

A Quarterly Newsletter of



**Solid Waste District of LaPorte County**  
 (219) 326-0014  
 (800) 483-7700  
 www.solidwastedistrict.com  
**Fall 2010**



# A tour of Diversified Recycling

We still have the doubters! There are some people who still think that recycling is mixed with garbage and taken straight to a landfill. These folks believe that the recycling materials are NOT recycled. We are failing at our job if we don't continually try to educate the public on the success of their recycling efforts.

Recently, two representatives from the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County, Clay Turner, Executive Director, and Tom Larson, Citizen's Advisory Committee President, were among a group of 12 from the Northern Indiana Recycling

Initiative who toured Diversified Recycling in Homewood, Illinois. This was a day of discovery for many as they watched the process of picking and sorting through the truck loads of recyclables that travel from our curbside every other week and from other communities to this facility. Diversified Recycling takes in approximately 600 tons of recyclables per day. During the month of June, LaPorte County alone delivered 753.2 tons.

At Diversified Recycling, sorting is the first part of daily operations as tons of recyclables are sent through the process. The workers pick through paper, cardboard, magazines, cereal boxes, and plastics and place these materials on conveyors to bale later for shipment. Glass is filtered through a screening process and shipped to a recycler that uses an optical eye to sort various colors that will be processed. An eddy current is put on aluminum cans, and a magnet is used to pull out the steel cans. The end product is huge bales of crushed cans, cardboard, and plastic. This material is then shipped via truck or rail to its final recycling destination where it is turned into a variety of new products.

We are providing a video of this tour so that



we can prove to the doubters that our curbside recycling materials are really being recycled! The pictures included here are nothing compared to the video tour you can take! Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type in Diversified Recycling Tour at the top. See for yourself the amazing process that takes place.



**Mark your calendars!**



## Household Hazardous Waste Mobile Collections

Saturday, September 25, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Michigan City, Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall

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



## Tire and Appliance Collection

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

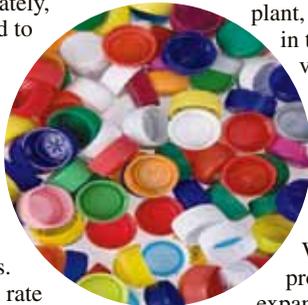
## Bottle Caps: The Mystery Solved

By Nancy Gibson, Education Coordinator

Many times each week, and, in fact, sometimes several times a day, someone calls our office and asks the question, "Can I recycle plastic bottle caps?" In the past, taking our direction from the recycler, the answer was, unfortunately, no. There were two reasons we had to give this answer.

First, the caps are usually made from a different plastic than that used to make the bottle. Different materials have different resin codes (letters and numbers), and workers at the recycling center must separate the materials on the conveyor belt by their codes. The recycling line moves at a high rate of speed, and employees must work at an extremely rapid pace picking items from the line. Therefore, it hasn't been feasible for them to pull off bottles, twist off the caps, and place the bottle and cap into separate sorting bins.

Second, bottle caps are small. When they were separated from the bottle, they almost never made it all the way to the processing plant in Homewood, Illinois. Imagine a cap from a 16-ounce soda bottle, separated from its bottle, and making it to Homewood, Illinois. As you can



**You no longer need to remove and discard bottle caps. Bottles and caps are now accepted together for recycling, thanks to improved equipment at the processing facility.**

(© Jiri Hera | Dreamstime.com)

imagine, it was likely to get lost in transit. A little, loose bottle cap going from LaPorte County, Indiana, to Homewood Disposal and Diversified Recycling in Homewood, Illinois is probably going to get lost on the way!

Even if the loose cap did make it to the plant, small, loose items tend to get stuck in the machinery, clogging up the conveyor belts. So, the only answer was to say no to diligent recyclers who wanted to recycle the caps.

However, our answer has now changed to a "yes"! The "lowly bottle cap" can now be recycled along with the bottle! With new and advanced recycling processes in place, recyclers are expanding the list of items that they can accept. One of these new processes includes a machine that allows you to leave the cap on the bottle. At the plant, this new machine slits the side of the plastic bottle, allowing the air to escape so the bottle doesn't explode when being baled. Once the material is sorted, marketed, and shipped to a recycler, the cap and bottle can be separated and used to "remake" articles from the different plastics.

