

Young writers offer visions of Earth: 2010

First place (16-18)

Lauren sat through the closest while her kids finished packing lunch.

"Now where's that 110 SP sultan lotion?"

Hidden behind the 20 oz. tube of Rottin-A skin cream and the carton of Tylenol gelscaps she found the lotion. She took it into the kitchen where Tina and Jimmi sat, throwing grapes at each other.

"Tina, Jimmi, just stop that okay? Don't you want to go to the zoo today?"

It was the first time Lauren had been to the zoo in 20 years. She could hardly wait to take the kids there for the first time; the zoo was her favorite place as a child and she felt guilty that she had never taken her children there. Finally, they would experience a part of the world they had never seen before.

The entire ride downtown consisted of one complaint after the other. "Mom, why do I have to wear all

this slimy lotion all over my skin?" Jimmi whined.

"Because Jimmi, you'll get sunburned. Remember that time at Aunt Susie's beach club? You almost had second degree burns."

"Yeah, stupid," Tina continued. "We, like, almost have no one layer in the sky anymore."

"That's Ozone layer, Tina."

"Whatever, who cares?"

They arrived at the empty zoo at 11 a.m., unable to stand the 100 degree heat. Immediately, the kids tried to decide where they wanted to go first.

"What's better, Mommy, the Insect Farm or the Dog Village?"

"Why the two worst choices, Jimmi?"

"Because that's all that's here."

Lauren pushed Jimmi out of the way to look for herself. This didn't make sense. What had happened to all the giraffes, lions, and elephants? Did they send them back to their nat-



Liz Newman

ural habitats? There must be some mistake. Lauren stood quietly for a second, thinking, and then halted an elderly zookeeper.

"Excuse me, sir, where's the elephants?"

"What? Elephants? Where the hell

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Second place (16-18)

July 4, 2010.
Looking back 20 years.

Today's annual festivities have been dampened by the new law, stating that there are to be no more fireworks, ever. This law is the last in a long string of social, industrial, and political reforms.

Although slower than the gas car, today's electric models produce no harmful wastes. Nuclear power, ruled as too threatening to humans by the Supreme Court, has been replaced by the slightly more expensive, less harmful hydro-electric and solar energies. As a result there has not been a nuclear waste incident in the last 10 years; and oil spills are now extinct due to laws prohibiting the burning of gas, oil, coal, and natural gas.

Industries have not produced measurable wastes in the last five years; these clean new factories of today, were inspired by government

programs funded for converting a company over to clean energy alternatives.

Governments of the U.S. and most other advanced societies have rewarded homeowners for each tree planted on their land. Incentives range from tax write offs in the U.S., to cash rewards in Japan. The newly educated governments of South America have outlawed the once popular slash/burn method of clearing rain forests; you may note that the forests are now being nursed back into health.

Recycling, now mandatory, has been transformed into a multi-billion dollar industry, as a result the prices of many packaged goods have decreased. Twenty years ago littering was considered no big deal. It is now punishable by 300 hours community service. Even the acreage of animal reserves has quadrupled in the last 20 years, and animals once rare, are now quite common, like the



Rocky Johnson

Bald Eagle for instance.

The ozone layer has stabilized, due in part to the public boycotting of aerosol cans; the green house effect has also stabilized. Acid rain, once a daily problem, is becoming a thing of the past as fish and wild life re-

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Second place (16-18)

What's the solution to the Earth's pollution? The Earth 20 years from now? I shudder at the thought of it. I am not talking about the ozone, the greenhouse effect or biodegradable diapers. I'm talking about the pollution in peoples' minds, hearts and souls.

Why does a 12-year-old think he can solve his arguments by shooting a playmate? Why does a 15-year-old think he will be accepted by his peers for snorting cocaine? Why does a 13-year-old think she will be loved by having sex?

The blood from all these senseless killings flows through the soil of every city throughout the world. The stench from cocaine powder assaults the nostrils of every person who walks the earth. The murder of innocent babies through abortion affects the entire world.

It's the "I don't give a damn" attitude that is polluting the earth. People aren't willing to forgive and forget anymore. Guns, drugs, and abortions are too easily obtained.

But, I'm just a kid. What do I know, right? I say wrong! I've seen and heard things that children shouldn't see or hear. I care enough about the Earth to tell my friends I love them and forgive them when they've hurt me. I care enough about the tomorrows of this Earth to say



Carrie Keese

no to drugs. I care enough about future generations to abstain from sex until marriage. I care enough about mankind who inhabits the earth to say: "Love one another. Be kind to one another." I believe it's the only hope for the Earth 20 years from now.

—Carrie Keese, 18,
Franklin High School

Third place (16-18)

Close your smoke-filled, weary from pollutants eyes, and imagine with me for a moment. Imagine this world we live in 20 years into the future.

What can you see? Even though you have your eyes closed and your imagination is working, does it seem preposterous to see anything other than this environmental fiasco we've created?

But in 20 years, all of that will have changed. It will be a brand new world. Let me take you for a moment into my thoughts and show you what I see. I am visualizing a changed environment and a changed people, where the Earth is clean and protected.

Crystal lined and clear, fresh sparkling lakes with flowing cool rivers are now alive and pure again. Brilliant minded scientists have discovered easy and cost-efficient ways to make our water once again pure for fishing and drinking.

Industries have been banned from the use of any streams, lakes and rivers for dumping.

New trees have sprung-up in the forest by people with wisdom to know how much trees are needed. The fresh oxygen they produce, lets this world breathe easier and it has helped to break the greenhouse effect. No longer are there dead, decaying rain forests, but thousands of acres of fresh, new vegetation.

The earth, once gray with litter, toxic waste and tons of filthy, foul-smelling garbage is now the way it used to be clean, pure and free.

Can you imagine a free earth? The thanks from Earth for lifting her burdens would be a tremendous runoff of gratitude.

Imagine it being possible for people to recycle everything! Anything used now can be assuredly recyclable. People now only throw away food that has not been used, and certain biodegradable products. Everything else is used over and over again. This new system is called mandatory recycling.

Garbage dumps are now a rarity. In the year 2010, all previous dumps will have been cleaned up and made into parks. No more will you see hygienic needles and other medical supplies washing up onto the shores of our beaches.

Oil spills do not even exist. The



Jean Stevens

words toxic waste are almost extinct. The earth is joyous. Imagine that!

Imagine a world where the people themselves are aware and do everything they can to protect the beautiful world in which they live. Energy is conserved in vast amounts. People now rely on solar energy rather than nuclear, electric or gas burning methods.

Food supplements are common places in order to conserve on soil and endangered animal life. People no longer wear furs. And when walking along the streets of any town or city, people no longer see the uncared for homeless. Government programs have given new lives to them. Veterans are also seen too. People reach out for each other and for their home: "This place we call Earth."

Unheard of is racism, prejudice, or wars. There is only peace.

Imagine this world in 20 years. It isn't very far off, is it?

Now remember what I have told you, what I now will be. Now, open your eyes and take a good, long look around. Look at what you see. Look at it, remember what I have said, and go out into this world, and make it 20 years from now. Make it happen, starting with you.

—Jean Stevens, 17,
Eisenhower High School

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