

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County
(219) 326-0014
(800) 483-7700

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Spring 2005



Be a winner! Recycle those losing lottery tickets

By Pauletta Schuster

As many as 250 million scratch-off lottery tickets are printed each year in Indiana. Have you ever noticed how many of these tickets are on our roads, streets, and sidewalks?

Many states have initiated second-chance drawings so that people can send the losing tickets in for a second chance at winning. Not only is this another chance to win, but it is also an opportunity to participate in reducing litter and protecting the environment because the tickets can be recycled. If all states would start a program to recycle lottery tickets,

people would actively be picking up that litter in the streets and making the U.S. a cleaner place to live.

Unfortunately, the Indiana Lottery does not yet have a second chance drawing, but the tickets are printed on recycled paper. Take a look at the back, where you'll find a recycling symbol! So, be a winner and follow through with that symbol—put those non-winning tickets into your recycling bin!



Need a reminder?

Do you sometimes forget to set out your recyclables because you get mixed up on the collection week? We can help. Our new online Curbside Recycling Calendar does more than just list the curbside schedule. Now, you can sign up to get automatic e-mail reminders of any event, including your curbside recycling dates.

Simply go to our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com, look for the "Need a Reminder?" section, and click on "Check It Out." (Or, click on "Calendar" on the main page.) Then, just select the month, date, and event, and you're in! You'll just need to type in your e-mail address. You can get a reminder for as many events as you want!

Please remember that your recyclables need to be at the curb by 6 a.m. on your collection day. Recyclables are not always collected by the same drivers or on exactly the same route. The only way to ensure that your bin won't be missed is to have it at the curb by 6 a.m. Also, be sure that your bin is clearly visible. Your bin is the driver's notice to stop.

**Recycling
Out
6 a.m.!!**

Good "Guys" Wear White Suits

By Susan Bortell

Perhaps you've attended one of our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Mobile Collections and seen, firsthand, all those guys and gals walking around in white Tyvek suits. They may look like creatures from another world, but they wear those protective suits to be sure our high safety standards are met and exceeded.

The HHW Program, under the eight-year leadership and direction of HHW Coordinator Tom Buford, has grown beyond our wildest dreams. Not only will Tom and his crew collect the ordinary household waste products which can be harmful to our environment, the program has added "sharps" and expired medication collections (see sidebar), as well.

Often there are long lines and folks get impatient because they have to wait. While this is understandable, this FREE program is a necessity to our community and well worth a bit of waiting time. To hurry through a collection could lead to mistakes, and with all of the chemicals involved, mistakes could be extremely dangerous.

HHW Collections are held once a month in LaPorte County,

March through October, though the locations of the mobile unit change for this event to provide added convenience to residents. Please remember, we DO NOT accept latex paint.

In 2004, nearly 1,700 households in LaPorte County delivered 118,395 pounds of HHW to the Mobile Collections.



"Sharps"

Our "sharps" program provides a safe and convenient way to rid your home of insulin/injectables, lancets, and needles/syringes. In the past, these items ended up in the garbage where the possibility was far too great of an unsuspecting trash hauler or child getting stuck.

By bringing these dangerous items to our collection in a SEALED CONTAINER (such as a detergent bottle—NOT a milk jug—with a screw-on lid), you can get a new SHARPS container FREE.

Expired Medications

We all remember the old days when we were told to flush outdated medications down the drain or toilet, right? Oh so wrong! Some medications, especially in areas where there are wells and septic systems, can leach and pollute drinking water. People with certain allergies could become ill by ingesting water contaminated with medications meant to heal. Even in septic systems, antibiotics can kill the natural enzymes necessary to break down waste.

Bring your old meds, in their bottles, to our collections. Sharps and meds are collected by someone trained to handle them; they are disposed of in a safe and environmentally friendly way.

HHW Mobile Collections for 2005

Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

LaPorte County Fair Grounds, 2581 W. State Rd. 2, LaPorte

Saturday, May 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Kabelin Ace Hardware (Marquette Mall, east parking lot), Michigan City

Saturday, June 4, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

LaPorte County Fair Grounds

Friday, July 15, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Kabelin Ace Hardware, Michigan City

Saturday, August 13, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

LaPorte County Fair Grounds

Saturday, September 10, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Kabelin Ace Hardware, Michigan City

Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.,

LaPorte County Fair Grounds

♦♦♦

What HHW can I dispose of?

