



WEST FARGO PIONEER

Thursday, November 16, 2006

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FASHION -- Recycled style

Clothes fill up landfills, too. EMILY ZEUGNER visits a swap meet where clothes are made new again.

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By EMILY ZEUGNER

Recycling isn't just about cans, bottles and newspaper anymore. It's also about sweaters, dresses and hats.

Landfills are full of millions of pounds of discarded clothing -- garments that are just waiting to be turned into unique new designs.

Swap-o-rama-rama, a one-day design event, combines 10,000 pounds of used clothing with the do-it-yourself spirit to help amateur designers create recycled fashion.

Wendy Tremayne, a New York City artist, founded Swap-o-Rama-Rama in 2005. The event has expanded and now 30 swaps a year are held in cities all over the country -- from places as big as Boston and New York to small towns like Kennesaw, Ga.

Each participant brings a bag of unwanted clothing, which is then distributed and transformed in workshops with help from professional artists. Silkscreening, embroidering and knitting stations help add flair to recycled designs. The swap also hosts a fashion show featuring the recycled designs of local artists who are exploring reuse.

Tremayne says the event helps individuals reclaim some of the creativity that has been lost to the clothing industry.

"Clothes you design yourself are always cooler and more meaningful than things you find at the mall," she says.

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asap contributor Emily Zeugner works in the AP's New York headquarters.

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