

# Green Friends

Nature on its own is indeed beautiful and clean. The hills and rivers do not need us to clean them. In fact it is nature's water which cleans us; it is trees which purify air for us. Because we have littered, we have spoilt its pristine beauty.

Amma



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## April Greetings

What a big month it was for PNW Green Friends! In March, Netsah Zylinsky, presented a Permaculture workshop in Bellevue and in April she will present one in Pt. Townsend. We will report on both in next month's newsletter. Our Kick Butt Day resulted in 30 pounds of cigarette butts being sent to TerraCycle! You will find that report in this edition.

We keep thinking that "next" month's newsletter will be shorter than the previous one, but that rarely, happens. This newsletter is once again packed with interesting information about gardening, worm composting, litter pickup, museum displays, and much, much more. There are even new projects to report, among them Visala's TerraCycle shed and Danielle's Soup and Serve.

Enjoy!

Karuna and Maheswari

Green Friends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

Green Friends is one of the projects of Embracing the World, a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

To join the Pacific Northwest Green Friends Litter Project write Karuna at [pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com](mailto:pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com)

## Bottle Garden at Amritapuri



The Amritapuri campus offers a 6-month 'Serve an Hour' course focusing on developing an attitude of selfless service among Amrita students. The course emphasizes student learning through hands-on service projects and offers opportunities for students to collaborate in creative learning opportunities with students at government schools in rural areas through school visits and educational outreach activities. In order to keep their commitments, a group of Amrita University students created a unique "hanging bottle flower garden" –using recycled bottles as receptacles for the flowers. The bottle garden is a 36-meter stretch of Jasmine, Lantana, Browallia, Lily, Tabernaemontana, Duranta, many types of Portulaca grandiflora (table rose), Ixora Miniature, and Springaria – all flourishing in recycled bottles hanging neatly in 4 rows and 48 columns long the walls near the mess hall in Amrita University's Amritapuri campus. "We are very happy that we could do something which Amma likes and want us to do along with our studies." says Trayesh, a first year student of engineering.

Read more at: <http://www.amritapuri.org/16356/bgarden.aum>



## Litter Project Membership

As of March 31, 2013, we had 290 members.

## Litter Project Hours

Fifty-eight members and nine guests reported picking up 146.67 hours of litter during March 2013.

(The statistics below relate to members and guests who report having picked up litter. They do not include those who do not report or who reported 0.)

Average: 2.56 hours

Range 2 minutes to 25 hours

Median: 1.33 hours

The group has completed 3256 hours of litter pick up since the project began in July 2011.

## Aluminum Can Report

Washington State Litter Project members collect and sell aluminum cans gathered from the litter they pick up and from friends, family and colleagues.

In 2011, they sold 323 pounds of aluminum cans for \$151.04. In 2012 the total was 281 pounds for \$134.67.

In March 2013 we turned in 49 pounds of cans and earned \$20.58. That makes 129 pounds and earned \$57.28 for 2013.

Since the project began we have sold 813 pounds for \$379.64. All funds were given to the Pacific Northwest M.A. Center.

## Cigarette Butts/ TerraCycle Report

In January 2013 we joined the Cigarette Brigade of TerraCycle.

We can send the cigarette butts to TerraCycle, at their expense, and they will turn them into recycled products such as plastic pallets. This keeps the toxic butts out of the landfill and waterways.

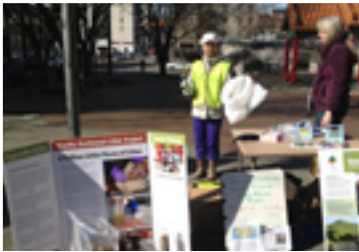
In March we sent 30 pounds of cigarette butts to TerraCycle for a yearly total of 40.50 pounds. TerraCycle January and February we sent 10.50 pounds of cigarette butts to TerraCycle. Terracycle estimates that we have turned in 40,484 butts!

# Kick Butts Day 2013

This year we decided to hold support Kick Butts Day in two ways. On Thursday Feb. 21, PNW Litter Project presented a compelling display of cigarette butt pollution on the environment at the Science Fair for Bailey Gatzert Elementary School located in Seattle's "Central District."

Sarva, a GreenFriends volunteer, stayed at the booth and was on hand to answer questions and invite folks to the next cigarette butt clean-up. Over 200 people viewed our interactive display.

