

Garbage a renewable resource, recycler advises

By Meg Springer
Of the Emerald

Lane County generates enough garbage to fill Autzen Stadium to the rim seven times a year, according to Peter Guttchen of Begin Recycling in Natural Groups (BRING).

Garbage disposal is a serious problem in Eugene and nationwide. The United States throws away 200 million tons of garbage a year, and landfill space is becoming scarce, according to pamphlets distributed by BRING.

Environmental officials say the offshore barge that has been at sea more than 40 days packed with 3,100 tons of garbage from Long Island, N.Y., is a clear indication of the garbage disposal problem facing the nation.

"Seventy-five percent of the garbage we throw away can be recycled," said Guttchen, who is the community educator for BRING. "Recycling also extends the life of a landfill."

BRING is a non-profit Lane County organization dedicated to recovering and recycling materials from the waste stream. It has been providing recycling opportunities and educational information to promote recycling since 1971.

"I'm spreading the gospel about recycling. It's one way that the individual can make a difference in the environment," Guttchen said.

"We're a clearinghouse of information on recycling," said BRING manager Lissa

Weinholt. "We offer slide presentations for all community groups and send out information about starting recycling operations all over the nation. People call us with questions all the time."

Oregon is one of the nation's leaders in resource conservation and pollution reduction. In 1972, Oregon enacted the "Bottle Bill," which offers a deposit for some returned beverage containers.

In July 1986, the "Recycling Opportunity Act" went into effect in Oregon. It states that every Oregonian must be given the opportunity to recycle. In cities with a population of 4,000 or more, monthly curbside pickup of recyclables must be provided.

Glass, aluminum, newspaper, cardboard, brown paper bags, scrap metal and motor oil all can be recycled. By spending a few minutes recycling each day, said Guttchen, an individual can save money on garbage collection costs, conserve energy and natural resources, and reduce air and water pollution generated in the re-manufacturing process.

Recycled glass from Lane County is sent to Owens-Illinois Glass Co. in Portland, where it is melted down and turned into new glass containers. Recycling one glass jar saves enough energy to light a 100-watt lightbulb for four hours, according to Guttchen.

Re-using glass containers saves energy 100 percent, Guttchen said.

The United States has no domestic source of raw tin, so recycling tin would ease the United States' dependence on foreign imports, he added.

Oregon also leads the nation in newspaper recycling. Seventy-five percent of all newspapers produced within the state are recycled, compared to the nation's average of 30 percent. Recycling old newspapers cuts down on air pollution, water pollution and saves trees.

Manufacturing aluminum is a very energy-intensive process, and recycling can save 95 percent of that energy.

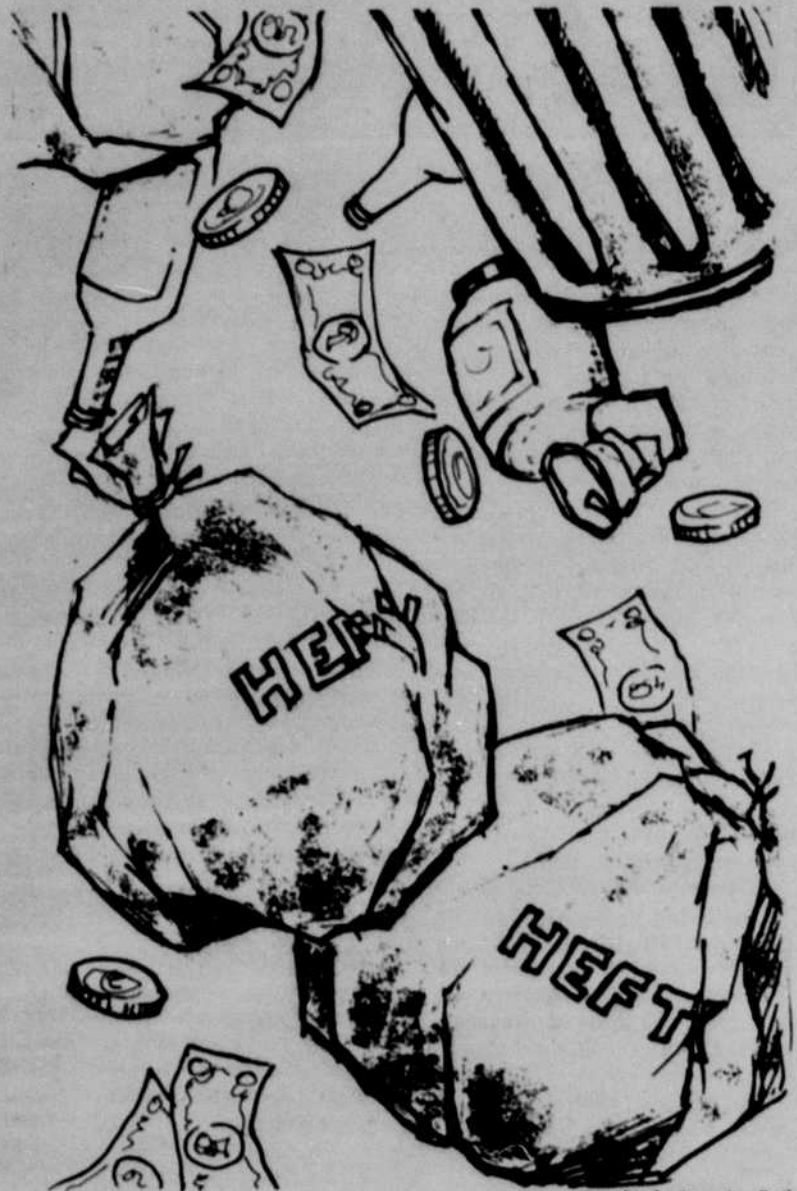
Plastics are not yet recyclable and pose a major problem. It takes 500 years for plastics in a landfill to decay.

