

TRASH FEST

Documents Compiled for Climate Smart Communities Action 9.3



Trash Fest was a month-long series of art and educational events centered on waste, held in June of 2016 at multiple venues in the Town of Marbletown and other locations in Ulster County. One of the main goals was to increase awareness of the ways we can all reduce and reuse waste. The artwork, installations and musical instruments were created out of trash by artists of various disciplines.

This event led to aesthetic improvements of the town's Transfer Station and brought more awareness of the Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission. More importantly, it helped advance the ECC's work on composting, streetlight reduction and a plastic bag ban. Other municipalities have shown interest in hosting similar events.

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All written by organizer

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MEDIA/PROMOTIONAL LINKS

Press Release on Marbletown's Website

<http://www.marbletown.net/2016/05/19/trash-fest-june-1-30-at-the-transfer-station/>

Article: Hudson Valley Almanac Weekly

<http://www.hudsonvalleyalmanacweekly.com/2016/06/02/trash-fest-kicks-off-this-saturday-at-marbletown-transfer-station/>

Trash Fest Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1684292518500030/>

Video: Public Access TV

<http://pandatv23.org/node/587>

Trash Fest Ad: for BlueStone Press (below)

<http://www.midhudsonmyco.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/BSP-Ad.pdf>



**TRASH FEST Comes to the Town of Marbletown,
Ulster County, NY
June 1-30, 2016**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2016

CONTACT: Margot R. Becker at MargotRBecker@hotmail.com or at 917-715-2697
Like us on Facebook at “TRASH FEST Ulster”—and keep informed of TRASH FEST events.

TRASH FEST, a month-long series of art and educational events all centered on waste, is coming to a variety of venues in the Town of Marbletown and other locations in Ulster County this June. TRASH FEST will engage the public through artwork and installations created out of trash by artists of all disciplines, and will educate the public on strategies for reducing and reusing waste. The goal of TRASH FEST is to generate a conversation about trash and foster ways for the public to better deal with it.

[Opening events \(Saturday, June 4th, 2016\)](#)

- Marbletown Transfer Station in High Falls, 12:30 to 3:30. Art, education, performance. Build art with John Michelotti, of Catskill Fungus. Performance by Ventiko. Education by League of Women Voters. Play on the art. Bring the kids.
- The Wired Gallery from 3:30 to 5:30.

[Concert at the Rail Trail Café \(Sunday, June 5th, 2016, 7pm-10pm\): \(310 River Road Exd. New Paltz\)](#). Four musicians will make music on junk: **Bill Ylitalo**, a member of Karl Berger's Improvisers Orchestra, The Big Sky Ensemble, and Gamelan Djam Gong; **Skip LaPlante**, co-founded Music For Homemade Instruments; violist **Anastasia Solberg**, of the Ellenville Chamber Players, VIOLENT PERseCution, and the American Festival of Microtonal Music; and **Peter Head**, of Gus Mancini's Sonic Soul Band and Pitchfork Militia.

[Marbletown Transfer Station, High Falls, NY \(all of June, 2016\): \(135 Canal Rd, High Falls, NY\)](#): Large scale, site-specific sculpture: **Skip LaPlante** is building a musical waterfall—water is the drumstick, and the public makes the music; **Alexander Lyle**, performer at Marina Abramovic's celebrated MoMA event, and featured artist in residence at Robert Wilson's Watermill Center, is creating a sculptural structure. **Bill Ylitalo**, Director of Gamelan at Bard and The New School, is making musical instruments of junk for the public to play. A new mural by High Fall's own **Eugene Stetz** will grace the truck trailers at the Transfer Station. And more!

[The Wired Gallery, High Falls, NY \(all of June, 2016\): \(11 Mohonk Rd, High Falls, NY\)](#). Come see art made of re-sourced materials by **Judith Hoyt**, **Chuck Davidson**, **Loel Barr**, **Lenny Kislin**, **Jeanne Verdoux**, **Ana Bergen**, **Chris Fanjul**, and **Carey King**.

[TRASH FEST Public Education Events and Workshops:](#)

- Film showing of *Bag It: Is your Life Too Plastic?* (Wednesday, June 15th, 2016, 6:30-8:30, Marbletown Community Center, 3564 Main St, Stone Ridge, NY)
- Reducing Your Personal Waste Stream, with Jacquie Ottman (Thursday, June 16th, 2016, 6:30-8:30, Marbletown Community Center, 3564 Main St, Stone Ridge, NY)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Composting Workshop (Saturday, June 18th, 2016, 10am-11am). (At the Cornell Community Garden at SUNY Ulster Community College, 491 Cottekill Rd, Stone Ridge, NY)
- Reducing Your Personal Waste Stream, with Jacquie Ottman (Thursday, June 16th, 2016, 6:30-8:30, Marbletown Community Center, 3564 Main St, Stone Ridge, NY)
- Reusable Bag Law Workshop, Wed. June 22nd, 6:30 at the Stone Ridge Community Center.