So, the next time you finish that water or  
*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk



"Pay As You Throw" may be the way to go. More and more communities throughout our great country are starting to think along those exact lines. I have been doing some research on this topic and maybe it's time to start looking at this option, or, at the very least, thinking about it.

Pay As You Throw is a method of paying only for the amount of garbage you produce, whether it is charged by the bag or by the size of the trash can that you use. In reality, why should a single person or elderly couple pay the same amount for trash collection as a family of six, seven, or more? Obviously, the single person or couple doesn't produce the same amount of refuse. With Pay As You Throw, you purchase your bags or containers from either the government entity or private hauler and then use them as needed. I know what you are thinking—what's going to keep me from taking my trash to my neighbor's or to the park and dump it? Case studies show that neighbors are pretty diligent about keeping track, and usually there is something left behind that indicates to whom the trash belongs. Then, with some stiff fines involved, the illegal dumping seems to halt pretty quickly.

I'm not saying that we should run out and start this tomorrow. I'm just saying with land being so precious and the economy the way it is, it makes sense to at least entertain the idea. Plus, it gives you something to talk to our elected officials about at the next candidates' night or public forum.

You are probably thinking about how this idea has some potential. But wait a minute, why does our recycle guy want to talk about trash? Well, the answer is simple—if you have the opportunity to pay for the trash you produce and can save money by producing less trash, then it sure makes sense to recycle more. I also think recycling is one of the best deals around. Think about it—the day might come when we will only have to pick up trash every other week and collect recycling every week. What a day of rejoicing that will be! Some communities saved so much with Pay As You Throw that they were able to reduce the cost of recycling or even offer it for free.

If you get a chance, check out this website, [www.epa.gov/payt](http://www.epa.gov/payt), or call toll free 1-888-EPA-PAYT (1-888-372-7289).

*Clay*

THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS WOULD HAVE DISAPPEARED LONG AGO...HAD THEY HAPPENED TO BE WITHIN THE REACH OF PREDATORY HUMAN HANDS. ~ HAVELOCK ELLIS

# WHAT DO I NEED?

OFTEN WHEN LOOKING AT A MASS OF THINGS FOR SALE, HE WOULD SAY TO HIMSELF, "HOW MANY THINGS I HAVE NO NEED OF!" – SOCRATES

Yes, over 2,400 years ago, the philosopher Socrates was going to the market and finding many things offered that he didn't really need! How many times have you had that same feeling? You were at a store, you had an item in your hand, you were headed toward the checkout, and suddenly, you thought, "I don't really need this."

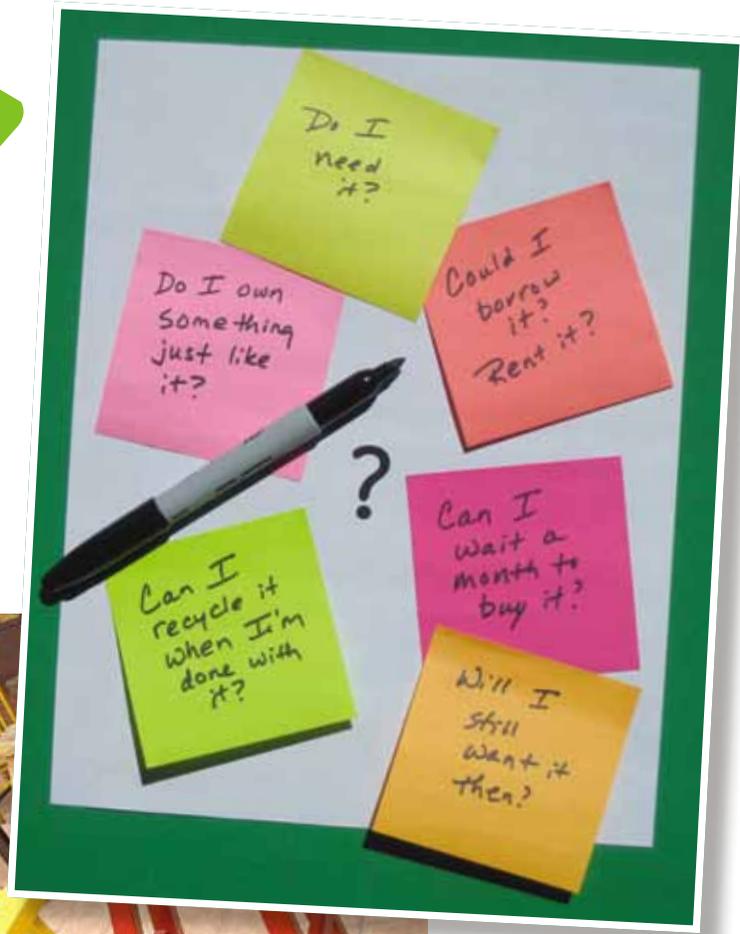
When it comes to shopping for things we may want, but don't necessarily need, it's a good idea to think before heading to the checkout counter. The Center for a New American Dream's Conscious Consumption program invites all of us to ask these questions as we shop:

- Is this something I need?
- Do I already own something that could serve the same purpose?
- Can I borrow one, find one used, or make one instead of buying new?
- Was it made locally?
- Was it made with environmentally preferable materials?
- Will it serve more than one purpose?
- Will it be easy and cost-effective to maintain?
- Does it come in excessive packaging?
- Can I recycle or compost it when I'm done with it?
- If I'm still not sure, can I wait a month before deciding whether to buy it?

**Could I buy something used instead of something new?**

In asking and answering these questions, we will ultimately decide to buy many things that we want. But when we do so, we'll be selecting them for their utility or for their capacity to enrich our experiences and enjoyment. Instead of buying on impulse, we'll be buying with intention.

When we choose to consume more consciously, we will probably also save money and create less waste that we must reuse, recycle, or dispose.



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## One Change

If you were going to make one change this month, what would it be? Here's an idea—give up bottled water. If you buy one bottle of water a day from a vending machine or store, you are spending at least \$500 more per year than you would spend for the same amount of tap water. Even if you are buying water by the case on sale, you're probably spending an extra \$50-95 per year. Aside from the cost, what about the waste? At a bottle a day, that is 365 water bottles. If you were getting all of the water you need per day – about 64 ounces – from bottles, you would be using and discarding four bottles a day, which is 1,460 bottles per year per person!

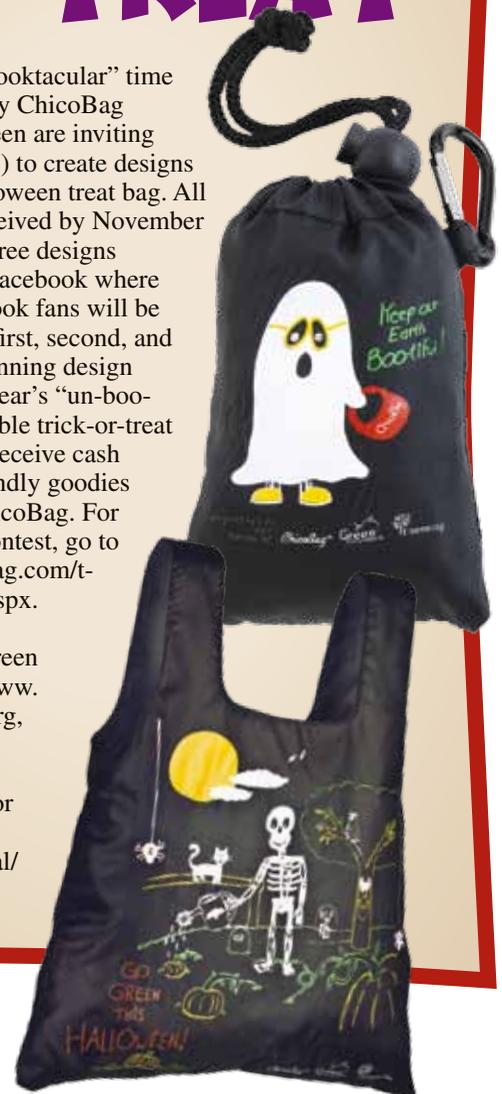
Instead of buying bottled water, fill your own reusable bottle, use a glass, or get a drink at the water fountain. If you are using a refillable bottle, be sure to wash it with hot, soapy water between uses, or, if it is dishwasher safe, put it in the dishwasher. If you are worried about germs, label the bottles so that each family member has his or her own bottle. If you don't like the taste of your tap water, purchase a water-filtering pitcher and keep it in the fridge.

