

Celebrate the Earth

Our Planet . . . One Home.

In celebration and honor of our Home, we'd like to share information and ideas with you that we hope will help protect and save our home, and encourage wonder. We've highlighted organizations, websites, and ideas that can offer you and your family opportunities to get involved in the protection of our home. Some ideas are big, others small. Some happen across the globe, others in our own backyard. Some offer a challenge, others are easy. Some cost money, others only time. Some, we hope, motivate you to take action. In the Celebration, and work, begin!

Protecting the Wrong Places?

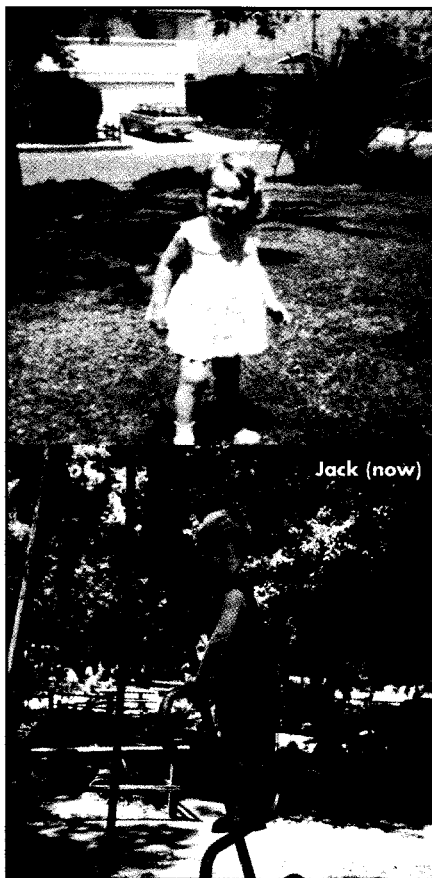
"We've done a heck of a job protecting the wrong places," says J. Michael Scott, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Reston, Va. Scott is one of the authors of a recent study showing that much of the protected habitat in the 48 states is at the highest elevation and the least productive land. The study found that unproductive areas such as mountaintops, deserts or other areas with poor soils, is preserved. But only a small portion of the richest land—grasslands, wetlands and other areas that support a wide variety of species, is protected from development. Much of the richest land has already been turned into housing developments or commercial areas. We need to protect the widest range of habitats, Scott argues, future conservation efforts must focus on these lands. "We have a huge responsibility to protect what we have left of us," he says. ■

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Sweet Memories *By Donna Bush*

It's become increasingly clear that we live in a different time than we did growing up. The reminders are everywhere: Megan's Law, \$2 gas, teens with pagers, dot-com madness, antibacterial soap. Life in Silicon Valley is advancing at a frightening pace. But my three-year old, Jack, has taught me that some things never change.

My husband, Brian, and I grew up in this area and are blessed to be raising Jack in the same neighborhood. While it's true that San Jose is no longer the small, suburban haven bounded by fruit orchards and two-lane roads it used to be, there remains one special place that seems virtually unchanged from the time I spent there in knee socks and Buster Browns. Even its name makes me smile: Happy Hollow.



As a freelance writer, I often work during the day while Brian takes Jack on little adventures. Aware that my son was in danger of growing up believing that only Daddy does fun things, I recently took Jack on his first visit to Happy Hollow Park and Zoo.

It was everything I remembered and then some. All of my old favorites were still there, as if they'd been waiting all this time for my return. What a thrill it was to see Jack on his first merry-go-round ride, bravely taking the reins of a painted pony and waving to Mommy as he bobbed up and down. Or climbing into the driver's seat of the big fire truck, gripping the huge wheel and clanging the bell. He watched the model train with fascination and giggled as he petted the goats, their bristly hair tickling his skin. The highlight of the day was cuddling up for a relaxing ride on Danny the Dragon.

To see it all through his eyes sweetened my own memories of coming here as a child. I thought of how it must've made my parents feel to see me so carefree, whiling away the afternoon in the kind of magical world often only reserved for fantasies. Happy Hollow is such a sweet, friendly place, proving that kids don't need all the overdone glitz of expensive, corporate-sponsored theme parks with roaming life-size cartoon characters to have a good time. Like Happy Hollow itself, a child's needs are much simpler: room to run, a place to play, a hand to hold. How easy it has become to forget that in today's bustling world.

As Jack and I sat and talked about what we had seen and done that day, I realized what a special memory this would become for him. And now I have one more precious memory of Happy Hollow to cherish for myself. ■