



# WEST CHESTER GREEN TEAM NEWS

May 2024

*Mission: The West Chester Green Team is a civic organization in West Chester, PA, that works to educate the local public and to establish and nourish green initiatives in the community in harmony with nature and each other, promoting the health of all living things and of planet Earth.*

## Inside:

Earth Day wrap-up and lots of photos, Porchfest activities, Environmental action you can take, Reusing plastic bottles



# WCGT Calendar of Upcoming Events

**When – What – Where.**



**Saturday, May 18:** Porchfest! See information and articles beginning on page 8.

**Tuesday, May 23:** 4 pm at the home of Margaret and Jim Hudgings, 409 W Union St. Reporting on progress for this summer's family education on the Lenape: Meagan Hopkins-Doerr, Penn State Extension; Amy Johnston, Director at Camp Linden; Tim James of Westtown Meeting; and Margaret Hudgings, Education Committee organizer.

**For details on other May and later events, see listings beginning page 3.**

**Related groups and committees:**

**4th Monday of every month: East Bradford Environmental Advisory Council (EAC),** 7 – 8:30pm, East Bradford Township Bldg, 676 Copeland School Rd.

**4th Monday of every month: East Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee,** 7 – 8:30pm, East Goshen Township Bldg, 1580 Paoli Pike

**4th Tuesday of every month: West Goshen Sustainability Advisory Committee,** 6 – 8 pm, West Goshen Township Bldg., 1025 Paoli Pike

**4th Tuesday of every month: Westtown Environmental Advisory Council,** 7 – 8:30pm, Westtown Township Bldg., 1039 Wilmington Pike (Rt. 202)

**4th Thursday of every month: West Chester Sustainability Advisory Committee,** 6:30 – 8 pm, Room 240, Borough Hall, 401 E. Gay St.

Be sure to visit our Web site at <https://wcgreenteam.com/> and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WCGTeam/> (all are welcome to post environment- and sustainability-related items there). If you wish to support our work, please donate here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/contact-2/>

**NOTE: Deadline for the June 2024 issue is May 31! We welcome contributions and suggestions from our readers for possible inclusion in a future issue. E-mail your ideas to Dianne Walsh at [LDwalsh318@gmail.com](mailto:LDwalsh318@gmail.com).**

# About Earth Day



**By Nathaniel Smith**

*Earth Day/Earth Week have now come and gone, but we thought you'd like to know more about how it all came about.*

Earth Day is officially on April 22 every year. Its founder, US Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, chose a spring date when students are still on campus, as he recognized that education and youth would be central to the cause of spreading knowledge and respect of nature's role on earth and in human lives.

Many others were involved, but Senator Nelson's name was the most prominent one attached to it. That was back in 1970, in the day of the "teach-in," which formed the nucleus of the movement. I remember participating when I was living near Amherst in western Massachusetts. "More than 20 million people poured out on the streets, and the first Earth Day remains the largest single-day protest in human history" ([Wikipedia](#)).

Over 30 years later, I met Senator Nelson in his 80's at a conference, where he was sitting at a table selling and autographing copies of his 2002 book [Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise](#). There was no line (I had snuck out of a slow speech) and I had time for a nice chat with him after buying 2 copies.

Looking back to that encounter reminds me of hearing another environmental hero, [Franklin Kury](#), also then in his 80's, speak at West Chester University in April, 2019, during what by then had expanded to Earth Week. As a young state representative, in 1971 Kury was instrumental in getting Pennsylvania's General Assembly to [add an Environmental Rights Amendment](#) to the state Constitution (art. 1, section 27; ratified by voters with a 4 to 1 margin in 1971).

His far-reaching measure [reads](#):

*The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.*

Kury too went on to write a book about it, [The Constitutional Question to Save the Planet: The Peoples' Right to a Healthy Environment](#), in which he called for the US constitution to include a national environmental rights amendment.

For a long time courts treated the Pennsylvania amendment as well-meaning words without legal impact, but in 2013 environmental lawyer [Maya Van Rossum](#) and colleagues was a monumental victory when the PA Supreme Court invalidated most of Act 13, a highly destructive law written by the fracking industry.

You can read about it in her 2017 book [The Green Amendment, Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment](#) (now in a [2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#)). Van Rossum, like Kury, is urging the US to pass a Green Amendment (her own term) and she is working at it [state by state](#).