Many people were amazed, surprised and saddened by the fact that cigarettes are not made of cotton and that each cigarette releases over 1,300 toxic chemicals.



The second event, held on March 3, was a cigarette butt cleanup in the International District of Seattle. The forecast was for rain, but we were delighted to wake up and find it was beautiful and sunny! In 2012, in the same area of town, twenty-four of us picked up 16,560 cigarette butts in two hours. This year, thirty people participated in the work party. We decided the butts were too toxic to continue counting them, so instead we weighed them. At the end of the work party we mailed in 30 pounds of cigarette butts to TerraCycle to be turned into plastic pallets. Most of these were from our two hour work party!

grocery sized bag full of items that would no longer be burdening our Mother Earth. We were grateful for the opportunity to serve her.

## From Theresa in Bellevue:

On that Saturday, I woke up thinking that I didn't want to pick up gross and stinky cigarette butts. I "encouraged" myself to go since I had signed up enthusiastically. I ran into Kalavathi at the sign-in table and we partnered up. We walked around block after block picking up butts and sharing Amma stories while enjoying the sunshine. Before we knew it, an hour and half had flown by! What a fun experience! I'm just glad that we didn't have to count the cigarette butts this year – yay!

## From Rose from New York (visiting Seattle):

I found the experience to be very Zen like in that the International District was very quiet, warm, and sunny that morning. I had the single-mindedness to look for cigarette butts and related trash. It also took on a game like activity in my mind when finding cigarette boxes and lighters: those taking on extra points so to speak, kind of like an Easter egg hunt. When picking up butts from grimy areas, I thought a lot about Amma picking up far more unsavory trash from the Calcutta streets and it made my work much easier. A woman passing by thanked me for doing what I was doing. I found 26 cents which I donated to the PNW Amma Center fund and I found a fortune on the street that said "You will never have to worry about a steady income." I thought that was a pretty good omen---do good works and life takes care of itself! I was so glad to finally be able to participate in one of the Satsang Green Friends litter project events, the timing of my trip worked out very well. Thanks for all your efforts in putting these events together. It's a great way to build community on multiple levels.

## From Jeff in Seattle:

I read the GreenFriends information board and got to understand the toxicity of cigarette butts and the impact on the environment, especially on fish. It felt great to read that and then be able take action immediately to help a little bit.

## From Shawn in Seattle

When I was picking up butts in the International District on March 3rd I had a good feeling. I am blessed to have living family members still alive who grew up in that area back in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's- when it was called Japan

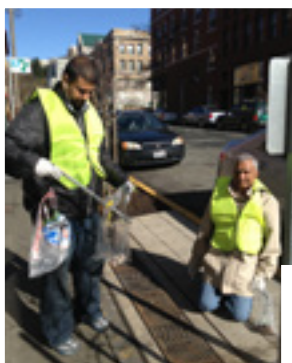


Town. In fact, Dearborn was called Mikado Lane (until the war came). The area is a lure for me because of my family's history there in addition to the fabled lore of the I.D. which includes the Panama Hotel and its connection to a popular novel.

Somehow, by picking up butts I had a sense of 'ownership' or stewardship of the territory. Being Japanese-American, I had usually felt different than the Chinese in the I.D. district due to language and cultural backgrounds but working 'down and dirty' with a red and orange vest somehow I was able to make eye contact with the locals there and I felt more part of the scene.

While picking up the butts one by one, I imagined who might have tossed it away. Maybe it had been a hard working kitchen hand that originally came from Shanghai. Or maybe it had been a young person out and about on a weekend evening. I also thought about the power of the accumulation of small acts. Each person's throwing away a single butt is not large transgression but obviously the accumulation is large in its effect. My mind automatically went to the converse- how people decide not to vote in elections because of the thought, "Oh, what's one vote worth, not much. I won't bother to vote."

Wearing an official red and yellow reflective vest gave me a sense of safety but also a semblance of legitimacy and a 'right of way'. At King's Street Station where the sign clearly said, "Restrooms Only for Amtrak Passengers and Personnel", the lady posted at the entrance gave me a big smile and waved me right in. The lesson there is I should always carry with me a red and yellow reflective vest!



