

ae CARTOONS

# Mother Earth Sings the Blues

## Leah Wittenberg Shows Her Environmental Cartoons

REVIEW BY LYNN MCNICOL

The first thing to catch the eye in the show room is an "earth" beach ball dressed up like a person, arms attached and rigged up as a backpack to go on trips such as the recent Global Warming Walk along Route 7 that cartoonist Leah Wittenberg participated in. The beach ball character, Code Green, is a sort of Mother Earth mascot. Attached to Code Green, is, of course, one of Leah's cartoons titled "She Ain't Heavy, She's My Mother."

Anyone who has read *OITM* is familiar with Witt'sEnd, Leah's political cartoon that is published monthly on our letters page. But her cartoon creations began long before *Out in the Mountains*, and many were published in the 1970s with Vermont's *CommonWoman* monthly paper. Lynn Vera, who attended the cartoon show and was active in the Burlington Women's Community at the time, remembers Leah as one of the founders of *CommonWoman*, which was published from about 1978-82. Leah, now a psychotherapist in Burlington, also wrote many articles and drew many lesbian-centered cartoons, Lynn said. In addition, Leah was also an organizer of the first Pride marches, which used the theme "Out of the Mountains and Into the Streets" - fore-

(L to R) Lucy Gluck, Rose Wittenberg Wallace and Leah Wittenberg with Code Green at City Market. PHOTO PROVIDED.



"She does a lot of play on words which I like a lot," said Susan Smith, a neighbor of Leah's. Susan pointed out a cartoon picturing four varieties of gas-guzzling vehicles, each with its miles-per-gallon noted, and the tag line "Wanted for Crimes of Emission."

"I think it's a fantastic show in every respect,"

**She expresses her politics with a good clear line and with humor, and that's a great way to bring her messages to the public.**

SOPHIE QUEST, SOUTH BURLINGTON

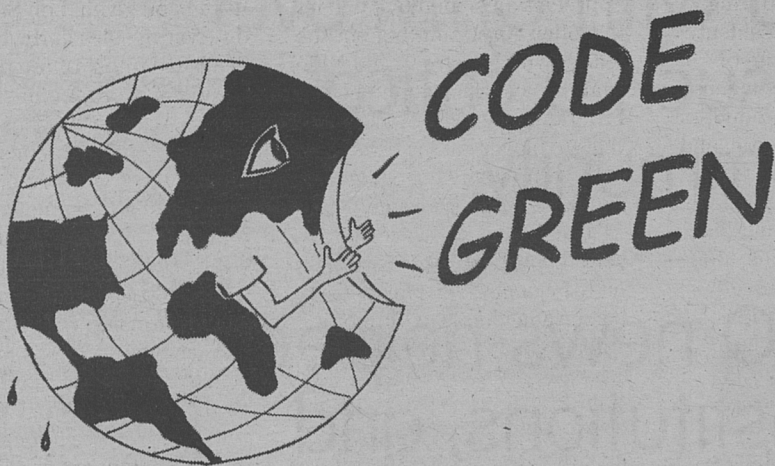
said Sophie Quest, a local artist. "She expresses her politics with a good clear line and with humor, and that's a great way to bring her messages to the public."

Leah said she and Lucy Gluck, also a Burlington activist, long ago came to the conclusion that "we have to do something about global warming." The portable Code Green - based on Code Pink, a women's peace group - has been employed by the two women in their scheme to get people talking about the environmental crisis we seem headed for, at places such as City Market and Burlington's waterfront.

In April 2007, Leah will show her cartoons again, downstairs from the current show, at City Market on the

member's art wall. And there's a possibility that later this month (December), she will show a few cartoons at ECHO, the museum at Burlington's waterfront and a fitting place for Code Green to get people interested in talking about our environmental future. ▼

WITTENBERG © 07



*We can stop global warming*

runner of the name of this newspaper, Lynn noted. In recent years, Leah's cartoons have taken on a more environmental flavor, often focusing on issues of oil and global warming, while retaining a feminist perspective.

"We were always environmentalists as feminists," Lynn said, noting that the issues are all connected to one another. Leah, she said, has "a feminist mind that never stops."

Many of the people attending the show appreciated Leah's sense of humor.

➔ Environmental Cartoons, By Leah Wittenberg, Center for Community and Neighborhoods, 82 S. Winooski Ave., Burlington Above City Market, Business Hours (call first), Through December 10.

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- March of Dimes-Vermont Chapter
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- Shelburne Farms
- United Way
- University of Nebraska Foundation
- University of Vermont
- Vermont CARES
- Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger
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