

A Quarterly Newsletter of

North Andover



NASCC
Sustainability Committee

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Fall 2009



Recycling at large multi-family facilities

As part of the agreement with the Town, Thompson Brothers Industries (TBI) is required to collect recyclables at large multi-family facilities at no charge. Large multi-family facilities are any residential complexes with more than eight units, such as apartments and condominiums. Providing recycling at these housing complexes will offer a new and convenient service to residents, as well as increase the Town's recycling rate. Since two-thirds of most household waste is recyclable, this may allow the complexes to reduce their costs for trash hauling and disposal.

Thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Town will be able to provide the outreach and educational materials to help get these new multi-family recycling programs under way.

In May, the North Andover Sustainability Committee, the Town, and TBI developed a priority list for the 15 local complexes that fall into the large multi-family facility category as outlined by the agreement. Here's what will happen next:

- An initial meeting with the property manager or organization responsible for overseeing trash management will identify the type, location, and recommended amount of collection equipment for the complex.
- Wheeled carts or dedicated dumpsters will be purchased or leased, along with appropriate signs.
- Equipment and signs will be put in place as soon as all program details are worked out.
- Informational materials will be distributed throughout the complex to announce the new program, the location of recycling drop-off containers, what



can be recycled, and how those materials should be prepared.

- If needed, a public informational meeting can be scheduled with residents to explain the new procedures.
- Oversee the implementation and accept feedback from residents and management so that modifications can be made as needed.

So far, five of the 15 priority facilities have been contacted: Royal Crest Apartments on Rt. 114, Brookside Condos on Rt. 125, Mill Pond Condos on Osgood Street, Sutton Pond Condos off Main Street, and Village Green West Condos on Kingston Street. Once these facilities have decided on their collection equipment needs, the Sustainability Committee can provide educational assistance and the collection of recyclables will begin. In the coming months, we will be contacting Meadowview Apartments, Woodridge homes, Edgewood, and others.

For more information about this program, contact Bruce Thibodeau at the DPW, 978-685-0950.

Does litter bother you?

By Tina Klein, North Andover Sustainability Committee Chair

When the spring finally rolls around and I can get outside on my road bike, it's not the motorists I have to be worried about—it's the litter.

I find myself so distracted by trash, especially in the wetlands, that I've actually ridden right off the road. Thankfully, I haven't actually fallen over . . . yet. Are you wondering why I'm so upset about some plastic litter? Go online and search for "the great garbage patch" to see the trash spinning in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. After I discovered this, it was a lot easier to remember to take my own bags when I went shopping and to return my recyclable plastic

bags to the grocery store!

On May 2, I spent a good part of a sunny Saturday participating in North Andover's 7th Annual Earth Day Cleanup. A couple hundred volunteers got outside and up close with the trash strewn beside our roadways and in our parks. The most prevalent item was non-deposit beverage containers. (The most unusual? Someone actually found a \$100 bill!) I spent the time around Lake Cochichewick, the source of North Andover's drinking water, and could not believe the number of trash bags I filled from along the banks.

What have I learned? It's time for an expanded bottle bill. In 1982, Massachusetts passed the bottle bill, which placed a nickel

(Continued on Page 4)

Idling reduction campaign launched

As North Andover parents drive their children to school this fall, they will notice a minor change along school roads and in the parking lots—the addition of signs warning drivers not to idle their vehicle engines.

This past spring, the town of North Andover was awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The purpose of the grant is to educate residents on Massachusetts' anti-idling law, the penalties that breaking this law can carry, and the health and environmental impacts of idling.

Because the resources given to North Andover through the DEP's grant were limited, members of the North Andover Sustainability Committee (NASCC) chose to focus the bulk of these resources at the venue where idling is most prevalent—our schools. Our focus on idling reduction in school zones is driven by two equally important points.

First, as a suburban community, North Andover does not experience frequent and excessive traffic problems. Congestion is not an issue. However, the idling that does occur in our community, and with startling frequency, is in school zones. This is because parents line up outside schools as they wait to pick up their children, in most cases arriving 10 to 20 minutes prior to school being let out or the extracurricular activity ending.

