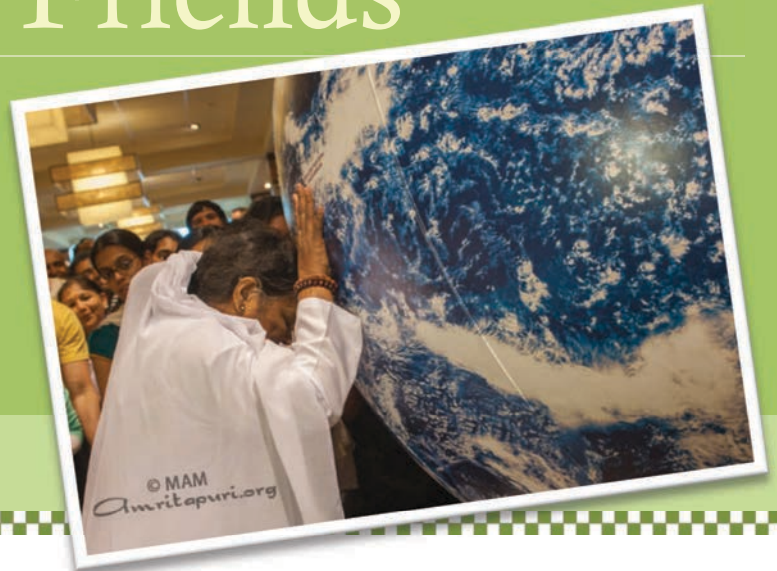


Pacific Northwest Litter Pick-up Project

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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August Greetings

We logged more hours of litter pick up this month than we have since March. We've also shot well past the 2000 hour mark. At the time of this writing, our grand total was up to 2156.13 hours!

This newsletter has some special stories in it. Achala wrote about her big 4th of July project, a project that really made a difference! Ajayya wrote about Tacoma and Olympia satsang's new project; turning discarded trash into new treasures. And of course, there are stories and reflections from project members from all over the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Another piece of news worth highlighting is that you can now buy a DVD of the three songs we sang for Amma at the retreat. More information about that can be found on the second page of the newsletter.

Enjoy!

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
<mailto:pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com>

Interesting Reading

Later in this newsletter there is an article by Ajayya about Upcycling.

Either before or after reading that article, click on the links below and let your imaginations go wild!

[Recycled Trash Art](#)

[Junk Mail Portraits](#)

[Denim Scrap Art](#)

[Glowing Fish from Plastic Bottles](#)

[Bird Sculptures from Plastic Utensils](#)

[Mobiles from Wine Bottles](#)

[Crochet Bags and Household Items](#)

[from Plastic Bags](#)

[Art from Old Tires](#)

[Reuse Men's Neckties!](#)

Litter Project Membership

As of July 31, 2012, we had 265 members.

4 new members joined in June!

("Members" are individuals who signed up for the project or who have participated in work parties.)

Litter Project Hours

In July 2012, 55 members reported picking up
172.38 hours of litter.

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

Members Average: 3.13 hours

Range 5 minutes to 40 hours

Median: 1 hour

The group has picked up 2156.12 hours of litter since the project began in July 2012



Litter Project Performance DVD

A DVD of the 3 songs sung for Amma during the Litter Project performance at the Pacific Northwest Retreat is now available.

Cost: \$15 plus postage (or order it and then pick it up at Seattle satsang or Karuna's).

If you are interested in purchasing a copy, contact Karuna at karunap108@comcast.net. Proceeds will go to the Pacific Northwest Amma Center.

Upcycle Craft Days

Upcycle - to use discarded or expendable objects to create something more beautiful, useful, or valuable.

Join us and turn discarded trash into creative treasures!

A group of Tacoma & Olympia devotees has begun creating upcycled crafts. Inspired by Amma's trash collection program, members are making beautiful things from scrap wood, beach finds, aluminum cans, and other discarded materials. The aim of the group is to repurpose trash into items that can be sold at the upcoming Seattle auction and during Amma's 2012 Pacific Northwest programs.

Achala has used objects found on beach walks to make magical mosaic mirrors. Brick bits, barnacles, shells, and refinery slag have been transformed into an artful, earthy frame for an octagonal mirror. She has accented smaller mirrors with mosaics of colorful pottery shards and delicate bits of patterned china.

Satyavati is using reclaimed wood and her painting skills to create magnificent altar pieces, and icons. She has also fashioned a beautiful, wooden Kali box, with a powerful image of the goddess inside.

Ajayya is using discarded aluminum drink cans to make small, intricately embossed boxes, painted Christmas ornaments, and lightweight jewelry.

The list of ideas, projects, and potential materials for Upcycle Craft Days continues to grow. Please join us on Thursdays, between 9:30 and 1:30 in University Place. Contact Satyavati for more information: 253-566-3648



Achala's mosaic mirror - beach finds set around an octagonal mirror.