There will be times when you are thirsty and a water bottle is your only, or the best available, choice. Remember to recycle those plastic water bottles!

## TRICK-OR-TREAT

Halloween is a "spooktacular" time to reuse. That's why ChicoBag and Green Halloween are inviting children (ages 1-13) to create designs for a reusable Halloween treat bag. All entries must be received by November 5, 2010. The top three designs will be posted on Facebook where ChicoBag's Facebook fans will be invited to vote for first, second, and third place. The winning design will become next year's "un-boo-lievable" and reusable trick-or-treat bag. Winners will receive cash prizes and eco-friendly goodies in a Halloween ChicoBag. For details about the contest, go to [http://www.chicobag.com/t-green\\_halloween.aspx](http://www.chicobag.com/t-green_halloween.aspx).

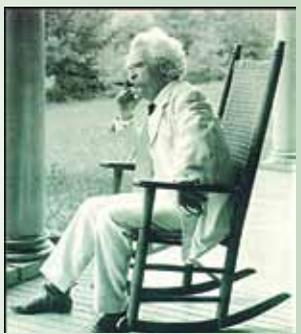
To learn more about enjoying a green Halloween, visit [www.GreenHalloween.org](http://www.GreenHalloween.org), <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/halloween/>, or [www.recycleguys.org/images/seasonal/halloween.htm](http://www.recycleguys.org/images/seasonal/halloween.htm).



## QUOTES REQUOTED

A human being has a natural desire to have more of a good thing than he needs.

Mark Twain, 1835–1910  
Following the Equator  
American Novelist and Humorist



# Thankful, not wasteful

At Thanksgiving, families and friends gather for a feast that kicks off the holiday season. Whether your gathering features board games, football, basketball in the driveway, or movies, chances are, the focus is on the food and the conversation that surrounds it. Make your event this year filled with thanks, but light on waste.

- Use email to invite guests, coordinate food assignments, share recipes, and more. Have a large family or group? Set up a Facebook group or send an Evite online.
- Count heads. Find out who is coming and who is not so that you can plan to have plenty of, but not too much, food. For the meal, you need to plan for about one serving of turkey, four side servings, and one dessert per person.
- Design the menu with care. If no one likes cranberry relish, don't make it. If cornbread dressing was a hit last year, make it and skip the oyster dressing. Go for appetizers that



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are tasty, but light. If you want to introduce an exotic food or ingredient, pair it with something familiar.

- Dress up the house with reusable fall decorations, such as festive tablecloths and vases, or choose edible or compostable decor, such as gourds, corn, pumpkins, apples, oranges, lemons, or fall foliage.
- Set the table with family heirlooms. This is the perfect time for Grandma's china or the cloth napkins that were a wedding gift. If you don't have enough plates, silverware, or glasses, borrow extras from a friend or consider renting what you need.
- Turn down the thermostat as guests begin to arrive. Allow body heat to keep your rooms comfortable. How many times have you had to open a window on Thanksgiving because the house was feeling stuffy?
- Make sure your guests know where to recycle bottles and cans.
- Plan a "Leftovers Party." Invite your friends over for an evening of games and ask each family to bring their Thanksgiving Day leftovers. This is a great way to sample other people's special holiday foods and keep your leftovers out of the trash.

