



Environmental Update




Bellaire Recycling Committee


December 2002


Happy Holiday Recycling

By Terry Timme

The Bellaire Recycling Committee wishes everyone in Bellaire the best this holiday season and offers the following tips you can use that will translate into a meaningful gift for Bellaire and the Earth. Every holiday season millions of Christmas trees, holiday cards, boxes and wrapping paper are used and then thrown away and most end up in the landfill. There are a number of ways you can *reduce*, *reuse*, and *recycle* at this time of year. The Bellaire Recycling Committee offers the following tips and invites you to let us know (713-662-8173) if there are others you have thought of and we will add those for next year's list:

 **Recycle your used wrapping paper and cards** at the Bellaire Recycling Center. Make sure the paper does not contain foil however. Don't forget all those cardboard and chipboard boxes can also be *recycled*. Why not open the largest present first and then *reuse* that box to collect all the other boxes in for *recycling*. The recycling committee will host a special assisted drop-off at the Bellaire Recycling Center on Saturday Dec. 28 - 9:00 AM to noon so come join us and bring all your recyclable items.

 **Recycle your tree** at Public Works next to the Bellaire Recycling Center. The city will shred the trees and *reuse* them as mulch that will be used around town to keep Bellaire beautiful, please remove all ornaments and garland first. Also see the accompanying article on live vs. artificial vs. no trees.

 **Reduce waste by making your own holiday decorations:** Set aside time for the whole family to make holiday decorations and ornaments: colorful wall-hangings, pine cone wreaths, menorahs, advent calendars, garlands of flowers or colored paper, dried nuts, seeds, or seashells. Then save the best ones to *reuse* next year or give as gifts. (Cont'd on page 3)

Planning a Home Recycling Center

By Gayle Davies

Sooner or later, many recyclers decide that they want to better organize the recycling space in their homes or garages. When one makes the commitment to recycle, it usually means that recyclables hang around a bit longer than trash before removal from their containers. It is helpful to have an organized location in the house or garage so that recycling doesn't become unmanageable - and so that you don't become discouraged from your efforts. In that spirit, we offer some suggestions that you might find helpful for designing your own home-based recycling center.

Recycling collection containers run the gamut in price, from the modest to expensive. Probably the least expensive receptacles are stackable, uncovered, plastic baskets. They often come in several colors, so you can buy a different color for each recyclable material: red for aluminum cans, blue for plastic, green for junk mail, etc. A significant advantage in using stackable baskets is that they take up very little space. More expensive than plastic baskets are metal, wire, or mesh bins, some of which are available on wheels for easy transport. Utility carts on wheels, with or without drawers, are another option. Carts without drawers can be fitted with inexpensive plastic storage bins.

Even some laundry-bag stands can be fitted with plastic or paper bags for easy collection of recyclable materials.

Receptacles made specifically for recycling collection are some of the more expensive

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products on the market. However, if you're willing to spend the money to save some effort, there are lots of innovative items that will help you do so. Even so, recycling products don't have to break the bank. Examples of moderately priced containers include stackable storage bins with lids, and clips under them to keep the lid on the bin below open for easy filling or removal. One newspaper stacker keeps the papers on the bottom of a pile off the bottom of the stacker, making it a snap to tie twine around a bundle of papers. The stacker even has a place to store the twine! The more expensive recycling products are bins with step-on pedals for easy opening and receptacles on pullout tracks for easy storage in hard-to-reach places. One pedaled bin has multiple, color-coded compartments for compost as well as recyclables. One pullout track system has a wire basket that accommodates a paper grocery sack in which newspapers can be collected. Another holds two removable bins with flip-up lids.

If you're wondering where you can find these products, your best bet is visiting an organizer, container, or storage department of a major discount store, or a store that specializes in household organization and storage. The suggestions offered here are only food for thought. You may find other products that better suit your needs. Whatever you do, be sure to buy recycled, or at least let a manager that you want recycled products, especially for home recycling centers!

Earth Day, Every Day

Why Does the Recycling Committee Host the Annual Bellaire Garage Sale?

