



ArchivesSpace

## **Bethlehem Work on Waste; Records**

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M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Bethlehem Work On Waste Records
<b>ID:</b>	apap148
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1989-1996
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.99 cubic ft.
<b>Physical Location:</b>	The materials are located onsite in the department.
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	This collection is about the Bethlehem Work on Waste (BWOW) and its opposition of the American Ref-Fuel/BFI incinerator from 1989 to 1995.

### Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Bethlehem Work On Waste (BWOW) Records, 1989-1996. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as BWOW Records).

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## Administrative History

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Bethlehem Work on Waste (BWOW) began in the spring of 1989 by Betsy Lyons, Betty Albright, and other residents from the town of Bethlehem, New York. It started in opposition to American Ref-fuel/BFI's (Brown Ferris Industries and Air Products and Chemical Inc.) proposal to build an incinerator on Cabbage Island (now Beacon Island) in Bethlehem.

After defeating the proposed American Ref-fuel/BFI incinerator, the group organized with environmentalists from the town of Coeymans against a suggested ANSWERS (Albany New York Solid Waste Energy Recovering System) landfill. In 1992 the EAC (Energy Answers Corporation) proposed building a waste management facility that included an incinerator on Green Island, located in Albany

near Troy, or Cabbage Island, the same site that BWOW fought to protect against American Ref-Fuel/BFI's proposal.

On June 18, 1992, a referendum vote was held in Bethlehem and rejected EAC's proposal and prohibited the building of incinerators in the town. BWOW advocated the 3 R's: reduce, reuse, and recycle. The group wrote editorials, spoke at public meetings, held public forums, gave talks at schools and for community groups, and organized recycling days for the community. Members were the first in the community to organize days for recycling of specific materials such as books, shoes, and latex paints. They mentored the student group Students Reduce Our Trash, who put together a lesson plan for the Bethlehem Central School District incorporating the 3 R's. They also formulated a Solid Waste Disposal System for the town of Bethlehem.

The group issued extensive information not only about themselves but also about the dangers of incineration. In 1991 the group incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. The money came from member donations and fundraising events. The group ended its efforts in the mid-1990s. The last newsletter was issued in 1995.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection documents the work of Bethlehem Work on Waste (BWOW) from its inception in 1989 and its first opposition of the American Ref-Fuel/BFI incinerator through 1995. The materials in the collection include correspondence between BWOW and members of town and state government as well as other environmentally concerned groups and individuals. There are also numerous news clippings related to the waste management facility proposals BWOW opposed, as well as articles about the group's activities within the town such as recycling days. BWOW also spoke and wrote about the dangers of incineration and promoted waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. There are notes from BWOW meetings and notes from speaking engagements. There are materials related to the three waste management facility proposals BWOW opposed. The files include relevant correspondence, news articles, reports and materials from the companies proposing the waste management facilities. There is also material related to the June 18, 1992 election in Bethlehem in which the EAC proposal was defeated and the town voted to ban incinerators. The collection also includes videos. Some of the videos are home recordings of news programs about the incinerator proposals. Greenpeace produced one of the videos about the dangers of incinerators and community protest against them. The collection is weak in the day-to-day operations of the group. There is little financial information. Files are arranged alphabetically within each series. Materials within the files are arranged chronologically, items without dates come first in the folders.

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## Arrangement of the Collection

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The collection is organized into the following series:

- 1 Series 1 - Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet
- 2 Series 2 - Waste Management Facility Proposals, 1989-1995, .66 cubic feet
- 3 Sub-series 1 - American Ref-fuel/BFI, 1989-1992, .33 cubic feet
- 4 Sub-series 2 - ANSWERS Landfill, 1990-1995, .17 cubic feet
- 5 Sub-series 3 - EAC, 1990-1994, .16 cubic feet
- 6 Series 3 - Subject Files, 1989-1995, .83 cubic feet
- 7 Series 4 - Videos, 1989-1992, undated, .17 cubic feet

Files are arranged alphabetically within each series. Materials within the files are arranged chronologically, items without dates come first in the folders.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

### Revision Description

Encoded in EAD by Lisa Christopher 2013

### Processing Information

Processed in 2003 May by Michelle M. Powers.

### Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

### Copyright

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately

rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

## Acquisition Information

All items in this manuscript group were donated to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, by Elizabeth Lyons in November 2002.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Neighborhood and Community Associations
- Conservation and the Environment
- Recycling Advocates
- Waste Minimization
- Incinerators
- Bethlehem (N.Y.)
- Video Recording
- Administrative records
- Correspondence
- Proposal, short notes, occasional papers
- Newspapers
- Advertising fliers
- Newsletters
- The Bethlehem Work on Waste

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## Collection Inventory

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### **Administrative Files, 1990-1996Undated**

Physical Description: 0.33 cubic ft.

#### **Arrangement**

Organized alphabetically.

#### **Scope and Contents**

The Administration series includes material related to the founding and growth of BWOW. There are copies of the organization's by-laws and incorporation papers. There are notes and outlines for BWOW presentations and speaking engagements. There is correspondence between members of BWOW and government officials including the Town Board, the Town Supervisor, the Town Attorneys, the State of New York Department of Environmental

Conservation, the State Assembly, and the Rensselaer County Legislature. Meeting minutes are separated between the typed minutes from a few of the meetings in 1990 and 1991 and the handwritten notes kept in two spiral bound notebooks from 1990 to 1995. BWOW's newsletter was first issued in November of 1990 with issue #1. In January of 1991, a second newsletter labeled Volume 1, #1 was printed with the title *Words on Waste*. *Words on Waste* was published three or four times a year from 1991 through 1995. There are a few issues missing in the collection. The Miscellaneous folder contains three printouts. Two of these printouts include correspondence, news releases, meeting agendas, and notes. Some of the items may be copies of items found in this or the following series. The third printout is a listing of documents that were created by BWOW and an annotated bibliography of publications regarding environmental issues such as recycling, incineration, and waste reduction.

Title/Description	Instances
By-laws, undated, Undated	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 1
Correspondence, 1990	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 2
Correspondence, 1991	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 3
Correspondence, 1992-1993	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 4
Correspondence, 1994-1995	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 5
Financial, 1990-1991	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 6
Incorporation, 1991	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet) Folder 7
Minutes, 1990-1991	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, Folder 8

	1990-1996, .33 cubic feet)	
Minutes, 1990-1994	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet)	Folder 9
Minutes, 1994-1995	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet)	Folder 10
Miscellaneous, 1990-1992	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet)	Folder 11
Newsletter, 1990-1995	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet)	Folder 12
Speaking Engagements, undated, Undated	Box 1 (1- Administrative Files, 1990-1996, .33 cubic feet)	Folder 13

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## Waste Management Facility Proposals, 1989-1995

Physical Description: 0.8 cubic ft.

### Arrangement

Organized Alphabetically

### Scope and Contents

BWOW was involved with three major opposition campaigns to waste management facilities. Each one is arranged as a sub-series. Sub-series one is American Ref-Fuel/BFI's proposal in 1989 to build an incinerator on Cabbage Island in Bethlehem. Sub-series two is the proposal by Albany New York Solid Waste Energy Recovering System (ANSWERS) in 1991 to create a landfill in the town of Bethlehem or Coeymans. BWOW worked with environmental organizations in the town of Coeymans to prevent its development in either area. Sub-series three is the Energy Answers Corporation (EAC) proposed building of a waste management facility that included an incinerator on Cabbage Island or Green Island. On June 18, 1992 a referendum vote was held in Bethlehem and rejected EAC's proposal and banned the building of incinerators in Bethlehem.

Files include proposals from the waste management companies, news clippings, legal papers related to the building of the facilities, correspondence from BWOW and other environmental advocacy organizations to government offices or the media, fliers for public forums, and items related to the scoping process. The "scoping process" is



the process by which the public is given an opportunity to comment on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

## American Ref-Fuel/BFI, 1989-1992

Title/Description	Instances	
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, Proposal, undated, Undated	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 1
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, 1989	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 2
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, 1990	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 3
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, June-October 1990, 1990	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 4
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, 1990	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 5
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, 1991	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 6
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, 1989	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 7
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, 1990-1991	Box 1 (2-Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 8
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, Scoping Process, 1992	Box 1 (2-Waste Management	Folder 9

American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, Scoping Process, 1992	Facility Proposals) Box 1 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 10
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, New Releases from BWOW, 1989-1990	Box 1 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 11
American Ref-Fuel/BFI Incinerator, Flyers, undated, Undated	Box 1 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 12

### **ANSWERS Landfill, 1990-1995**

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
ANSWERS Landfill, 1991	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 1
ANSWERS Landfill, 1992-1994, 1992-1994	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 2
ANSWERS Landfill, 1994-1995, 1994-1995	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 3
ANSWERS Landfill, Scoping Process, 1995	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 4
ANSWERS Landfill, Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement, 1990	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 5
ANSWERS Landfill, News Releases from BWOW, 1991	Box 2 (2- Waste Management	Folder 6

