

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County

(219) 326-0014
(800) 483-7700

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Spring 2009



Compost facility did not take a winter's nap



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You'd think with the awful, cold winter weather and snow that the men at our compost facility would have had lots of spare time. Not so! "Compost cooks year-round," said Joe Jokantas, Compost Facility Coordinator. "If we continue the processing all winter, although it is a bit slower, we will have tons of that fine compost that LaPorte County residents love so much."

"Of course," Joe continued, "we still have lots of good firewood, and we hope to keep a steady supply."

If you have any questions about the compost program, just give Joe a call at 785-2511, extension #4935. He will be glad to answer your every question.

A great time to "grasscycle"

When you "grasscycle," you simply let your clippings drop back onto your lawn instead of bagging them. Grass clippings are mostly made up of nitrogen and water—both of which your lawn needs. Because each mowing will take about one-third less time, grasscycling saves your family time, too. So, grass-



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bagging, be sure that you insert the "chute cover," which is a safety device to cover the hole where the bagger would go.

If you do want to pick up your grass clippings, or if you have other yard waste, deliver it to the District's yard waste drop-off site at the north end of Zigler Road (Zigler runs along the east side of the

Fairgrounds), just past the grandstands on the west side. The site is open seven days a week during daylight hours. Remember—you *cannot leave plastic bags at the site*. If you deliver material in plastic bags, please empty the bags and take them home with you for disposal in the trash.

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You don't have to have a special mower to grasscycle. You can use a mulching mower, which will chop the clippings very small. But, you can also use a regular mower by taking off the bagger attachment. If you remove the

6 a.m.!!

Everyone, please check your clocks

Although there have been some big changes in our recycling program with the schedule change and the new toters, one thing has remained constant. Bins **MUST** be at curbside by **6 a.m.** on pickup day, the same as always. The recycling trucks now have GPS trackers, so we get a printout of what time each truck was on each road. This records every two minutes. Drivers are keeping track of addresses that do not have a recycling bin at curbside when they run the road.

In our desire to save the environment, we must factor in the cost of fuel plus the pollution effect on the environ-



ment. Repeated trips back and forth because folks do not have toters out on time only hurts us all in the long run. Please be mindful of the 6 a.m. rule. If you feel you have been missed, you must contact our office no later than the next morning after the miss; only then can we help you. Waiting a week to call makes it impossible to rectify the situation properly because trucks have moved on to other

routes.

To keep the recycling fee low and provide good service, we must all work together. We sincerely appreciate the great recyclers in LaPorte County; it is our desire to add to the numbers. Thanks for doing your part.

Today's Thought: 500,000 trees could be saved if everyone recycled their Sunday newspapers.

Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk



By now, I hope everyone has their new recycling toter—and I stress—I HOPE! According to what I said in the winter issue, you should all have your toters. Due to address problems and the horrible weather conditions, we did not finish drop-offs by our expected delivery date. We are now finishing the bin exchanges. Man, oh man, was it ever a rough couple of months delivering and switching toters. This, coupled with a change in the pickup schedule, plus the awful weather, made January and February a real tough time. But, we made it!

Here is where I need to thank the citizens of LaPorte County for their kindness and patience during these trying times. Over all, the response to the new toters has been very impressive, and I feel that they will be a great benefit to our recycling program. In the December 2008 figures, the recycling total was 500 tons over last year's total. So, I believe all of the aggravation that our residents went through will yield high dividends for the recycling program. Out of 40,000 toters delivered, we had less than 1% of the bins refused by residents who did not want to recycle at all. No matter how easy we make it, we will still have a handful of folks who do not want to participate. I will continue to work on lowering that percentage.

The new large toters have been very well received by our community, and I can't wait until the end of 2009 to share the new collection totals with you.

Thank you for working with us during this difficult transition. The old saying, "Mirrors Reflect and People Shine," certainly is applicable to the citizens of LaPorte County.

Clay

10 tips for Greener Cleaning



(c) Ivonne Wierink / SnapVillage.com

Read more about it!