So this year marks the 54<sup>th</sup> Earth Day, which long ago became institutionalized, like MLK Day, into our national life. This year's overall theme is Planet vs. Plastics. You might wonder, why plastics and not, say, climate change or ecological destruction? The answer is: such issues are all connected.

The fossil fuel industry, seeing the rise (albeit too slowly) of alternative energy and electric vehicles, has long been promoting the use of plastic, a fossil fuel product. Thus plastics, as much as gas heating and gas-powered cars, are responsible for the climate crisis. In addition, the ubiquitous throw-away plastic bag (see the Chester County effort to ban such bags [here](#)) fouls our neighborhoods, roads, waterways and shores and kills vulnerable wildlife like water birds and dolphins. A [recent study](#) shows that bottled water contains hundreds of thousands of nanoplastic particles per liter. In fact, we continuously [eat, drink and inhale](#) a lot of tiny plastic particles. Is plastic responsible for the alarming rise in autoimmune and other chronic diseases?

As in so much else, buyer beware! The corporate culture that once said smoking was safe and told western PA residents that fracking produced no adverse effects on the environment now say bottled water is perfectly safe. Unfortunately, we all have a lot of work to do just to defend ourselves and our environment. Earth Day is a good time for that.

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*Marshall Square Park, West Chester. Photo by Rani Norley*

## Earth Day in West Chester



Over one hundred environmental supporters gathered at the Chester County courthouse to commemorate Earth Day. Leading off was Josh Maxwell, Chester County Commissioner and environmental leader who spoke on plastic pollution in the county. Rep Chris Pielli, champion of Dark Sky legislation. Rev Dan Schatz with melodies and memories and 11-year-olds Owen Weber and Quinn Galey providing the youth perspective provided an overview of environmental concerns and solutions. Finally, former Mayor Jordan Norley spoke about bringing trains back to the borough and led the group on a march down High Street to a gathering at the Unitarian Congregation. Professor Meagan Schraedley officiated at the rally which was cosponsored by the Unitarian Congregation and the West Chester Co-op.

Highlights at UCong were a keynote address by Maurice Sampson II who spoke on Environmental Justice. Sampson, a longtime ally of the Green Team's, stressed the importance of addressing the disparities in tree cover, air quality and health between our richer and poorer neighborhoods. In West Chester, the southeast quadrant of the borough is an area at risk. Let's start at home and plant more trees so the air is filtered, flooding reduced, and temperatures lowered. At the close of his speech, Sampson was presented with a lifetime achievement award from the West Chester Green Team by Elizabeth Cunningham, assisted by Nasha Yisreal and Misaki Nagai.

Similarly honored were Sharon Wallis and Leonard Weeks, longtime leaders at Camp Linden in Northbrook. Weeks and Wallis have spent many years running programs to bring inner city youth to summer camps in Chester County. In addition to learning about nature, children are taught to swim. Wallis and Weeks were honored by the PA Senate and Carolyn Comitta as well as by the WC Green Team.

This year the Interfaith Leadership Fellowship, 40 students from West Chester University, joined in the Earth Day commemoration, bringing a welcome youth presence to the event. Representatives from Citizens Climate Lobby, Stroud Water Resources, the WC Coop, WC Porchfest, and Camp Linden spoke about their work, led by Dr. Bradely Flamm, Director of the Office of Sustainability at West Chester University.

A banquet prepared by the WC Cooperative, Kim Stack of 3 Little Pigs and El Limon rounded out the evening. Dr. Flamm introduced the chefs who provided such delights as Tres Leches cake, watermelon agua fresca, and shrimp tacos.

The West Chester Green Team is a member of the international Transition Town movement that maintains that as times change rapidly, towns need to respond by addressing local issues and promoting community happiness. The annual Earth Day rally and also Porchfest, bringing music to the borough on May 18, aim to promote connection and harmony in the community. And good times.





## Scenes from Earth Day in West Chester



Ale and Mario from El Limon, caterers of the evening's taco dinner.



Jordan Norley leads the march from the Historic Courthouse to Unitarian Congregation of West Chester..



Matt Zency, Citizens' Climate Lobby



Tim James and tacos!



Joe Debes, Stroud Water Research Center

Elizabeth  
Cunningham, Nasha  
Yisrael, Misaki  
Nagakai, Sharon  
Wallis, Leonard  
Weeks



Camp Linden folks enjoy the tacos.





## PORCHFEST is Almost Here!

While you're enjoying the music, visit our Green Tables and/or kids' activities. Here are the lists.