TRASH FEST is the brain child Margot R. Becker, a writer, collage artist, former dancer, and solid waste management activist. This project is made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered by Arts Mid-Hudson. TRASH FEST is sponsored by League of Women Voters Mid-Hudson Region (LWVMHR) and by the Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission (ECC).

TRASH FEST Report
Margot R. Becker
August 1, 2016

OVERVIEW:

TRASH FEST was a rich feast of diverse events that took place in High Falls, Stone Ridge, and Rosendale in Ulster County in the month of June 2016. All events were attended decently, but not as robustly as I would have wished. Ulster County has so much going on, there was a lot of competition for the time and attention of the public. Nonetheless, I would say that TRASH FEST presented multiple opportunities to reach a range of people within the community and beyond, and that strong connection and education were made possible via the time I took to talk intimately and with patience with those I met—whether that was with an artist, a local person offering administrative assistance, a radio show host, or someone with whom I happened to have a conversation while I was putting up fliers for the events. What is more, while I would have wished for broader attendance by the public, I made close connections with a range of much more committed people within the community—artists, arts professionals, and waste activists. This more committed group is the one that can take the base built by TRASH FEST this year and expand and flourish it to include new and unimagined uses for currently trashed materials that are in our waste stream, and this will happen in the months and years to come. The first TRASH FEST created a strong base from which to move forward into waste activism. And of course, I learned a tremendous amount—be it about organizing when many stakeholders have diverse agendas, doing a radio appearance, or cutting down poison ivy at an art site where the public might be likely to step!

PUBLICITY:

I learned that the publicity was an important part of the event—and not just to get people to attend. Many people who never actually came to an event or exhibition read about TRASH FEST in the articles in three newspapers or heard about it via the three radio interview that I gave (Tom Konrad of the ECC appeared in one of these as well). These were key opportunities to reach and educate the public about art and waste. Print ads appeared in the three key papers in the area—Blue Stone Press, Chronogram, and the Almanack. I also did a lot of flyer-ing in the local towns. We had a facebook page as well. As Tom said, I did Old School Publicity. Since I'm not great with computers, it would have helped to have someone with more interest in Publicity 2.0 techniques. But I did my best and managed to provide wide coverage of the events in simple but effective ways.

Calls for Art went out in a variety of grassroots ways. Two Kingston artists posted the call either on their facebook page or at artist housing. Ulster County Legislator and committed environmentalist Manna Jo Greene posted the call on her personal monthly newsletter, which goes out to thousands. The Saugerties Art Association posted the call, as did Women's Studio Workshop. Via the New York City realtor and committed environmentalist, Helena Durst, the call also went out to the Chashama community of artists in New York.

I also made three appearances at the Rondout Valley High School for environmental classes and clubs, asking for the youth to become involved. Although they didn't step to the fore (TRASH FEST happened concurrently with most of these students graduating from high school—not a time most wanted to take on new work), these appearances, like the others, enabled me to talk about art, waste, community activism and more with an eager and interested group of young people.

BRINGING TOGETHER DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS:

This was a massive project that launched just three months after I learned I'd be receiving an Arts Mid-Hudson grant. It was A LOT of work. Luckily, people stepped to the fore to help out. Doug Adams come out countless ties to problem solve or make sure something necessary did in fact happen. Tom Konrad also added his expertise—both in terms of organizing events and in terms of creating some water catchment for the waterfall

(good engineering!). Mike Warren was also incredibly willing to let am unusual project go forward, donating barrel for water and more. The League of Women Voters Materials management Committee, likewise, was there from the very beginning and stepped to the plate in many ways—for instance, by sponsoring the event in my Arts Mid-Hudson grant application, and then by bringing education and art events to the Transfer Station on the opening day of the exhibition. Artist Ana Bergen heard about TRASH FEST via a Call to Artists that went out to the Saugerties Art Association. We talked about the project and she got so excited that she offered to help with administration; eventually, she took on the organization of the hung art show, as well as helping me with countless other necessary pieces of work. Sevan Melikan, owner of The Wired Gallery, known as one of the best galleries in the area, stepped forward to host the hung art show. People offered labor, hung fliers, shared ideas, and more. At times, I felt incredibly moved by how the community came out to help put on TRASH FEST. Each interaction was an opportunity to educate—about waste but also about art. I had many chances to talk about aesthetics, as well as about the logistical issues of making less waste in our town. My favorite set of stakeholders was Henry, Ford and Jeff, the guys who work at the Transfer Station. At first, they seemed a bit confused by the whole idea, but they quickly began collecting materials from the waste stream. I'd come in each day to find new things waiting for me and the other artists to turn into art. Henry, Ford and Jeff were using their eyes and “getting creative with their waste,” as TRASH FEST’s tag line urges everyone to do. I knew we were doing things right when Henry invited his two granddaughters to the TRASH FEST opening.

