

## SILVER CITY'S 12TH ANNUAL EARTH DAY FESTIVAL A SUNNY SUCCESS

by Richard Mahler, Newsletter Editor

The otherwise fickle spring weather cooperated magnificently on a warm and bright April 24, drawing an estimated crowd of over 500 to enjoy Silver City's 12th annual Earth Day celebration. Besides the many informational booths, vendors, and musicians spread throughout Penny Park, activities for children included a climbing wall, a puppet-making station, molding of "litterbugs" out of clay, and a tree-planting hosted by third-grade teacher Mark Cantrell and his students from José Barrios Elementary School. The Arizona sycamore helped fill the bare spot created by last year's fire in one section of the park. (It was decided later that a planting ceremony will be part of the annual event from now on.)

There was plenty of dancing, drumming, and singing, along with vegetable, herb, and native-plant sales. Attendees also were encouraged to buy raffle tickets and take part in a trivia contest.

A time capsule containing handwritten messages was buried under a rosemary bush, commemorating Earth Day's founding as an international event some 40 years earlier. The capsule will be opened a decade from now, according to Carolyn Smith, one of the organizers of this year's celebration.



New this year was the community's first electronic waste recycling event, held adjacent to Penny Park and organized by the Town of Silver City Recycling Advisory Committee in cooperation with the Southwest Solid Waste Agency. More than five tons of e-waste were collected, including old computers, TVs, stereos, phones, printers, hard drives and batteries. The material was hauled away by Albuquerque Recycling, a private company specializing in environment-friendly processing of such potentially hazardous materials. Voluntary donations totaling \$1600 helped fund the effort. The committee hopes to offer similar e-waste events at least once each year. In the meantime, residents and businesses are urged to store their electronic waste since local landfills do not yet offer any consistent and proper means to recycle it.

Co-sponsored this year by the Gila Resources Information Project and Town of Silver City, local Earth Day festivities were first pulled together a dozen years ago by Gwyn Jones, one of the subsequent coordinators of Penny Park. The latter was a vacant lot reborn in 1999 as a community-inspired and child-oriented park built by hundreds of volunteers. Thousands of pennies have been donated over the years to construct the park, keep it going, and rebuild damaged or degraded portions.

