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Clearwater music delivers green message

BY JULIE MORAN ALTERIO
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Pete Seeger entertains the crowds at the annual Clearwater Festival at Croton Point Park in Croton-on-Hudson yesterday. (Frank Beccera Jr./The Journal News)

IF YOU GO

What: The Clearwater Festival Great Hudson River Revival
When: 10 a.m. to dusk today
Where: Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson
Tickets: \$45 per day
Information: 800-677-5667 or [clearwater.org](#)

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CROTON-ON-HUDSON - Retired schoolteacher Pauline Smith relaxed on the grass listening to jazz musician Hayes Greenfield perform his signature blend of classic children's tunes with environmentally updated lyrics.

"There is a place beyond the fence



Where people use their common sense

Where all of us have all agreed

To never take more than we need."

The scene - a cloudless sky above, the sparkling Hudson in the distance and environmentally minded songs in the air - embodied the essence of the experience of attending the Clearwater Festival Great Hudson River Revival yesterday.

Organizers expect the festival will draw more than 12,000 people to Croton Point Park by the time it concludes today.

Smith, a resident of New Rochelle, clutched two copies of Greenfield's new CD, "Music for a Green Planet" for her grandchildren. "Hush Little Planet," sung to the tune of "Hush Little Baby," is one of the songs.

In between catching music from some of the more than 60 performers scheduled for the weekend, Smith visited the festival's green-living expo.

"I've been collecting information on wind energy and solar energy. I'm going to try and do something with my house to make it more environmentally good," said Smith, who brought daughter-in-law Victoria Healy along to share the experience of being with other like-minded people. "It's a very positive environment. They're here because they believe in saving the planet," she said.

Festival director Ron Aja said he was seeing record crowds.

"Despite the gas prices, despite the economic woes we're all having, this festival is still important enough for people to come to," he said. "It's a festival with a purpose. It's not just great food, great crafts, great music, which it is. But it's also a virtual world's fair of environmental issues."

Started in 1966 by folk music legend Pete Seeger, 89, who will take the stage at noon today, the Clearwater Festival combines five stages of music, a juried crafts fair and an array of children's activities alongside environmental education and political activism.

Amid festival-goers clad in batik, tie-dye and peace T-shirts were signs proclaiming "nuclear power is not the answer," "resist imperialism" and even "Nader '08."

Iona College professor Fredrica Rudell, a resident of Yonkers, staffed the booth for local environmental group WestPac sporting an "Impeach Bush and Cheney" button.

"It's never too late," she quipped.

More seriously, she noted that a thrill of the day beyond the music was the community atmosphere.

"You're with a lot of people who share the same values and interest in peace and justice and sustainable living, and that's always good. The only problem is you're preaching to the choir. Hopefully some of the people who come to Clearwater just for the day learn something new," she said.

Peter Carter, a heating and air conditioning worker from New Rochelle, learned just how much energy he would save by switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs by watching a demonstration that had two lamps hooked up to power meters: one with CFLs and one with traditional incandescent bulbs.

"I knew it saved money but I didn't really know until I saw the meters running," he said.

Bobbi Bittker of Bedford Hills, with her children, Harry, 10, Jordana, 7, and Shoshana, 3, said that in between making masks with glitter glue and watching the Steve Charney & Harry comedy magic show, the youngsters are getting a deeper lesson.

"It was nice for the kids to reinforce the things we're doing at home and for the kids to see so many other people doing these things as well," she said.

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Among the attendees this weekend are more than 1,000 volunteers, including Hastings High School junior Zoey Hart, who has done environmental advocacy at her temple.

"I've been coming for a long time with my dad to listen to music. It was always a great atmosphere, and I have great memories," she said.

She is volunteering with a group of friends. "We all brought our guitars so we're jamming," she said.

Reach Julie Moran Alterio at jalterio@lohud.com or 914-666-6189.

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seideltdan wrote:

The County will take back the lightbulbs. Check the County web site for recycling info on these bulbs.
6/23/2008 6:30:18 PM

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GodlessLiberal wrote:

Not many that I could see, and I was there.

As for the person asking about the "mercury laden" lightbulbs, let's pretend you were asking a serious question.

First, the amount of mercury is tiny. You'd literally have to bite into the lightbulb with your teeth and inhale the moment it breaks to get any significant amount.

When it breaks, you open a window for a little while, clean up the glass, and that's about it. But if you're worried about mercury, I invite you to do something about the coal industry, which releases so much of the mercury that ends up in your food chain.

6/23/2008 12:16:56 PM

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TarrytownJoe wrote:

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<http://www.musicforagreenplanet.com/>

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Rocco wrote:

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prettykitty wrote:

What do you do with those funny looking mercury-laden light bulbs when they break?

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