

Don't toss those unplayable discs



By Jesse A. Floyd
GateHouse Media
Thu May 03, 2007, 01:00 AM EDT

Maynard -

MAYNARD — When they came on the market in the 1980s, compact discs were touted as the perfect music storage solution: They were small, sounded great and were touted as indestructible.

They are small, they do sound great and, while they do become scratched, beat up and unplayable, the small hard plastic disc with its aluminum covering are indestructible.

Therein lies the rub. What, exactly can be done with the unusable, unwanted and discarded discs that might, in fact, stuff landfills for time out of mind?

The folks at Dunia Ecostore and CD Willy's might have the perfect solution: Chop up those polycarbonate discs and make them into other artwork.

In fact, the ownership of the two stores is sponsoring a contest that will reward the best effort at turning those old and in the way discs into newly beautiful objects.

The idea struck a chord with Maynard High School art teacher John Flynn. He decided to get kids in his classes, about 30 or so, involved in making their own CD-to-art projects.

"I got an e-mail from someone in the community and the idea intrigued me," Flynn said. "We were studying shape and form, so it fit in well with the curriculum."

Monday morning, the kids were busy in their metal-shop-turned-classroom and to the observer the class was a bit odd. The tools — metal snippers and hot glue guns — seemed out of place in the world of paintbrushes and ceramic.

Ashley Keenan, a sophomore, had chopped the pieces of her discs into smaller and smaller parts. Her goal: to reassemble them into an iPod.

"I just really like music, so that was kind of the inspiration," she said.

At another table, sophomore Pat Ryan, 16, sat hunched over his project. Several bright silver coils of wire would form the legs, the discs themselves, cracked and scratched to reflect light, would be the table top.

"I just felt like making a table," he said.

At each table was a different project. A CD rack made from discarded CDs; a bicycle made from twisted wire; and a pair of sunglasses made, mosaic style, from pieces of discs.

No surprise the discs represent pretty much the scullery trash of the music world. Discs labeled, hopefully, "World's Greatest Movies Songs," were being chopped into hash alongside discs for Microsoft Publisher, a legion of writable discs and at least one copy of the video game Hexen.

"This closely relates to our business," said CD Willy's co-owner Ellen Joseph.

The basement of her store is, in fact, full of cartons stuffed with unusable CDs. The plastic cases can be stripped of their paper and recycled. The discs, with the combination of aluminum and acrylic bonded to the plastic, are another story, she said.

"Art projects are great, we're happy to give them away," Joseph said.

According to Joseph, the idea for an art project with CDs had its origins with Did Chadron and Paige O'Brien, owners of Dunia. They were, Joseph said, sitting at home lamenting that audio tape could be reused, but not CDs. From that humble conversation, an art contest was born. Having the high school students involved is a bonus.

"That's been most fun part of this, knowing the students are involved," Joseph said.

Entries for the contest are due by May 31. The winners will be chosen by four judges and will get their work displayed at either Dunia or CD Willy's starting Aug. 7. For more information, visit http://dunia-ecostore.com/instore_fs.html.