485 Ways to Clean, Polish, Disinfect, Deodorize, and Remove Stains
Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping by Annie Berthold-Bond (Ceres Press, 1994)

All-Purpose Cleaners Buying Guide
www.thegreenguide.com/buying-guide/all-purpose-cleaners

Clean Your House Without Hurting the Planet
www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/

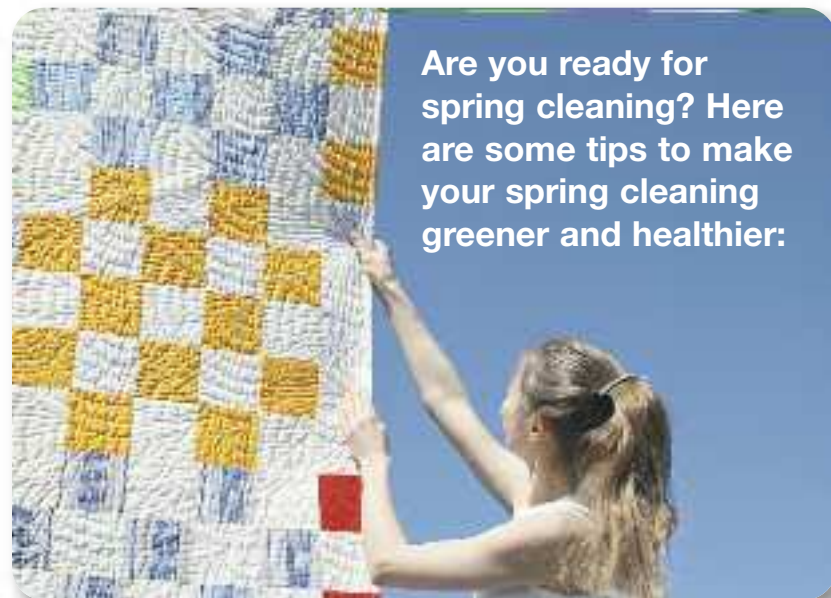
Greener Cleaning
www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning

How to Go Green: Cleaning
<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/green-cleaning/>

How to Make a Non-Toxic Cleaning Kit
www.care2.com/greenliving/make-your-own-non-toxic-cleaning-kit.html

Non-Toxic Home Cleaning
www.earthesy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm

A Test of Green Cleaners
www.grist.org/advice/products/2008/03/25/



(c) Anita Salsara / SnapVillage.com

Are you ready for spring cleaning? Here are some tips to make your spring cleaning greener and healthier:

1. Open the windows. After the house has been closed up for most of the winter, the best thing to do is to give it a good airing out. On a pleasant spring day, throw open the windows and give the house a few hours to breathe in the fresh air.
2. Think mechanical first. A scrub brush, a dish scrubber, and a retired toothbrush can provide a lot of cleaning power with no chemicals at all. Drain baskets keep drains free of debris that can lead to clogs.
3. Use up chemicals that you have on hand before purchasing replacement products. If you have cleaners stored in multiple locations (some in the laundry room, others under the kitchen sink, and a few in the garage), find them and inventory what you have available.
4. Consider creating your own cleaners from common household products, such as vinegar, baking soda, salt, lemon juice, and mineral oil. Many of these cleaners are easy to make, effective, and less expensive than pre-mixed chemical solutions. (Remember that even homemade cleaners can be irritating to skin and eyes. Always use caution in mixing, storing, and using homemade cleaners.)

5. If you choose to purchase a cleaning product, choose the mildest and most benign chemical product available. Although it is not mandatory, a few manufacturers do voluntarily provide a complete list of ingredients. Try to select products that provide you complete information on ingredients, offer the most clear instructions on use, and don't require extraordinary safety measures for use or disposal.
6. When you purchase products or containers, look for recycled-content and recyclable containers. Rather than using paper towels, use reusable towels and old rags. If you purchase paper towels, please choose those made from recycled-content paper.
7. Buying concentrates reduces packaging waste. Some cleaning products are now sold in concentrated form; you finish making the solution by adding tap water at home. Other products, such as laundry detergent, are concentrated and ready to use when you get home. Remember—if you have softened water, you can use even less detergent.
8. Keep unfinished products in their original, labeled containers. *Never* pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage. Store all cleaning products out of reach of children and away from pets. Do not store potentially hazardous materials close to sources of heat or in direct sunlight.
9. Dispose of containers and unused chemicals properly. Follow the label instructions. If the instructions are unclear, call the manufacturer for more details or call us.
10. Make sure everyone in your family knows about your new "greener cleaning" habits.