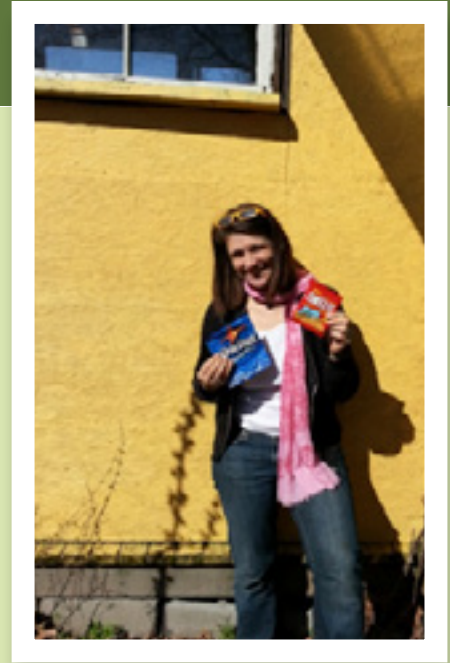
### From Kalavathi in Seattle

I almost decided not to come as I have been feeling overwhelmed with work piling up at home. However, Karuna encouraged me to come if I could, and I am so glad I did. We were blessed with one of the most beautiful days this whole winter that Sunday morning. The sun was beaming on us and the sky was a brilliant blue. I ended up pairing up with another devotee and having a really lovely conversation as we walked around the International District picking up butts. It was really a good time! Random strangers walking by smiled at us in our yellow vests- I assume to be encouraging for our work. It ended up feeling like a party! I left with my heart full and much more energy and enthusiasm to face the tasks at home. It's amazing how even a little act of seemingly "selfless" service always ends up feeling like I have received more than I gave.

### From Kalavathi in Seattle

On Sunday my daughter and I joined the work party and picked several bags full of butts. It was a beautiful sunny morning and we had a chance to chat while we picked. At one point I realized we were on a street I had picked last year and noticed how much less debris there was this time! Made me feel good for the locals :)

# New TerraCycle Project!



TerraCycle is an organization that is recycling materials that are not allowed in regular community recycling programs. In January we started sending them cigarette butts which they are turning into plastic pallets. Visala has taken on this project with a passion. She is devoting a shed behind her house to hold the items until we have enough to send them to TerraCycle. Please start saving and turning in all of the items you find listed below! You can 1) give them to Visala at her home (8201 Greenwood Ave North, Seattle) or satsang , 2) drop them off at Karuna's (3212 25th Avenue S, Seattle), 3) or bring them to the Local GreenFriends table at Amma's programs in May.



## OTHER NEW LITTER PROJECT IDEAS

### From Visala in Seattle: Cigarettes and Bars

Recently when I dropped off cigarette butts at the “Greenwood Sip and Ship” to be shipped to TerraCycle, I noticed there were hundreds of cigarette butts near the drain on the street outside the bar. I knew they were on their way to the streams. I picked them up and sent them off to TerraCycle. I went into the bar “The Crosswalk Tavern” and asked the bartender if he could put a can out to collect the butts. He did not respond positively, saying that he had put out cans in the past but that someone always stole them. They had grown tired of it and given up; I encouraged them to try again. The response had also been similar from another bar I had tried.

The next time I went to “Greenwood Sip and Ship” to drop off cigarette butts, I picked up the butts again.

This time I took the butts in with me to the bar. I stood there silently, and just showed the butts. The bartender looked at the butts and said “That’s terrible!” I told her I wasn’t anti cigarette smoking. I was just trying to help all of the salmon that die in the creeks. I learned this from a video called “Lost in Sound” which is about our local Puget Sound Creeks. All of the salmon in Longfellow Creek die before they spawn. They swim in from the ocean and then into the Duwamish and then die as they swim up Longfellow Creek..... BEFORE they Spawn! If you look it up on line there is tons of information about PSM..... Pre-Spawning-mortality..... It is really sad.

Anyway, it turned out that the bartender was an animal rights activist and the story of the salmon motivated her. She vowed to put out a can. She will collect the butts, and either I will collect them, or she will mail them to TerraCycle.

I also stopped at the bank and showed them the butts. The manager got on the phone to “Corporate” to request a metal cigarette ashtray for outside of the “Greenwood Chase”. If you are in the neighborhood, please thank him!

My last stop was at “The Yard” which I have been in to at least 3 times to request they put a can out. This time, when I showed the manager the butts, she was appalled and said she would put a can out.

