

**RIP Earth Day:
Who are we fooling with this Earth Day stuff anyway? Oh, right, the kids.
Alan Bisbort, Hartford Advocate - April 20, 2006**

This Saturday is Earth Day, the one day of the year adults set aside to fool their children that they're serious about leaving them a livable planet. What dupes these children be!

Global warming spirals beyond even the most cautious scientific projections, and what do we do about it? Nothing. Less than nothing. We buy gas-guzzling, ozone-depleting vehicles, throw chemicals on the lawn, deplete and despoil the oceans, cover the countryside with asphalt. We are simply not serious about leaving the earth in better shape than we ourselves inherited it. And yet we pretend, with Earth Day, that we are.

Let's be real adults and put Earth Day to rest, along with the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, voting, the tooth fairy, Easter bunny and Santa Claus. After five years of Bush, Earth Day is not something any sentient adult can take seriously. Why lie to the kids? What good will it do them?

One glance at the table of contents of Worldwatch's latest "Vital Signs" tells us the Earth is in deep trouble: Fossil fuel use surging (even as oil prices and profits hit record highs); climate change indicators rising; weather-related disasters setting records; human population surging as other species decline; global ice melt accelerating; wetlands drying up, forests disappearing, etc. All manmade problems, all ignored by the powers that be. And yet we continue to hold Earth Day.

It would be more healthy and helpful to take our kids aside and say: the powers that be don't care about your future. Maybe then, these young ones will take matters into their own hands. Of course, this leaves open the possibility that the young ones will go beyond the dictates of "working within the system."

Take Jeff "Free" Luers, an impassioned Oregon eco-radical who at age 23 set fire to three SUVs on a dealer's lot to "raise awareness about global warming and the role that SUVs play in that process." The state threw the book at him, sentencing him to 22 years and eight months in prison, far longer than the average sentence of convicted arsonists, murderers and rapists in Oregon. No one was hurt in this action, the vehicles were salvaged and sold. And yet, nearing age 30, Luers still sits in prison, an impassioned activist pushed by what he saw as desperate circumstances into a desperate act (and, let's be honest ... who hasn't fantasized about doing something of this sort to Hummers?).

Jeff put it this way: "The FBI devotes more time and energy to radical environmental activists than it does Al-Qaeda ... I'm beginning to feel a lot more like a P.O.W. than a political prisoner." This is what we do to the best and brightest of our young activists -- stick them in a hole for 20-plus years, while we reward GE, Monsanto and Dow, who've done more to destroy the health of the planet in the time you've read this sentence than Jeff Luers could do in 10 lifetimes. "Free" deserves the last word: "This June marks my

sixth year in prison. From behind these walls I have strived to remain an active part of this struggle; from contributing to the dialogue and discussion of tactics, to furthering the debate on climate change ... Perhaps most importantly I am proof that prison cannot crush the spirit of resistance." For more, check www.freefreenow.org.