

# 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

July was the second anniversary of the PNW Green Friends Litter Project. In those two years members, and their guests, picked up litter for 3,885 hours (+ the hours of all the members who choose not to report their time). At the time of this printing, we are already 3,943 hours so by the end of August we will certainly reach the 4,000 hour mark! Thanks to each one of you for all you have done to make the Litter Project a success.

Karuna

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)

## Important Information

### From Visala:

Watershed- No Butts About It Jun 16, 2013

Created by 4th grade students that share a concern about cigarette butts and watershed pollution. Over 85% of smokers drop their used cigarette butts on the ground. With rain and wind, the butts get washed down storm drains that then shunt them straight to our rivers, creeks, and wetlands. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFz6gP0pF9Q>

### Lost and (Puget) Sound: Restore Our Waters 7/18/2011

Follows three teens who lose a key down a storm drain. As they search for the key, they learn about stormwater pollution in Puget Sound and they discover they can do something about it. The film was produced for Seattle Public Utilities by Ijo Arts and directed by Bogdan Darev. <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5917>

### Other info:

#### A Mushrooming Alternative to Styrofoam

In a 40,000-square-foot warehouse, employees of Ecovative Design grow packaging using organic waste like corn husks and stalks -- and mycelium, the roots of mushrooms. "Right now, when you get packaging in the mail, it's a pollutant," Eben Beyer said. "You're going to throw it out. Our vision is when you get packaging, it should be a nutrient." [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563\\_162-57596881/a-mushrooming-alternative-to-styrofoam/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-57596881/a-mushrooming-alternative-to-styrofoam/)

#### Save America's Pollinators Act (H.R. 2692)

A bill has been introduced to Congress that would stop use of bee-toxic pesticide. For more information: [http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/1881/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action\\_KEY=11547](http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/1881/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=11547)

## Litter Project Membership

As of July 31, 2013, we had 333 members.

### Litter Project Hours

Forty-two members reported picking up 126.67 hours of litter during July 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: 3.01 hours

Range 2 minutes to 30 hours

Median: 1 hour

Members of the project have picked up litter for **3,885** hours since the project began in July 2011.

## Aluminum Can Report

The Washington State Litter Project members collect and sell aluminum cans (soda, beer and cat food cans) gathered from the litter they pick up, and from friends, family, neighbors 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 July 2013 we turned in 47 pounds of cans and earned \$19. That makes a total of 225 pounds and \$108.98 earned for 2013.

Since the project began, we have sold 935 pounds of aluminum for a grand total of \$430.82. All funds were given to the Pacific Northwest M.A. Center.

# Cigarette Butt Pick up Diary

(July 24-30, 2013)

by Karuna

My energy last year was limited due to health issues and as a result my participation in the litter project was mainly limited to working on the newsletter and organizing occasional work parties. But I'm back! I realized two weeks ago that my energy is solid and I started picking up litter regularly again, mainly focusing on cigarette butts! As I worked that week, I recognized that I was having experiences that were good reminders for me and that others might appreciate the reminders as well.



## Wednesday, July 24

I walked to the area on Martin Luther King Way that is near the bus stop. There have always been an abundance of cigarette butts there and that certainly hasn't changed. As I walked down to the site, I noticed a group of city workers cleaning weeds and brush around the trees in the area. While I was working, one of the men came over to me and asked what I was doing. He told me that he was a gardener for the city. He was fascinated by the information I gave him about the toxicity of cigarette butts. He said he would relay the information to his boss, one of the people he was working with. After cleaning up butts for a half hour or so, I walked back home. Later in the day, I came back to that area and left some of the cans that Visala and Satyavati had made for collecting cigarette butts. I was eager to discover if people would use them.

## Thursday, July 25

I returned to the same area the next day. One can was missing. The others hadn't been used. There were certainly plenty of butts for me to clean up though..... so many.



I pulled back weeds and found even more butts. I realized these were due to city or county staff using blowers to blow the trash and butts off the sidewalks.

