

LIVING GREEN



Let's Think Outside the Bag and Bottle

How you can reduce plastic use

By Aline Bloch, Eco-Artist and resident of Central Park Neighborhood

It was invented in 1907. It's resistant to corrosion, durable, lightweight and cheap to produce. We love it and use it every day. About 350 million metric tons are produced per year but only about 10% is recycled and about 100 million metric tons is ending up in the nature and ocean... It's time to rethink the way we use plastic.

This month, I have been lucky to meet and interview Robert Milligan, business owner of - Clean-H2O - and Issaquah Highlands community member. We talked about clean water in the oceans and for drinking, and plastic pollution.

Rob, can you please introduce yourself and the purpose of your business:

I've enjoyed a long exciting career as a business information consultant and have built systems for many



100 million metric tons of plastic ends up in natural areas.

governments and businesses around the US. For my last project, a huge one, I led a team that managed all the scientific and economic data collected during the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill of 2010. That exposed me to a great many topics related to marine life and water pollution. Near the end of that project, the 2014 Flint Michigan water crisis surfaced. This raised my interest in public water sources and testing and how public health concerns drive large numbers of people to buy their drinking water in disposable plastic water bottles, versus taking it from their own home kitchen tap.

I saw an opportunity to merge two topics together, testing water - to help citizens realize their own water at home is perfectly clean, or just needs some filtering, and that by learning this they would consequently stop buying water in disposable plastic bottles. Really more than an opportunity, I felt there was a dire need to go in this direction; This has to happen. And in my research and communications with professionals, it seems no other NGO, government agency, or municipal water provider is paying attention to the issues in this way, with this approach.

Americans today buy 30 billion plastic bottles a year. Nearly 50% don't trust the quality of the water coming out of their home tap. And for the rest who buy plastic bottles, only 13% of these get inserted into the recycling process.

Why do you do what you do?

- To increase awareness of the enormous quantity of sea life and water birds that are dying by choking on plastic.
- When these creatures are eaten by humans and other creatures, microplastics are transferred and absorbed into our bodies.
- To show people that they can easily test their own water at home, for many different factors.
- To increase awareness and sell water test kits, filters and reusable bottles, all via Amazon

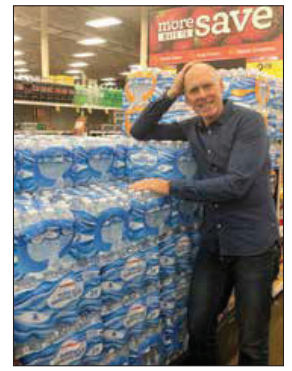
How do you help people to reduce their water bottles consumption?

It is a matter of education and acculturation, to reach into social networks and share information, stimulate participation in my efforts, volunteering in the public reach-out process, and generally asking people to practice

conservation. It takes broad communication efforts and will certainly take time to mature.

What are your solutions to reduce our water and plastic footprint?

My focus is mainly on helping to purify the water we consume, and to not pollute into the sea water with plastic where animals will consume it. This doesn't at this point refer to reducing water consumption, just plastic consumption" – clean-H2O.com



Rob aims to reduce the market for single-use plastic water bottles.

Simple TIPS to reduce plastic use:

- Bring your own shopping bags and reusable vegetable bags
- Refill your reusable water bottle at home for free
- Bring your own mug or thermos to local coffee shop
- Store food leftover or lunch in reusable stainless steel or glass containers
- Recycle as much as possible - Plastic bags (shopping, newspaper and dry-cleaning bags *when bagged together*)

Resource recology.com