"Buy products in recyclable containers instead of plastic or styrofoam," Guttchen said. "Forty percent of the price you pay is for packaging."

He also recommended buying bulk food in paper bags and then re-using those bags.

"Garbage is a very valuable resource, but people have to be constantly reminded about recycling it," Guttchen said. "People are lazy. They'll recycle for a few months and just quit."

For more information about BRING, call 746-3023.



Graphic by Lorraine Rath

'Alpine Fire' lets anger, emotion burn in sedate Swiss mountains

By Jackie Barry
Of the Emerald

Lush photography and emotional turmoil make excellent partners in the Swiss-German release "Alpine Fire," which will open tomorrow at the Bijou Theatre.

A boy's primeval journey from childhood to adulthood dominates the theme. The boy, a deaf mute, is a descendant of an "irascible" (angry) bloodline.

The film's action consists of an extremely effective blend of nonverbal and verbal communication enhanced by the documentation of the daily rituals performed by the boy's four-member family on their remote Alpine farm.

Nearly self sufficient, the family hikes to the nearest road (which we never see) and communicates with other mountain-side dwellers through arm waving and laundry line patterns seen through binoculars.

Each family member feels the pull toward civilization, but to different degrees.

Belli feels it the most. She listens to a small yellow radio and reads under the bedcovers while the rest of the family begins the chores of the day — milking, washing in the cold water of the trough, cooking breakfast.

The father feels it the least. He doesn't want the boy to attend a special school for the deaf and fears his educated daughter's head is being filled with "notions."

The boy feels uncontrollable anger at times. He plays pranks and wreaks havoc when the urge becomes too strong. He steals Belli's radio and smashes

it in the stone water trough, hooks an electric fence wire to the dog's metal food dish, and, breaking the last straw, pushes a gas mower over the edge of a cliff because it won't start.

The father says the boy's got the devil in him but, being from the same irascible bloodline, the father understands to a degree and tries to harness his son's violent adolescent behavior by assigning him the task of building a stone retaining wall from a rock face which must be chipped and transported.

After destroying the gas mower, the boy knows he's gone too far and retreats to a higher alp where he builds ritualistic stone towers.

Director Fredi Murer also wrote the screenplay for this film. It's his first feature film after two decades of documentary making.

He combed Europe for the performers who play Belli and the boy.

The portrayals of these and the other four characters worked so well together, a viewer might mistake them for a real family. Murer's script and direction must have contributed to this success, as well.

The breathtaking photo quality includes frequent use of subjective views through binoculars or telescopes and voyeur-like reflections in mirrors and through windows.

The visuals and story content are laced with sound ranging from well used silence, to the ambience of farm animals and chores, to dramatic bits of orchestration.

The irony of the family member's love for each other and the conflicts between them unleashes a surprising conclusion laden with tragedy and liberation.

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