There is nothing wrong, of course, with a parent arriving to pick up his or her child from school. However, in most cases, unfortunately, the parent arrives, parks the car, and leaves the engine running during the wait. Not only is this an incredible waste of gas (your mileage when parked and idling is zero miles per gallon!), but it is also in violation of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 90, Section 16a. Under state law, drivers can be ticketed for idling their engines for more than 5 minutes.

Health concerns are the second reason why NASCC chose to focus on idling reduction around schools. Engine exhaust is

heavy in particulates, which, when inhaled, can damage a person's lungs. When cars idle, especially around schools, the exhaust from multiple engines can dramatically affect air quality. In many cases, the exhaust from idling vehicles can make its way into classrooms with open windows, especially classrooms located near drop-off and pickup locations. In addition, children who are outside waiting for their ride end up standing in an invisible plume of exhaust. Exhaust is more hazardous to children than adults. Because children's lungs don't stop

developing until the age of 18 and children breathe at a faster rate than adults, they are breathing in more of these unnecessary particles. Studies show that the frequent inhalation of exhaust can significantly retard the development of lungs.

Given the concern for our younger residents, and the high concentration of idling vehicles, NASCC is happy to begin North Andover's idling-reduction campaign by focusing on our schools. This campaign will include the addition of anti-idling signs around each of our town's five elementary schools, the Middle School, High School, Pre-K building, and Saint Michael school.

In addition to posting signs, NASCC will be providing educational materials to students throughout the district so that they (and their parents) are better aware of the health effects of idling. These materials will also explain the state law and remind everyone that idling for more than 5 minutes is against the law.

To learn more about the environmental effects of idling, or to read why idling an engine isn't even necessary, please visit www.MakeALeap.org/idling_myth or check out the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's website at www.mass.gov/dep/.

Remember to reduce idling wherever you are stopping to wait for a few minutes, especially at locations where children are present, such as schools, bus stops, and athletic fields. You can make a difference!



Calling all businesses!

Did you know that North Andover businesses are welcome to drop off recyclables at our new Recycling Center? At your business, recyclable material probably makes up a majority of your office and retail waste. These recyclables cannot legally be mixed with your trash. Your waste hauler, too, is in violation of the law when picking up and disposing of loads of trash that contain recyclables.

The Recycling Center is located at 210 Holt Road. You can drop off cardboard, mixed paper, glass and plastic food and beverage containers, and metal cans. The Center is open Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

HELPFUL HINTS for the HOLIDAY SEASON

As the holiday season approaches, you are probably already planning trips and parties. Beginning in November and continuing through Super Bowl Sunday, many people travel, visit relatives, eat big meals, prepare special foods, and give more than a few gifts. Because of this, the holiday season is often also waste season. It doesn't have to be. Here are some tips to help you have a less wasteful—and more relaxing—winter season.

■ **Party Planning** – Know how many people are coming to each event you're hosting and plan the food accordingly. If you have more leftovers than your family can finish, send food home with your guests. Avoid disposable decorations, dishes, cups, and napkins. Instead, reuse old family decorations, your own dishes, glasses, and cups, and reusable cloth napkins. If you don't have cloth napkins, maybe this would be a good time to invest in some. They are inexpensive and can be reused year after year. If you take a gift to your hosts, make sure it is consumable, such as food and drinks, or reusable, like a serving tray.

■ **Travel** – Road trips often include disposable food packaging and recyclable drink containers that end up in roadside trash cans. If you're traveling by car, pack snacks (and even lunch) in your own washable, reusable containers. You can put them into a cooler with drinks from home. When you get to your destination, wash your containers. They'll be ready to repack for the trip home. Look for roadside recycling containers, which are available at some rest stops. If you don't find them, put your aluminum, glass, and plastic beverage cans and bottles into a bag or box and recycle them when you get home. If you are flying, look for recycling bins for paper and drink containers in the airport.