Aerosols
Automotive supplies (antifreeze, oils, other fluids)
Batteries (automotive and household)
Corrosives
Expired medications
Mercury-containing products (fluorescent tubes, thermometers with silver bulbs, thermostats, other mercury-containing items)
Paint and related products (oil-based paint only, thinners, solvents)
Pesticides (fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, other poisons)
Sharps (needles, syringes, lancets, injectables used in personal medical care)
Waste fuels (diesel, gasoline, kerosene, other flammable liquids)

Gargantuan garage sale

Do you still have the trumpet you used to play? What about the hand-me-down couch from Grandma's house that you no longer need? Or, is it craft books on a long-since abandoned hobby? We all have items in our house that we store for no good reason. Maybe you haven't gotten rid of these items because a garage sale seems like a lot of work or you don't have a truck in which to load the couch to deliver it to a charity.

No more excuses! The Internet is making it easier than ever to sell, trade, or give away things that you no longer want or need. It's like a huge nationwide garage sale. At auction sites, such as eBay, you can invite bids on your used stuff. At waste exchange sites, you can make arrangements to swap or, sometimes, sell your goods. At donation sites, you can learn how or where to drop items off. Or, you can post items that you would like to give away and wait for a taker, whether that is an individual or a charitable organization. No matter the method, ensuring that your good stuff gets reused is no more than a few mouse clicks away (see box).

Each of the sites devoted to reuse has its own rules and requirements. To post at the site, you often have to register or become a "member of the community." In most cases, there will be a few simple steps that connect you and your goods with the rest of the folks in cyberspace. Don't be daunted by the sign-up procedures. Once you're registered, participation is usually simple.

Getting reusable items into the hands of someone else

The Internet is also a great place to find gently used items that you need. Check out these same sites when you need to shop for something new-to-you.

who can use them is a great way to reduce your waste. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, about 23.3 percent of our municipal solid waste is actually reusable, including durable goods, such as appliances and furniture, and textiles, including clothes, blankets, and bedding. By the EPA's estimates, only about 16.7 percent of that material is currently being reused. This means the remainder is headed to disposal facilities—for no good reason.

Take part in the world's gargantuan, virtual garage sale.



When disaster strikes here at home or around the world, the first priority is always ensuring the safety of victims and meeting the basic human needs of survivors and their families. As that initial crisis wanes, communities are left with mountains of debris.

Last year, four separate hurricanes hit Florida during a two-month period, leaving behind 75 million cubic yards of vegetative (limbs, trees, and other plant waste) and construction/demolition debris. That was three times the volume of vegetative and construction/demolition debris in a typical 12-month period. In Florida, this waste was handled at 350 staging areas, many of which were mobilized to respond to hurricane debris only. Cleanup will take a year or more.

Much of the debris from any natural disaster is organic and woody. The vast majority of this material is chipped and turned into mulch. However, cleanup crews and debris site workers must beware of hazardous materials, including household hazardous waste, inadvertently mixed with these materials. As you know, household hazardous waste is so named because it is poisonous, corrosive, reactive, flammable, or explosive. Cleanups are dangerous enough without adding these hazards to the debris piles.

While none of us controls hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, mudslides, wildfires, or other natural disasters, we can each do more to be prepared. One of the ways that your family can be better prepared for any kind of disaster is to reduce the number of hazardous chemicals found in your home.

Here are some suggestions for reducing the hazards in and around your home. Don't buy chemicals that you don't need. If you need a chemical, choose a product that will solve the problem, select the most benign option available, and purchase only the amount you need. Keep leftover chemicals in their original, labeled containers. Never pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage. Use up products, or give them to a friend, neighbor, or organization that needs them. Or, call us to ask for safe disposal instructions.

For more information about disasters, disaster debris, and preparedness, visit www.fema.gov.

Something for sale, something to swap, something for nothing?

