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## Movies Features

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### Garbage maker talks trash

By Matthew Burrows

Toronto filmmaker Andrew Nisker is pleased to report that the snow has been cleared and the weather is warming up in his hometown.

The only thing is, when you lose the snowbanks, the trash people threw away last fall is revealed in all its springlike glory.

“In some neighbourhoods, we’ve had snowbanks up to eight or 10 feet high,” Nisker said in a phone interview with the Georgia Straight. “The amazing thing is when it melts and you see all the garbage that people throw on the ground. Even just the cigarette butts are unbelievable.”

Nisker will be talking more trash when he comes west for an invitation-only screening of his documentary, *Garbage: The Revolution Starts at Home!*, on Wednesday (April 23) at the Vancouver International Film Centre (1181 Seymour Street). A by-donation public screening will take place at the same venue the following evening; both shows are at 6:30 p.m.

The doc tracks the McDonald family—Glen and Michele (also on the movie poster) and their children, Ariel, 7, Thomas, 4, and Ester, 10 months—for 90 days as they stash in the garage of their Toronto home every bit of trash they create. That span includes such garbage-producing holidays as Halloween and Christmas. By the end, the McDonalds have accumulated 83 bags of refuse plus compost.

Nisker said he saw similar scenes, albeit on a grander scale, during Toronto’s garbage strike in 2002—something he credits with making him more “aware”.

“I live in the inner city, and I had to walk to a park [Trinity Bellwoods] where the people were throwing all their trash,” he said. “I would see it start piling up, and I started realizing how much garbage we create. The system is set up right now where it is taken away by the garbageman, right? So I started to think about the whole process and began to think, ‘If they stop taking away our garbage and this garbage strike never ends, how will that affect the way that we consume and how we live?’ ”

Vancouverites will relate to many of these themes, according to Mairi Welman, communications director with the Recycling Council of B.C., which is one of the sponsors of the local shows.

“There are parts of the movie that are a little Ontario-centric, such as the use of coal-fired plants and them going down to Virginia to see where the power comes from and all that,” Welman told the Straight by phone. “That is not that valid up here, but overall the message of waste reduction is really valid. We saw that the



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movie would be a really good catalyst to get all of the right people in the room at the same time, show them the movie, and then get them talking. Because, as you know, garbage is the big issue in Metro Vancouver right now. We've got people from the provincial and municipal levels, from environmental organizations, we've got educators and a whole big mix of people who are coming to this event. They are going to watch the movie and then network afterwards for a couple of hours."

Premier Gordon Campbell will not be attending, according to Welman, but Vancouver city councillor Heather Deal and City of North Vancouver mayor Darrell Mussatto will be there, among other elected officials.

Nisker said he is "privileged" to be coming here, and he invites anyone interested in hosting a screening to log on to [www.GarbageRevolution.com/](http://www.GarbageRevolution.com/).

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