On the GO

If you're trying to trim your expenses, you may be walking or biking more. Walking and biking are good for your health and your pocketbook. Of course, they are also better for our environment because walking and biking don't require fuel or spew out emissions.

However, if you like to take a cup of coffee with you when you leave the house, what are you supposed to do? Reusable travel mugs are fine if you are walking, but may not be fully leak-proof when you bike. There's a simple, waste-free solution—thermal or canteen bottles. The thermal-style bottles keep hot drinks hot and cold drinks cold. These bottles can be sealed, so you can put them into a backpack or bag without worrying about leaks and spills. Many have a built-in loop to allow you to hang the bottle from your handle bars. Others have insulated pouches with handles or loops. Still others will fit right into your bike's water bottle holder.

If your drink of choice is water or a sports drink, you can use the same style bottles. Simply fill the clean bottle with tap water or sports drink from your gallon jug.

Look for leak-proof thermal bottles at local stores. Many carry these bottles and accessories. Or, go online and search for "thermo bottles."



(c) Chrstock / SnapVillage.com

Hope for harried readers Planet Green

“Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation. Lend and borrow to the maximum.”

At a time when many have had to tighten their belts, novelist Henry Miller offers good advice for readers. Enjoying a good book doesn't require buying a new copy or even owning it. Books can be borrowed, shared, and swapped. The pleasure is the same, but the cost is less.

The library is, of course, the least expensive way to enjoy good books. You can borrow from the local library's many resources. All you need is a library card.

Another option is used bookstores. When you buy used books, you often pay only one-quarter to one-half of the original price. Some of the "used" books have never even been read. Many secondhand stores sell books, and books are a common item at garage sales, as well.

Sharing books with friends is free. Often, you and your friends enjoy the same types of books or authors. You can also spread your enthusiasm for a book that you couldn't put down by passing it along to a new reader.

In addition to these local resources, there are many online options as well:

- Book Crossing is a program that allows people to "read and release"

books. If you want to release a book or are hunting for one, visit www.bookcrossing.com.

- Several sites offer readers the chance to trade one or more books with other readers, usually for just the cost of shipping. For more information about book swaps by mail, visit www.bookins.com, www.bookmooch.com, www.paperbackswap.com, or www.swaptree.com.

- If you've ever wondered why there isn't a "Netflix" for books, your wait is over. BookSwim allows readers to rent books. This concept is not new. Before the age of downloadable audiobooks, readers could rent books on tape (and later on CD) by mail. Now, readers can rent bestsellers at a fraction of the purchase price. For more information, go to www.bookswim.com.

Books aren't the only media that can be borrowed, shared, swapped, or purchased used, of course. The same applies to DVDs and CDs, as well as many magazines.

You don't have to give up at-home entertainment, but you can lower its cost by lending and borrowing to the maximum.



(c) FutureDigitalDesign / SnapVillage.com

If you have a pay-TV service, such as cable or satellite, you may be getting the Planet Green network. If you enjoy the Discovery channel, you'll like Planet Green.

Planet Green offers a variety of original programs. If you love home renovation or want to know how to live an everyday green life, you'll be able to watch shows like *Living With Ed*, *Renovation Nation*, *Total Wrecklamation*, *Wa\$ted!*, *World's Greenest Homes*, *Focus Earth*, and *Greenovate*. Maybe you're more interested in food. Check out *Emeril Green* or *Supper Club*. If you're wondering what is new in transportation, catch an episode of *Mean Green Machines*. Do you love entertainment news? Watch *Hollywood Green*. How about a game show? Play along with *Go for the Green*.

In addition to the programming, you'll find "Go Green" tips at the website, <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/>, along with games and video clips. There is even a convenient "channel finder" — all you need to know is your ZIP code and your pay-TV service provider.

