

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



<http://www.wherethingshappen.com/36-perfectly-timed-animal-shots/>
Image Credit: Marac Kolodzinski



Contents

February Greetings
Recycling/Reusing
Litter Project Membership
Litter Project Hours
Beacon Food Forest Report
Stories and Reflection
Amma in Calcutta
Kick Butts Day Work Party
What is Permaculture?
TerraCycle
Composting Class

February Greetings

Welcome to the newest Green Friends newsletter! Once again it is full of information and opportunities.

On Feb 2nd, Maryellen, a Master Soil Builder and Composter from the Seattle Tilth, taught a composting class for GreenFriends. It was very informative and inspired those attending to begin or continue composting. More information will be included in the March newsletter.

Sign up now for the upcoming permaculture class in Bellevue or Port Townsend. This class is open to the public and it will fill up fast. For more information on permaculture go to page 6 of this newsletter to read the article entitled "What is Permaculture." Class registration link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?fromEmail=true&formkey=dDcxUlctSzhxWjU0bHd4aFVUZEZLakE6MQ>

And be sure to plan on joining us in picking up cigarette butts from 10-noon on Sunday March 3 in the International District of Seattle!

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)

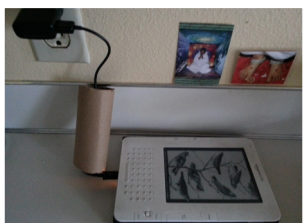
To join the Pacific Northwest Green Friends Litter Project write Karuna at pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com

Reusing/Recycling

From Karuna in Seattle:

After reading the article about reusing toilet paper tubes (<http://www.networx.com/article/10-clever-uses-for-toilet-paper-tubes>) in the last newsletter I decided to try out the idea of using them to keep electrical cords in order. I love the result!!!

I keep a shoe sized box next to the computer desk. I divided the box into two areas. One side holds various small cords and the other side holds the bigger computer electrical cord.



Litter Project Membership

As of January 31, 2012, we had 276 members.
0 new members joined in January!

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

Litter Project Hours

Forty two members and twelve guests reported picking up 88.28 hours of litter during January 2013.

(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: 1.6 hours
Range 3 minutes to 16 hours
Median: .71 hour

The group has completed 2863.88 hours of litter pick up since the project began in July 2011

Report from Beacon Food Forest Celebration



<http://beaconfoodforest.weebly.com/index.html>

On January 18, Maheswari, Karuna, Visala, Mechas and Sneha attended a celebration to honor the accomplishments of the Beacon Food Forest team, including their new matching grant from the Department of Neighborhoods.

The evening began with a sacred dance and prayers offered by the Tlalocotecutli Aztec Dance Group, who were dressed in amazing traditional costumes. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=399124513504608&set=a.146836522066743.37420.115216535228742&type=1&theater>

The dance was followed by a question and answer period to help us learn more about the Beacon Food Forest project.

The evening ended with a movie about Cuba, their economic crash and how they survived by creating community agriculture. See the trailer to ‘The Power of Community:

How Cuba Survived Peak Oil <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urTPsSFV2y8>

Stories and Reflections!

From Tirtha in Victoria, BC:

I just started [picking up litter] this week. If there's no one around I do my peace chanting, and also bring my camera in case I see any good shots. It's nice to balance litter-pick up with looking at the beauty as well. Today I remembered to bring a plastic glove and was picking up a lot of cigarette butts.. If this is my karma from being a past smoker, there will probably be a lot more butts to pick up!

Do people mention the humbling factor? I am walking on my own, carrying a plastic bag (and my camera), and I imagine I look a little eccentric. We don't have a big litter problem, but there is litter. People seem to be less interested in smiling at me and saying hi when I'm picking up garbage... I guess they can't be sure what I'm picking up or why, and I become a bit iffy... possibly more like one of THEM than one of US... But I'm enjoying it and feeling good about helping in a small way to serve nature.

From Aditi in Iowa:

It's 5 degrees below 0 this morning with a 20 mph wind that's making it much colder I suspect. It snowed most of yesterday after a previous day of rain that slowly froze. So with the bitter cold we have nearly the perfect trifecta... don't you wish you lived here and could experience a true winter??!

During the oddball high 50's couple of days we had earlier, I was actually able to get in about 20 minutes of litter pickup despite the lingering sciatica from last summer's surgery. So I'm pleased and happy to report even that little bit.

From Marmot in Renton:

For the National Day of Service, I took care of 6 children and we read, sang, and recited poetry about Martin Luther King. Then we all put on our gloves. Each had a trash bag and we went on a trash & recyclables "treasure hunt" to pick up litter at the local playground. The service team consisted of 2 two-year olds, one 4-year old, two 5-year olds, and one 9-year old. They did an amazing job. Even the toddlers were quite adept at recognizing garbage. We talked about recycling, compost, and garbage, and what went in each bin. We put in a total of 2.5 hours of litter hours.