## Friday, July 26

I came back to the area the next day to continue the cleanup. This time I discovered that the two remaining cans had been moved. They were now in an area where the homeless gather. I didn't think there were any more butts in the cans than when I placed them (I usually leave 5-7 butts in the cans so people would know what the cans are for).



This day I also found a congealed mess of cigarette butts, trash and leaves in the street, next to the curb. As I was sorting through it and pulling out the butts, a park department truck pulled up beside me. The passenger reminded me to watch out for needles. Good point. USE CAUTION!

This time I felt discouraged. There seemed to be no end to the cigarette butts in this one small area. I remembered that it is important for me to focus just on what I am doing and the difference I make in that one space. Tomorrow I can focus on another space. That is how change will happen.

## Cigarette Butt Pick up Diary -cont.

Celebration! Pat Burt has agreed to make professional labels for our cans!

### Saturday, July 27

There are more butts in the cans, not many, but some! And today I can see the difference in the whole area. Some of the butts I've been picking up have been there for months or years. Even though new ones are being thrown, there aren't nearly as many on the ground as before. It wasn't lost on me that only one day before I had felt so discouraged!

As I walked into some new areas on Martin Luther King Way, I could see some smaller piles of congealed butts, trash, and leaves. I realized all of these were from blowers. I can only shake my head about people thinking the blowers are cleaning up the trash. They are just moving the trash from one place to another. This time I noticed that there was broken glass in the mass. Again, a reminder to USE CAUTION!!!!!!



### Sunday July 28

Al and I plan to work in the International District today. Since the new labels aren't ready, I got up early and made a label to put on the cans we would be distributing. (The can in the middle of the picture was made by Satyavati or Visala.)

As we started to distribute the cans, Al saw a man smoking outside a men's club. That was an area where we always found huge amounts of butts on the ground. Al said he



would go talk to the man and ask him for permission to place our first can there. As Al started crossing the street, the man finished smoking his cigarette and headed back into the building. I laughed as Al started yelling, "Sir, Sir," and went running to talk to him. (Al has M.S. and walks very slowly so to watch him run at that speed was quite enjoyable!) The man was very interested and said he would use the can.

We put out five cans in a two block area and then started to clean up butts. We worked for one and a quarter hours and only cleaned one block.

When I was removing butts from one area, a man came outside his store and started smoking. I showed him the can, told him what it was for and asked if he would use it. He said sure and picked up the can to take it with him. I stopped him and asked him to leave the can near the tree. He was fine with that. He finished smoking his cigarette and then walked over and dropped the butt in the can. He smiled at me and walked away laughing. It was such a nice interaction.

At another point, I saw a man smoking outside his building and decided to talk with him since the last interaction

# Cigarette Butt Pick up Diary -cont.

had gone so well. He saw me coming and walked the other way, twice. I stopped trying and just watched to see what would happen. When he finished his cigarette, he walked up to one of the cans, looked inside..... and then dumped his butt on the ground beside the can.

On the way home from the International District, I checked the cans I had placed on Martin Luther King Way, but none had been used.

Later that day, Pat sent me the new design for our can labels!



**PLEASE HELP!**  
**Cigarette Butts Harm The Environment!**

### Put Butts In This Can!

The butts collected in this container will be made into plastic pallets instead of polluting the earth or our water.

## Monday, July 30

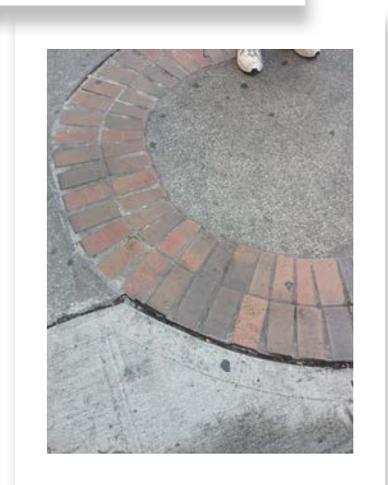
There were still no butts in the cans in the homeless area so I put the cans back where I had originally placed them. After I picked up the cigarette butts in that area, I walked down the street in the opposite direction from my normal route. I found a long line of cigarette butts, one that went as far as the eye could see. I decided I would put some new cans there tomorrow.