Over the next few months, Thanksgiving is only one of the parties that you'll be planning or attending. The winter months are full of celebrations and get-togethers. From now through Super Bowl Sunday, enjoy your family and friends, feast away, and watch your waste!

## Books for a better world

Describing itself as a "for-profit social venture," Better World Books earns money by selling new and used books. However, financial profit isn't the only motive; the company also strives to generate a social profit by contributing to improvements in literacy. Since it was founded in 2002, Better World Books has given more than 2.8 million books to partner literacy programs in the U.S. and around the world and donated over \$8.6 million to fund global literacy efforts. In addition, the company has kept more than 34.8 million books out of landfills!

Reusable books come to Better World Books from book drives for used books and textbooks through a network of over 1,800 college campuses and partnerships with over 2,000 libraries and thrift stores nationwide. These books are either sold, sent to a non-profit literacy partner program, or recycled if unsuitable for use.

Better World Books has more than 6 million titles in stock and offers free shipping throughout the U.S. For more information, visit [www.betterworldbooks.com](http://www.betterworldbooks.com).



## 50 Ways to Never Waste Food Again

Unwanted and spoiled food costs a family of four almost \$600 per year. During the holiday season, food waste goes up. Save money on food purchases and reduce food waste with the helpful tips at this website: <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/home-garden/ways-avoid-waste-food.html>

## FAST FACTS

### Do oil and compost mix?

As cleanup related to the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico continues, compost may be part of the solution. Compost provides the perfect environment for bacteria and microscopic organisms that can break down hydrocarbons like those found in oil. This process is called "bioremediation." With bioremediation, changes occur as contaminants or pollutants are metabolized by microorganisms and broken down into harmless, stable constituents, such as carbon dioxide, water, and salts.



Photo courtesy of Matter of Trust

## Recycling Stonehenge

If imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, then the prehistoric creators of Stonehenge should be quite pleased. The most famous of the stone circles in England, Stonehenge has been a source of controversy and curiosity. It has also spawned many imitators, including those using recycled materials.

In a recent article, Simone Preuss takes a look at "Seven Stonehenges Made From Recycled Materials." These include "stone circles" made from old cars, foam blocks, British-style phone booths, old refrigerators, decommissioned military tanks, port-a-potties, and snow. Read the article and see photos of these "henges" at <http://1800recycling.com/2010/09/stonehenges-recycled-materials/>.

A blog, *Clonehenge*, boasts "the most complete list of Stonehenge replicas on the Internet" and contains a feature entitled, "The 65 Large Permanent Replicas." Read more about permanent and not-so-permanent Stonehenge replicas at this blog, <http://replicahenge.wordpress.com/>.

Roadside America, a website devoted to offbeat tourist attractions, has a feature on "America Unhinged." Go to [www.roadsideamerica.com/set/OVERhenges.html](http://www.roadsideamerica.com/set/OVERhenges.html).



© Kevin Saff

for "recycled clothing" or "recycled shoes" online to see some of the options.

Clothing, shoe, and accessory reuse is and has been a big business. Whether referred to as secondhand, vintage, or hand-me-down, they are all the same—a good deal! Plus, used items provide lots of variety and come in every size, style, and color. You'll find never-worn, seldom-worn, and gently used clothing, shoes, and accessories. You probably won't show up at a party in exactly the same sweater as a friend, either!

After textile products have reached the end of their useful lives, they can get second lives as new products. Denim blue jeans are being turned into home insulation. Shoes are being ground up and turned into running tracks and other athletic surfaces. Some fabric products become industrial rags, pet bed stuffing, and even casket liners.

## Textile me

Simple Shoes can make the soles for six pairs of shoes from a car tire. Byproducts of coconut husks help wick away sweat in Atayne's running shirts. Fabric made from wood pulp and seaweed is being used for lingerie and loungewear. Fermented maize plant sugars are used to create a moisture-resistant, hypoallergenic fabric for bedding. Plastic soft drink bottles are being turned into polyester that becomes fleece blankets and hoodies. Organic cotton and plastic bottles make t-shirts of all shapes, sizes, and colors. If you are shopping for recycled-content clothing and footwear, you have many choices. Search



## WHAT'S UP?

Solid Waste District Educator Nancy Gibson has several great programs that can be adapted for groups of all ages. Whether you are a classroom teacher, a youth leader, or a civic organization officer, we have a program that your group will enjoy.

