

Students: We must act now to save our world

Third place (16-18)

Someday

Like animals freed from their cages, The children poured out of the school, forgetting about homework and teacher's rules. Bursts of laughter came from the bay, As the children applauded the first warm day. The sun shone down through the city haze, beckoning the children to come and play. They danced through the streets and bathed in the sun, All dreaming of beaches and summer fun.

No one lingered behind on such a fine day, except Johnny who saw things his own way. Johnny was different from all of his peers, he saw no excitement in this time of year. When he looked about all he could see, Was smog all around him and garbage to his knees. The streets were cluttered with more debris

than before. As the ocean tide brought waste to the shore. Johnny saw trees in the park, That had been abused and stripped of their bark. The sparse grass was brown and dying. All of nature seemed to be crying.

Johnny sat down on the park bench and drifted away. Waking to find a much different day. Johnny looked up and around, Not believing what he found. The trees were not dying but full of life. Untouched by the abusive knife. Birds flew about happily, Making their homes in the green trees. The sun shone through in true majesty. And the sky was blue and smog free. The streets were empty of all debris. And the beaches were clean and waste free.

Johnny could not believe what he saw. As he stood looking full of awe. He searched for the answers to how



Sue Wilkerson

and when. And spotted a newspaper that read 2010. This was the way the world ought to be. Full of life and pollution free.

—Sue Wilkerson, 17
West Bloomfield High School

First place (16-18)

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do you think you are, lady, in 1990? Elephants are extinct. By the way, those are lovely ivory earrings." "So where's everything else? All I see on this list are insects and dogs." "Lady, animals can't take this heat. Lakes and oceans are drying up, most animals are extinct. We can't cram what's left in zoos; we can't even keep them alive. Don't you listen to the morning newspaper tapes?"

"No." "Well, perhaps you'll enjoy our 'Extinct Animal Museum' then." Lauren was in shock. That was it? Dogs and mammoth roaches?

"Come on kids, let's go." Lauren climbed back into the car, followed by the kids. They turned on the radio, catching the tail end of yet another Detroit Zoo commercial:

"The Detroit Zoo. The Detroit Zoo. Where Doggies and Roaches are waitin' for you."

But that's not all, just wait and see.

We have an Extinct Animal Museum...Vipee! You can always pay a visit there instead.

And see all the animals that are now dead... The jingle rang through Lauren's head, as tears welled up her eyes. She couldn't help but somehow feel responsible.

—Liz Newman, 17
West Bloomfield High School

Third place (13-15)

In 20 years, I think people will have started to clean up the Earth.

There won't be anymore air pollution because everything will be solar powered. Also instead of people getting in cars and driving to work there will be new computers that let them be in contact with their offices without leaving their homes.

As you approach a big city, you won't see the smog because everything is solar powered. If people want to travel overseas, they will get in a plane that flies so fast, no smoke is left behind.

There will still be the hole in the ozone layer, but it won't grow any bigger. Aerosol cans won't be made anymore and a new cooling method will be invented for refrigerators

and air conditioners. The hole will be closed by chemicals scientists discovered.

There won't be a greenhouse effect anymore because more and more trees will be planted, and those will use all the carbon dioxide up. Also there won't be smoke from rain forests because, the farmers won't use slash and burn methods. The rain forests will be safe, and the farmers will have solar farms to gather the sun for use elsewhere.

The landfills will have been cleaned up and we will recycle everything in our own homes. You will take all the recycled products to your supermarket where you will get a deposit on everything you bring in.

The oceans, lakes, rivers, streams

and all other bodies of water will become very clean. There won't be any pollution in them at all. That way fish can still spawn upstream to lay eggs.

Ocean life will be protected from oil spills because oil isn't used much. It still is used, but only a little is needed for your solar car.

The skies will be bluer, because no pollution will make it gray. The global temperatures will go back to normal, so the icecaps won't melt. Skin cancer isn't as big a threat. Maybe I'm being too optimistic, but I hope people will start to do these things.

—Karen Eisenhauer, 13
Our Lady of Good Counsel School

First place (13-15)

In 20 years, the Earth is going to be uninhabited.

There aren't going to be any more birds flying around in the trees or squirrels running around in the grass, because the birds and squirrels are going to be dead. Just like the trees and the grass.

And the people. There will be no human beings alive on this planet in 20 years. No more first graders playing tag on recess. No more teenagers going to rock concerts and parties. No more parents looking forward to grandchildren and retirement and old age.

In 20 years, the earth is going to be a barren chunk of rock, covered with corpses, stripped of an ozone layer, and choked with fumes and plastic garbage.