THE EVENTS:

1. Transfer Station Art Exhibit: We had eight pieces of art by five artists (ten pieces by seven artists if you include the painting by an unknown artist that we pulled out of the garbage and used in the exhibition and the Metal Monster made by the Boy Scouts ten years ago and still on display at the Transfer Station). These included myself, Alexander G. Lyle, Skip LaPlante, Eugene Stetz, and Bill Ylitalo.

My work included a TRASH FEST welcome piece made of plastic bottles of colored water jammed into the metal fence around the Transfer station—gorgeous sparkling colors when the sun illuminated it from behind. I also made a piece called Gravity from pieces saved for me by the men who work at the Transfer Station, including a metal cage, boulders, tree back, metal springs and a metal grate. The piece contrasted natural and human-made materials, and mimicked a monument that stands pretty much forgotten at the entrance to the Transfer Station. My final piece, Obsolete, used waste television sets and text to bring together waste management facts with more personal reflections about waste, hope, and progress.

Alex Lyle’s piece was constructed out of waste wood from broken down wooden shipping pallets, which we found and resourced from a nearby facility. Alex, a former dancer who has worked in the art performance space with Robert Wilson and Marina Abramovic, used technology to project images of himself moving into the space and then created a built construction that made these images real in space. Alex work on the piece in multiple lights, from morning to dusk and well into the night via headlamp, all of which affected the final shape of the piece. The simple but elegant piece had a lot of movement and space in it, inviting viewers to look at it from diverse sight lines. It contrasted the elegance of the shape and complexity of the idea with extremely simple, unfinished materials. Alex chose to complete this piece during the opening, giving visitors a chance to watch him work and also to ask questions and interact with him as he built. For instance, one young boy spent a long time watching him, talking to him, and emerged completely jazzed about making things out of waste—a future TRASH FEST artist in-the-making.

Skip LaPlante made one of his Musical Waterfalls, which have shown at P.S. 1 in New York and at the Queens Museum, among other sites. Skip worked long days in the hot sun, throwing ropes over trees and hanging junk. Resourced PVC piping and other tubing formed “channels” though which the public could pour water, which hit the junk to make sound. Visually, the piece was like an insane web from a planet where spiders eat plastic (and indeed, even in our own world, birds and fish do in fact eat tiny

pieces of plastic, thinking it's plankton or insects)—colorful and baffling, amusing and visually fascinating. Tom Konrad, Chair of the Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission, constructed a 55 gallon water barrel with a spigot, using resourced materials, so that we could provide water. Mike Warren, the Town Executive, provided additional barrels. The highway department kindly filled the barrels with water.

Eugene Stetz created two bright and colorful murals out of resourced spray paint. These are the permanent offerings of TRASH FEST to the environment of the Transfer Station. Eugene is local to High Falls, the town where the Transfer Station is located, and he had always wanted to fill the empty spaces with images. One mural is sited on the concrete wall of the platform where waste materials are collected and serves as a warm welcome to Transfer Station visitors. The other is sited on an old shipping container that now holds discarded tires; at the top of the transfer station, it is of a woman flying or falling—it's unclear which—and invites visitors to a part of the Transfer Station where few generally go. This project was paid for by Doug Adams (with a donation from Tim Sweeney) and was not a part of the TRASH FEST budget, although I did oversee aspects of this art-making and was moved that Doug was interested enough in this project to take this one.

Bill Ylitalo, a professor of Gamelan at Bard College and at The New School in New York City, created the Junk Drum Kit for the public to use. More on that below.

All of this was joined by the Metal Monster, created ten years ago by a group of boy scouts out of junk from the Transfer Station, and the first piece of art to grace the Transfer Station.

2. **Wired Gallery Art Exhibit:** We filled two walls with art (the main gallery was being used for a show organized previous to our request to house TRASH FEST at the Gallery). We included art by nine artists. These included constructions using waste materials, photos of characters made of waste objects, colorful close up photos of the insides of composting buckets, “flowers” made of discarded zip ties, a construction made out of waste wood and the sole of an old shoe, paintings made of egg shells or of discarded aluminum foil, abstract creations made of old TV screens and found materials, and a sculpture made of an old bed spring and made pieces of found glass. Artists included Jeanne Verdoux, Chris Fanjul, Carey King, Corey Solinger, Poramit, Judith Hoyt, Chuck Davidson, Loel Barr, and Lenny Kislin.
3. **Opening Day Events (6-4-16):** On the opening day, we turned the Transfer Station into a kind of fair ground. Tents for education and art making went up in the central space of the Transfer Station. These included the League of Women Voters, which handed out literature about waste reduction, talked to the public, and had an art-making event (making art out of found plastic) that captured the attention of the younger girls. Catskill Fungi also had a tent and featured information on up-cycling garbage via fungi, as well as making art out of old jeans infused with fungus spores. How-to-Compost signs from Cornell Cooperative Extension added more education. Rosendale Trance Drum ‘n Dance brought a wide range of instruments made of found materials for the public to play—a hit with the kids! The public also got to play on Bill’s junk drum kit (see above), and it was used for the most part by adult men (who could really play a drum kit!). At the Transfer Station in the weeks prior, we used a found baby carriage frame, a teapot, and cups (all cleaned prior to the event) to serve the public cold water and watermelon under the hot afternoon sun. A found beach umbrella, secured to a frame created shade. All of this built a rich environment of fun, interactive play, art, and waste education.

