

**Newspaper:** Boone County Recorder  
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**Column Article Title:** The "Green" Generation  
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I met with two truly awesome high school students a few days ago. As founders of a flourishing environmental club, Rosie and Sara were proud that interest in their cause had swelled and were optimistic about the future of their eco do-gooder society. They did not neglect to mention, though, their concern about the ephemeral nature of their club members' devotion. "I just think that some kids want to join because it's trendy to care about the environment, you know? Five minutes later, they won't care."

While I joked that it was fine with me as long as the hip kids picked up a little litter during those five minutes, the Earth Club co-chair had a point. While interest and concern for environmental causes is increasing faster than the polar ice caps can melt, how meaningful is all of the "green" discussion if it serves only to be the equivalent to this decade's Care Bears?

The whole concept of cool kids taking up eco causes in a superficial way can become even more depressing when put within the context of a recent study conducted by the National Geographic Society and GlobeScan. Pollsters found that we consumers in the US rank dead last against fourteen other nations when it comes to choosing goods and services with minimal environmental impact. NPR put it this way: "Even using energy-saving light bulbs, driving hybrid cars and buying organic, Americans are in last place when it comes to being environmentally friendly."

Sigh. Again the ever-present danger of discouragement creeps into my perennially positive world-view. I find myself pondering these ideas as I help my new high school student colleagues prepare for a presentation. Sara and Rosie are speaking to the entire freshman class at Conner High School and trying to convince them to lend their efforts to the Earth Club. I wrangle an electronic projector as the ladies nervously discuss what they'll say to the hordes of classmates. They had no reason to be apprehensive - the minute they finish their short presentation on the effects of picking up litter and recycling, a mob of teen eco-enthusiasts swarm from the gymnasium bleachers to sign up for their club.

Whatever wisps of discouragement I may have felt evaporate as I look at the mass of environmentally excited students. I can't help but feel hope for the next generation of Earth's inhabitants. So what if they're signing up because it's cool? This is the biggest opportunity we environmental educators have ever had. If we can inspire passion for the planet in just a few of these people, we're making progress.

Sara is elated. "We planted four hundred trees before we were even an official club!" she tells me. I can't help but wonder what her new club members are capable of.

If you go to <http://kyecogeek.blogspot.com/>, you will not regret it. Check it out to learn more about upcoming cleanups, environmental fundraisers and other ways to inspire the youth of our nation.

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|         | Yes, recycle it!                                                                                                                  | Not allowed!                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Anything else?                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Plastic | Bottles with #1 or #2 on them, including:<br>Soda bottles<br>Detergent jugs<br>Milk jugs<br>Vitamin containers<br>Shampoo bottles | To be recyclable, plastic must have a spout, or an opening that is smaller than the rest of the container. Because of this, we can't allow items like:<br>Butter/yogurt tubs<br>Buckets<br>Food trays<br>Also, no oil jugs. They're gross. | Please take off the lids. They're a different and not recyclable type of plastic.<br><br>Oh, and if you get a chance, rinse containers out and squash them flat. |
| Glass   | Any color glass bottle or food jar                                                                                                | Widow glass and drinking glass aren't good, nor is broken glass. We've got to help look out for the guys who pick up our recycling.                                                                                                        | Once again, no lids! No corks, either!<br>And rinse out the bottle!                                                                                              |
| Paper   | Oh man. We take all kinds of paper.                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Metal   |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                  |