**Coming to America** is a hands-on and "magnifying" look at worms and what they do for us. This program includes how-to instructions for building a worm composting bin.

**Greed vs. Need** is a different and fun way to identify renewable and non-renewable resources.

**Can You Sort It? Yes, You Can!** Let's talk recycling and look at the 3R's. This program also introduces participants to the 4th R! A Recycling Relay is an option with this program.

**Love Me or Leave Me?** Take a look at landfills and why we need to conserve our resources. For kids, this presentation ends with a sweet treat the children actually make and eat! (Adults are welcome to make the treat, too!)

**Build It and They Will Come** is an interactive, fun way to look at how landfills are built and used to protect our surrounding environment and water. Participants are asked, "What would we do if the wells truly did run dry?"

**E! The Biggest, Bestest in the Midwest** — What are the worldly effects of wanting and getting more of what we want in the Electronic Age? Who is responsible for what goes where?

For more information about these programs or to schedule a presentation, contact Nancy Gibson at [ngibson@csinet.net](mailto:ngibson@csinet.net) or 219-326-0014.

## An evening by the fire

Are you looking forward to an evening by the fire? Whether your choice is an outdoor fire pit or a cozy indoor fireplace, visit the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County's Compost Facility to buy firewood.

Three types of firewood are available: hardwood, pine, and mixed pieces. Hardwood is sold for \$55 per full-sized pickup truck

load and \$45 per short-bed pickup truck load. Pine is sold for \$17 per full-sized pickup truck load and \$10 per short-bed pickup truck load. All other wood (odds and ends) is \$10 per pickup truck load on either truck size. Trailer quantities are available; an estimate will be given based on the trailer size.

All firewood is loaded by Compost Facility personnel. The beds of trucks will be loaded as evenly as possible. Capped trucks, dump trucks, and flatbed trucks will not be loaded. There are no exceptions to these guidelines.

The District's Compost Facility is located at Westville Correction Facility, County Road 1100 West in Westville. The facility is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 1:45 p.m., but closed daily from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for lunch.



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## Recycle junk mail

By Pauletta Schuster

The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 90 billion pieces of direct mail every year. About one-third of all mail delivered is direct mail that you weren't expecting and don't necessarily want, commonly referred to as "junk mail." You can reduce and recycle your junk mail to save landfill space, conserve natural resources, and save some of the 100 million trees that are chopped down annually to produce junk mail.

Here are some simple techniques for reducing junk mail:

- Whenever you donate money, order a product or service, enter a contest, or fill out a warranty card write in large letters, "PLEASE DO NOT SELL MY NAME OR ADDRESS." Also, you should know that, in most cases, you do not have to send in a warranty card to be eligible for the warranty. The warranty cards are mostly used to gather marketing information about you.
- Call and ask your credit card company to stop selling your name to other companies.

- Cross out the address and bar code on First Class junk mail, circle the first class postage, and write "Refused – Return to Sender."
- To stop catalogs, call the toll-free number and ask that your name be removed from the mailing list. When you make the call, have the label information ready.
- To stop receiving mail from specific sources, call the company's customer service number (usually toll-free), email them, or send a written request.
- The major consumer credit bureaus have a toll-free number (1-888-567-8688) which you can call to have your name removed from mailing lists used for credit offers.

The Solid Waste District of LaPorte County can help with your junk mail. We recycle junk mail, along with other paper products, in our curbside pickup. Most junk mail can be recycled. Mixed paper, plastic windows, stickers, cards, and even staples are OK to recycle. Your new blue toter is a good place for all of that junk mail!

## Only rain down the drain!

Unlike water that flows through sewers (from sinks and toilets), water that flows through storm drains is not treated before entering our waterways, such as creeks, rivers, and lakes.