After the Transfer Station opening, we all moved over to The Wired Gallery for the opening of the Hung Art show. More of a standard art opening event, this gave us all a chance to get out of the hot sun, convene for more quiet, intimate conversation, have a glass of wine and some fruit, and talk about art and waste.

4. TRASH FEST Concert (6-19-16): We were rained out on 6-5-16, but were pleased to be able to reschedule the concert a few weeks later on 6-9-16. The concert was held at the Rail Trail Café, on an alternative, non-paved, car-less transportation route. Under the green canopy of trees, a group gathered to hear Peter Head and Eric Tessle, Skip LaPlante and Anastasia Solberg, and Bill Ylitalo. The best attended event of TRASH FEST, this concert ***worked.*** It began with Bill introducing his instruments and singing along with self accompaniment on assorted bells, old pipes and plastic bucket drums. Peter and Eric began their set with a duet on old vacuum cleaner tubes, whirled overhead to make haunting sound, then went on to play a duet on two ratchets, and including music played on Peter's tin can guitars (eg: made of a metal first aid kit box or a Curious George lunchbox). It rocked, and at the same time, the instruments were joyously fascinating to look at and hear. Skip and Anastasia dueted on Skip's zither-like instrument, which he re-tuned before our eyes to mimic tuning systems from seven countries, and Anastasia's standard viola. Skip also delighted us with music made on his Styrocello (made of Styrofoam—squeaky when the Styrofoam was bowed directly!) The three sets of musicians played separately, then jammed together to close. Bill closed the concert by rolling a barrel full of metal junk down the hill—Noise? Music? We all laughed, not sure anymore which was which.
5. TRASH FEST at the Library: So that the literary arts would not be left out, we mounted a small and quiet exhibit of quotes about trash by great writers at the Stone Ridge Library, including Walt Whitman, Ray Bradbury, Sholem Alecheim, and the artist Anselm Kiefer.
6. Educational Events: TRASH FEST included four educational events (numbers for audiences are guestimated as I neglected to write down the numbers at the time): The first was a community discussion among about a dozen people about how to reduce our personal waste streams, led by myself and Jacquie Ottman. The group consisted of committed waste activists so the conversation could be on a high level. This core group has a lot of offer waste management thinking in Ulster County and we shared many ideas that surely will affect one another going forward. We also held a showing of the film "Bag It," which is about stopping the use of single use plastic bags... and is brilliantly graphic about what plastic waste does to our environment. About 10 people attended. It was a prelude to a discussion the following week about what kind of legislation Marbletown should enact to reduce the use of plastic bags. This discussion included County Legislators Tracey Bartels and Hector Rodriguez, and Marbletown Town Board Member Douglas Adams, as well as four members of the Marbletown ECC (including Tom Konrad, Iris Bloom, Jason Zimmerman, and myself), and many highly concerned community activists, for a total of about 14 participants. We came to a consensus about the kind of legislation we wished to bring to the Town Board and have since introduced this legislation to them. Both the Bag it event and the discussion about plastic bags were organized by Tom Konrad—thanks Tom! The final event was a composting workshop held at SUNY Ulster Community College and given by volunteers from the Cornell Cooperative Extension Community Gardener program. It was attended by over a dozen people, include several who came to one or more of the other TRASH FEST educational events.

