



UWSR Eco Letter

January/February 2019

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Please note: The UWSR Eco Letter still includes the Commentary section. But now - to make navigation a bit easier - you'll just click on "read the full Commentary" to access it in its entirety.

The free **UWSR Eco Letter** comes from Upper West Side Recycling six times a year. Each Eco Letter lists events taking place during the following two or three months and also includes a Commentary on an environmental topic relevant to the Upper West Side of Manhattan. **We urge you to distribute this important information to appropriate people in your network.**



Make sure to open and save a copy of our [Hard-to-Recycle List](#) for more information on how to recycle a wide variety of items, as well as our list of [Environmental Organizations](#).

Please email us at info@uwsr.org with any information you may have about upcoming environmental events for our consideration.

As we compile this Eco Letter, one year moves all too rapidly towards its end, while the next waits in the wings. Always a time for reflection and gratitude, we want to thank you for your continued concern about the environmental issues on which we focus, now more important than ever. We wish you a new year of peace and hope.

- *Jeff and Scottie Twine*

First, some Recycling Updates (but be sure to read the Commentary below)

- [Single-use plastic foam containers will be banned in New York City starting January 1, 2019](#). This means that restaurants, stores, and manufacturers may not possess or sell polystyrene containers, cups, plates, trays, or loose fill packaging (known as packing peanuts). Nonprofits and small businesses with less than \$500,000 in annual revenue can apply for exemptions if they can prove that buying alternative polystyrene containers and products would significantly harm their finances.
- In mid-2018, Councilmember Rafael Espinal introduced a bill to [ban plastic straws](#) in New York City, but no action has been taken on this bill to date.
- A [NY State Senate Drug Take Back Act](#) was signed into law in July 2018. This law will hold manufacturers of pharmaceutical products responsible for costs of the take-back program, including drug collection, transport, and destruction, and chain and mail-order pharmacies will be required to provide consumers with collection options, including drop-off boxes and prepaid mail-back envelopes.

- The Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board has created two free recycling guides for for multi-family residential buildings. To download a copy [click here](#).

COMMENTARY: Re-Use and Repair

(Editor's Note: Our thanks to Jacquie Ottman: Much of the material in this commentary has been taken from her article, *What Comes After Shopping?*, and from her website. To read the original article and find out more about waste reduction, visit <http://www.wehatewaste.com/>.)

We New Yorkers generate an astounding 25,000 tons of waste every day—more than any other city in the world. About half of this is residential waste, of which three-quarters is potentially re-usable, recyclable or compostable. However, City budget limits, lack of markets for materials and poor participation by residents means that less than one-fifth of residential waste is actually recycled or composted at this time. Discarding all this recyclable material both squanders our natural resources and costs the City a great deal to collect the resulting garbage. On a broader scale, it also creates pollution and exacerbates global warming throughout the products' entire cycle, from the mining of raw materials to their manufacture, sale and eventual disposal.

There are potential legislative solutions to some these problems. For instance, the State electronics law that went into effect in early 2015 has resulted in the diversion of many electronic goods from landfills, to be either re-used, repaired or recycled. A significant section of this bill dealt with manufacturers' responsibility to take back the electronic goods they originally produced, a concept that could be applied to other types of consumable products and packaging materials.

Another legislative approach is the introduction of outright bans or similar approaches that sharply curtail the use of materials hazardous to our environment (including plastic goods, which generally don't biodegrade). To encourage re-use, small fees could be charged for certain items; e.g., a five-cent fee on single-use plastic bags passed the New York City Council in 2017, only to be repealed by the Republican-controlled State Senate. Now that both the New York State Senate and Assembly have Democratic majorities, this bill may have a greater chance of passage. In the meantime, you can make a difference by using cloth or other reusable bags for all your shopping.

The best option for decreasing this staggering quantity of waste would be to sharply reduce the amount we buy in the first place. Sadly, purchasing large quantities of consumer goods seems to be ingrained in our culture – and even in our identity as Americans. Since about 70% of the U.S. economy is based on consumer consumption, it's unlikely any significant reduction in purchasing will occur soon. *But right now, as we try to limit future purchases, we can focus on re-using, donating, swapping or repairing the goods we already own.*

Re-use, Donate or Swap

Each year, the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, in partnership with the Citizens Committee for New York City, awards small grants to organizations conducting reuse or repair projects, research on those projects, or other activities that will help lead to replicable reuse or repair models in New York City. For more information click [here](#) or contact kgrassle@citizensnyc.org; (212) 822-9567.