Overtime, with education, change is not just possible... but PROBABLE!! YAY! 1 point for the salmon!

### From Karuna in Seattle: Cigarette Butts and QFC

Inspired by Visala’s experience with store owners, when I noticed a Cigarette Bin in front of QFC I went in and asked to speak to the manager. I thanked him for providing the “ashtray” and asked if he would be willing to save the butts for me so I can send them to TerraCycle. That way we can keep them out of the landfill and the water ways. He said that he was not willing to save them, but that I could come and empty it as often as I want to. In writing this, I am remembering I need to go empty it again!

### From Danielle in Bellingham: Soup and Serve

The litter clean up I hosted back in February was called Soup and Serve. There were some areas near my office that needed to be cleaned up so I sent out an invitation to folks. People would gather around lunch time and before we picked up litter, I would feed them soup!

Seven people including myself participated; four of us were members of the Amma Satsang, a few were friends and a few were from a Buddhist group. We spent an hour enjoying the soup and then set out to clean up the litter. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. We picked an area to clean where a lot of homeless people live in the summer. We worked for two hours and bagged about 20 bags of litter. It was a success!

## No GMO

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

<http://www.thehealthyhomeeconomist.com/the-four-steps-required-to-keep-monsanto-out-of-your-garden/>



## OTHER NEW LITTER PROJECT IDEAS CONT.

### From Karuna in Seattle: Involve your neighbors

Last year I invited neighbors to leave aluminum cans at my doorstep and some do that regularly. A few weeks ago I sent out this email to the contact list that goes to my neighborhood:

Many of you know I have been collecting aluminum cans (beer/soda/small cat food cans) for about two years. It is a part of the Pacific Northwest GreenFriends Litter Project. Mostly we pick up litter but we also collect the cans as a fundraiser for a Pacific Northwest Amma Center that will eventually be here!

We have started a new part of the project. We are sending the cigarette butts we collect to TerryCycle, a group that recycles things that can't be recycled in most systems. They are turning the butts into plastic pallets! By doing this we are able to keep the very toxic butts out of the landfill and waterways.

Interesting fact: Our group picked up cigarette butts in the International District last week. In 2 hours thirty of us picked up THIRTY POUNDS OF BUTTS! We did the same thing last year, although that year we counted them. In 2012, 24 of us picked up 16,560 butts in two hours.

I now have two big green bins on my front porch..... one is for cigarette butts and one is for aluminum cans.

If you are smoker would you consider collecting and putting your butts in the container on my porch.

If you know a smoker, would you consider asking them to save butts for you and you can turn them in.

If you pick up litter would you bring both the butts and the aluminum cans and leave them for me!

If any of you want to join the main litter pickup project you would be most welcome. I would be happy to send more information if you let me know you are interested.

If you have any questions about any of this, feel free to ask!!!!

Karuna Poole  
3212 25th Avenue S

It may not have been related, but there were many new cat cans in my bin an hour after this email went out to my neighbors!

Consider sending an email like this out to your friends, family and neighbors!

### Gardening help

<http://seattleseedling.com/>

<http://youtu.be/18ZuuAOUIXo>



## Stories and Reflections

### From Merlin in Portland:

This summer I got started picking up litter as my service to the world. I was staying in Southern California, very near the beach, and often walked along the coast there. Even though I preferred walking in the sand along the water, I almost always stayed to the paved pathway farther inland because I found that when I walked on the sand, I encountered so much trash that it “ruined” my walk.

The times that I did pick up all the litter I encountered in the sand, I was full of anger and resentment by the end of my walk because I had spent the time imagining all that was wrong with people who would leave trash behind after visiting such a unique and special place, and all that was wrong with the government agencies that weren’t doing enough to keep the beach clean, and all that was wrong with how people raise their children so that the children think it’s okay to treat Nature as their personal trash barrel. But then when I walked on the pathway, I felt guilty and selfish, thinking how all my hours of exercise were benefiting no one but me as I ignored the trash that was destined to wash or blow out to the beautiful sea and possibly harm the animals there.

Around this time, I heard about an M.A. Center being created in Hermosa Beach, just a couple miles from where I had been seeing all the beach trash. I didn’t know anything about Amma except that she was an Indian woman who hugged people. When I visited her website out of curiosity about the Center, what caught my attention was Embracing the World’s InDeed Campaign for Nature.

