

THIS WEEK IN "LITTERLAND"

litterpreventionprogram.com

April 26, 2020

Cigarettes still the most littered

The anti-tobacco group TruthInitiative.org used Earth Day to report that nearly 75 percent of cigarettes purchased end up on the ground instead of in a trash can. No source is given for this finding, but guaranteed it is one popularity contest there's no prize in winning. *Litterland* research had pegged the littering rate among smokers at 65 percent.

CALIFORNIA BUTT CATCHER. This receptacle (at right) tries to help smokers break their littering habit. Dedicated bins for butts attempt to make tobacco users more environmentally responsible.



'Do beautiful things'

Stay-at-home rules during COVID-19 that prompted the cancellation of group events didn't nix the creativity at Keep America Beautiful. The national anti-litter agency built DoBeautifulThings.org, a website, and a hashtag, to showcase and inspire acts of kindness and each person's ability to "do beautiful things" individually despite the reality of the coronavirus pandemic.

EARTH WEEK EDITORIAL

When health experts sensibly deemed that smoking indoors was unwise, they pushed the smokers outside. This created an unwieldy littering problem that these same experts made no effort to address or control. Using the all-too-familiar "not my job" rationale, they shoved the butt litter issue over to beleaguered solid waste departments. Indoors, smokers made use of ashtrays but out of doors they flicked butts everywhere and with a greater frequency than ever before. Health folks shouldn't uncouple themselves from the solid waste side of things.

Now with COVID-19 health communicators again have distanced themselves from two serious littering concerns: the rampant casting off of protective masks and gloves (PPE) and the sin of flushing wet wipes. All these items go in the garbage bin as waste destined for landfill. Health officials need to add another rule to the oft-repeated "wash hands, avoid touching face, stay home and practise social distancing."

All novel coronavirus advertising should remind people not to litter face masks and rubber gloves and never to flush or litter sewer-clogging, system-endangering wipes. When spokespeople talk of protecting human health they shouldn't forget about speaking for the health of the planet at the same time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Planning ahead: On April 26, 2021 all Singapore street cleaners will be given the day off. It'll be citizens doing the job that day. The annual Clean SG Day uses this hands-on tactic to educate the public on the extent of the littering problem and the challenges that the cleaners face.

Debating site combs world for best arguments

A new website out of Toronto could help you win debates on the most important environmental questions of our times. OmniDebate.com is an online platform for crowd-sourcing "best arguments and sources" to educate and inspire environmental and climate action. First up for debate: Plastic Bag Pollution, Energy Regulation, Green New Deal. Check it out to refute or augment the arguments on either side.

HEADLINE LITTER GRABBERS (APR 19 - 26)

Some of what made our News Reel this week

Bottle banks overflowing with good intentions (4/20)

Hold on to those empties and don't return them to bottle banks during the COVID-19 pandemic, say officials in Galway, Ireland. Bins are overflowing and staffing is low.

Swear jar is for tracking your plastic use (4/23)

[Changing Tides Foundation](http://ChangingTidesFoundation) has invented the "swear jar" for raising money and awareness of single use plastics. Place a dollar in a jar for every single-use plastic item used and donate the money to charity monthly.

Fine for improper glove disposal doubles (4/23)

In Yorktown, NY the fine for littering latex gloves and protective masks has just been doubled to \$1,000. This type of littering continues as a troubling story worldwide. A few samples, a Washington [glove video](#), a report about [Qatar taking action](#) and [Houston](#) sounding alarm bells.

Satellites and AI reveal plastic in our oceans (4/23)

Using images from European Space Agency's Sentinel-2 satellites, an AI system has enabled scientists to see the extent of plastic waste in the oceans. The system was tested over Canada, Ghana, Scotland and Vietnam.

Beijing attempts to legislate civility (4/24)

In China a new law upping fines for littering, spitting, having dogs off leash, eating on a subway and throwing objects from height received government approval Friday.