From Sreemayi in Nelson, BC:

I'm SURE nobody can top the litter clearing that Amma herself did after midnight on 3 km. of the main road in Kolkatta ... with 800 helpers!!! I am so humbled. When I introduced Amma to my first public IAM-20 Class in Nelson last week, I read the web article of her mighty feat to the 12 students, who were about to learn her meditation technique.

That same day, Jan 26, was also the day that indigenous elders of Canada in the "Idle No More" movement were calling out to honour Mother Earth. I suggested that we begin honouring our Mother Earth, as Amma does, by noticing the throw-a-ways on the streets, parks and malls and picking them up to recycle or take to garbage cans. I'll be doing some follow-up at the Refresher class next month, with a photo of Amma with mask and gloves as our super-model. I imagine I'll be seeing more litter that I can't resist now! (See page four of this newsletter for more information about Amma's Kolkatta [Calcutta] clean up.)

From Karuna in Seattle/Amritapuri:

The day before I left Amritapuri, I heard a commotion near the cafe. I saw a group of very excited children looking up at a tree. I walked over to see what was going on and discovered they were watching a small monkey. Later that day I heard that the monkey had gone through the window of the chocolate factory (yes they make chocolate at the ashram) and stolen some chocolate! In the afternoon I saw another crowd gathered by a tree in the courtyard near the temple. Once again the same monkey was the center of attention. What a treat! It is unusual to see monkeys at Amritapuri.



Stories and Reflections continued

From Anonymous:

I read recently (in Oprah's e-newsletter) that studies show that SAD and circadian rhythm disturbances respond best to spending time outside, in early morning light. They found the time between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. was most effective, even if it was a very dull, dark day. Ever since I got M.E. I've had a lot of problems with my circadian rhythm being out of whack. So I decided to get outside as early as I can, and picking up litter is part of what I do while I'm out there. I've only been doing it a few days, but it does seem to be helping. I'm easily going to bed hours earlier. I've been a night-owl all my life, but I don't think it's 'natural'... I'm sure there would be few night-owls (or only avian ones) if there were no electric light

From Shawn in Seattle

After months of picking up cigarette butts I notice that I have developed subtle mixed feelings about the butts. On one hand I am definitely angry at people for throwing them on the ground. On the other hand whenever I see one on the ground in any part of the city as I go about my daily life I feel a subtle positive 'oh there's one' discovery type of reaction. I usually don't pick them up if I am not gloved though.

While out in the community garden on Capitol Hill, I sometimes see dog poop and I clean it up. I feel angry because dog owners fail to clean up after their dogs. My anger is fueled by the danger the poop can create because of the parvo disease outbreak in dogs in Seattle. I know that my reaction gives me an opportunity to learn how to deal with my anger but I also wish dog owners would bring a bag and clean up after their dogs. For more info on the virus go to: http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2019857775_parvo08m.html

From Kalavathi in Seattle:

My hours have gone up because I found a way to combine daily exercise, sadhana and clean-up: about 4 days a week or so I've been chanting 1,000 names along with Swamiji on my headphones while going for a run around Queen Anne Hill, and picking up litter all along the way. It's more like interval training that way (stop and squat), and its exercise, sadhana and karma yoga, all in one! Jai Ma!

From Laura in Seattle:

I committed to myself that I would do 30 minutes of litter pick-up any time I was tardy to work. The pickup was to be done by the end of the week that I was late. Historically I have been late to work at least twice a week. This week was no exception. The day after I set that consequence, I was tardy (although I haven't been since.) I waited until the last possible minute to do the litter pickup, 8 pm on a Sunday night. It was dark outside and I knew I should have done it during the day when I could enjoy the sunshine. Well, regardless, it was 8 pm on a Sunday night and I had on my warm jacket, a reflective vest, a ski cap and a headlamp and gardening gloves. My clever boyfriend had lured me to the door saying there was a kitten outside and then shut the door, handing me my coat and a plastic bag. Well, too late to turn back.

I was actually glad to get outside. I had been inside all day and I needed the fresh air. There weren't very many other people around. (Actually there weren't any other people outside that night that I recall, except an occasional car driving by.) I walked along the street I use every day to get to the bus. Some days I dislike that walk because of all the trash people toss on the ground. I don't know why so many people around my apartment don't know how to use a trash can, but they don't. I found a huge cache of extra tall beer cans by the trailer park that's near my apartment. As I was picking them up and dumping out the remaining contents, I saw something really dark and avian. A crow had died, wings wide open and head straight ahead, as if it were in mid-flight and had simply fallen out of the sky and landed here. I said a short eulogy for the crow and chose to leave whatever trash was touching him where it was. I felt honored to have had this connection to animal life that I wouldn't have been aware of by just walking by.

Now, as I walk to my bus, the path is a little less cluttered and I feel I have a special connection to the creatures that live near me.