■ **Gift Giving** – Make a list of everyone to whom you'll give a gift this holiday season. After making the list, decide how much you want to spend on gifts. Now, decide what you would like to give. One budget-conscious and waste-reducing way to give gifts is to shop for gently-used books and other items at secondhand and antique stores. Give

reusable gifts, such as washable placemats and cloth napkins, or consumable gifts, such as gift cards to a restaurant or movie. Gift cards for



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downloadable music are also a great, waste-free idea. Another option is to give of yourself, such as offering to run errands, babysit, take a walk in the woods, or meet for a picnic in the park. You also might consider giving to a good cause in honor of someone on the list; you can make a card describing the group that has received money or goods in their name. Framed photos make a wonderful gift—you might even be able to make a frame or find a unique used frame. If you choose to buy new gifts, look for items such as jewelry or handmade stationery made from recyclables.

■ **Gift Wrapping** – Reuse wrapping paper, gift bags, ribbon, and tags from past years. If you don't have any on hand, make your own wrapping paper by decorating the blank side of brown paper grocery bags; reusing colored sections of newspaper, old maps, or children's artwork; or using fabric, shelf paper, or wallpaper scraps. In other words, begin with items that you already have on hand! Or, "wrap" the gift in a basket or canvas bag that will be reusable later. If you buy wrapping paper, look for paper with recycled-content.

■ **Holiday Greetings** – Think about the holiday greetings that your family most enjoys—they are probably the cards or letters that include a personal touch, whether that is newsy notes or fun photos. Consider creating your own letter with family updates and holiday greetings. Of course, print it on recycled-content paper and mail it in recycled-content envelopes. Or, email paperless greetings instead.

This is a great time of year to discuss what really matters most to you, your family members, and friends. During this season of giving, learn what your family and friends really need. You might find that they could use more of your time and attention. Time and attention don't cost money and create significantly less waste than giving them a lot of stuff.

Read more about it!

42 Ways to Trim Your Holiday Wasteline
www.use-less-stuff.com/ULSDAY/42ways.html

Reducing Holiday Waste
www.epa.gov/osw/wycd/funfacts/winter.htm

Simplify the Holidays
www.newdream.org/holiday/

Tips for a Cleaner, "Greener" Holiday
www.informinc.org/greener_holiday.php



A ship-tastic idea!

Are you ordering a gift online for someone who lives faraway? Don't have it shipped to your house, unpack it, wrap it, and re-ship it. Save time, packaging, shipping costs, and fuel by having it delivered directly to your far-off friend or family member. If you really want the gift wrapped, many online retailers offer gift wrapping services, too.



Make Something Day

This isn't an enforced craft event for the non-crafty! Instead, it is an opportunity for each person to make something they enjoy. By hosting a "Make Something Day" with friends and relatives, you bring people together to enjoy each other's company and use their hands and hearts to create something special. For some, it will be a great meal. For others, it might involve sewing, knitting, or beading. One person may write a poem or a song. Others could paint, draw, or scrapbook. A few may decide to create holiday cards or gifts. Express your talent and share it.

Hosting a Make Something Day is easy:

1. Set the date and location.
2. Ask each person to come up with a creative idea and gather the needed supplies.
3. Set up tables so that crafters with common materials can work together. For instance, those with fabric will want to be at a separate table from the folks working on collages with glue!
4. Celebrate the creations over a meal. If one of your creative friends has cooked, enjoy. If not, have a pitch-in meal or order pizza.

QUOTES REQUOTED



When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe

John Muir, 1838–1914
American naturalist and writer

fast facts

Going Waste-Free

According to WasteFreeLunches.org, packing a waste-free lunch for your child costs about \$2.65 per day, while packing a lunch full of single-serve and disposable items costs \$4.02. Waste-free lunches can save your family \$1.37 per child per day. That's a savings of over \$240 for the school year. The same applies for lunches that adults take to work, but the savings is even greater—as much as \$340 per year. Pack waste-free to save!



Overshooting

According to The Global Footprint Network, we reached "Earth Overshoot Day" in mid to late September. This marks "the day when humanity begins using more ecological resources and services in a given year than Earth can regenerate in that year." From that day on, we are consuming resources that we are, in essence, borrowing from the future. "Put another way, in less than 10 months, humanity will have used ecological services it takes 12 months for the Earth to regenerate."



