

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

THE GREAT PACIFIC PLASTIC ISLAND

Well it's not quite an island, more like a garbage soup; an area thought to be twice the size of Texas that has roughly 100 million tons of plastic waste circulating in it. It is often called the "trash vortex" or the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The region where ocean currents trap the garbage stretches from about 500 miles off the Californian coast, across the northern Pacific, and almost to Japan. The Atlantic and Indian oceans, which have different current patterns, have plastic garbage patches of their own. Eighty percent of this trash is plastic with about one fifth of the junk coming from ships and oil platforms, and the rest from land.

Most of this plastic has broken down into small particles so you really can't see it from an aircraft or satellite picture. But from a ship you will find yourself surrounded

by garbage. In 2006 the UN Environment Program estimated that every square mile of ocean contains 46,000 pieces of floating plastic. The concentration in the trash vortex is far higher, where pieces of plastic outweigh surface zooplankton by a factor of 6 to 1.

This large garbage dump in the middle of an ocean wreaks havoc on sea life. The larger items are consumed by seabirds and other animals which mistake them for food. Many seabirds and their chicks have been found dead, their stomachs filled with medium sized plastic items

such as bottle tops, lighters and balloons. A turtle found dead in Hawaii had over a thousand pieces of plastic in its stomach and intestines. It has been estimated that over a million sea-birds and one hundred thousand marine mammals and sea turtles are killed each year by ingestion of plastics or entanglement.

Dr. Marcus Eriksen, of California's Algalita Marine Research Foundation, addressed this problem by saying, "It makes no sense that we take a material designed to last forever, then turn around and make products from it that are designed to be thrown away."

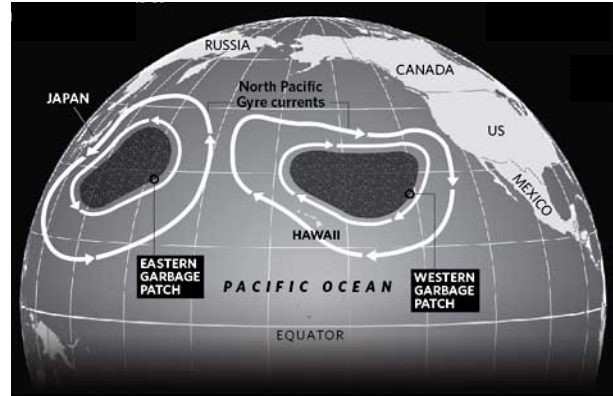
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Eriksen and a colleague sailed to Hawaii on a boat made of 15,000 plastic bottles to raise awareness of plastic waste in our oceans.



NATURAL BURIALS



We are interested in your thoughts on this subject. E-mail blake@snapwa.org

More information can be found at these websites:

naturalburialground.com

naturalburial.coop

greenburials.org

This is a subject that many of us are uncomfortable with and don't talk much about; what happens to our bodies at the end of life.

A recent poll by the AARP asked the question "Which type of burial is most appealing?" Only 8% wanted a traditional cemetery burial with 18% choosing cremation. 70.4% of those polled chose a natural burial.

The typical modern cemetery functions in a way to prevent the human body from returning naturally to the Earth. We are all familiar with typical burial practices. The body is embalmed with hazardous preservatives, placed in an expensive metal or

wood coffin which is then placed in a concrete burial vault. The typical cemetery is a field of grass requiring perpetual maintenance; mowing, watering, and literally tons of pesticides and fertilizers. Ten acres of cemetery contains enough coffin wood to construct more than 40 homes, nearly a thousand tons of casket steel and another twenty thousand tons of concrete for vaults. Whatever we might think of this kind of burial, it is not sustainable.

A natural burial is quite different. It is an environmentally sustainable alternative where the body is returned to the earth to decompose naturally and be recycled into

new life. Interment of the body is done in a bio-degradable casket, shroud, or even a blanket. No embalming fluid or concrete vault is used.

A natural burial ground preserves, protects and restores natural habitat while establishing a place where family and friends can visit, perhaps planting a native tree, shrubs or wildflower on or near the grave to establish a living memorial. If grave stones are used they are typically a flat, engraved native stone. A completed natural burial ground is a green place with trees, grasses and wildflowers, which essentially becomes a nature preserve.

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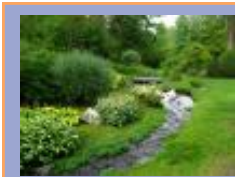
LEARN FROM THE MASTER COMPOSTERS

Composting is the best way to reduce the waste stream and create a healthy garden at the same time. It's actually easier than it seems.

To start, select a location with partial shade and construct the bin so the composting materials are on the dirt. Keep adding organic material with

"greens" such as vegetable scraps, and "browns" such as dry leaves or straw.

Always keep the pile moist, but only as damp as a wrung out sponge. Add air every 2-3 weeks by turning the material with a



Finch Arboretum

pitch fork or garden tool.

To use the compost, mix some in the soil before

you plant and

sprinkle screened compost around plants or as mulch around trees. It's also great to use in potting soil for indoor plants.

To learn more about how to compost attend the Compost Fair held twice a year every year at the Finch Arboretum.

The next fair is Saturday, October 17 from 11-2pm. Go through the educational stations with the Master Composters and earn your own free compost bin.