QUOTES REQUOTED



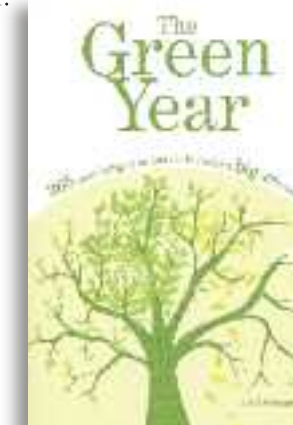
The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope.

Wendell Berry, 1934—
American farmer and poet

Greening your year

Looking for small steps that will make a big difference? Check out *The Green Year: 365 Small Things You Can Do to Make a Big Difference* by Jodi Helmer (Penguin Group, 2008). This book has one simple idea for each day of the year. Each page also has a spot for you to check off that you've done the activity or to write your own alternative that will work better for you and your family.

The ideas include reducing waste, saving energy, and much more. Some days suggest things that you probably already do—or have thought about doing—such as replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents and sharing magazines. Other days give you new and fun ideas. For instance, when you stop at your favorite ice cream shop, don't get ice cream in a cup. Instead, order your ice cream in an edible and waste-free cone. Here's another one: Clean out your car's trunk or cargo area and improve your gas mileage. According to Helmer, an extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce your fuel efficiency by 2 percent.



CLIP AND SAVE



(c) Maypop / SnapVillage.com

Each year in the U.S., gas-powered lawn mowers consume more than 720 million gallons of gasoline. At the same time, these mowers spit out harmful air pollutants and disturb the peace and quiet of our spring and summer days.

However, gas-powered mowers aren't the only way to keep your lawn looking good. Electric mowers are quieter and exhaust-free. Some electric mowers need an extension cord, but many of the newer ones contain a rechargeable battery. With battery-powered models, you simply plug in the mower to charge it and then unplug it while you cut the grass. These cordless mowers are heavier and a bit more difficult to maneuver than the corded models. Neither type requires oil changes or gasoline. You do have the cost for electricity, but that may be as little as \$5-10 per year.

Another—and even more environmentally friendly—option is a manual reel lawn mower. Here are just a few of the great reasons to use a reel mower:

- Reel mowers leave behind healthier grass plants because they "snip" the grass, cutting it in the same way that a pair of scissors would. (Powered rotary mowers actually tear the grass blades.)
- Manual mowers don't need gasoline, so an empty gas can will never change your plans. They also don't require an electrical charge, so you don't have to remember to plug them in.
- Push reel mowers produce no harmful emissions and emit no exhaust into your face and your neighborhood's air.
- Manual mowers are whisper-quiet, allowing you to hear your children playing and to enjoy the birds chirping. You can still listen to your music on headphones, but you won't have to!
- You'll enjoy a brisk walk and some resistance training while you mow.
- Reel mowers are virtually maintenance-free. Occasionally, the bearings and cutting edges may need a little lubricant and a slight adjustment. The cutters will need to be sharpened every couple of years.
- You'll never struggle with the pull cord on a manual mower. Simply start walking and the mower starts, too.
- Reel mowers take less space in the garage or shed.
- Push reel mowers are the cheapest to purchase, operate, and maintain.

A manual reel mower isn't right for every yard. The mowers are best suited to smaller yards, such as those that are 10,000 square feet (about one-quarter acre) or less. However, many of today's yards are no bigger than this.

If you'd like more information about reel mowers (or about electric mowers), ask at your hardware store, lawn and garden center, or home supply store. You can also learn more at www.cleanairgardening.com, www.planetnatural.com, www.gardeners.com, www.reelin.com, or www.reelmowerguide.com/.

WHAT'S UP?

FREE E-cycling is convenient and available year-round to LaPorte County residents! You can drop off computers, monitors, electric typewriters, printers, fax machines, copiers, stereos, televisions, VCRs, DVD players, telephones, laptops, cell phones, adding machines, zip drives, palm pilots, keyboards, mice, hard drives (erased, please), calculators, scanners, electronic games, microwaves, power supplies, battery backups, etc.

ELECTRONIC RECYCLING



We are accepting these items Monday through Friday at two locations: 1027 Hitchcock Road in Michigan City and the LaPorte County Highway Department, 1805 West 5th Street, LaPorte. Hours may vary, so call us at 326-0014.