Impervious surfaces cover soil that would allow stormwater to soak into the ground. By not allowing stormwater to soak into the ground, these surfaces significantly increase the amount of water that runs off the land. Always on the move, water flows downhill, over and through the land, picking up pollutants and sending them to the nearest waterway. This is called stormwater pollution. However, you can help reduce stormwater pollution and improve the health of surface waters.

Maintaining your landscape can help reduce pollution in our waterways. Preserve existing vegetation as much as possible. Plants are a natural, inexpensive, and highly effective means for controlling runoff. Runoff slows down and loses much of its force when it reaches vegetation, which works as a filter, straining out sediment, debris, and pollutants.

To further reduce and prevent pollutants from entering the storm drains, take this advice:

- Dispose of hazardous waste properly at one of the upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Mobile Collections. See the front page for details.
- Select a lawn fertilizer that is low in phosphorus. Also, look for fertilizer with slow-release nitrogen.
- Avoid applying any lawn care products before heavy rains.



- Mow less frequently. Longer grass needs less water.
- Fix automotive leaks promptly. Use a funnel and drip pan when pouring automotive fluids to avoid spills onto the ground. Never pour automotive fluids down any kind of drain.
- Wash your car on the lawn or take it to a commercial car wash.
- Pick up after your pet and dispose of the pet waste in the trash.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean debris from sidewalks and driveways.

### Bottle caps

(Continued from Page 1)

soda and are rinsing the bottle to put it into your recycling toter, don't forget to replace the cap and give it a new home!

Better yet, try reducing the number of plastic bottles you purchase and use at your next party or picnic. Instead of buying single-serving bottles, try buying your soda in larger 2-liter bottles and using glasses that can be washed and reused. This will save you money when purchasing the soda and create less container waste. Plus, you won't find half-full bottles and cans when everyone has gone home, so you'll waste less soda, too. Are you expecting a lot of water drinkers? Fill a pitcher with tap water and add lemon slices for a fresh taste and a classy touch.

## Bright Recycling Ideas From the Staff

The staff at the Solid Waste District would like to share some of their recycling ideas with you.

- Pauletta has a "designer" camera case that she made from a thin piece of foam packing material and duct tape. She also used a small piece of Velcro to hold the top together. The camera is well-protected if it should be dropped, and it's quite the topic of conversation when Nancy is doing an educational program. Duct tape is the "in" thing right now!



© James Hoenstine | Dreamstime.com

- Nancy uses clean, new shower caps to cover food bowls at picnics and also in the refrigerator. It's a great way to keep flies off at outdoor parties and still see the contents. If you don't get them from a hotel stay, they are very inexpensive. She got 8 for \$1 at the dollar store. They can be reused, they are much less expensive than plastic wrap and aluminum foil, and they stay on much better.
- Carol uses the bags inside cereal boxes to crush crackers, nuts, etc. They are stronger than plastic bags and won't break as easily. The bags cannot be put in your recycling toter because of the waxy coating.
- Michelle uses newspaper to wash her windows. Crumpled up newspaper dries and polishes windows better than using a lot of absorbent paper towels. The newspaper also eliminates much of the streaking.
- Tom uses old, obsolete business cards for notes. They are more durable than a piece of paper and less likely to be misplaced.
- Clay uses baby food jars with screw-on lids to hold small screws and nails. The lids can be attached to the bottom of a shelf to save space. The result is neat organization on a workbench in your garage or basement. The jars may break over years of parenting, but, never fear, you can start collecting again when you're a grandparent.
- The office staff uses cloth towels in the kitchen and bathroom instead of paper towels. This eliminates excessive waste from paper towels and saves money. Plus, we are practicing what we preach!

Please send your recycling ideas to us, and we will use them in our next edition of "One Man's Trash..."

### 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.

**Solid Waste District of LaPorte County**  
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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS

## Read more about it!

The Solid Waste District partners with Better World Books for our annual book collection. This year after our June collection, we packed up and sent 290 boxes of books to their sorting center. The Solid Waste District also selected a literacy foundation to receive the revenue from the books. Read more about Better World Books inside the newsletter.