

# Bellaire Recycles!

More information available at [www.BellaireRecycles.org](http://www.BellaireRecycles.org)



**Bellaire Recycling Committee**

**August 2005**

## **CURBSIDE RECYCLING for Bellaire?**

*By Craig Bello*

When you leave Bellaire and cross into one of the residential neighborhoods surrounding the City, you are likely to see curbside recycling bins. Blue or green bins populate West University Place, Southside Place, and the area neighborhoods served by the City of Houston. It is time for Bellaire to decide whether to join the curbside recycling movement.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the Recycling Committee reported to City Council that we have received significant support for initiating a curbside recycling program in Bellaire. Based on this support, we asked that a curbside program be included in the 2006 City budget and begun as early as October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Every Bellaire household would be included in the curbside recycling program. Basically, each household will see once per week curbside collection of commingled (mixed) recyclables. After collection, the recyclables will be transported to a sorting facility. To assist residents in collecting recyclables and make curbside collection easier, the Department of Public Works will distribute a recycling bin to each household.

As a result of this report, the Recycling Committee was asked to prepare a simple survey to help City Council gauge residents' opinions more formally. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the City Council approved a survey based on the Committee's presentation and included it in the City water bills due in August.

Please consider the following as you fill out your survey:

**Bellaire stands alone in Southwest Houston by not offering curbside recycling.** West University has been conducting a successful, cost-effective program since 1973. The other neighboring communities offer curbside recycling as well.

**Curbside pickup makes it easy for every family, no matter how busy, to participate in recycling.** By making it as easy as taking out the

trash, any member of the family - young, old or middle aged - can recycle. You don't even need a driver's license.

**Public Works conservatively estimates that curbside recycling will cost Bellaire households about \$3.43 per month.** With bins, the monthly cost for the first year would be \$3.98. This fee could fluctuate based on factors like the cost of fuel. Costs could also go down over time as participation rates increase, giving Public Works more flexibility to negotiate more favorable recycling revenues.

**On the other hand, the absence of curbside recycling has hidden costs.** If the average recycler in Bellaire travels an average of 3 miles a week to deliver recyclables at the Recycling Center, it costs about \$63.18 per year, or \$5.26 per month (based on IRS travel allowance of 40.5 cents per mile).

**The most effective curbside recycling programs use bins, not bags.** We pay for bins only once, and we can use them for a lifetime. We use bags only once, and we pay for them for a lifetime. Bags create an ongoing expense and an ongoing waste stream.

**Curbside recycling complements the Recycling Center.** One doesn't replace the other - or Bellaire's tradition of First Saturday Assisted Pickup.

**Curbside recycling fosters a culture of conservation.**

Over time, this will hold down the costs of critical services like water, energy and even sanitation. And conservation preserves our resources for our children and grandchildren.

### **This Issue**

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- **Proud to Recycle Debut**
- **Fall Leaves**
- **Earth Day Festival Review**
- **July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival**

More information is available at [www.BellaireRecycles.org](http://www.BellaireRecycles.org)!

Now, the fate of curbside recycling is in your hands. City Council wants to know how you feel, so get your survey in before the August 12<sup>th</sup> deadline! The easiest method is to complete the online survey on the City website - see the link at [www.ci.bellaire.tx.us](http://www.ci.bellaire.tx.us). If you prefer the paper method, complete the survey form in the water bill and submit it by including it with your payment. Completed paper surveys can also be dropped off at City Hall - with the receptionist during business hours and in the night deposit box afterward.

Additional paper surveys can be obtained online at [www.BellaireRecycles.org](http://www.BellaireRecycles.org) or at City Hall, the Nature Discovery Center, the Library, the Recycling Center, and the Department of Public Works. **We need to hear from you!**

## Proud to Recycle Debuts

*By Craig Bello*

Bellaire's July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival provided a perfect backdrop for the Bellaire Recycling Committee to unveil its Proud to Recycle campaign. Started as a great idea of Committee member Elaine Lange, the campaign gained funding through a grant from the Houston-Galveston Area Council and the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality.



**The Proud to Recycle rollout crew.**  
The rollout crew posing in front of the prepared tent, ready to meet Bellaire residents.

Proud to Recycle focuses on two major themes and will include four other neighboring communities – Braeswood Place, Meyerland, Southside Place, and West University Place. The campaign promotes all kinds of area recycling options, from curbside programs to recycling drop-off centers and alternative options. The campaign also aims to thank current area recyclers and encourage them to be proud of their service to their community.