Sustainable September Spokane



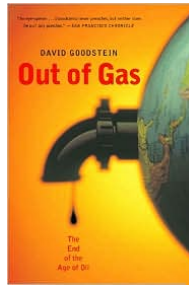
Community Minded Enterprises along with sponsors and supporters are dedicating a whole month to activities, films and education that will help prepare Spokane to be a self-sustaining and self-sufficient community.

Among the events are kids activities, tree planting, markets, and several tours. Some tours will visit community gardens and farms. On the 20th from 11-4 the self guided Green Home and Landscaping tour will feature energy-saving ideas in building and landscaping, home-siting for solar efficiency, strawbale construction, as well as green remodeling techniques. Tickets are \$10 or \$25 for a car load.

Also Living Green will have a discussion about sustainability in the home at Auntie's Bookstore on the 19th from 4-6pm. Attendance is free for this event.

For the full listing of events and to get tickets when necessary, go online at sustainableseptember-spokane.org. To volunteer during the events, please contact Angie Dierdorff at angied@community-minded.org or at (509) 209-2632.

OUT OF GAS



David Goodstein's book "Out of Gas" tackles two

words that have been coming in and out of American vocabulary for the past 40 years: peak oil. In 123 pages, Goodstein depicts the looming fuel crisis with a realistic perspective, informing the reader of the fuel path we've taken thus far and the alternative routes we can choose to take from here.

Back in 1956, geophysicist Marion King Hubbert made the startling announcement that the then dominant oil processing nation, the United States, would soon reach its maximum point of production. Hubbert claimed that when over half of the naturally produced

and stored oil had been drilled, oil production would reach its peak. From there on, we could only drill less and less until there was no more.

Skepticism of Hubbert turned into a respected and trusted theory used by many, when in the early 70's the US reached peak production as predicted. And it is this very theory that Goodstein says predicts a worldwide oil peak in the very near future and many believe we all ready have.

From the fragile origins of fossil fuels to the possibilities of controlled nuclear fusion, "Out of Gas" provides the reader with the broad spectrum that goes into fueling our world. It's an important read for all of us as we navigate through the uncertain future of energy.

Meet Our New Staff



We would like to welcome Erika Leeland to SNAP's Living Green program. Erika graduated from Whitworth University with a BA in Spanish Literature. After teaching elementary school in Houston, Texas, Erika moved back to the Northwest with a passion for educating people of all ages about sustainability and healthy living.

Natural Burials *continued from p. 2*

There are only about a dozen natural cemeteries open in the United States at this time, the closest one in the Golden-dale, Washington area. The concept is catching on though, with twenty more cur-

rently in the planning stage. Natural cemeteries are very popular in England where there are now over 200.

A natural burial is all about completing the circle of life. What

could be more wonderful than to become a part of nature? Perhaps a molecule from your body will end up in a tall pine, or maybe in a service berry eaten by a bird to sustain it through a long cold winter.

UPCOMING EVENTS

9/8 Green Drinks at Sante featuring Down To Earth NW, 404 W Main. 5:30pm.

9/10 Composting Workshop at One World Café. From 5-7pm, please call 270-1608 or visit oneworldspokane.org.

9/12 Fall Harvest Festival begins on Greenbluff.

9/12 Main Street Fair Enjoy Art, Food, Music, 3-8pm on Main Street between Browne and Division.

9/13 Spokefest Begins in Riverfront Park, with a 21 or 1 mile loop. Ends on Post Street Bridge for celebration. Register at spokefest.org.

9/15 Lords of Nature: Life in a Land of Great Predators, a documentary hosted by Conservation Northwest and The Lands Council. At the Globe

Room, 429 W Boone on Gonzaga Campus.

9/19 Solar Power Class Learn the basics of Solar Power, Registration is \$35.00 and includes materials. Contact Nadine 924-8803 or email nadine@ecodepotinc.com to register. Classes are held at Eco Depot, Inc. 1326 E. Sprague Ave.

9/19-20, Tour Des Lacs: Two-day journey from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene (and back) via whatever route you like, from easy to difficult. www.roundandround.com.

9/26 Valleyfest Festival, music, and food at Mirabeau Park from 9:00-5:00.

10/17 Compost Fair 11-2pm at the Finch Arboretum.

Farmer Markets

Community Roots Market at Fresh Abundance, 2015 N Division. Sunday from 11-4.

Cheney Farmer's Market at 1st St and College Ave. Every Fri 10-3.

Liberty Lake Farmer's Market Liberty Square, 1421 N Meadowwood Lane. Sat 9-1.

Millwood Farmer's Market Millwood Community Presbyterian Church, 3223 N Marguerite St. Wed 3-7.

NE Community Center 4001 N Cook. Tues 2-4, Free, no income requirements.

S. Perry Farmer's Market Christ Community Church, 1317 E 12th. Thurs 3-7.

Spokane Farmer's Market at 2nd and Division. Wed and Sat 8-1.

The Friday Market 1717 W 6th Ave. Fri 8-2.

West Central Farmer's Market Salem Lutheran Church, 1414 W Broadway. Tues and Thurs 11:30-1:30

Plastic Island *continued from p. 1*

So how do we clean up the largest garbage heap in the world? Unfortunately most think it is not really possible. Eriksen says there is no way to clean up this plastic soup, so his call is to

"do no more harm." He urges everyone to use stainless steel water bottles instead of single-use plastic containers and carry groceries in canvas, not plastic bags, the same thing Living Green has

been teaching for years. It seems like a small thing to do to address such a huge problem, but it is still true that it starts with us.



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