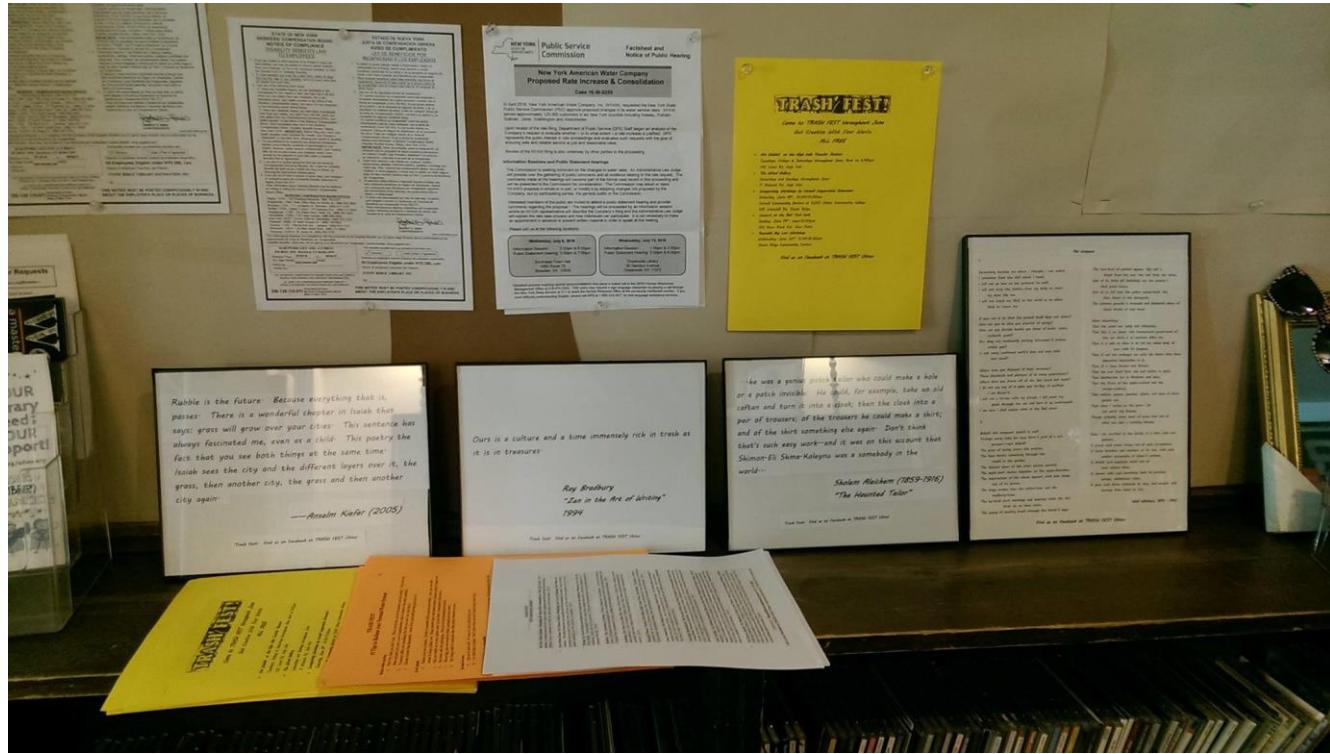
SPONSORS & COLLABORATORS:

Arts Mid-Hudson provided the first grant for TRASH FEST; indeed, I probably wouldn't have even come up with the idea if not pressed to do so by this opportunity. TRASH FEST received sponsorship in the form of collaboration and funding from the Marbletown Town Board. League of Women Voters was our original sponsor for the Arts Mid-Hudson grant and also put up a tent and held art-making activities at the Transfer Station opening event. The Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission also sponsored the event and provided substantial connections to resources and organizing around educational events.

FUNDING:

TRASH FEST received funding of \$2,115 from Arts Mid-Hudson and an additional grant of \$1,500 from the Town of Marbletown. Margot invested \$400 of her own into the project, and a private funder offered \$40. We stayed within this budget for the full range of diverse events. TRASH FEST generated interest by Doug Adams, who commissioned two murals for the Transfer Station with his own funding (with help from Tim Sweeney). While this is not in my budget, it was exciting to see someone become so involved in the project that he generated permanent art for the site.

I am extremely grateful to The Town of Marbletown, the League of Women Voters, Arts Mid-Hudson, Mikek Warren, Doug Adams, Tom Konrad, as well as my other funders, helpers and collaborators, for making TRASH FEST possible. While this iteration of TRASH FEST is without a doubt the largest and also the costliest for the town, we can generate more ideas that take fewer resources. It's a beginning, and where it will go from here is anybody's guess! More events and ideas to come over time. Many thanks to all.



Trash Fest promotional and educational material at the Stone Ridge Library

TRASH FEST

19 Tips to Reduce your Personal Waste Stream

Reduce what you buy

1. Don't buy what you don't need. When you do buy, go for less quantity and more quality. Don't buy two when you need only one—even if manufacturers make it cheaper to buy larger quantities.
2. If someone offers you something free that you won't use, don't take it.
3. Durable is better than disposable. Invest in the good stuff and take good care of it.

Avoid plastic

4. Reduce your use of plastic. Switch to reusable coffee cups and water bottles. Carry your own fork instead of using a plastic one. Bring reusable bags to the market instead of taking a plastic or paper one.
5. Ask your waiter not to put a plastic straw in your drink. Avoid plastic coffee stirrers.
6. Buy items with low packaging. Recycle as much packaging as you can.
7. Brown bag your own lunch to reduce packaging and save money.
8. Buy things made of materials other than plastic whenever you can.

Be kind to trees

9. Opt out of junk mail. It's easy at www.catalogchoice.org.
10. Use both sides of paper. Don't print when you don't need to keep a hard copy.

Keep useful things out of landfills

11. Repurpose things rather than throwing them away and getting new ones. Opt for repairing rather than replacing.
12. Getting rid of something that's still useful? Bring it to the thrift store, have a yard sale, or give it to someone who needs it.
13. Sell and buy things on ebay and Craigslist.

Eat your food, don't waste it

14. Use a doggy bag to take home food leftovers—and bring your own container to avoid making more plastic waste.
15. Instead of throwing away fruits that turn brown, turn them into smoothies and pies. Turn old veggies into soup stock.
16. At restaurants, order only as much as you can eat. Same goes for buying at supermarkets and farm stands.