Search these sites

Dump & Run

www.dumpandrun.org

Earth 911

www.earth911.org

(Click "Reuse & Recycling Services")

eBay

www.ebay.com

Freecycle

www.freecycle.org

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

www.habitat.org/env/restore.aspx

i-WasteNot

www.i-wastenot.com/

Reuses

www.reuses.com

2 Good 2 Toss

www.2Good2Toss.com

Throwplace

www.throwplace.com

Waste Exchanges

www.wastexchange.org

(Click on "Other Exchanges")

Worth noting

Since we're coming up on Earth Day, we wanted to share some good news that we've seen, heard, and noted:

- In a commercial entitled "Waste," everyday images of wasteful behavior—from leaving unneeded lights on to letting an unattended garden hose run—introduce this theme: "Maybe we could all use a little less." The ads promote the Honda Accord Hybrid.
- Kinko's stores, which are now part of FedEx, announced in

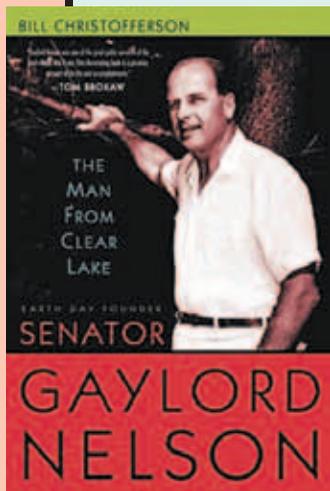
December that the standard paper used at the office and print centers will be 30-percent post-consumer recycled content, a jump from the 10-percent recycled content that the stores had been using. This raises the average recycled content used by the more than 1,100 stores to 26.2 percent overall.

- Recycline makes toothbrush and razor handles from 100-percent recycled plastic. About 65 percent of the plastic to make these handles comes from recycled Stonyfield Farm yogurt cups. Recently, Stonyfield Farm and Recycline recycled the 1 millionth yogurt cup in this partnership. It takes two yogurt cups to make each new toothbrush handle. The yogurt cups must be returned to Stonyfield Farm for recycling. After use, the toothbrushes can be returned to Recycline for recycling. (For details about these recycling programs, go to www.recycline.com and www.stonyfield.com.)

Recommended reading for Earth Day

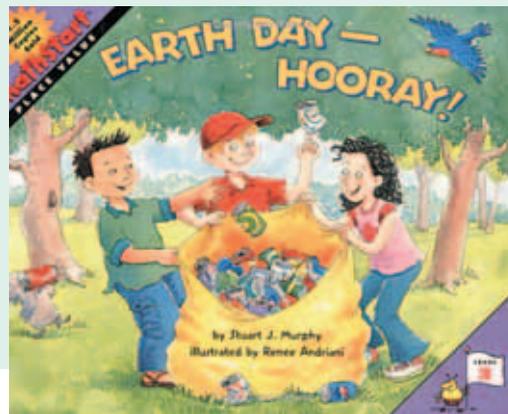
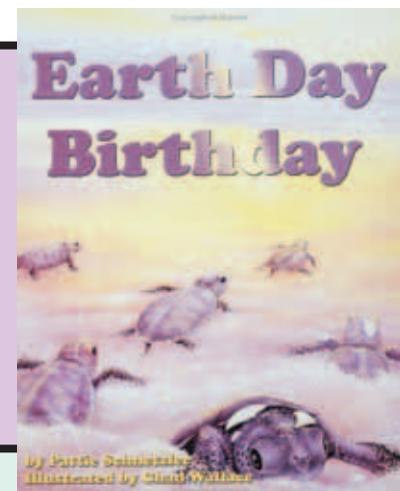
On April 22nd, we'll celebrate the 35th anniversary of Earth Day. Visit your local library or media center to learn a little more about Earth Day. While you're there, look for these three recently released books:

A biography that reads like a novel, *The Man from Clear Lake: Earth Day Founder Senator Gaylord Nelson* by Bill Christofferson (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) tells the story of Gaylord Nelson. A governor of Wisconsin and later U.S. Senator from that state, Nelson is the man behind Earth Day. While in the Senate, Nelson championed the idea of a "teach-in" for the Earth in 1970, dubbed "Earth Day." To everyone's surprise, 10 percent of U.S. citizens took part in that first celebration, picking up litter, cleaning up playgrounds, learning about pollution, and making a difference. After leaving the Senate, Nelson continued to devote his life and career to the environment, serving as the head of the Wilderness Society.



Read and enjoy!

