

# A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



As spring makes its annual appearance, it's natural to think about the Earth, our planet, and its amazing powers of renewal and rebirth. For many Americans, the return of spring after months of short, cold days and gray skies is a relief to all the senses. In India

we delight in the bright yellow blossoms of the laburnum trees, enjoy the red-cheeked bulbuls noisily furnishing their nests and savor the cool mornings and evenings. It is because of these natural rhythms Americans concerned about our environment have chosen this season to celebrate Earth Day, in late April, for almost 40 years.

It was in 1970 that this grassroots movement began, with Americans in big cities and small towns holding recycling drives, water cleanup campaigns, air pollution teach-ins, energy-saving picnics and environmentally conscious fun fairs. That's when we began having discussions, on a personal, local and national level, about making choices to reduce waste and stop using products that pollute. We also began learning how our individual decisions to turn off the lights and recycle our trash can have a direct impact on the preservation of park lands or the cleanliness of our rivers.

Women's History Month is also observed each spring. This year Americans focused on "Women Taking the Lead to Save the Planet." Our cover art by Ann Altman shows women as guardians of plants, animals and children. An article by Louise Fenner highlights the contributions of women who have promoted biodiversity in landscaping, used school gardens to provide healthy lunches for kids, and encouraged girls and boys to choose science careers and find solutions to our environmental challenges.

This variety of approach is reflected in our cover story, "Different Shades of Green," by Jane Varner Malhotra, on how Americans still celebrate Earth Day, teaching each other how to protect the environment in the choices they make. For her article "Green Melodies," Richa Varma interviewed members of Solar Punch, an American band that traveled across India in an electric car and bio-fuel bus, demonstrating their solar-powered musical instruments. The U.S. Mission in India and other Indian and American donors supported the band's goal, which is to teach that environmental protection is important enough to require us all to accept some personal inconvenience or sacrifice.

"For the sake of our security, our economy and our planet, we must have the courage and commitment to change," U.S. President Barack Obama says. He promises that America will take the lead to fight global warming, cut energy consumption and reduce the country's dependence on imported oil. The president also appointed the first U.S. special envoy for climate change, Todd Stern, who is profiled by Deepanjali Kakati in this issue.

Indians and Americans increasingly share a love of running, explains Vaidehi Iyer in "The Best Foot Forward." Ms. Iyer testifies to the difference running has made in her life—something I well understand. When the weather cooperates, it's a great way to maintain fitness and combat the stress of modern life. The sense of accomplishment, exhilaration and camaraderie that one feels from participating in a race, regardless of speed or distance, is infectious. A fine "green" sport for spring.