By Terry Timme

The recycling ethic we try to promote to make Bellaire a better place for all its citizens is really made up of three R's – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

Recycling is wonderful. But reducing the amount we discard in the first place is even better. Every item that is reused is one less

thing for the landfill; and more natural resources saved - whether wood (for furniture or paper), or cotton, (for clothes) or oil (that's the basis for plastics) and gas (to go get new things and haul the old things to the landfill). That all translates into less energy and water used, and less pollution created. So what a better way to promote reusing things than by having a garage sale.

An old saying theorizes that one person's trash is another person's treasure. So do yourself and the environment a favor - consider reuse whenever possible. Set aside those things that are still in good shape, but you have outgrown or don't need anymore. Add any holiday gifts for which you don't have a use and have a garage sale.

How do you have a garage sale? You can place a classified ad in the Houston Chronicle or smaller newspapers like the Green Sheet. However, you may find it cheaper and more effective to try a more high-tech solution by posting the information online in local newsgroups such as houston.forsale and houston.wanted. You could try posting an online classified – try google.com, yahoo.com, or any of the dozens on sites that maintain classified ads.

To help Bellaire residents reuse we sponsor an annual citywide garage sale - coming up on Saturday, April 26th. You supply the garage (or yard) and we supply the advertising in the form of a flyer detailing all the participating houses in Bellaire. We will print a brief description of what have for sale, the hours you will receive buyers, and your address on a map of Bellaire. The flyer will be made available the morning of the citywide garage sale at the recycling center and the library.

Watch for details and a sign-up form in the Spring Newsletter!

Special Holiday Assisted Drop Off Day! Saturday December 28th

Save up all your holiday recyclable materials and bring them to the center where eager helpers will cart them away! Make the holidays merry and bright...and renewable!

The Bellaire Recycling Committee Needs You for Assisted Pickups!

By Frances Freeman

Opportunity is knocking! The First Saturday Assisted Pickup Crew at the Recycling Center would like for you to give a Saturday morning hour or two between 9-12 helping unload cars of recycling materials. Please contact Frances Freeman at 713-668-6858 to volunteer.

The New TCEQ and You

By Craig Bello

As of September 1st, the state environmental agency changed its moniker from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The new name was chosen to help better identify the purpose of the agency and be less of a tongue twister.



Although the name has changed, the responsibilities of the agency have not changed. According to the website (found at www.tceq.state.tx.us), the TCEQ *"is one of the most comprehensive state environmental agencies in the nation. Our responsibilities are grossly diversified and include those of permitting, licensing, compliance, enforcement, pollution prevention programs and education related to preservation and protection of our air and water quality and safe disposal of waste. The TNRCC has approximately 3,000 employees, 16 regional offices, and an annual budget that exceeds \$500 million funded primarily by regulatory program fees, federal funds and the state general revenue fund."*

This agency is involved with all the facets of commercial, industrial, governmental, and residential waste and pollution. The TCEQ is the highest state authority for answering questions regarding environmental issues, detecting and enforcing pollution regulations, and supplying information to the public regarding environmental permits and annual reported emissions by our neighboring commercial and industrial facilities.

You can contact the local office of the TCEQ (Region 12) at: 5425 Polk Avenue, Suite H, Houston, TX 77023-1486 (713-767-3500)

Happy Holiday Recycling (Continued from Page 1)



Buy wrapping paper and cards made with *recycled* paper. Look for products with the highest content of post-consumer waste.



Save wrapping paper for *reuse* next year if it is not torn, or cut away the torn parts and use the good parts for smaller presents then *recycle* the torn or crumpled parts.



Reduce your use of wrapping paper – Those beautiful calendars you received or a pretty page out of a magazine can be used as wrapping paper for smaller packages. The Sunday comics can be used to wrap larger presents. Use a paper bag turned inside out and create your own beautiful designs with your kid's crayons. For large items in their original box try hiding them somewhere and place a card under the tree with hints on where to find it.