As the first rollout for the campaign, the public got its first look at the pocket recycling guide and promotional items developed for the campaign. We were excited to see so many Proud to Recycle

stickers and canvas shopping bags around the festival.



Be on the lookout for that Proud to Recycle logo around town. At events, like the First Assisted Saturday Drop-offs, avid recyclers can get informational materials and be rewarded with one of our canvas shopping bags or brown yard waste bags (while supplies last).

Prepared in cooperation with the Houston-Galveston Area Council and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

## Coming Soon: Fall Leaves

*By Meg Healy & Craig Bello*

Despite that the thermometer outside reads above 90°F, fall is coming. As the temperatures mercifully fall, so do the leaves, beginning the annual battle of the backyard. This year though, things could be different. You could help the City save money and be more environmentally conscious, depending on how you handle the onslaught of leaves.

The worst thing you can do is to dump leaves to the sewer. Leaves and other debris can easily clog the sewer system, ruining drainage and making the area especially susceptible to flooding. Unclogging a sewer stuffed with leaves is also an expensive repair for the City.

You could bag the leaves and put them on the curb with your trash, forcing the City to pay the highest fees for disposing of your leaves and wasting valuable landfill space. **Or** you can put your leaves out on compost waste day (which differs from trash day) for transport to a landscape supply company that turns your leaves into compost for a lower cost. See the City website ([www.ci.bellaire.tx.us](http://www.ci.bellaire.tx.us)) or contact Public Works at 713-662-8170 to find out your compost collection day.

There is a no-cost composting method. Compost the leaves yourself and save the City disposal fees and all the resources consumed in storing, transporting and redistributing your yard waste.

The easiest method is to mulch the leaves with your mower, right along with the grass. If that's not tidy enough for you, the next best thing is spreading the leaves around your trees and plants.

If you want more flexibility, then true composting is the answer. Simply pile leaves, grass and any other bite-size organic matter (no sticks or

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branches) up in a corner of your yard, and turn it regularly. It's even a great way to recycle your non-meat table scraps. In fact, your compost will "cook" faster if there is roughly an equal mix of brown (leaves) and green (grass, plant trimmings and table scraps) matter.

Over time, air, heat and water will decompose your yard waste into a rich supplement to your garden soil. Nature provides heat and water. Turning supplies the air, so the more often you turn your pile, the faster you will have compost.

Use a bin to contain your compost in a neat pile. The Department of Public Works sells a coated wire bin for \$35. It has no top or bottom. So when you want to turn your pile, simply pick up the bin, place it next to the pile and refill the bin.

## Committee Joins July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival

*By Craig Bello*

The Fourth of July has always been my favorite holiday with the fireworks, parades, and American pride. One of the thrills about living in Bellaire is the parade tradition that brings me back to my childhood. It was really great to be in the parade with my Recycling Committee cohorts and then to accompany my daughter on her decorated bike.

Thanks to everyone that stopped by the Recycling Committee tent at the July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival. With curbside recycling issues in the air, the tent was abuzz with discussion and even a few heated conversations. All in all, lots of questions got answered and many suggestions were heard.



**Ready for the parade.**  
Recycling Committee members preparing for the parade.



**Smashing Idea!**  
David Cooley helping out the Committee with can smashing.

The buzz was repeatedly punctuated by the excited sounds of kids smashing aluminum cans headed for the Debbie Marshall Recycling Center. Our appreciation goes to the Nature Discovery Center for loaning us their can-smashing apparatus.

Thanks also go to the folks at the Rec Center, not only for organizing yet another fantastic event, but

also for assigning the Recycling Committee a spot in the park under a huge, shady tree. Can we place a reservation for the same spot next year?

## Earth Day 2005 a Big Success

*By Gayle Davies*

The Bellaire Recycling Committee, Whole Foods Market, and the Nature Discovery Center hosted a Spring Fling in celebration of Earth Day on Saturday, April 16, 2005. This year's event—the fourth annual—was held at two locations, Whole Foods Market at 4004 Bellaire Blvd. and the Nature Discovery Center at 7112 Newcastle Drive. We thank our partners, including Office Depot, for helping to make this event possible.

A fun, family festival, Spring Fling included children's crafts and activities, wildlife walks through Russ Pittman Park, and much more. At the Nature Discovery Center, the Bellaire Garden Club held its annual spring plant sale, and the Scholastic Book Fair took place in the Henshaw House. The North Harris County Dulcimer Society provided music while the Houston Storyteller's Guild entertained adults and children alike with nature-related stories. Also, the Texas International Dancers entertained at Whole Foods Market.