This site is monitored on a daily basis and is for the convenience of **LaPorte County residents only**.

Businesses, industries, and schools cannot utilize this drop-off because of limited space in the garages and trailers. However, businesses, industries, non-profits, institutions, and schools can drop off electronics at ICRI, 1824 West 35th Avenue, Gary. For more information, call ICRI at 219-887-7000.



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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Fun Facts

1. In California, a wheat farmer produces about \$150 per acre per year. What sort of farmer can earn \$12,000 per acre per year?
 - A. Coffee farmer
 - B. Dairy farmer
 - C. Wind farmer (by producing electricity with windmills)
 - D. Beet farmer
2. True or False: It is estimated that the earth supports 5 million species of plants and animals.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. How much air do we breathe each day to stay alive?
 - A. 695 quarts
 - B. 11,950 quarts
 - C. 21,000 quarts
4. Air pollutants, mainly sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, mix with rain or snowfall to pollute rivers and lakes and to kill trees. What is this process called?
 - A. Non-recycling
 - B. Acid rain
 - C. Tree-acide
5. Over half of the phosphates in our streams and lakes comes from detergents. What type of detergent is usually phosphate-free?
 - A. The sale brand
 - B. The one your mother uses
 - C. Liquid detergent
 - D. Powder detergent that claims to be "phos-free"

Answers: 1 C - The wind farmer; 2 B - It supports over 30 million species; 3 C - 21,000 quarts; 4 B - Acid rain; 5 C - Liquid detergent



Household hazardous waste collections begin for 2009

Again this year, the Lake Michigan Districts Household Hazardous Waste Mobile Collection Program will be accepting lawn and garden chemicals, automotive fluids, oil-based paint and related products, and mercury-containing items, such as fluorescent tubes and bulbs and thermostats, for proper disposal.

Here in LaPorte County, our first collection for the year was held on Saturday, March 21 in LaPorte. The remaining collections will be held as follows:

- Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall, Michigan City
- Saturday, May 30, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Lake Park Plaza, Old Wal-Mart,

4301 S. Franklin Street, Michigan City

- Saturday, June 13, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 West State Road 2, LaPorte
- Saturday, August 1, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 West State Road 2, LaPorte
- Saturday, September 26, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall, Michigan City
- Saturday, October 17, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 West State Road 2, LaPorte

For more information, call 219-326-1425 or 800-483-7700. Or, visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com, and click on "Household Hazardous Waste."

Good Reasons to Recycle

- **Recycling saves energy.** It takes less energy to make new products from recyclables than to make them from virgin materials. Last year, recycling by households saved an amount of energy equal to the electricity used by 17.8 million Americans or the gasoline used by 11 million cars.



- **Recycling reduces pollution.** Making new products from recycled materials releases fewer air and water pollutants. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, last year's recycling reduced carbon dioxide emissions by an amount comparable to removing 35 million passenger cars from our roadways.
- **Recycling conserves natural resources.** When we make new products from recycled materials, we keep resources out of landfills and in use.

Mark your calendar!

Tire and White Goods Collections

Saturday, May 23, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 West State Road 2, LaPorte

Saturday, October 17, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. – LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 West State Road 2, LaPorte



Book Collection

Friday, June 12, and Saturday, June 13, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. – LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 West State Road 2, LaPorte

What can I deliver to the Mobile Household Hazardous Waste collections?

- Aerosols
- Automotive supplies
 - Antifreeze
 - Oils and other fluids
- Batteries
 - Automotive
 - 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*
 - Thinners
 - Solvents
- Pesticides
 - Fungicides
 - Herbicides
 - Insecticides
 - Other poisons
- Sharps
 - Needles
 - Syringes
 - Lancets



- Waste fuels
 - Diesel
 - Gasoline
 - Kerosene
 - Other flammable liquids



* **Bring oil-based paint ONLY to the mobile collections! NO latex paint is accepted at these events! Remove lids from latex paint cans; add a cup of cheap, CLAY cat litter; allow to dry and harden; and dispose of with your regular garbage (leave lids OFF of cans).**

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