Recycle

17. Find out what can be recycled in your community—then recycle as much as you can.
18. Return ink cartridges and electronics to your retailer for recycling.
19. Collect your food scraps to compost them or use them as animal feed. You can always find a neighbor who needs them if you don't.

Get creative about reducing your personal waste stream!

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Like us **on Facebook at TRASH FEST Ulster**—and keep informed of TRASH FEST events, too

TRASH FEST
RECOMMENDED FILMS AND YOUTUBE CLIPS

- ***Garbage Dreams***: This PBS documentary explores waste collection in Cairo, Egypt, where a class of traditional garbage collectors, the Zaballeen, collect 4,000 tons of trash each day, recycling nearly all of it. But when multinational waste collection corporations threaten the community's survival, three teenage boys born into the trash trade are forced to make difficult choices about their futures. There is also a *Garbage Dreams* game on the website. (79 minutes—2009) <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/garbage-dreams/>
- ***The Story of Stuff*** (and other *Story of...* youtube videos): The classic youtube animated statement by Annie Leonard. (21 minutes—2007) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM>
- ***Trashed: the Story of Garbage***: This documentary is a provocative investigation of one of the fastest growing industries in North America—the garbage business—and how every American contributes to the problem, often without even thinking about it. Narrative by Jeremy Irons. Seen on public television. (1 hour, 37 minutes—2012)
- ***Plastic Paradise: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch***: Every single piece of plastic that has ever been created since the 19th century is still somewhere on our planet. So if it never goes away, where does it go? Much of it into our oceans. (57 minutes—2013). <http://plasticparadisemovie.com/>
- ***Just Eat It: A Food Waste Movie***: Everything you ever wanted to know about food waste and food rescue. Did you eat your leftovers today? (74 minutes—2014) <http://www.foodwastemovie.com/>
- ***Waste Land***: This documentary follows artist Vik Muniz as he journeys from his home base in Brooklyn to his native Brazil and the world's largest garbage dump, Jardim Gramacho, located on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. There he photographs an eclectic band of "catadores"—self-designated pickers of recyclable materials, who then recreate photographic images of themselves out of garbage. The *catadores* begin to re-imagine their lives. A film about the transformative power of art and the alchemy of the human spirit. (1 hour, 39 minutes—2010)
<http://www.wastelandmovie.com/>
- ***Dive!: Living off American's Waste***: Inspired by a curiosity about our country's careless habit of sending food straight to landfills, the multi-award winning documentary follows a group of friends as they dumpster dive in the back alleys and gated garbage receptacles of Los Angeles supermarkets. In the process, they salvage thousands of dollars worth of edible food. Equal parts entertainment, guerilla journalism, and a call to action. (55 minutes—2009)
<http://www.divethefilm.com/default.aspx>
- ***Reuse! Because You Can't Recycle the Planet***: This film isn't about our waste problem. It's about solutions. And they are everywhere! Traditional recycling is not enough. The reuse mission offers a more sustainable solution that everyone can join. The film follows Reuse Pro Alex Eaves' cross-country adventure to the 48 contiguous U.S. states, as he finds endless reuse solutions for our waste problem that are not only sustainable, but many of which are easy and fun! And he learns just how reuse truly benefits people, planet, and wallet. (1 hour—2015)
<http://www.reusedocumentary.com/>
- ***Municipal Solid Waste - The Integrated Approach***. This 24-minute film focuses on how cities and towns manage solid waste. Made in 1993, it continues to offer a good overview. It won an international award in 1998.
<https://youtu.be/Fz-gOCoQYZg>

