



March 30, 2009
October 2005 Issue



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CD Reviews
 Our teen reviewers say you should give the Black Eyed Peas, The Faint and Nile a spin in your CD player.

So what if I'm emo?
 Nick, 16, thinks it's dumb for people to criticize his music and his style.

FROM OUR READERS

Letters to the editor
(October 2005)
 These are letters we received in response to articles that appeared in our Sept. 2005 issue of L.A. Youth newspaper.

HEADLINES

I made it
 All her mom cared about was drugs, so this 16-year-old had to learn to take care of myself.

Beach cleanup crew

By **Selina MacLaren**, 16, West Valley Christian Jr./Sr. HS

Kneeling in the sand and protected by only a soggy plastic glove, I plunged my hand into the fly-infested tangle of seaweed, cigarette butts and rotten fruit. I called to my friends, triumphantly wagging a muddy sock at them before dropping it into a trash bag.



Photos by Manuela Yim, 16, Fairfax HS Teacher Grant Bell and students Raidah Noohu, 15, and Jenna Gharzeddine, 16, of West Valley Christian Jr./Sr. High School picked up trash in Santa Monica during a statewide beach cleanup day.

My friends and I are members of California Scholarship Federation, or CSF, a high school community service club. We had sacrificed sleeping in and met at our school in West Hills at 7 a.m. on a Saturday morning so that we could be at the Santa Monica beach by 8. It was Sept. 17, International Coastal Cleanup Day, and people in more than 90 countries were gathering to clean up beaches and the trash in the streets that would be washed onto the beaches.

When four members of the club and I, along with my mom and our club advisor, showed up near the Santa Monica Pier, the beach was nearly empty. A dozen volunteers gathered by a banner that said "Underwater Scuba Cleanup," and my mom panicked at the thought of us taking part. Every year 50 scuba divers dive under the pier to collect trash and bring it up to waiting kayaks to be hauled to shore for disposal. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled this year because of poor visibility, so we weren't able to witness the scuba divers in maid outfits that we had visualized when hearing "underwater cleanup."

We were handed gloves, trash bags and information sheets, which we used to record the trash we found for later research. In groups of two or three, we started by gathering the most noticeable pieces of trash, such as bags and bottles, and put them in our trash bags. Soon our backs hurt from bending over. To pass time, our club advisor, Grant Bell, invented a game of Balloon Search. Whichever group found the most shreds of balloons (which harm marine life) would win a prize. (We found almost 100.)

Soon, the beach was filled with people of every age, combing through the sand to purify the beach that Californians had thoughtlessly strewn with garbage throughout the summer. Smiling strangers asked us why we had decided to help out and suggested places to find interesting trash. We saw many other student groups and even runners jogging with plastic bags.

My group found several absolutely sickening and a few surprising items, such as used tampon applicators, condoms, underwear, dead birds and a toothbrush. Another group even found dentures!

Picking up trash with a purpose

While collecting trash, I encountered a man making an enormous sand pile. His name was Bill and his skin was weatherworn from building sandcastles for 30 years. About the volunteers, he said, "Their spirit is in the right place. These people are performing miracles. It's like Christians. Christians quote the Bible when all they have to do is

VIDEO



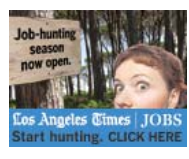
L.A. Youth teen roundtable on community violence



Do your friends use a phone while driving?

- Yes, all the time. It's no big deal.
- Yes, but I wish they wouldn't. It's dangerous.
- No, they follow the law.

VIEW RESULTS 60



L.A. Youth Art Contest
 Art contest: My Los Angeles. Show us what Los Angeles means to you and you could win \$75!



Dating violence resources
 Singer Chris Brown's arrest on assault charges has put a spotlight on dating violence. Check out L.A. Youth's articles on the topic.

perform miracles—feed the hungry, give some money to the guy begging." His words reminded me that we volunteers were no longer quoting our beliefs, but putting them to action. By cleaning the beach, we were making the famous California coast beautiful, healthy and safe.

Jaime Nack, a leader with coastal cleanup day, later told me that there were about 2,500 volunteers on the Santa Monica beaches. She said the volunteer turnout this year surpassed all others. The amount of trash collected in Santa Monica was astounding—689 bags of trash weighing 1,993 pounds and 417 bags of recyclable trash weighing 222 pounds. Countywide, 95,000 pounds of trash and recyclable items were collected that day.



Selina MacLaren, 16, (left) holds a coffee cup sleeve she found while picking up trash from the beach with her classmates.

After three hours of collecting trash, we treated ourselves to lunch. I washed my hands three times in the bathroom and desperately scrubbed them with a lemon slice, but the rank stench of rotten fish remained. Although we were tired, we agreed that the work was definitely worth it. CSF President Jenna Gharzeddine said, "When you're doing things sacrificial on your part, it's no sweat off your back."

Article Comments

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