

Danielle Hickey Emerald

Student Adam Hinkley, left, purchases some items from the University Bookstore on Sunday from cashier Luke Langstraat.

Teach-in to show students effects of overconsumption

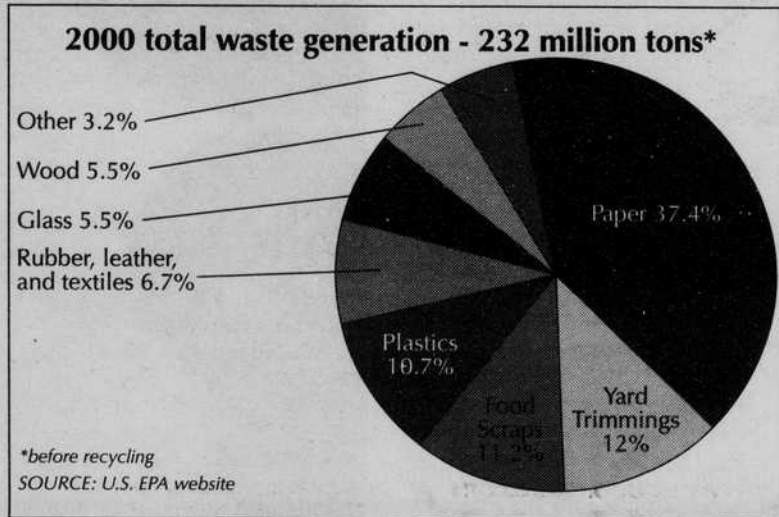
In the week of Buy Nothing Day, teach-in will question buying habits to reduce student overconsumption

Jody Burruss
Environment/Science/Technology Reporter

The average American generates about 4.6 pounds of waste every day. In 2001, the United States alone generated 409 million tons of waste.

Raising students' awareness about the waste they generate — where it came from and where it will go when they are done with it, is one of the goals of ASUO's Buy Nothing Day teach-in, which will be held from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. today in the EMU Fir Room.

The teach-in is an attempt to show, rather than tell, students why they should participate in Buy Nothing Day, ASUO Environmental Coordinator Vivian Vassall said. Organizers will use graphics, pictures,



ward solving this problem." Vassall said young adults and teens usually shop more than other age groups, and the hope is that before students go shopping, they will ask themselves if they really need what they are going to buy. Also, students should think about how items are produced and packaged, where that packaging will go and the effects the item is going to have on society and the environment.

"We should be dramatically reducing our consumerism," community activist Robert Bolman said.

Bolman, who will speak at the teach-in, said it is also important to look at how wealth and overconsumption is causing disparity around the globe. According to the United Nations Development Programme, 86 percent of personal consumption is made by 20 percent of the world's population.

"If we continue living (this) lifestyle, I feel we're doing ourselves a disservice," Bolman said.

Vassall said other discussion will focus on ways to consume less during the holidays by making gifts, and how to repair old items rather than

purchase new ones.

University alumnus Justin Lind said he thinks Buy Nothing Day could hurt the economy if enough people don't shop on what is usually the busiest shopping day of the year. Lind said he understands the idea behind the day, but he thinks people buying less is going to hurt local businesses.

"For the people that live here, it seems backward to boycott the economy locally when it's capitalism they have a problem with," Lind said.

Treefrog, who uses only one name and works for Morning Glory Cafe and Out of the Fog, said both businesses will remain open for Buy Nothing Day from noon until 6 p.m., but they will not sell anything. Instead, students and community members are welcome to come listen to live music and hear speakers addressing topics ranging from organic growing to alternative building.

"We want to see a different future," Treefrog said, "and call into question this consumer culture."

Contact the reporter at jodyburruss@dailyemerald.com.

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