Satyavati's Icons - repurposed boards that are primed, painted, varnished and enhanced with divine photos and images.



Ajayya's boxes - After cutting a soda can to make it flat, Ajayya traces a pattern on the metal.

Perfection in Imperfection by Achala from Tacoma



July 5th, 2011, as some of you may remember, was quite a traumatic day for me. I had gone down to the waterfront to take my morning walk with the dogs only to find piles of garbage left from the festivities of the fourth. Most of the piles were where the food vendors had been. The dogs and I spent well over 2 hours in a 100 yard space picking up and sorting the trash. There were other volunteers from local churches helping. I voiced my frustration at the vendors making money, yet being irresponsible with their trash. I was told that the organizer of the fair went to their church and that they would speak to him about this.

As the day neared this year, I thought about what I could do to change that situation. At first, I thought about contacting the fair's organizers and asking them to increase the price the vendors have to pay if they leave a mess. The date was approaching quickly so that option faded away.

Then the idea came to make 3 large banners. Never having done this before, I pondered what to make them from. It occurred to me I could use 3 old sheets from Ft Flagler retreat days. Then I thought about what to put on them. The answer came quickly into my mind. "Keep it clean and green Tacoma, please use trash and recycle bins. I got to work cutting each sheet in half and sewing them together. House paint was used for the lettering on one, but was drying too slowly so I used permanent markers on the others. Those that know me know that I really try to do all that I do perfectly, without blemish. On the painted banner, there were so many drip marks I couldn't count them. While I fretting about all the drip marks, the thought "There is perfection in imperfection, Achala" came into my mind. That was the running theme for both this whole endeavor and my life at this moment in time.

I made signs on sticks that could be pounded into the ground out of foam board from the dollar store. Another devotee found pictures on line that showed the effect that trash has on the ocean and the creatures that call it home. I printed the pictures and then collected cigarette butts to tape on the signs. The text spoke of the effect the butts have on fish. After hearing of the endeavor, a friend offered me the sticks for the signs as well as the labor and screws and washers to place the signs on the sticks. Another friend and her child helped by writing "Please help pick up trash" along with their hand prints on the back of the signs.

There were many, many more components to this story, but space will not allow me to detail them all. Throughout I felt inner guidance and on numerous occasions I had to let go of my own plans in order for the project to progress.

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On the morning of July 4th, I awoke at 4 a.m. and drove to the waterfront. Many vendors were setting up. Those who saw me had words of encouragement and every sign and banner went up without any problems. When I placed the last banner, the sun rose. That morning in particular was quite shining and beautiful, so clear and bright!

On July 5th, I awoke at 5 a.m. prepared to collect the banners and signs and pick up trash. As I approached the site where the food vendors had been, what I saw brought a large smile to my face and some tears to my eyes. There were two dumpsters full of trash and very, very little near the ocean. My heart was singing with joy as I collected the signs. Twenty out of the 26 signs and one of the banners were missing, but it didn't matter for they had done their job, fulfilled their purpose!!

I found myself walking further down the waterfront than I usually picked up trash. Where the beer garden and stage had been set up, there were recyclable cups strewn all over and empty recycle bins nearby. I usually am praying for the person who dropped the trash rather than being angry at them. Anger serves no-one and doesn't leave the warm fuzzies in my heart that the prayer does. There were so many cups though. I started singing "Jai Mata Ki, Jai Mata" in a way I hadn't heard it chanted before. This continued while I cleared the area of all the cups, at least an hour's time. At the end of this I was so completely full of bliss I could hardly contain myself.

I went home, took a shower and a bite to eat and brought the dogs down for their walk, still containing all the bliss I had been given. In the parking lot, one of the Metro Parks guys who knows I do trash pick-up came up to me and asked if I were angry, sad or happy the amount of garbage this year. I smiled big and told him that I was ecstatic for there was so much less than in previous years and that the signs had worked! He smiled and said they had figured it was me, but they weren't sure. The feedback from regular walkers was that the garbage this year was at least 1/2 of what it had been in years past; that the signs had worked at raising consciousness!

The next day, one of my walking buddies handed me a business card from the Solid waste supervisor, saying that he wanted to talk to me. When I called him, he said he just wanted to thank me for all the effort we put into the signs and the information presented on them. He said that information was well presented and didn't try to make people feel bad, just the facts and the visuals of the effects trash had. He also told me of the problems they had keeping trash out of the recycle bins and that each recycle bin had been contaminated and was actually thrown out. It saddened me to hear this and I gave him some suggestions for next year.

Thanks to all the people who helped make this venture a success and special thanks for the lesson gave in following inner guidance. I pray that we may all be still enough to "hear" the guidance that is so freely given by Spirit. JAI MA!