Through a number of clicks, I ended up reading someone’s blog entry about their efforts to encourage recycling and the use of trash barrels at an annual beachside festival in their community--one that had previously been a terrible occasion for litter-making. I don’t even remember now if the writer was a man, woman, or small group, but the spirit in which the post was written made all the difference. It was so positive, so happy! The writer conveyed great joy at being able to offer this service of educating others about the effects of litter, and in being able to divert trash from the ocean and beach to the waste barrels and recycling centers. I found similar posts by others, beaming with joy in photographs and describing their happiness at being able to gather up the trash left along trails and roads. We were both picking up trash, but I was acting from a sense of righteousness, and they were acting from selfless service.

This had a tremendous effect on me, and I began to pick up all the trash I encountered wherever I walked, whenever I could. I was no longer worn out and disgruntled by the experience. Instead of thinking bad things about how the litter came to be on the ground, I thought instead of how fortunate I was to have the opportunity to restore Nature’s beauty in this small way, and to be well and strong enough to walk and stoop many times in order to deliver my gift of this service to humanity.

And now I am the one beaming with joy, eager to pick up more litter! If I catch myself thinking negatively about other people dropping litter, I need only remind myself of all the negative, judgmental, and garbage thoughts I have dropped into the well of human consciousness through my own carelessness and ignorance. I can only hope that there are others whose service in purifying that well will correct the errors I have made.

### From Mike in Tacoma:

Satyavati and I went to a Walmart store a few weeks ago and found hundreds of butts everywhere. Especially over on the left of the parking lot where there was an outside employee break area with a small patio and some benches. The grass was littered with hundreds of butts everywhere. So if you are looking for a lot of cigarette butts, try Walmart.

### From Aditi who was visiting California:

Regarding the Litter stuff (and it is time) I was walking very early this morning barely after first light and came to a neighbor-



hood park in this CA town. Grass nurtured and watered in a very arid high desert environment. Small playing field and picnic tables and permanent trash containers spread around efficiently. Bottles, cans, fast food containers, newspapers, plastic ware, and just plain junk strewn all around as well - most of it within 2-3 yards of the receptacles. Felt chagrin, annoyance and was working hard not to be critically judgmental - but really, people!!! High end neighborhood, and if I was feeling all this in my small self, can't imagine what Mother Earth is feeling in Her enduring patience with her messy and unthinking children. Spent a half hour ferrying stuff to the 4 receptacles and happened upon 2 quarters by the picnic table. \$\$ for Amma's can redemption fund! Small blessing to end the task.

### From Laura in Seattle:

Enjoying litter pickup in the sunshine! Had a man stop and thank me. It feels like litter pick up creates community. I will see about creating a work party this spring or summer.



# PLANT SALE

**FOR CHARITY**

**“Look at the beauty and perfection of Nature.  
Everything in nature is so joyful.” Amma**

**MAY 4<sup>th</sup> 2013 9:00 – 3:00**

**PORT TOWNSEND**  
**AT THE CORNER OF LAWRENCE AND PIERCE**

Perennials, Herbs, Ground covers, Grasses, Refreshments, Charity Info

# Finding God in Nature

## by Sudha Borys

Supriya and Sudha



Amritapuri, Amma's ashram in India, is a place fluid with activity. Amma's darling children from every corner of the world join together in Amritapuri to spend precious time with Amma, to do selfless service, and to experience a new way of life.

Four years ago the realization dawned on me that it was time to be in Amritapuri. My heart was calling for That Pure Love and my mind was in need of purification.

Sarvaga, who built the foundation for one of two of Amma's tulasi farms invited me to work with the tulasi upon my arrival. Tulasi is a healing plant in many respects. Even being near tulasi is said to help ease one's mind. In India tulasi is considered the Divine Mother in the form of a plant. Every Hindu household in India reveres this aspect of the Divine Mother by keeping a tulasi plant near their front door. Tulasi, also referred to as "Holy Basil", is one of the queens of herbs in the Ayurvedic tradition, tulasi helps to alleviate symptoms of diabetes, cancer, headaches, stomach aches and the flu.

When I began the seva in Amma's farm my connection with nature as a part of Amma and a part of myself was in the bud stage. I had very little understanding of the intricacy of the life of plants, trees and eco systems in general. These last four years have shown me on a deeper level than mere words that nature is God.

