

Trash

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want us to recycle and separate it. And that food thing is adding insult to injury. I'm already paying for a bigger can. We should be getting a break on our bill if you want us to do all the work."

Frustrated with the bags of garbage piling up, she called the city's hotline.

"I called and they told me – Take the other stuff to the dump! Are you serious?"

Even though food waste can go into compost, garbage cans still contain organic, decomposing materials, Baker points out. Food wrappings, medical waste, pet waste and disposable diapers, for example, must go into the garbage.

Since composting started, she says, a lot more gulls are visible in her neighborhood. She fears other scavengers will follow.

"What is going to happen when it gets warm?" Baker asks. "It's cold right now, but just wait until summer comes. We're going to have maggots, flies, rats. What are they trying to do—start a pandemic?"



Dee Baker

diapers sit around for two weeks, which attracts everything and the smell is horrendous."

To try to reduce the smell they moved the garbage bin farther from the house. It means extra work, yet still doesn't solve the problem. Is Banks worried about summer?

neighbors are allowing her to put some garbage in their can. She doesn't put the diapers in her neighbors bin, she says, just cleaner garbage.

Lauren Norris, sustainable living outreach manager for the Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, said just 20 percent of calls to the composting hotline, have been complaints, although the full data is not yet in.

Norris says the city is reaching out to help people solve problems. Already, representatives have visited 74 community events and reached 5,000 people. And this spring 500 volunteers and master recyclers are planning a massive outreach, with the goal of reaching 40,000 people.

The volunteers will be trained to help people solve garbage problems, and they will be paid \$2 for everyone they contact in person and 50 cents for leaving a door hanger. To volunteer call 503-823-7202 or email wasteinfo@portlandoregon.gov

"Portlanders are recyclers," Norris says. "Ninety-five percent of Portlanders recycle and it's a core part of who they are...People are trying to make it work. A small percentage of people are upset."

Norris says disposable diapers were a concern for her team, but the pilot project that tested the plan in four neighborhoods across the city, didn't find problems.

"Generally speaking, people were not as concerned about it as we thought they would be. It is a tougher situation and they may need to get a larger bin.

"It's important to keep the lid closed and you might have to move your bin farther from your



On the sorting line.

house – maybe to the far side of your garage. In the summer, keeping the bin in a shady place will help reduce the smell."

About 7 percent of people in the pilot did need larger garbage cans. And Jackie Lang of Waste Management, one of the 19 haulers who pick up Portland's waste, said from 5 percent to 7 percent of her customers have increased their can size.

For \$5 you can arrange with your hauler to leave out an extra bag. Low-income families with excess medical waste can get help to upsize their garbage can for no extra cost. Call 503-823-7202 to apply. Baker wonders if someone is making a profit from her problem. And she's not alone in that. Comments on articles about composting usually feature someone who believes haulers are making big bucks from the change to a two-weekly garbage collection schedule.

Lang says that's a myth. The changes haven't saved money for

haulers. The trucks are making the same number of trips because they are picking up compost and yard waste every week now, she says.

"The food and the yard debris still have to go to the transfer station every week. It's changed our routes a lot, but there are no cost savings for the hauler."

On comment threads some posters say they are so angry that they dispose of trash in the recycling or the compost, hidden in a brown paper bag. But Lang says she has not seen an increase in problems.

"There are always contamination issues," she says. "It's important. But to think everyone is going to get everything in the right bin every time: That's not realistic.

"On the whole people say it is getting easier and easier. Changing behaviors always takes time and education. But what we're hearing is that it's getting easier. People want to do the right thing."

'I called and they told me – Take the other stuff to the dump! Are you serious?'

-- Dee Baker

Lakecia Banks and her mother Danetta own Smiling Faces, an in-home daycare on N.E. Killingsworth Street. Banks says they were in favor of the move to two-week garbage pickup, which they hope will be good for the environment. However, they are concerned about odor and pests.

"It has been a real problem," Banks says. "We're having dirty

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" she says. "It would be nice if they came up with special rules for daycares and schools, and if they would take our diapers away every week."

Jodie Throckmorton, who also runs a home daycare, in Southeast Portland, says all but one of her parents uses disposable diapers. That means overflowing garbage, she says. For the moment, neigh-

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were valuable in celebrity gossip culture. She cited examples of photos of George W. Bush cutting brush in a cowboy hat and the "Mission Accomplished" moment when Bush wore a pilot suit, as well as a lot of fighting language coming from the administration as examples of hyper-masculinity.

"Despite the showroom presences of Condoleezza Rice and Karen Hughes, girls and women were especially and utterly irrelevant," Douglas said. "We had no role in judging or influencing what the government did.

"But we are still part of the nation," she added, "and common-shared stories about which we have strong opinions, are part of the glue that binds us together."

While celebrity journalism provided universal stories for women to discuss their values, Douglas feels the vast majority of what is communicated to women in celebrity journalism is negative. On the screen she presented many magazine covers with strict messages about how women should be judged.

"Women are to be judged first and foremost by their appearances," Douglas said. "The corporately defined standards of beauty remain very narrow, very white, and impossible to achieve.

"[T]he line between being too thin and too fat is razor thin," Douglas continued, "a policing and disciplining regime of body surveillance [...] has utterly naturalized in celebrity journalism."

Many readers consume celebrity content with a grain of salt, but the messages are very strong. For example, she said, these magazines prescribe that all female celebrities, and therefore women in general, should

Women are to be judged first and foremost by their appearances

base their happiness on having a husband and children.

"No woman is treated as complete without a guy," Douglas said. "Losing your man is a big tragedy, but remaining childless is a gigantic atomic disaster.

"Julia Roberts was constantly hounded about having kids until her twins arrived," Douglas explained. "George Clooney, by

contrast, is not hounded about when he will reproduce."

Douglas' talk focused on an era when social media were not yet popular; after the lecture a Q-and-A session led by Professor David Domke, chair of the UW Department of Communication, focused on celebrity culture and social media.

"I've seen a number of people comment on how they felt more connected to Whitney Houston's death through their Facebook communities than any kind of traditional media environment," Domke said. "So it seems that there is a relational capital with celebrities, that's greater than it's ever been, because everyone can quickly post something that is about that person."

With celebrity news more dominant, Douglas said, there has been a decrease in international news.

"The great irony of our time," Douglas said, "is that just when a globe-encircling grid of communications technology systems, satellites, light-weight digital cameras, and the like indeed make it possible for Americans to see and learn more than ever before about the rest of the world, Americans have been rendered more isolated and less informed about global politics by our media institutions."

Randal Beam, UW communication professor, asked Douglas: "I'm sort of wondering if the impression you're getting about the availability of international news has more to do with what you looked at as potential sources than what's actually out there," mentioning that sources like (English-language) Al-Jazeera are available to most people now.

Douglas responded by saying she is more interested, rightly or wrongly, in common experiences that people share through the media, and that what we have today with the web is much different than when Americans watched three TV stations and heard a common story.

Our common story, according to Douglas, covers in much more detail in the lives of celebrities than international events, and this trend is detrimental to American society.

To learn more about Susan Douglas, check out her website at <http://www.susanjdouglas.com>

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