Written to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," *Earth Day Birthday* by Pattie Schnetzler and illustrated by Chad Wallace (Dawn Publications, 2004) introduces students in preschool through fourth grade to 12 native species of North American animals. The illustrations and lyrics show children and adults how habitats work and help them understand the importance of our country's varied environment.



Kids in first through third grade can learn math place values and learn about Earth Day at the same time in this clever book, *Earth Day—Hooray!* written by Stuart J. Murphy and illustrated by Renee Andriani (MathStart Series, HarperTrophy, 2004). In the book, a group of kids clean up a park and recycle aluminum cans to raise money for the purchase of flowers they want to plant.

10 Tips for greener gatherings

In the U.S., the wedding industry is a \$70 billion business, stressing brides, grooms, budgets, and the environment. Add to that the amount of money—and waste—created at other similar types of events, including family reunions, graduation parties, and retirement roasts, and you have a lot of resources devoted to gatherings.

Here are some of the ways to make your gathering or celebration fun and earth friendly:

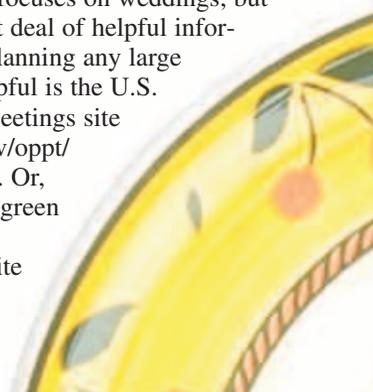
1. Avoid a lot of extra paper in invitations, such as double envelopes and reply card envelopes. If you need replies, request a phone call or include a stamped, self-addressed postcard.
2. Print everything from invitations and programs to thank-you notes on recycled-content paper.
3. Look for used formal wear, costumes, and wedding attire, including secondhand or vintage dresses and accessories.
4. Check into rentals. For years, men have rented tuxes. Why not rent or borrow a dress or suit for the occasion? In pictures, a rented dress can look just as lovely as a rented tux looks debonaire.
5. Select locally or regionally grown flowers, which are often grown with fewer pesticides and always require less fuel and create fewer emissions to deliver to your event.
6. Use washable and reusable plates, cups, napkins, and tablecloths. If you don't have enough for the



number of guests, rent or borrow extras.

Minimize your use of disposables, and you'll minimize your waste.

7. Plan to recycle at the party. Have containers for beverage container recycling near each trash bin. For multi-day events, such as family reunions, be sure to provide newspaper recycling, too.
8. Send leftovers home with guests, or donate leftover food to the needy.
9. Give party favors that are consumable, such as candy, teas, or coffees. Or, avoid party favors altogether. The guests came to share your special day—not to take a gift home!
10. Read more about greening weddings, gatherings, and other celebrations. Look for these books: *Green Weddings That Don't Cost the Earth* by Carol Reed-Jones (Paper Crane Press, 1996) and *Organic Weddings: Balancing Ecology, Style and Tradition* by Michelle Kozin (New Society Publishers, 2003). The website www.organicweddings.com focuses on weddings, but contains a great deal of helpful information about planning any large event. Also helpful is the U.S. EPA's Green Meetings site at www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/. Or, type "planning green gatherings" into your favorite search engine and follow the related links.



Brothers take greeting seriously

Since 1975, brothers Floyd and Earl Marian have been exchanging the same birthday card. Earl originally sent the Peanuts comic strip card, which carried the greeting: "This is the age of ecology! Don't throw this card away. Recycle it to a friend." Floyd took the message to heart and returned it on Earl's birthday the next month. The tradition has continued to this day, with each brother adding a handwritten line of greeting!

Quotes Requoted

Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like.

Will Rogers
American humorist
and entertainer,
1879-1935

Photo courtesy of Will Rogers Memorial Museums, www.WillRogers.org



WHAT'S UP?



Residents will be able to drop off tires and white goods (large appliances) for recycling on Saturday, May 21 at the LaPorte County Fair Grounds from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Gates close at 2 p.m. and rules are strictly enforced.

There is no charge to drop off up to 10 tires of any size and large appliances, such as washers, dryers, stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, humidifiers, and water heaters. Freon will be extracted from refrigerant appliances at no charge.

Any load with more than 10 tires requires a call to Susan at the office (326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700). You will be added to our list. Those NOT on the list will be turned away on the day of the collection. In addition, driver's license and vehicle registration must be presented to the officer at the collection prior to dropping off tires.