Save your bows and ribbon and *reuse* them next year. Each year enough ribbon (38,000 miles) is thrown away to tie a bow around the Earth.



This year, Americans will send more than three-quarters of a billion Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa cards, according to the National Greeting Card Association. If Americans sent just one out of every ten holiday cards electronically, it would save over 30,000 trees.



Cut out the pretty parts of cards you have received and *reuse* them next year as gift tags.



Shopping on-line or by mail order is a good way to *reduce* the amount of running around shopping for that special or unusual gift thus *reduce* gas consumption and its associated pollution.



You are probably inundated with gift catalogs at this time of year (even if you asked that your name not be given out to other mailers when ordering from one company, or asked to be removed from mailing lists). If you don't already

have one now is a good time to start a *recycling* box or bag for household mail and magazines.



Getting a new computer? Ask your favorite charitable organization or church if they can *reuse* your old computer. *Recycle* your old computer – call 713-728-4424.



Not sure what to get someone? There are a number of ways to *reduce* the number of gifts that end up being discarded. How about a gift certificate to one of the several fine Bellaire stores or restaurants? Or make gifts - who wouldn't appreciate a home-cooked meal, baked goodies, or fresh fruit (and you can put the gifts in a storage or decorative container that can be *reused*). Or give non-material gifts like tickets to a concert or sporting event, or make a charitable contribution in someone's honor.



Get a gift you cannot use or as a replacement for something that is still useable? Consider how to *reuse* these items by donating them to your favorite charity or save them for the

Bellaire garage sale in the spring (see accompanying article).



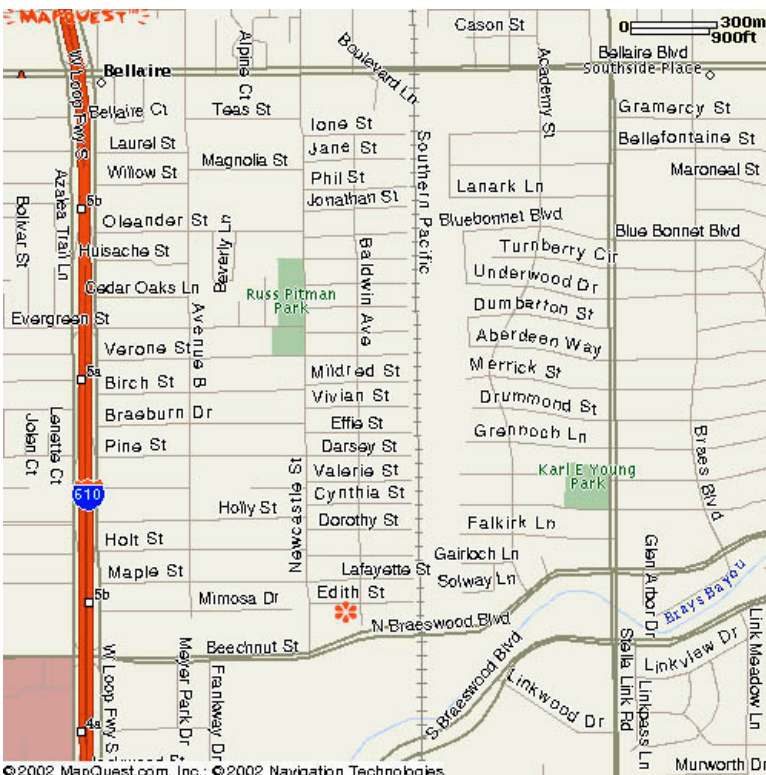
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For comments or to learn more, call our hotline at 713-662-8173 or e-mail us at bellairerecycles@hotmail.com. We welcome everyone to our monthly meetings. Our meetings are held at the Parks and Recreation center on the First Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm.

Bellaire Recycling Center

4337 Edith



Special Thanks to:



Office DEPOT

In helping with our First Saturday Assisted Pickups and Programs!

Next assisted pick up dates:

December 28, 2002

January 4, 2003

February 1, 2003

March 1, 2003

Do a Good Deed and Recycle!