And nobody cares. Yes, we talk about how terrible it is that the earth is in such danger. We talk about how we should recycle our garbage, and we should shut down nuclear power plants until we can get rid of the nuclear waste. We talk about how we really ought to

stop using plastic foam cups and aerosol hair sprays because they're destroying our ozone layer.

And yes, the factories show great efforts in the fight against pollution. Why, they've invented a plastic that degrades in sunlight. Because they care about the environment.

And then there are the schools who want to do their duties. There are the elementary schools who tell the kids to go home and tell mommy and daddy to recycle their trash. And there are the high schools who support environmental clubs, because their students want to save the planet.

So what?

We still buy disposable diapers and aerosol bug sprays. We still throw away newspapers and plastic bags and soup cans because it's too much trouble to go to a recycling

center once a week. The factories still dump waste into the oceans and let clouds of toxic smoke float into the air. They still destroy millions of acres of rain forests. They still make plastics and plastic foam.

And the schools still use plastic foam trays and dishes to serve lunch, because it's cheaper than cardboard. It's saving them money. But it's costing us our planet.

Do any of us want to be dead in 20 years? Does anyone want to see our environment disintegrate around them as they choke and gasp in the toxic air?

To the schools: Please stop using plastic foam trays and stop burning your garbage.

To the factories: Please stop destroying our air and water and land with your products that never decompose and become one with the earth.

And to everyone reading these lines: Please recycle. Please stop using disposable products and aerosol sprays.

But most of all, start caring about the earth. Start taking action. Please. Nobody wants to die.

—Andrea Tawil, 15
Churchill High School

Second place (13-15)

It is scary to think that not many people can remember the days when the air was clean and the lakes were still blue, when air masks were not necessary and there was a surplus of trees. Unfortunately, man's greed, cost him the beautiful trees, mountains, oceans and beaches that helped to make the world great. The desire for money was obviously stronger than the desire to live a healthy life.

The year is 2010 and I am a mother of two children. It is hard to constantly protect them from our polluted environment. The air has become so filthy that it is not safe to breathe without protection. Air masks must be worn or serious lung and respiratory defects could be the result.

OUR WATER is also in a pathetic state. Garbage has piled up in streams and lakes. The water is so

dirty that a purifying pill must be put into all water before being used. Each household only has a ratio of water to use for showers and baths, then the water supply is shut off for the day. Since water cannot be wasted, people are not allowed to use water for pools or other leisure activities.

Because of the holes in the ozone layer the sun's ultraviolet rays have become more powerful. My children must wear special clothes to shield themselves from the harmful rays. People don't go to the beach anymore because it is too dangerous. A 26 sun block 20 years ago is like a 4 sun block today. The temperatures have risen which has caused more and more floods. We are in constant fear of them.

Forests exist only in pictures and have been wiped out long ago. Wood is very valuable and it can be sold to companies for money and materials.

Instead of paper, erasable states are used in school work and daily life.

Fast food chains have either closed down or have had to switch to alternative packaging methods.

Many animals have become extinct because of all of this. I never thought I would be pointing to a dolphin in a museum and explaining how they used to exist when I was little.

Food is scarce and crops are puny and unhealthy because the soil is not fertile enough. All recyclable products must be recycled or there is a major fine.

It is depressing that our once magnificent world is so grimy and polluted. Every day there is a battle to survive. I pray that by now man will have learned his lesson. What kind of a future am I leaving my children? A slimy, smelly, disgusting, hazardous and bleak one.

—Nicole Valenti, 13
Academy of the Sacred Heart

Second place (16-18)

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cover from decades of pollution.

It took the deaths of millions of people before we seriously considered change. Global warming, the Green House effect, caused by a build up of pollutants in the lower atmosphere, had caused extensive melting of polar ice caps. The great flood of '93, would have submerged all major coastal cities if not for the emergency efforts to build sea walls;

yet the oceans still claimed some of the planet's once coastal land.

California was the site of the largest water contamination incident in history, taking the lives of some 25.7 million people. Most of the contamination suffered over a three year period due to toxins discovered in the water; despite frantic efforts no one was cured. Since these two tragedies planet earth has changed quite drastically, are you surprised?

At last, we are free of pollution, world wide environmental preservation has first priority. At this rate the planets estimated life expectancy is longer than the sun's, four times more than predicted by scientists' some 20 years ago.

Surprise! A political incident... a pushed button... a nuclear attack... Need they even retaliate?

—Rocky Johnson, 17
Eisenhower High School

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