The District reserves the right to refuse any loads. This drop-off event is for residents ONLY. No businesses or industries may drop off items.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

We are also available to speak to your club or organization about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling and composting.

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Obsolete electronics recycling set for June 3-4

Have you checked under the basement stairs? What about the high shelf in the hall closet? Do you see any old electronics? Take a look around and plan to deliver them to our upcoming Obsolete Electronics Collection at the LaPorte County Fair Grounds. We'll be accepting electronics for recycling on Friday, June 3 and Saturday, June 4. On both days, you can drop off electronics between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

We'll be accepting electronics, including obsolete computers, monitors, telephones, VCRs, copiers, radios,

paggers, printers, CD players, computer paraphernalia and components, electronic games, FAX machines, TVs, modems, and electronic typewriters.

At the event, all items will be loaded into semi-trailers as they arrive. You may have a short wait, but we do our best to keep the line moving quickly. This event is open to all LaPorte County residents and non-profit organizations. Any resident or non-profit with 10 or more large items must pre-register by calling 326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700.



GARAGE SALE SEASON



To some people this is spring, but to others it's just the beginning of one long garage sale season. The weekly treasure hunt through neighborhoods and along side roads brings the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Every devoted garage-saler has at least one story of a perfect hammock bought in the last hour of a three-day sale—for a dollar. But for every story like that, there is a tale of walking up a driveway, ready to shop, and seeing another patron walk away with a one-of-a-kind, must-have vintage lamp. If you are ready for the adventure, get into garage-saling this spring.

Here are some tips to make even a novice seem like a pro:

- Travel light. Consider putting your money and driver's license into your pocket or use a "fanny-pack." Remember to bring cash—most sellers won't accept checks (or credit cards, of course). A small tape measure comes in handy, too.
- Grab a canvas tote. Not everyone provides bags or boxes, so the tote will give you a place to bag your purchases.
- Don't dry out. Wear a hat and sunscreen. Fill a water bottle and take it along.
- Pack a lunch. If you're planning to be out all day, pack your own lunch in a small cooler. This is a day for savings, so why give your hard-earned money to a fast-food restaurant?
- Read the ads. Look for garage sales in the classified ads. Also, you might check online. There are several online garage sale advertising services—maybe someone in your area posted a sale there.
- Map your route. Decide how far you want to drive and plan to take on the sales in a route that circles out from and back to your home, if possible.
- Keep your eyes open. Often neighbors decide to hold a sale after someone nearby has advertised. Stay on the lookout for these unadvertised sales.
- Take a good look at the merchandise. Pick items up and look at the back and the bottom. Check for stains, chips, rips, and cracks. Ask to plug in electrical appliances to be sure they work. Open board games and puzzles to check to see that the pieces are all there.
- Make an offer. Prices at garage sales aren't always firm.
- Enjoy your newfound treasures.



The green, green grass of spring

Everything seems so fresh and new in the spring. Trees bud, flowers bloom, and grass begins to grow. As you are pulling out your patio furniture, you are probably also getting out the garden tools and lawn mower. Now is a great time to think about grasscycling.

Grasscycling, which is also called mulching, means letting your grass clippings drop onto the lawn when you mow, rather than picking them up with the grass catcher or bagger. These grass clippings can provide your lawn with moisture, as well as nitrogen, which is a food that your lawn needs.

If your family owns a mulching mower, the mower is designed to chop the grass blades into tiny pieces and then drop them onto the mown grass. If you don't have a mulching mower, you can simply remove the bag attachment from the mower and insert the "chute cover." This cover is a safety device that covers the hole where the bag is normally attached. A regular mower

may not chop the grass blades quite as small, so you might have to mow slightly more often.

Grasscycling is easier if you trim off no more than the top one-third of your grass on each mowing. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. However, the small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. Chopping off more than one-third of the grass blade is hard on the plants and leaves behind long clippings that take longer to break down.

In addition to providing moisture and nitrogen to your lawn and reducing your use of trash bags, grasscycling will also save time. If your lawn takes an hour to mow when you stop and bag the grass, it should only take about 40 minutes to mow when you grasscycle. Wouldn't you rather spend that extra time relaxing on the patio furniture?