**Earth Day / Spring Fling 2005**  
A big crowd enjoying the natural setting on a nice day at the Nature Discovery Center.

Additionally, at both locations, various exhibitors, environmental groups, and organizations had information booths for adults and activities for children. These included clean air, land, and water supporters, a computer recycler, a wildlife rehabilitator, hybrid cars, and many others. It was a great event for the whole family to attend and learn from a variety of organizations about how we all can help sustain the Earth's environment.

# Looking for a Few Good Volunteers

By Elaine Lange, Volunteer Coordinator

Ever wonder "Who are those helpers on Saturdays at the Recycling Center?" They are the members of the Bellaire Recycling Committee and other dedicated volunteers for the Bellaire Assisted Pick-up and Assisted Drop-off programs. These innovative programs provide pick-up of recyclables from the homes of our disabled and senior citizens, as well as assistance to anyone at the Recycling Center on the first Saturday of each month from 9 AM to Noon.

Come and join us! This is a flexible, meaningful volunteer activity that is very much appreciated by members of the community. Come for an hour or stay all morning. Tasks involve moving and sorting of recyclables...and those cool aprons are provided.

## Save the Date – Earth Day 2006

Looking ahead to next year, the Bellaire Earth Day Festival will occur on Earth Day – **April 22, 2006**. Although the planning of the event is in the early stages, it is likely to be similar to the 2005 event with dual events at the Nature Discovery Center and Whole Foods Market on Bellaire Blvd. Pull out your calendar or PDA and save the date...

## A Call to Service

Ever have that feeling that you want to be doing more, that you should be giving back to your community? The Recycling Committee has an open spot at the table for just such a person!

Meetings are the first Wednesday of every month from 7-8:30 PM for you to come and observe. The Committee has plenty of projects brewing for you to get involved in like Earth Day, Proud to Recycle, e-waste, hazardous waste, and the Citywide Garage Sale. If there is a recycling-related idea that is of particular interest to you, the Committee is open to consider new projects.

If you have questions about the Committee or would like to attend a meeting, please contact us at [RecyclingCommittee@BellaireRecycles.org](mailto:RecyclingCommittee@BellaireRecycles.org).

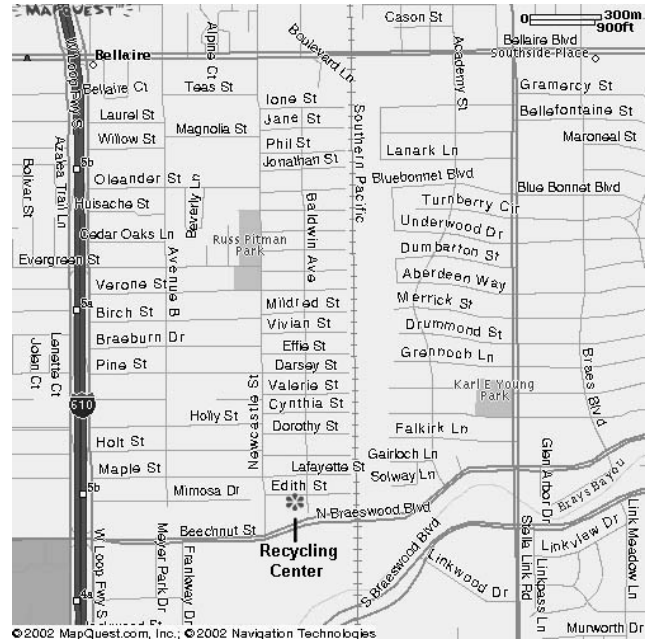


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# Bellaire Recycling Center

4337 Edith

Open 7 Days a Week 8AM to 5 PM



## Next Assisted Pick-up/Drop-off Dates:

September 3, 2005      November 5, 2005  
October 1, 2005      December 3, 2005

## Bellaire Recycling Committee

Craig Bello	Co-Chair / Editor
Meg Healy	Co-Chair
Gayle Davies	Vice Chair
Elaine Lange	Volunteer Coordinator
Guyleene Ebersole	Secretary
Patricia King-Ritter	Communications
Patricia Atkins	Committee Member
Chris Sizemore	Committee Member
Open Position	Committee Member

Hotline: 713-662-8173 or [RecyclingCommittee@bellairerecycles.org](mailto:RecyclingCommittee@bellairerecycles.org)

Monthly meetings: 1st Wednesday, 7 PM, Dept. of Public Works Bldg - All are welcome.

## Special Thanks to:

- Our Volunteers
- Whole Foods Market-Bellaire
- Office Depot

In helping with our First Saturday Assisted Pickups and other Programs.