[Nextdoor.com](#) can help you re-use or swap goods in your neighborhood. You can also find ideas for re-using items or information on helpful local organizations detailed below.

Some Ideas and General Information

- Avoid using plastic straws.
- Carry reusable water bottles or coffee cups with you.
- Bring your own reusable shopping bag to the market and say no to disposable plastic bags whenever possible. If the cashier tries to load you up with plastic bags, remind them how harmful these can be for ocean creatures.
- If the sheet of paper you no longer need has printing on only one side, use the blank side for scrap paper. Do the same for the junk mail you receive.
- Some apartment buildings already have a bookcase or shelf of books for all residents to share or swap. Why not do the same for other goods as well; for instance, a Free Stuff box or a shelf in your apartment building or office space?
- Share or swap CDs, household appliances, tools, printers or other electronic items with your neighbors. Requests to borrow or receive can be posted manually on designated bulletin boards in the laundry room, mailroom, or other community areas.
- If you have an intranet, you can do the posting electronically. Intranets are hosted—for your building or building complex only—by services such as [Building Link](#) or [Verizon Concierge](#). For a fee, these services provide access to property-specific news, calendars, amenities and services.
- Community refrigerators are becoming more popular in Europe and could be utilized in buildings here. How about a community food shelf for just dry goods as well?
- There are informal exchanges for books, furniture, and other goods on many blocks on the Upper West Side. Just put what you want to give away on balustrades, next to stoops, or elsewhere on your street. The goods are usually picked up quite quickly.
- Also, some block associations (such as the [West 102nd & 103rd Streets Block Association](#)) host block parties or street fairs where used goods can be donated, swapped or sold. For a calendar of these events, see the [nyc.gov](#) or the [newyorkled.com](#) sites.
- Some churches and other community organizations sell used goods to raise funds.
- Sacramento, California now has a Library of Things. Residents can borrow guitars, sewing machines, cookie cutters, and many other objects. Why not here in NYC?

Where to Donate Specific Types of Goods

Toys

Pass toys on to relatives, friends, or neighbors with younger children; if you can't do that, most plastic or metal toys can be donated or recycled in your building along with other plastic, metal and glass.

These organizations accept donations of toys:

- [Good+ Foundation](#), 306 West 37th Street, 8th floor, NYC; (212) 736-1777; info@goodplusfoundation.org; (toys are given to antipoverty programs)
- [Goodwill Industries](#), (212) 874-5050 (vintage toys and clean stuffed animals only)
- [Grow NYC](#), at their Stop 'n Shop events, (212) 788-7900 (see listing below)
- [NYC Mamas Give Back](#) (supports agencies and shelters in the NYC area)

servicing homeless pregnant woman and families and young children at or below the poverty line)

- [United War Veterans Council](#), (212) 838-8982 (toys, baby items)

Furniture

- [Goodwill Industries](#), (212) 874-5050
- [Housing Works](#), (212) 579-7566; (212) 222-3550
- [The Salvation Army](#), (212) 757-2311
- [United War Veterans Council](#), (212) 838-8982

Textiles (see also our *Hard-to-Recycle List*)

- [Grow NYC](#), (212) 788-7900 (accepts cleans textiles at local greenmarkets)
- [NYC Mamas Give Back](#) (accepts gently used clothing and other textiles for infants and young children in poor families)
- [re-fashionNYC](#), call 311 (will set up containers and pick up textiles from apartment buildings with 10 or more units; *no fabric scraps, pillows, comforters, luggage or carpeting*)
- Thrift Shops such as [Goodwill Industries](#), [Housing Works](#) and [The Salvation Army](#) (see below and our *Hard-To-Recycle List*)
- [United War Veterans Council](#), (212) 838-8982 (will pick up clothing and other textiles)
- [Wearable Collections](#), (646) 515-4387 (picks up most textiles and footwear from larger buildings and non-profits; *they don't accept fabric scraps, pillows, comforters, luggage or carpeting* (see below for ideas on re-use of these items)

- *Fabric Scraps* can be re-sewn into book covers, wall hangings. snack bags, shopping bags, quilts, children's blankets or incorporated into art.