Al called and said two of the cans in the International district have new butts in them! In addition, there were changes in the

can we had placed in front of the men's club. Someone had taken the sign off of the can and taped it solidly to the wall of the building and put the can under it. That seemed like a really good indicator that they may take it seriously! I mailed two boxes of cigarette butts to TerraCycle.

I decided to end my diary at the end of the week, but want to end this article with the story and pictures our next visit to the men's club in the International District. This time there were LOTS of new butts in the can! And even more exciting was the fact that the area outside of the club was completely free of cigarette butts. This had been the most littered part of the street in the past. YAY..... such a feeling of SUCCESS!!!! It may still only be one day at a time, but on that day that area was CLEAN and FREE of cigarette butts.



# Stories and Reflections

## From Stanley at North Cove:

On the 13th of July we held a volunteer class sponsored by COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team). Liz Mack, volunteer coordinator, facilitated 12 of us in discovering how our beach walks can also help with the research project that was begun in 1999 at the University of Washington- so, besides our "normal litter pick up" walks, Resha & I are now members of the COASST TEAM. We have a kilometer section of the beach which begins at our front yard, making it easy to fulfill our contract of "Walking our Beach" at least once a month for the purpose of reporting on 'beached birds". We feel that we are playing a major role in marine conservation, while learning how to identify, tag, photograph and report about our bird finds. During the 3 hour class on the beach we found two birds, a Common Loon (COLO) and an immature Gull. Gulls are difficult to identify until they mature. I have attached a photo of our July "litter/COASST walk" with my niece and her son (from Hawaii)..... L-R Everett Martin (w/ clipboard), Darlene Martin & Stanley Sabre.



## From Skya:

I did an hour of litter pick up this month, and had an interesting experience. I was biking into town to buy groceries one Sunday, which is my usual pick-up day, and forgot to make sure I had bags and such. I passed a big field that had some obvious trash, and found I had two bags in my panniers; one for trash and one for recyclables. I started combing the open grass finding, as we all do, all sorts of hidden junk which one cannot see from the road. Fortunately, we've had such a long dry spell that nothing was too "ick", moisture being the agent for putrefaction of course.

But still, I was going gingerly, having sensitive hands as a body and energy worker. And then, I spied a chunk of white cloth -- which turned out to be a clean winter glove of the perfect size to fit my hand! What do you think of that? I put it on, and started shoveling junk with relish, enjoying the boundary between me and the trash. The glove went into a pannier to live with my little stash of bags, like the set of rubber gloves and bags that live in my car, and never again will I have to skip picking up something because I feel squeamish. Here's to the gifts in the garbage!

# The Tree Planting Project!

## by Ananya and Kalavathi

Have you been hoping to get more involved with GreenFriends but you are not sure how? Do you want to work with Mother Earth and help make our Seattle community more green and beautiful? Have you ever wanted to plant trees?

The Tree Planting Project includes tree planting and habitat restoration, and is a segment of Amma's Green Friends. We will be joining with ongoing tree planting and habitat restoration efforts in the greater Seattle area. Please help care for the earth in this way as Mother has so often asked us to do.

There are 2 opportunities to get involved planting trees and working with Mother Earth coming up this summer:

### 1. Habitat Restoration at Magnuson Park

The first work party is scheduled for Saturday, August 17, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Warren G. Magnuson Park at Sandpoint in north-east Seattle where we will work on restoration of the native habitat. Feel free to come for any part of the party. If you would like to sign up on-line, you may do so by using the following link. <http://cedar.greencitypartnerships.org/event/gsp/2060/>

### 2. Community tree and garden work party at Beacon Food Forest

The second work party is scheduled for September 21st from 10 am to 3 p.m. on Beacon Hill west of Jefferson Park. The Beacon Food Forest is a public land space that is being created to grow plants and trees specifically for harvesting fruit, vegetables and nuts for the entire community. For more information you can go to: [beaconfoodforest.org](http://beaconfoodforest.org)

If you would like to get involved in either of these events, or if you know of other tree planting and habitat restoration projects in our community for GreenFriends to get involved in, please feel free to contact: Ananya or Kalavathi (see email addresses below).

