writer

FM car radio used to be a smorgasbord of tasty "food" served up just enough to keep the musical taste buds happy. But today's listening fare for commuters is akin to a plate of brown lettuce.

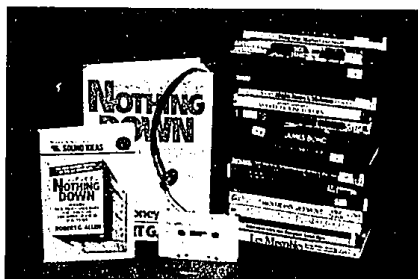
Don't choke. The proper antidote to blah radio is being swallowed by more newly energized folks each day — books on tape.

"It's something that, once people discover, they have a voracious appetite for," said Carol Benson, adult services librarian at Southfield Public Library.

One of the discovering types is 40-year-old Livonia resident Susan Krause, who decided that listening to books on tape beats the heck out of radio.

"I'd rather listen to a book or tape than the radio," said Krause, who tunes in to self-improvement and spiritual cassette offerings during commutes to visit friends in Ann Arbor and Sterling Heights. "To get what I need to know from books and have them on tape is wonderful."

According to Farmington Hills saleswoman Teri Spytman, \$6 motivational titles from Zig Ziglar keep her rolling strong on her state-



BLAKE DISCHER/staff photographer

Long trips suddenly are shrinking thanks to the book tapes, scaled-down conversions of their print counterparts.

wide job travels. In her opinion, cassettes KO radio programming. "I find it (radio) more monotonous than the tapes. It's always the same thing over and over again," Spytman said. Whereas non-music tapes "seem to pass the time quicker and keep me awake."

Such converts to this new commuting activity can probably be spotted checking out the tapes at medium-to-larger sized branches of the Wayne Oakland Library Federation, which carry the audio dynamo, Benson said.

THEY'RE ALSO available at

shopping mall book stores and "Storytellers," a Farmington Hills business which specializes in them.

The tapes pump up, excite, entertain, motivate and instruct. They drive away the commuting boredom that radio fans regularly fight.

As a result, some are quitting the habit of punching the digital car radio dial to avoid the day's 32nd rendering of the Rolling Stones' "Paint It Black" or Janet Jackson's dance-flavored "Escapade."

West Bloomfield's Carol Fink, 41, can attest to that.

"I'm a constant button pusher and I do a lot of driving," said Fink, who has recently had authors such as Anne Rice as road "companions."

"I listen to them (taped books) when I can't find enough good songs on the radio or interesting talk shows," she said.

According to Fink, long trips suddenly are shrinking thanks to the tapes, which are scaled-down conversions of their print counterparts. Taped versions leave out wordy descriptions and some of the "he and she" talks.

"I just drove to Columbus (Ohio), and by the time I got there I wished the trip was longer," she said.

Fink's affection for the tapes has not been without a down side, she

said. Occasionally, she has reached business destinations only to stay inside the car to listen to a story's conclusion.

Some lunch hours also have been spent near the dashboard, Fink said.

JUDGING HOW business has grown at Storytellers since it opened in 1987, from 500 to 1,500 non-music titles, Fink is not alone. Store owner Diane Harris said truck drivers, doctors, nurses, other professionals and even teenagers buy from a variety of offerings, paying \$13.95 a tape.

Customers have the option of keeping their purchase or returning it within two weeks for a \$10 rebate, she explained.

"It's mostly for people in their cars, traveling an hour back and forth to work," Harris said. "They listen to a tape. It reduces stress . . . they slow down in traffic."

"They don't care if it takes them longer to get there, they're listening to a tape."

Farmington's Carol Eve Hyka claims her new listening habit has "saved her life," keeping her charged up on trips to Benton Harbor and Kalamazoo.

"If you know I-94, it's not real exciting. . . They (tapes) saved my

life, I think," she said. "I needed something to keep me awake on the highway and these have done it."

A library card can be obtained free of charge by residents of communities belonging to WOLF, which among others include Southfield, Livonia, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Redford Township, Wayne-Westland and Rochester.

Libraries in Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills are independent of the federation, Benson said.

At Storytellers, customers can choose from racks of titles. On one wall are motivational tapes, such as Wayne Dyer's guide to positive thinking. Elsewhere are mystery thrillers, espionage ("Windmill of the Gods" by Sidney Sheldon) and comedy.

AN EXAMPLE of the latter is Gerald Gardner's "White House Follicle," about how President Reagan handled the "Iranian Affair."

Someone embarking on a lengthy trip can pop in the 26-hour tape "The Mammoth Hunters," written by Jean Auel.

"That's a whole trip to Florida," Harris said.

It's much cheaper for persons living in a WOLF community to listen to books on tape, Benson said.