- *Pillows and Comforters*

- [The Humane Society of New York](#), (212) 752-4840 (used for animal bedding)
- [New York City Rescue Mission](#), (646) 362-3157 (gives to homeless shelters; also accepts clothing, footwear and towels)

- *Luggage*

- [Goodwill Industries](#), (212) 874-5050
- [The Salvation Army](#), (212) 757-2311

- *Carpeting*

- [Carpet Cycle](#), 360 W 1st Ave, Roselle, NJ 07203; (973) 732-4858 (removes and recycles old carpet tiles and padding from commercial buildings for a fee)

Electronic Goods (see also our *Hard-to-Recycle List*)

- Computers and other electronics are accepted at periodic collection events hosted by [Lower East Ecology](#), (212) 477-4022, as well as at their Brooklyn warehouse. See the Electronic & Textile Recycling Section of our Events Listing or our *Hard-to Recycle List*
- Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, 245 West 104th Street; (212) 866-3970. (Office accepts used cell phones for re-use or recycling on an on-going basis.)
- [United War Veterans Council](#) (will pick up)

Organizations Accepting Other Goods or Materials

- [Big Reuse](#), in Brooklyn, (718) 725-8925, is a non-profit retail outlet for salvaged or surplus building materials, lighting and appliances
- [Goodwill Industries](#), (212) 874-5050

- [Housing Works](#), (212) 579-7566; (212) 222-3550
- [Materials for the Arts](#), Long Island City, (718) 729-3001
- [The Salvation Army](#), (212) 757-2311
- [United War Veterans Council](#), (212) 838-8982
- [Swap.com](#) is an online consignment and thrift store

Also check our [Hard-to-Recycle List](#).

Swap or Loan – Organizations

- [Grow NYC](#), (212) 788-7900 (hosts free Stop 'N' Swap events—at local greenmarkets and schools—where people can drop off unwanted clothes, books, shoes, toys and housewares; others can grab them on a first come, first served basis)
- [FreeCycle.org](#) (online materials exchange)
- [Next Door.com](#) (a private social network that helps you keep informed about what's going on in your neighborhood)
- [ReUse NYC Donations Exchange](#), (212) 650-5832; donations@reusenyc.info (materials exchange service for businesses and non-profits)

Repair

Another good option is to repair damaged goods rather than buying new replacement items. By extending the life cycle of an object you help create jobs for communities and individuals. When you invest in repair, you also operate within a circular economy, which creates value beyond the point of sale, in addition to the environmental benefits of reducing pollution and greenhouse gases.

Each year, the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, in partnership with the Citizens Committee for New York City, awards small grants for organizations conducting reuse or repair projects, research on those projects, or other activities which will help lead to replicable reuse or repair models in NYC. For more information click [here](#) or contact kgrassle@citizensnyc.org; (212) 822-9567.

You can learn to repair items yourself, join an existing repair group, or use one of the services listed below.

- [Crown Sales & Services](#), (212) 663-8968, 2792 Broadway (at 108th Street), repairs a variety of electronics goods at their store. These include sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, other small appliances, electric tools (saws, drills, etc.), computer equipment, televisions, stereo equipment, video cameras, and more. They charge a diagnostic fee for most goods, but this fee is applied to the final repair cost when they fix it.
- [Pop-up Repair](#); Drop off your goods at a partner location (see their [website](#)) and pick it up at that same location one month later. Goods repaired include lamps, jewelry, appliances, furniture, toys, clothing and textiles, and more. They charge a diagnostic fee for appliances and other electronic goods, which is applied to the repair cost if they can fix it. See their website for a list of what they don't fix. All payment is online.
- [iPhone Repair Café](#), 38 West 32nd Street, Room 505; (347) 781-5757; (over 30,000 iPhone & Macbook devices repaired in last eight years).
- [iFixit](#) provides advice, components and repair manuals for almost anything, including computers and other electronic devices.
- [Fixers Collective](#); info@fixerscollective.org (creating and publishing a best

[ARCHIVE OF PAST COMMENTARIES](#)

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EVENTS

Electronic & Textile Recycling

(See also our [Hard-to-Recycle List](#))

REMINDER: According to New York State recycling laws it is illegal to put any electronic waste into your trash. Residential buildings will be fined for violations of this law.

Free Electronics Recycling Events

[Lower East Side Ecology](#); [212-477-4022](tel:212-477-4022). (Hosts E-Waste recycling events during the year throughout Manhattan; also operates a permanent E-Waste collection center at 469 President Street in Brooklyn, Tuesdays through Saturdays; call [718-858-8777](tel:718-858-8777) in advance for hours and other relevant information. Events occur as scheduled, rain or shine.

Accepted (unless otherwise noted): Computers and peripherals (monitors, printers, faxes/scanners, keyboards, mice, wires, etc.); TVs; stereo and A/V equipment, VCRs, DVD players; cell and wall phones.