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TRASH FEST
RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- ***The Zero Waste Solution: Untrashing the Planet One Community at a Time***, Paul Connett. The authors, a scientist-turned-activist, details model programs around the globe that show the many different ways a community can strive for, and achieve, zero-waste status. (2013)
- ***Zero Waste Home: The Ultimate Guide to Simplifying your Life by Reducing Your Waste***, Bea Johnson. The author shares how she simplified her life by reducing her waste. Today, her family produces just one quart of garbage a year, and they now have more time together, they've cut their annual spending by a 40%, and they are healthier. (2013)
- ***Picking Up: On the Streets and Behind the Trucks with the Sanitation Workers of New York City***, Robin Nagle. Anthropologist Robin Nagle takes readers inside New York City's Department of Sanitation, which picks up the more than 12,000 tons of household trash and recyclables that the city produces each day. (2014)
- ***Rubbish!: The Archeology of Garbage***, William Rathje and Cullen Murphy. It is from the discards of former civilizations that archaeologists have reconstructed most of what we know about the past, and it is through their examination of today's garbage that the authors examine our present. (2001)
- ***Garbology: Our Dirty Love Affair With Trash***, Edward Humes. A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist takes readers on a tour of America's biggest export—trash. Waste is the one environmental and economic harm that ordinary working Americans have the power to change—and prosper in the process. (2013)
- ***Junkyard Planet: Travels in the Billion Dollar Trash Trade***, Adam Minter. The author, a veteran journalist and son of an American junkyard owner, travels deep into a vast, often hidden, five-hundred-billion-dollar international industry that's transforming our economy and environment. (2015)
- ***Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage***, Heather Rogers. The United States is the planet's number-one producer of trash. Each American throws out 4.5 pounds daily. Said to read like a thriller, this book excavates the history of rubbish handling from the 1800s to the present, pinpointing the roots of today's waste-addicted society.
- ***Recycling Reconsidered: The Present Failure and Future Promise of Environmental Action in the United States***, Samantha McBride. Recycling is widely celebrated as an environmental success story. But the vast majority of solid wastes are still burned or buried. The author argues that, recycling as we know it today generates the illusion of progress while allowing industry to maintain the status quo and place responsibility on consumers and local government. (2013)
- ***Food Foolish: The Hidden Connection Between Food Waste, Hunger and Climate Change***, John M. Mandyck. One-third of the food we produce is never eaten; 800 million people remain chronically hungry; the carbon footprint of food waste totals 3.3 billion metric tons, enough to rank as the third largest country in the world in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, behind China and the United States. But in waste, there is the environmental opportunity presented by wasting less food. Proceeds from the book are donated to food charities. (2015)
- ***The Brown Agenda: My Mission to Clean Up the World's Most Life-Threatening Pollution***, Richard Fuller and Damon DiMarco. Pollution is the single largest cause of death in the developing world. One in seven people in low- and middle-income countries die as a result of pollution. The book details Fuller's journey as he successful fights to save hundreds of thousands of acres in the Amazon rain forest to his creation of Pure Earth, a global nonprofit that initiates large-scale cleanups of some of the most polluted places on earth. (2015)

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Like us **on Facebook at TRASH FEST Ulster**—and keep informed of TRASH FEST events, too

Text for the art piece

Obsolete

by Margot R. Becker, 2016

TVs, paper, tape, resourced plastic

This text was projected onto old TV sets.

It consists of educational facts balanced with personal reflections on
waste

SCREEN 1: *OBSOLETE*

The concept of garbage is obsolete—like these televisions soon will be, or even reading things printed on paper.

In fact, there's no such thing as garbage, only valuable resources waiting for US to figure out how to use them.

Sound weird? It's already here:

CRADLE-TO-CRADLE: A phrase invented by Walter R. Stahel in the 1970s and popularized by William McDonough and Michael Braungart in their 2002 book of the same name. This framework creates manufacturing techniques that are not just efficient but are essentially waste free. In cradle to cradle production all material inputs and outputs are seen as either biological or technical nutrients. Biological nutrients can be or they can be composted or consumed. Technical nutrients can be recycled or reused with no loss of quality.

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY: A generic term for an industrial economy that produces no waste and pollution. Materials are of two types—biological **nutrients**, designed to reenter the environment safely, and technical nutrients, designed to circulate at high quality in the production system (they're easily recyclable).

Working on TRASH FEST, I've been digging in the garbage—alone or in the company of others. When I dig in the garbage, I see possibility. What could that thing be, if only I had the time to turn it into something different? And I learn stuff, too. You think you know your garbage but you don't unless you root around in it.

Working with others at the Transfer Station is a lesson in noticing what I'm not seeing. Their eyes turn different things into treasures than mine do, things I see only as trash.

The guys who work here pulled things out for us, and it was beautiful to see that they saw that I would have missed. I'd show up at the Transfer Station and excitedly turn my eyes to the growing pile of raw materials they were amassing for us. Sometimes I'd be here working and one of them would call out, "Margot, I got something for you," or they'd tell a member of the public who wanted to take something, "The art show's got first pick of all that stuff!"

There's sadness, too. The mounds of things that will never be used. The things the Transfer Station guys pulled out that I didn't have time to turn into anything, and they were returned to the waste stream. Garbage: endless possibility balanced by endless limitation.

SCREEN 2: WE WASTE A LOT OF FOOD

30% to 40% of all food ready for harvest in the U.S. never makes it to the dinner table.

A lot of this waste occurs from farm to retailer—some of it is never picked, some spoils during overly long transit or processing, some gets to stores but reaches its expiration date. It may still be good enough to eat, but it can't be sold.

We consumers also do our part in wasting.

We buy food and don't cook it or eat it before it goes bad.

All this waste equals 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food.

SO WHAT'S THE RESULT?

- 48 million people in this country struggle to have enough food all month. 15 million are children.
- The land, water, labor, energy and other resources used to grow, process, transport, prepare, store, and dispose of this food is all wasted, too.
- Food waste, which is the largest component going into landfills, quickly generates methane, helping to make landfills the third largest source of methane in the United States. Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide.
- Consumers waste money on food they never eat.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Don't buy what you won't eat, both in restaurants and at home.
- Even if you buy realistically, you will generate food waste via preparation. Compost your food waste. It's easy and fun. You can do it in your back yard or find a food scrap collection project in the area. Marbletown hopes to increase composting options soon.

