

The Columbian

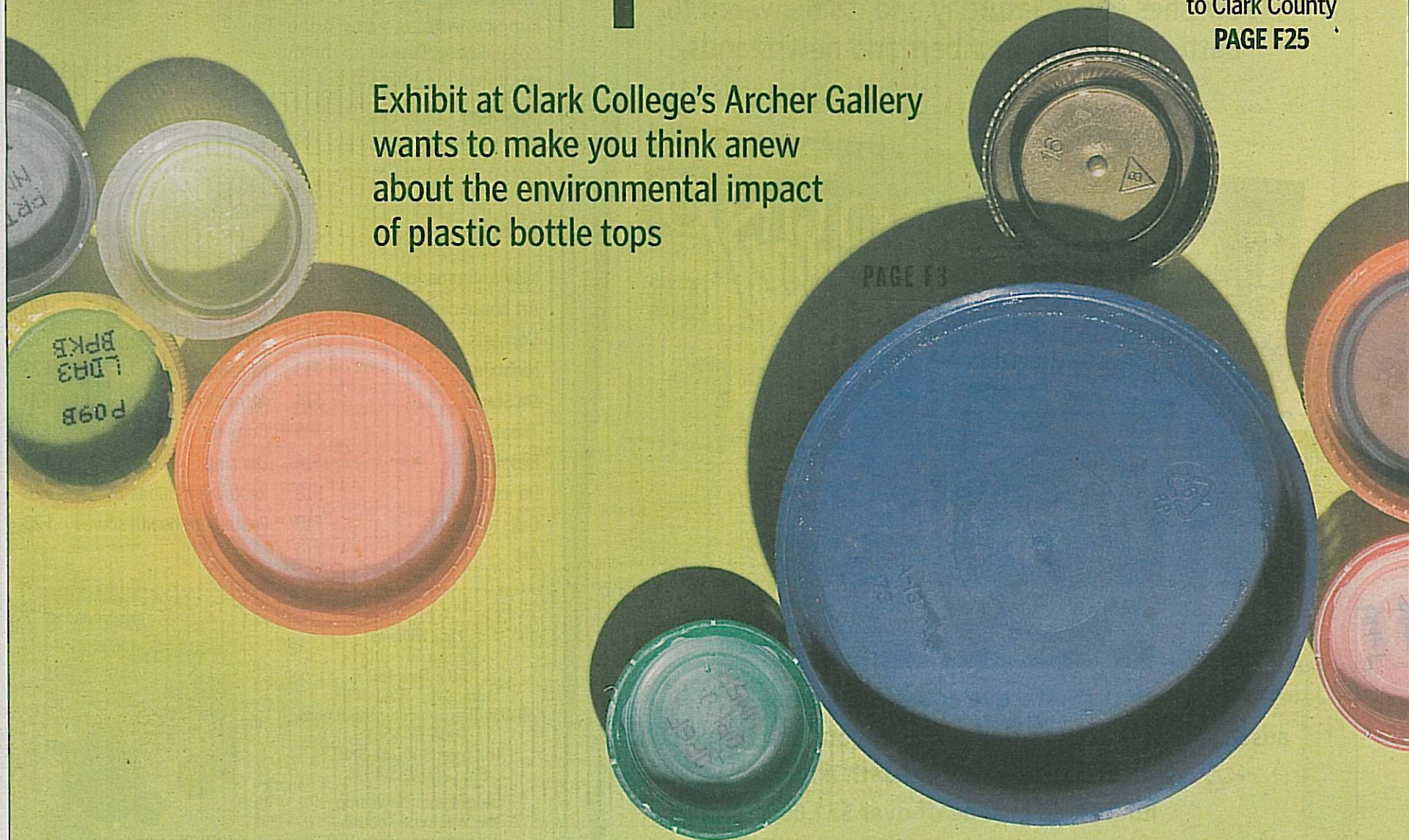
# Weekend

and beyond

Friday, November 13, 2009

## Catch that colorful cap

Exhibit at Clark College's Archer Gallery wants to make you think anew about the environmental impact of plastic bottle tops



**MOVIES:** Unlike other disaster flicks, '2012' gives us nothing to root for amid the destruction  
**PAGE F4**

**MUSIC:** Kiss brings back classic sound on latest CD, 'Sonic Boom,' builds new stage for tour  
**PAGE F11**

**DINING OUT:** Laurelwood Public House & Brewery crosses the river to deliver its organic fare to Clark County  
**PAGE F25**

# Exhibit urges putting cap on lid litter



TROY WAYRYNEN/The Columbian

## Floor-only effort on display at Clark College

By **MATT WASTRADOWSKI**  
Columbian staff writer

Portland artist Steven Beatty — a California transplant — was walking around downtown Portland in January 2006, looking for inspiration and bemoaning the Pacific Northwest's dreary winter.

"I need something with color," Beatty thought. He wasn't finding it in the gray Portland skies.

Soon, a bright red Odwalla juice bottle cap floated by in the gutter.

"It was the brightest thing on the street at the time," he said. "It seemed cartoonish bright."

The bright red cap, coupled with Beatty's concerns for the environment, inspired him to begin creating works with bottle caps. Beatty, 43, teamed with fellow Portland artist Laurel Kurtz, 36, for a series of bottle cap exhibits, the latest of which opened this week at Clark College's Archer Gallery.

A variety of bottle caps, including caps from soda bottles, cat-litter jugs, margarine tubs and laundry-detergent containers, will cover most of the gallery's 1,650 square feet, said Blake

### If you go

■ **What:** Bottle cap art by Steven Beatty and Laurel Kurtz.

■ **When:** 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays, and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays through Dec. 10.

■ **Where:** Clark College's Archer Gallery, inside the Penguin Union Building, 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver.

■ **Information:** 360-992-2246 or [clark.edu/archergallery](http://clark.edu/archergallery).

Shell, Archer Gallery curator. Rocks will form a spiral path three feet wide.

"We're going to put all of our bottle caps there," Kurtz said. "If they cover the whole floor, awesome. If they don't, they will still have a huge impact."

None of the artists could estimate how many caps were used in the latest exhibit. "Thousands" was as close as Beatty or Kurtz could get to a definite answer. But both expect the exhibit to be the largest since they began working with caps in 2006. Beatty and Kurtz's first bottle cap sculpture used

between 5,000 and 8,000 caps.

Beatty and Kurtz, who worked with fellow Portland artists David Posz and Mark Jondahl for the exhibit, have covered the gallery floor with bottle caps of all shapes and sizes to raise awareness about recycling and the impact that stray bottle caps can have on the environment. The artists hope to use the concept of a sea of caps to illustrate how easily caps can wind up in oceans.

"We're just trying to spread awareness," Kurtz said. "People can make their own decisions about how they want to approach that. We're not trying to be preachy."

The bottle caps typically outlast the products they are attached to and aren't easily recycled, Beatty said.

"Most people, once they've interacted with one of our pieces, they think of bottle caps differently," he added.

Visitors will be able to add to Beatty and Kurtz's growing collection by tossing caps into a bin at the exhibit. The artists appreciate the donations but have advice for anyone who wants to lend a hand.

"Always rinse them," Beatty said. "We spend hours and hours washing. We've handled every cap and washed them in bleach. It took a long, long time."

**Artists, clockwise from left, Mark Jondahl, Laurel Kurtz and Steven Beatty, collaborated on an exhibit made up entirely of bottle caps at Clark College's Archer Gallery. The exhibit is the first floor-only exhibit from Kurtz and Beatty. The duo have previously tied caps together with zip ties to create sculptures and displayed piles of caps.**