Not Accepted: Microwaves, refrigerators, air conditioners, smoke or carbon monoxide detectors.

- **Sunday, January 6, 2019**, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Union Square North Plaza, between Broadway and Park Avenue
- **Sunday, January 6, 2019**, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Kips Bay Promenade, NE corner of East 33rd Street & 2nd Avenue
- **Saturday, January 19, 2019**, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Church of the Holy Name of Jesus, Amsterdam Avenue & West 96th Street
- **Sunday, January 20, 2019**, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Avenue

Ongoing: Functioning cell and chargers can be donated to the Office of Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, 245 West 104th Street. *Info:* 212-866-3970

Free Textile Recycling Events

Textiles are accepted at the 79th Street Greenmarket [79th & Columbus Avenue], 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Sundays; at the 97th Street Greenmarket [97th & Columbus Avenue], 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Fridays; and at Columbia University Greenmarket [Broadway between 115th-116th Streets], 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Thursdays and Sundays; also accepted in Inwood and other Manhattan locations; check Grow NYC website for hours. For information: [Grow NYC](#), [\(212\) 788-7964](tel:212-788-7964). Events occur as scheduled, rain or shine.

Also, [Wearable Collections](#), [United War Veterans Council](#), [Salvation Army](#), [Goodwill](#), and [re-fashion NYC](#) will pick up from residential buildings. See the Textiles Section of

the attached [Hard-to-Recycle List](#) for more specific information.

Accepted by Wearable Collections: Clean textiles, including clothing and shoes, handbags, blankets, sheets, curtains, towels, etc.

Not Accepted: Scraps, pillows, comforters, luggage or carpeting.

Other Recycling/Solid Waste

(See also our [Hard-to-Recycle List](#))

- **Monday, January 14, 2019**, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., *Swap, Share and Shmooze! New Years Edition*, Crossroads Community Church, 410 West 45th Street (betw. 9th and 10th Aves). Info: (347) 460-1818, [Hells Kitchen Commons](#), hellskitchencommons@gmail.com
- **Tuesday, January 15, 2019**, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., *Fix, Tinker and Craft Night*, Crossroads Community Church, 410 West 45th Street (betw. 9th and 10th Aves). Info: (347) 460-1818, [Hells Kitchen Commons](#), hellskitchencommons@gmail.com
- **Wednesday, January 16, 2019**, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., *Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board Meeting*, Manhattan Borough President's Office, 1 Center Street, 19th Floor. Info: [Manhattan SWAB](#)
- **Sunday, February 3, 2019**, 12:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m., *Grow NYC Stop 'n' Swap*, Westbeth Community Room, 155 Bank Street. Info: [Grow NYC](#), 212-788-7900
- **Second Wednesday of each month** (Except July & August), 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. (location varies), *Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board Meeting* (open to the public). Info: [Manhattan SWAB](#)
- **Wednesdays, 2019**, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., *Compost Drop-off*, 127th & Malcolm X Blvd. Info: [Lower East Side Ecology](#), 212-477-4022

Year-round Greenmarkets in Upper Manhattan that accept food waste include locations at: 66th Street and Columbus Avenue; 79th Street and Columbus Avenue; 82nd Street and York Avenue; 97th Street and Columbus Avenue; the east side of Broadway between 115th-116th Streets (*please note* the compost collection on Sunday ends two hours earlier than the textile collection at this site; see the [Grow NYC](#) website for current hours); 175th Street and Wadsworth Avenue; and Isham Street between Seaman Avenue and Cooper Street (see [Grow NYC](#) or our [Hard-to-Recycle List](#) for more information and other locations).

Climate Change & Energy

- **Monday, February 4, 2019**, 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m., *On the Frontline of Climate Change: Building Emotional Resilience*, 2910 Broadway (114th Street), Hogan A. Info: [The Earth Institute](#); pjv2@columbia.edu
- **Second Wednesday of each month**, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., *350 NYC Sustainable Solutions Working Group*, Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street, Room 508. Info: [Ethical Culture Society](#), (212) 874-5210.
- **Third Wednesday of each month**, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., *350 NYC Divestment Working Group*, Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street, Room 508. Info: 350NYC; [Ethical Culture Society](#), (212) 874-5210.
- **Fourth Wednesday of each month**, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., *350 NYC General Meeting*, Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street, Room 508. Info: 350NYC; [Ethical Culture Society](#), (212) 874-5210.