# West Chester Porchfest's WCGT's Green Activities



**Saturday, May 18**

**All Day Events!**



### **W Barnard Street**

**#334** Dark Skies

**#429** Living Landscapes/Green Wagons

### **W Union Street**

**#324** Mother Compost

**#401** WC COOP

**#409** Info/Merch Booth

**#410** Train Porch

**#411** Citizen's Climate Lobby

### **Dean Street**

**#224** Gifts & Thifts

**#401 (Behind)** Info/Merch Booth

**#424** Sierra Club

**SEE MORE DETAILS AT [WCGREENTEAM.COM](http://WCGREENTEAM.COM)**





# West Chester Porchfest's Children's Activities



**Saturday, May 18**



## **W Miner Street**

**1:30-3:30pm: #331** Face-painting

**2-4:30pm: #228** Japanese Celebration

## **W Barnard Street**

**2-3pm: #414** Rosie the Dog's Visit

**3:30-4pm: Everhart Park** Diane Matthews' Dance Class

## **W Union Street**

**2-4:30pm: #220** Lenape Journey sticks

**2-4:30pm: #402** Taylor's Music's Instrument Petting Zoo

## **Dean Street**

**1:30-5:30pm: #245** Face-painting

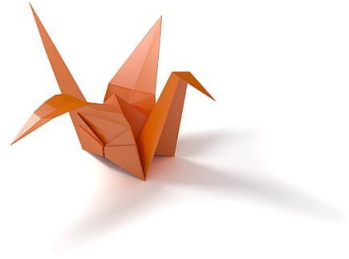
**2-4:30pm: #333** Meet Sally Coveleskie & Reading of "Henry the Steinway"

**SEE MORE DETAILS AT [WCGREENTeam.COM](http://WCGREENTeam.COM)**



## A Very Special Porchfest Activity

Want to learn more about Japan? Do you know about Kamishibai and FueRamune? Visit the Celebration of Japan at Porchfest and learn more about this fascinating culture. Fumiyo Kobayashi Batta sensei is heading up the "Celebration of Japan" from 2-4:30pm at Porchfest at the home of Kora and Tilo Segler-Stahl, 228 W Miner St. The Segler Stahl house is the site of two beautiful 112-year-old cherry trees given to the US by the city of Tokyo in 1912.



Batta sensei who trained as an opera singer will be singing Japanese folk songs and bringing along kimono and yukata that attendees can dress up in. She will tell stories too as will Prof Reiko Yoshida of Temple University. Yoshida will teach origami assisted by Segler-Stahl, retired professor of German from West Chester University, and will also read the story of Momo Taro-san, a boy born from a peach. Japanese snacks will be offered.

Kobayashi Batta has recently consulted with the Philadelphia Opera on their production of Madame Butterfly. She instructed them on dressing and walking in kimono. Batta has presented at University of Pennsylvania Museum, the Philadelphia Art Museum and at Shofuso, a model of a 16th century Japanese scholar's house in Fairmount Park as part of the annual Cherry Blossom Festival. Yoshida and Segler Stahl are both Green Team members.

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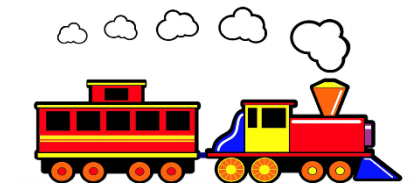
## Two Porchfest Hosting Opportunities

It's not too late to help with Porchfest. Consider these opportunities. Sign up today!

**GIFTS & THRIFTS**--In January local soccer star Aiden McFadden started a new WCGT committee and named it Gifts & Thrifts. His idea was to keep unwanted clothes from being donated and sent overseas where they are unwanted and unneeded or sent to the landfill. Aiden assembled a team of local family and GT members and offered a clothing swap, kindly hosted by the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester. Aiden has moved back to Atlanta, and we are looking for a new leader for this activity.



Gifts & Thrifts has a spot at Porchfest at the home of Shaw and Noakes in the 200 block of Dean Street. We have lots of leftover clothing and many people willing to donate. Is there someone out there who would like to lead this activity, pull it together and offer a display--at least for a couple of hours at Porchfest on May 18 between 1 and 7? Or do it just once and see if you like working on this fashion-focused committee?



**TRAINS**--Just for Porchfest we need a train enthusiast to oversee the porch at the home of Jim and Dee McFadden at 410 W Union St. Three shifts available 1-3, 3-5 and 5-7pm. Interested in helping out? Contact Margaret Hudgings at [mhudgings@gmail.com](mailto:mhudgings@gmail.com).





