

Stinson Beach becomes Earth Day artists' canvas



Susanna Czuchra of Mill Valley creates an art piece with debris and rocks found while picking up trash during the Create-With-Nature Earth Day event at Stinson Beach on Saturday.

Sherry LaVars — Special to Marin Independent Journal

By **Adrian Rodriguez**, *Marin Independent Journal*

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As Susanna Czuchra of Mill Valley built her fortress of rocks, twigs — and anything she could collect from the sand at Stinson Beach Saturday — the 50 or so others around her played music, danced and laughed.

“It’s nice to play like a kid,” Czuchra said. “It’s so very freeing.”

The Create-With-Nature Earth Day event was all about being around like-minded people and sharing experiences, she said.

Her boyfriend, Geoff Leland of San Rafael, contributed to her creation, building a scale out of a plank of wood weighed down by rocks found on the beach.

“Everything is temporary,” he said, explaining the meaning of his art. “The ocean is eventually going to come and wash this away. But for now, we’re in balance.”

It’s a harmony that the Berkeley-based environmental artist Zach Pine intended his Earth Day celebration to be.

“I wanted to create an event that would connect people to the earth and each other,” he said. “People take care of what they love.”

In its 12th year, the annual celebration featuring a beach cleanup, art, music and dance is produced by Pine and the international music and arts organization Samavesha. The volunteer cleanup is supported by Golden Gate National Recreation Area Volunteer Coordinator Tracy Neal and staff from the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

Earth Day traditionally falls on April 22. It was first celebrated in 1970 and generally features events that highlight environmental awareness and protection.

The reputation of the Stinson Beach event drew people from all over the Bay Area.

Standing against the shoreline, a group of people made sand globes they would use to adorn their creations.

Harold O’Neal was intrigued: “What is this about?” he asked Pine, who was teaching the others how to make the globes.

“The purpose of it is to really feel the earth in your hands,” Pine said.

After drying off the globe he just created, Pine handed it to O’Neal and said, “Here, now you have the Earth in your hands, too.”

It was a connection that O’Neal said spoke to him.

“My wife and I, we came here to have a spiritual connection,” he said. “These things bring people closer together.”

And the event had something for everyone. Some, such as San Rafael resident Laura Silverman, showed up to volunteer.

“I wanted to do something local, to just be grateful for all we have here in Marin,” she said.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Adrian Rodriguez covers Mill Valley, Belvedere, Tiburon, Corte Madera and Larkspur for the Marin IJ. He also writes the weekly business column Movers & Shakers, which appears in Friday's paper. Reach the author at arodriguez@marinij.com or follow Adrian on Twitter: @adrianrodri. Reach the author at arodriguez@marinij.com.



Alexandria Hilton laughs as Dick Ferrington, both of Mill Valley, shows their friend a sock and a piece of a shoe he found while picking up trash during Create-With-Nature Earth Day event at Stinson Beach.

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