- **First and Third Thursday of each month**, 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m., *NYC Safe Energy Campaign Meeting*, NYU School of Law, Furman Hall, 245 Sullivan Street, Room 245. Info: [NYC Safe Energy Campaign](#).

Urban Greening

- **Friday, January 4, through Sunday, January 13, 2019**, *Mulch Fest 2019*. Remove all ornaments, plastic wrapping, etc., and bring your holiday tree to a local city park to be recycled into mulch. Upper West Side locations include Riverside Drive & 83rd Street; Central Park West & 65th Street, Central Park West & 81st Street (at bridal path). If these locations aren't convenient you can leave your tree at the curbside and it will be picked up by a truck designated for mulching. Info: [NYC Parks](#).
- **Thursday, January 17, 2019**, 5:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m., *Organizing for Garden Success: Bylaws (Part 2 of 2)*, GreenThumb Office, 100 Gold Street. Info: 212-602-5300; greenthumbinfo@parks.nyc.gov; [Green Thumb](#)
- **Tuesday, January 22, 2019**, 6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m., *Find Your Green Thumb: Starting a Community Garden*, GrowNYC's Project Farmhouse, 76 East 13th Street. Info: 212-602-5300; greenthumbinfo@parks.nyc.gov; [Green Thumb](#)
- **Thursday, February 7, 2019**, 6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m., *Grow Your Garden Group*, GreenThumb Office, 100 Gold Street. Info: 212-602-5300; greenthumbinfo@parks.nyc.gov; [Green Thumb](#)
- **Tuesday, February 12, 2019**, 6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m., *Building a Garden: Parks Capital and your Elected Official*, The Arsenal, 830 Fifth Avenue (in Central Park). Info: 212-602-5300; greenthumbinfo@parks.nyc.gov; [Green Thumb](#)
- **Thursday, February 28, 2019**, 5:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m., *Working with Youth in the Garden*. GreenThumb Office, 100 Gold Street. Info: 212-602-5300; greenthumbinfo@parks.nyc.gov; [Green Thumb](#)

Environmental - Miscellaneous

- **Wednesday, January 9, 2019**, 6:30 p.m., *It's a Seaport, Not a Mall: South Street Seaport Has a Historic and Environmental Role*, Seafarers & International House, 123 East 15th Street. Info and future events: [Sierra Club New York City](#)
- **Saturday, January 12, 2019**, 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m., *The New York City Naturalist Club: Bald Eagle Watch*, Payson Park House (in Inwood Hill Park), Dyckman Street and Payson Avenue. Info: (212) 304-2277; [NYC Parks](#)
- **Wednesday, January 16, 2019**, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., *Cosmetics and Personal Care Products: A Community Briefing*, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm X Boulevard (at 135th Street). Info: lubna@weact.org, 212-961-1000 ext. 310; [click here to register](#)
- **Saturday, January 19, 2019**, 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m., *Nature Exploration Hike*, Payson Park House (in Inwood Hill Park), Dyckman Street and Payson Avenue. Info: (212) 304-2277; [NYC Parks](#)
- **Saturday, January 26, 2019**, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., *Birding: Winter Waterfowl*, West 100th Street & Central Park West. Info: (212) 360-1444; [NYC Parks](#)
- **Friday, February 15, to Monday, February 18, 2019**, *Great Backyard Bird Count*, Audubon Society. Info: [Audubon Society](#)
- **First Monday of each month** (except holidays), 6:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m., *NYC Grassroots Alliance Monthly Meeting*, Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th. Info:

NYC Grassroots-Alliance; [Ethical Culture Society](#), (212) 874-5210

- **Third Monday of each month**, 7:00 p.m., *CB 7 Parks & Environment Committee Meeting*, 250 West 87th Street, 2nd floor. Info: (212) 362-4008; office@cb7.org
- **Second Wednesday of each month**, *CB9 Health & Environment Committee Meeting*, 16-18 Old Broadway. Info: (212) 864-6200; info@cb9m.org
- **Third Thursday of each month**, 6:00 p.m.-8 p.m., *Food and Water Watch Meeting*, Social Hall, Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street. Info: Food and Water Watch, 347-778-2743; [Ethical Culture Society](#), (212) 874-5210
- **Fourth Sunday of each month**, 1:15 p.m., *Environmental Stewardship Committee*. Ethical Culture Society, 2 West 64th Street, Room 508. Info: [Ethical Culture Society](#), (212) 874-5210, www.nysec.org

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Jeff Twine & Scottie Twine, Editors

Contact: info@uwsr.org Web site: www.uwsr.org

Upper West Side Recycling Center, Inc.