At the tulasi farm we are working basically in pure sand, so, compost and Love are our bare essentials. Amma herself once told us; "Just love the plants". In this last year I began to do my spiritual practices in the garden, sing and talking to the plants. By doing this I began to see more of an improvement in their health than I had seen in the past year! Amma's instruction may seem simple at face value, but she is always looking at the deeper level of each situation, finding the root of the problem, and giving the simple yet ultimate answer.

Everyone who has a garden, a woodsy area to walk in or even a house plant can practice loving God through nature. A simple prayer to one's garden or even pouring out our hearts to the forest is a beautiful way to connect with our higher self. During the last US tour Amma said that when we pour our hearts out to another human being it is difficult to get relief, but if one merely tells their problems to a tree, plant, or nature itself one can gain great relief.



# Using Coffee Grounds for Worm Food



From Red Worm Composting- Worm Briefs 4/1/2013. Join their mailing list: [bentley@redwormcomposting.com](mailto:bentley@redwormcomposting.com)

## The Good

- Wet, well-aged grounds can provide excellent food and habitat value for composting worms. In fact, it was wet grounds from local coffee shop that saved my outdoor worm beds during a recent hot, very-dry summer. The same material has also been hugely beneficial as an over-wintering food in my beds.
- Apart from food/habitat value, the heating potential of coffee grounds also contributes to the cold-weather benefits of this material.
  - Coffee grounds can be easier to store temporarily (or to use in other ways) than typical food wastes.
  - When added in moderation, coffee grounds work great in smaller, enclosed worm bins as well.
  - Coffee grounds vermicompost is great stuff for your garden.

## The Bad

- Too much of this material added at once can easily lead to over-heating of a vermicomposting system.
- If it gets too wet, and is not mixed with anything bulky it can become anaerobic quite easily.
- Grounds that were recently used for coffee brewing (or those that have not been used at all) are typically not worm-friendly. Adding large quantities of either can harm your worms (especially if using a smaller system).

## The Ugly

- Certain fly species seem to love decomposing coffee

grounds sitting exposed outdoors (one variety produces maggots that exhibit an interesting hopping behavior when they get wet) .

- Over-heating grounds or even just grounds exposed to good air flow in warmer weather can dry out VERY easily, and become completely worm-unfriendly (not to mention difficult to re-hydrate)

## Helpful Tips/Info

- 1) Only add coffee grounds in moderation to smaller systems.
- 2) Mix with a variety of other materials (including bulky absorbent bedding materials)
- 3) If you have a lot of the stuff, make sure to mix with other materials and pre-compost or age for a while in a separate (non-vermicomposting) system.
- 4) Coarse grounds tend to be easier to work with
- 5) Keep grounds covered (and moistened) as much as possible in outdoor open systems (and even in enclosed systems with really good air flow).



worm bin factory 360

worm castings or vermicompost





# Plastics Unwrapped

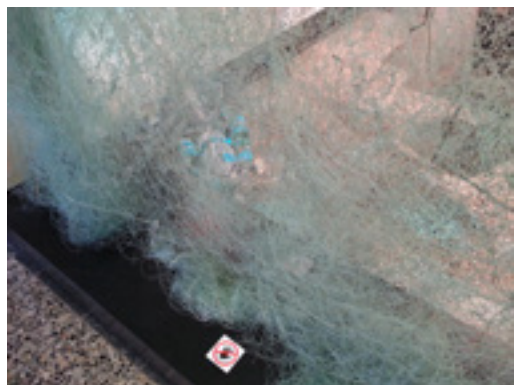
## December 20, 2012 – May 27, 2013

### Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

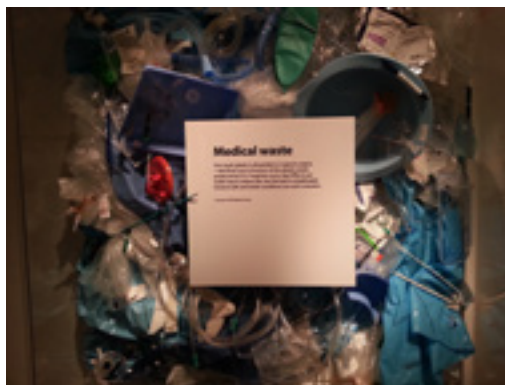
Open daily 10 am – 5 pm | Phone: 206-543-5590

Located on the UW Campus at 17th Ave NE and NE 45th Street , Seattle, WA

Only 50 years ago, we hardly used plastics. How did they go from being rare to being everywhere? Plastics Unwrapped, a new exhibit from the Burke Museum, explores how material culture was changed—rapidly and perhaps permanently—by plastics. Learn what life was like before plastics, how they are made, why they're so convenient to use, and what happens after we throw them away.