Title/Description	Instances	
ANSWERS Landfill, Flyers, undated, Undated	Facility Proposals) Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 7
<b>Energy Answers Corporation, 1990-1994</b>		
Energy Answers Corporation, undated, 1990, Undated	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 8
Energy Answers Corporation, 1992-1994	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 9
Energy Answers Corporation, News Releases from BWOW, 1991	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 10
Energy Answers Corporation, Flyers, undated, Undated	Box 2 (2- Waste Management Facility Proposals)	Folder 11

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## Subject Files, 1989-1995 Undated

Physical Description: 0.83 cubic ft.

### Arrangement

Organized Alphabetically

### Scope and Contents

This series contains various BWOW files that are not specifically related to any waste management facility or the group's administration. The files include copies of Bethlehem's town codes and laws regarding waste management, BWOW's Solid Waste Management plan, numerous lesson plans for teachers in grades K-12 from government and environmental agencies and one specifically created for the Bethlehem Central School District by Students Reduce Our Trash (Students R.O.T) who were mentored by BWOW, Bethlehem's Town Board Meeting minutes, random flyers and news releases announcing events and meetings, information for various topics such as incineration, composting, and recycling, testimonies given by BWOW and its members, and files for special events such as

paint recycling. The series also includes news clippings regarding BWOW's work and environmental concerns, the majority of clippings come from the local newspaper, *The Spotlight*.

Title/Description	Instances	
Bethlehem, Solid Waste Management Codes and Laws, undated, 1989-1996Undated	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 1
BWOW Solid Waste Plan, 1993	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 2
Composting, undated, 1989-1996Undated	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 3
Flyers, undated, 1989-1996Undated	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 4
Household Hazards. A Guide to Detoxifying Your Home, 1988	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 5
Illegal Dumping in New York State, 1991	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 6
Incineration, 1988, 1988Undated	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 7
Incineration, 1989-1992, 1989-1992	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 8
Lesson Plans, 1989-1996Undated	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 9
Lesson Plans, 1989-1990	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 10
Lesson Plans, Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycle: A Solid Waste Program for the Bethlehem Central School District, 1991	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 11
Lesson Plans, Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycle: A Solid Waste Program for the Bethlehem Central School District, 1991	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 12
Lesson Plans, Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycle: A Solid Waste Program for the Bethlehem Central School District, 1991	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 13
Miscellaneous, 1989-1996Undated	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 1
Lesson Plans, Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycle: A Solid Waste Program for the Bethlehem Central School District, 1991	Box 1 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 13
Miscellaneous, 1989-1996	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 1
News Clippings, Undated	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 2
News Clippings, 1992-1995	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 3
News Releases from BWOW, Undated		

	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 4
Paint Recycling, Undated	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 5
Paint Recycling, 1989-1991	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 6
Paint Recycling, 1992-1994	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 7
Recycling, Undated	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 8
Recycling and Composting, 1990	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 9
Recycling and Composting Programs, Volume 1, 1992	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 10
Recycling and Composting Programs, Volume 2, 1992	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 11
Recycling and Composting Programs, Volume 3, 1992	Box 2 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 12
Superfund Monitoring Program, 1987	Box 3 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 1
Testimonies, 1990-1993	Box 3 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 2
Town Board Meetings, 1992	Box 3 (3-Subject Files)	Folder 3

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## Videos, 1989-1992 Undated

Physical Description: 0.17 cubic ft.

### Arrangement

Organized Chronologically

### Scope and Contents

There are five videos in the collection.

Title/Description	Instances
<i>Solid Waste Town Meeting, #1</i> , 1989-1996	Box 1 (4-Videos), Folder 1

	1989-1992, undated)	
<i>A WMHT Town Meeting #2. Questions, Concerns, Misconceptions: Integrated Waste Management in the Capital Region, 1990</i>	Box 1 (4-Videos, 1989-1992, undated)	Folder 2
<i>North St. Dump, 1992</i>	Box 1 (4-Videos, 1989-1992, undated)	Folder 3
<i>The Rush to Burn, Undated</i>	Box 1 (4-Videos, 1989-1992, undated)	Folder 4
<i>WOW No.3 Saugus, Massachusetts Incinerator, Undated</i>	Box 1 (4-Videos, 1989-1992, undated)	Folder 5

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