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Looking inside my compost bin is entering a world of incredible wonder. What am I going to find? Will there be something growing in there? There's often some seed that has decided to sprout—or many. A whole forest of seedlings.

What living things will be in there?—it's not always the same bunch of bugs and worms. How did you get here, I want to ask them. I didn't see you last time.

How much will the food have broken down and how will the colors and shapes have changed? Will it smell rotten? When will that fresh, clean finished compost smell emerge? Where does that stinky smell go?

Looking inside my composting bins, I feel like a little kid—three years old, or four or five or something—and I think about all the actual little kids with their school compost bins, looking inside, feeling, talking, maybe shrieking, wondering.

SCREEN 3: *WE USE A LOT OF PLASTIC!*

The United States generates 33 million tons of plastics per year. The average American makes over 4 pounds of garbage every day.

Plastic makes up 13% of the waste stream.

Think recycling's a good answer? Only about 9% of plastics are recycled each year. We use 10% of the world's oil supply to make and ship disposable plastics—items that are used once and trashed.

SO WHAT'S THE RESULT?

- Plastic hangs around in the environment for centuries. It doesn't break down. Birds and fish eat this plastic because it looks similar to their food. This can be deadly to them.
- 8 million metric tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year. That equals five grocery bags filled with plastic for every foot of coastline in the world. We will double this by 2025. It is predicted that by 2050, plastics in the ocean will outweigh fish pound for pound.
- Most plastic in the U.S. is made from gas. As gas prices have sunk, we are using MORE plastic rather than less because its cheaper to make than ever before.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Use less plastic! Use A LOT less plastic. Get creative about avoiding plastic!
- Bring a reusable bag to the store instead of taking plastic ones. Bring a reusable water bottle or jar instead of buying water in plastic bottles. Ask your wait person to leave the plastic straw out of your drink. Be aware of plastic packaging when you buy things and avoid it. Don't buy plastic if you don't need it. Take care of it once you have it so you don't have to buy more.
- **REDUCE:** Don't buy it if you don't need it, don't take it if you don't want it even if it's free, and get items with less packaging or no packaging.
- **REUSE:** Try not to use single-use items like plastic bags and forks. Get a canvas bag that you can use again and again. Consider slipping a metal fork into your car instead of using throw away plastic ones. Buy things in thrift stores or at yard sales. Give it away for free if you don't need it.
- **REPAIR:** If it's broken, fix it!

- SHARE: Lend things to your neighbors and borrow, too. Maybe you don't need to own every tool or machine if you're willing to share them.

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What's so attractive about plastic? While working on TRASH FEST, I found myself in a Dollar Store buying rope (we found most of the rope we used at the Transfer Station, but we ran out at a critical moment).

Anyway, there I was, in this Dollar Store, where everything is fresh and new, made of plastic, wrapped in plastic. And I loved it. I loved the plastic. Even me, the waste activist.

Well, I thought, that's interesting. I want to hate this stuff and I do. Yet I still love it, too. I thought, if I don't think a little more about why I love plastic—and not just why I hate it—it will always have its power over me.

Heck, plastic is everywhere and will be for as long as I'm on this planet... and long, long after. So yes, it will always have power over me.

Plastic, oh dear Plastic. I'm attracted to your bright colors, to your molded and curvy shapes, to your appearance of cleanliness (you're not really all that clean, though, as you're made of a lot of toxic chemicals). I love your kitchiness, your seal-ability, how light you are. You're easy to carry, no muscle needed. Yeah, Plastic, I love you. I love you, Plastic dear.

SCREEN 4: *WE MAKE A LOT OF GARBAGE!*

Since 1960, the amount of waste generated in the United States has nearly tripled. About one-third of an average dump is made up of packaging materials.

SO WHAT'S THE RESULT?

Trash is expensive. Most communities spend more to deal with trash than they spend for schoolbooks, fire protection, libraries, and parks.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

People talk a lot about recycling, and that's important. But there are even better strategies.

- REDUCE: Don't buy it if you don't need it, don't take it if you don't want it even if it's free, and get items with less packaging or no packaging.

- REUSE: Try not to use single-use items like plastic bags and forks. Get a canvas bag that you can use again and again. Consider slipping a metal fork into your car instead of using throw away plastic ones. Buy things in thrift stores or at yard sales. Give it away for free if you don't need it.
- REPAIR: If it's broken, fix it!
- SHARE: Lend things to your neighbors and borrow, too. Maybe you don't need to own every tool or machine if you're willing to share them.

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I hope you'll learn more, get involved, change how you deal with your own trash, educate others, and become part of the larger conversation about waste management in Marbletown, Ulster County, our state, our nation, and our world.

If you want to communicate with me on these issues,
please contact me on Facebook at
TRASH FEST Ulster

I'm just one person, with my own ideas, and there are many smart people out there thinking about, and working on, these issues. But I'm happy to connect with you and help you find ways to change our garbage.