## WCU Students Attend Earth Day Rally



On Saturday, April 20th, 25 students from West Chester were able to attend the Planet vs. Plastics Rally and Celebration for Earth Day! This was made possible by the efforts of Carson Danaher and Rachel Shirk, Interfaith Leadership Fellows who received a grant to bring students to the event. Students attended the rally and learned about sustainability commitments and activities going on in West Chester. (Looks like a future student—Birdie—got involved, too.)

## 60 Ways to Reuse Plastic Bottles



There's just no getting away from the ubiquitous plastic bottle. First and foremost, recycle those bottles, but you can also help cut down on some of the massive pollution these objects cause—and maybe create something fun and useful for yourself or others--by trying some of these suggestions to reuse those bottles.

<https://foshbottle.com/blogs/fosh/60-ways-to-reuse-plastic-bottles>

Several of these ideas are great activities for kids and the solar water bulb is genius! (Warning: it requires some sheet metal and other materials, a few tools, and a bit of effort.)



# Some Actions You Can Take

## From PennPIRG

How much plastic will Americans throw away today? If it's like every other day, the answer is: enough to fill the largest NFL stadium in the country to the brim. Nationally, that amounts to 51 million tons of plastic waste thrown away each year. That's roughly 309 pounds of garbage per person.

**It's a huge problem, but fortunately, we have a big solution to match.**

**Tell your U.S. House representative to support the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act to move our country beyond plastic today.**

**The fact is, only 5% of plastic waste is ever actually recycled.** The other 95% either ends up in landfills or contaminates our food supply, waterways and the air we breathe via microscopic plastic particles.

Recently, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (Ore.) and U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman (Calif.) reintroduced the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act.

If passed, it would:

- Reduce single-use plastic and packaging nationwide.
- Finance new recycling, composting and reusable infrastructure systems.
- Prohibit the dumping of trillions of plastic pellets (also known as "nurdles") into our nation's waterways.

**Tell your U.S. House representative to support the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act and help stop the endless flow of plastic.**

The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act provides comprehensive solutions to our ever-growing plastic waste crisis. By shifting the cost of recycling and waste management to the corporations that make and sell these wasteful plastic products, the bill would also save states billions of dollars every year.

Our national network has already helped convince four states to pass producer responsibility laws, which will help cut down on plastic waste across the country. Together, we can build on this momentum to pass national legislation that addresses plastic pollution at every stage.

## From WCGT's Dark Skies Committee

WCGT's Dark Skies Committee needs your help! House Bill 1803, an Act providing for management of responsible outdoor night lighting, passed the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and is headed to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Please contact your representative and ask them to support the Bill. Dark Skies is also looking for additional ideas to support the Bill and if you want to get involved, contact Tim Lawlor ([tml10@psu.edu](mailto:tml10@psu.edu)) or Suzanne Webster ([websterse@etown.edu](mailto:websterse@etown.edu)). To find out more about Dark Skies, click here: <https://wcgreenteam.com/2023/07/17/dark-skies-initiative/>

**Tell your representative: It's time to break free from plastic**



**ADD YOUR NAME ►**

## *This and That*

### Coming Attractions:



**REPAIR CAFE**  
**DOWNINGTON**

**May 11th, 2024 10am -2pm**

**Central Presbyterian Church**  
**100 W. Uwchlan Ave. Downingtown, PA 19335**

**Bring Your Beloved  
But Broken Items and  
Get Them Fixed... for FREE\***

Everyone is welcome, you don't have to be a Downingtown resident.

**AVAILABLE REPAIRS**  
Soft Toys - Dolls & Stuffed Animals  
Computers & Electronics  
Jewelry  
Sharpening  
Mechanical & Electrical  
Things Made of Wood  
Clothing & Textiles  
Bikes

Limit TWO items per person!  
\*Lamp and bike parts available for purchase at our cost

**MORE INFORMATION**

✉ repaircafe165@gmail.com  
f @RepairCafeDowningtowntown



Flyer design by Upward Arrow.

**September 9:** The film "Common Ground," free and open to the public at WCU. Co-sponsored by WCGT and WCU Office of Sustainability. Details to come.

**September 23:** Spotlight on tree planting enthusiast Ryan Davis from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, speaking at WCU on September 23. A program jointly sponsored by WCU Office of Sustainability and the WCGT. He will also speak on meadows. Read more about Davis at: <https://www.greenzine.org/post/alliance-for-chesapeake-bay-ryan-davis>