Netting



Medical Waste from One Surgery



Plastic Found in Stomach of one Albatross



Make a Difference

#### From Kumuda in Seattle:

Karuna and I visited the exhibit last week and loved it! There were some interesting and fun retro items that showed how we did things before we had plastic, and other displays with ideas on rethinking our current use of plastic and how we can reduce it. I especially enjoyed an old 50's newsreel type video expounding on the miracle of plastic and how its use will change our way of life (was that ever right!). The exhibit is interactive and gives a very visceral experience of the impact of plastic in our lives.

A very powerful and related trailer for an upcoming movie: Midway by Chris Jordan

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

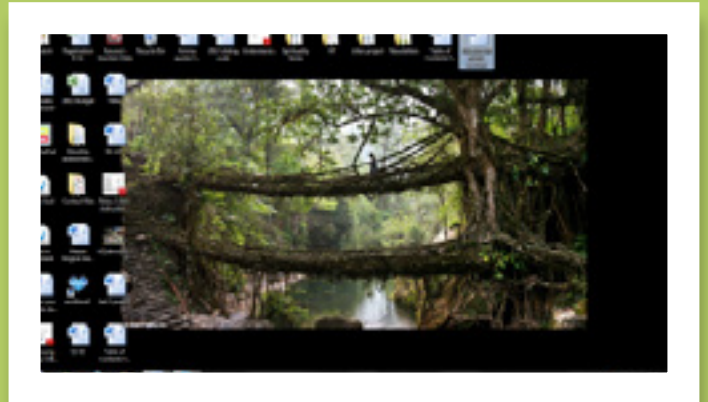
“Using spare narration and stunning imagery, Chris Jordan’s feature film Midway explores the plight of Laysan Albatross plagued by the ingestion of our plastic trash. Both elegy and warning, the film explores the interconnectedness of species, with the albatross of Midway as a mirror of our humanity.” Midway Island is 2000 miles away from the nearest continent.



# Followup from Previous Newsletter Articles

## From Karuna in Seattle:

Several people commented on the story about the Living Bridges in the March 2013 newsletter. I was intrigued by them too so decided to make one of pictures of the bridges as my laptop desktop page.



## From Saroja in Seattle:

The following is about the compost crank article (March 2013).

Question: Do you have to cut up the compost in order to use the compost crank?

Answer from Saroja:

That's a good question! Here's the long answer:

1. Bob collects materials and corrals it all in a big wooden bin.
2. When there's enough collected the next step is to cut everything into smaller pieces. [I was reading the newsletter piece by Jayanand about process at Amritapuri and the step 'material is shredded by machine' is the same, except we don't have a machine!] In the old days he used to run our electric lawn mower over the top of a bunch of material until he got through the pile - that worked really well. Now we've stepped up to a beautiful German-made hand mower for our 10X10 section of grass. That means he has to cut the compost material by hand with loppers, chop with a shovel, etc. He tries to cut pieces so they're no longer than say 10 inches.
3. So these pieces [10 inches long and less] are put in the 4 ft. bin I mentioned before, where it's mixed with all those other wonderful things.

At this point you can still crank the spiral down easily, but the further down you go, the more brambles and whips you get and they intertwine, so it's harder to pull up [I'm sure you pictured this, that's why you asked!]. His solution is to go down moderately at first. After a couple weeks plus, he's able to go deeper as the materials are hopefully cooking quite fast. Yes, it's easier with small pieces, but doable with larger.

## From Karuna in Seattle:

You may remember that Maheswari taught a Winter Gardening class in the fall and as part of that we made a hoop style greenhouse in my back yard. I had looked inside of it several times during the winter but it didn't seem like much was happening. This weekend I took the cover off completely and weeded it. There is kale, chard, lettuce and spinach that is edible. And I'm sure the worms in my worm bin were happy to get the leaves that weren't!



Setember 2012



April 2013



April 2013