

SECTION

B

SUNDAY

APRIL 23, 2000

CC

METRO

Los Angeles Times

B8

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2000 ★

LOS ANGELES TIMES

METRO NEWS

Volunteers Turn Out for Earth Day Cleanup

By BOBBY CUZA
TIMES STAFF WRITER

What do a surfboard, a toaster and a hypodermic needle have in common?

All three were among the items found floating in Marina del Rey on Saturday by a fleet of volunteers who paddled out in kayaks to fish garbage out of the harbor.

More than 250 people lent a hand at the all-day cleanup, just one of dozens of events held across Southern California on Earth Day. All told, volunteers rid the marina of about 1,600 pounds of rubbish, including 400 pounds of recyclables.

But the day's largest crowd was at EarthFaire 2000, a wide-ranging festival that drew an estimated 15,000 people to Exposition Park in Los Angeles. The event kicked off with a rally at Pershing Square downtown, followed by the Clean Energy Ride and Walk, a four-mile procession by foot, bicycle and alternative-fuel vehicles to the Coliseum.

From the dozens of environmental groups doling out literature and the organic food booths to the company promoting its *feng shui* and space-clearing serv-

ices, EarthFaire had something for everyone.

Even lonely hearts. CaringSingles.com, a matchmaking service that encourages singles to participate in a community service event as a first date, organized a local neighborhood cleanup.

Meanwhile, in Lake View Terrace about 250 volunteers turned out to plant 450 trees around the artificial lakes and pool at Hansen Dam recreation area. In addition to providing shade and oxygen, the oaks and sycamores will strengthen the hillsides.

"This is a beginning step to make it a more habitable place," said Gabrielle Newmark of Pacoima Beautiful, which helped organize the event.

The Marina del Rey boat and kayak cleanup was the third held in the last year by the fledgling Ocean Conservation Society, which also conducts marine mammal research in Santa Monica Bay. It was by far the largest.

Volunteers of all ages came throughout the day, strapping on life vests and climbing into one of the 75 kayaks on loan from Cobra Kayak. After tethering 10 to 12 of them together, group coordinators in

powerboats towed the kayaks to one of the marina's eight basins, where volunteers would go to work.

Each group paddled around for about two hours, snatching up plastic bags, cigarette butts and fast-food cups.

"I thought it might be a little boring, but it really wasn't boring at all," said Tim Lee, 14, one of about 10 students from Whitney High School in Cerritos who participated as part of a project for their biology class. "I don't really do stuff like this. But it feels good to help out a little."

Charlie Saylan, director of the Ocean Conservation Society, said Saturday's event was just one part of an ongoing cleanup effort in Marina del Rey.

"We feel we can make a pretty significant difference over time," Saylan said. "If we do this twice a month, with 35 kids, and we do three or four of these [big] things a year, it's probably going to translate to somewhere in the neighborhood of 6,000 to 10,000 pounds of trash."

Times staff writers Meg James and Roberto J. Manzano and correspondent Gina Piccalo contributed to this story.



WALLY SKALJ / Los Angeles Times

A volunteer carries bags of trash gathered as part of Earth Day celebration.