For information regarding fruit tree planting and the urban food forest, e-mail [annecrory@gmail.com](mailto:annecrory@gmail.com)

For more information regarding native plantings and restoration, e-mail [ammasananya@comcast.net](mailto:ammasananya@comcast.net).

Hope to see you there!

Nature is our first Mother. She nurtures us throughout our lives. We should all feel an obligation and responsibility towards Mother Nature. - Amma



## Making Lavender Wands by Satyavati

Last summer, one of Amma's devotees knew someone who had huge, beautiful lavender bushes. A few of us got together to create lavender wands. The wands were sold to earn money for scholarships for the children of the farmers in crisis in India.

If you would like to make wands for yourself, or to help with the scholarship program, you will find that details of the wand making process is easy to find on google. One site is [www.fairegarden.wordpress.com/2010/06/04/how-to-make-lavender-wands](http://www.fairegarden.wordpress.com/2010/06/04/how-to-make-lavender-wands)

If you would like to donate your wands for the Children of Farmers in Crisis fundraiser, please contact Satyavati at: [artammashh@gmail.com](mailto:artammashh@gmail.com)



## Gardening Adventures by Karuna

At least from my perspective, one of the main reasons that AI and I purchased the house that I still live in was so that we could garden. To me it was the opportunity to have a mini farm. At that point, we owned the lot behind the house. There were many fruit trees down there and lots of open land. We never anything as big as a farm but certainly did garden. I looked forward to canning each fall and having many jars of canned fruits, jellies, etc. in the basement pantry.

I didn't really know what I was doing, but the fruits and vegetables still grew. Then came years of childrearing and life in general and I stopped gardening. Four or five years ago I started again. By then the trees had



## Gardening Adventures-cont.

been growing for more than 30 years and there was almost no direct sun available. I made a garden in the lower lot a couple of years and was able to grow zucchini, potatoes and a few other vegetables. Then I moved the garden to the upper back lot, but everything was very shaded there so not much grew.

Two years ago, I decided to pull out all of the grass on the south side of my front yard since that is where the sun shines! Last year Akshay built 8 foot by 4 foot planters in the back yard. Then this spring I decided to pull out the grass on the north side of the front yard as well.

While things grew the previous two years, I still didn't really know what I was doing. For example, I only used a tiny bit of fertilizer when I did the original planting and never did anything else to the soil. This past year Maheswari started organizing gardening classes, which I took, and I also started using a worm bin so I would have the rich worm compost. With knowledge gained from Maheswari and Netzah, as well as information from time to time from Sri Lalita, Poornima and Mechas, I was ready for a new experience, and a new experience I had!



This year, I grew zucchini, summer squash, trombone squash, kale, chard, eggplant, beans, cucumbers, peas, lettuce, tomatoes, collards, marjoram, oregano, sage, and thyme. The garden was full of flowers which drew lots of bees. The worm fertilizer and Cedar Groves compost made the soil nutritious so almost everything grew abundantly. In



fact, the kale we planted during the Winter Gardening class last September is STILL producing!

One of the things I enjoyed the most this summer was watching.... and eating.... the trombone squash. I knew from my experience last year that you can eat that type of squash when it is small and it is a summer squash; or you can let it grow and it becomes a winter squash. The trombone squash grew so much while I was traveling to Amma's programs this year that I will have a great abundance of the winter squash form. (I think the big curved one in the picture is now almost 5 feet long!) The cucumbers were gigantic when I came back from those trips as well.

Well, I certainly have a lot more to learn, but I love seeing the results of what I have learned already. I'm sure that others who attended the Green Friends Organic Gardening classes also have plenty of stories to tell! Thanks to all who made our learning possible.