Creating Community

According to Bill McKibben in *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, "consumers have ten times as many conversations at farmers' markets as they do at supermarkets.... When you go to the farmers' market, in other words, you're not just acquiring tomatoes; you're making friends."



Ecological Intelligence

Daniel Goleman explores the relatively new field of Industrial Ecology in his newest book, *Ecological Intelligence* (Broadway Business, 2009). The study of Industrial Ecology focuses on Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs), which guide businesses and consumers in judging the relative impacts of their actions. LCAs explore the environmental impact of each stage of extraction, transportation, and manufacture. LCAs are increasingly used by businesses to make supply-chain, manufacturing, and distribution decisions.

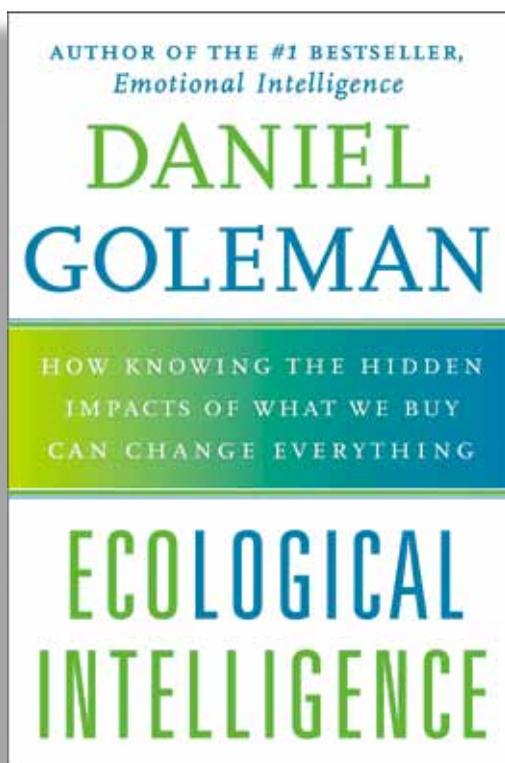
Goleman advocates for what he terms "radical transparency," which would involve making a large quantity of LCA information available to the average consumer. Much as food products are labeled with nutritional information, a radically transparent consumer product might be labeled with environmental impact information, such as pollution created, energy consumed, human and animal health effects, and non-renewable resource consumption.

Goleman writes, "If we get better, more complete information about the true effects of an item at the moment we are deciding whether to buy it, we could make wiser decisions. Such full disclosure can make each of us an agent for small, gradual changes that, when multiplied by millions, will ripple through the industrial enterprise, from manufacturing and design, through supply chains and transport, to the distant ends of consumption."

A single glass bottle, from cradle to grave, involves as many as 1,959 separate steps, each with its own environmental impacts. No consumer, no matter how well informed, can be expected to know and evaluate all of this information. Fortunately, there are many organizations devoted to helping consumers make wiser and greener decisions.

To learn more about the ecological impacts of various consumer products, visit these websites: Center for a New American Dream, www.newdream.org/marketplace/; Consumer Reports' Greener Choices, www.greenerchoices.org; and Good Guide, www.goodguide.com. At your local library, look for books such as *Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things* by John C. Ryan and Alan Thein Durning.

Several organizations certify certain products as being sustainable or environmentally friendly, including: Forest Stewardship Council (paper and wood products), www.fscus.org; Green Seal (cleaning and construction products and services), www.greenseal.org; and USDA Organic (certified organic food products), www.ams.usda.gov/nop. Another certification coming soon will be Good Housekeeping's Green Seal of Approval.



Re-style

When the going gets tough, the tough get creative! Whether you are decorating your house or outfitting yourself, hard times don't have to mean that style goes out the window. Learn to rework what you have.

Decorating your house? Look to Mark and Sally Bailey for ideas. Sally's book, *Recycled Home*, explores their adventures in reusing their own stuff and the discards of others. Visit the local library to look for this and other books full of home decorating ideas that focus on reuse. While you are there, take a look at the magazine section. Periodicals such as *Ready Made*, *Country Living*, and *This Old House*, among others, are full of ideas for taking the used to create the useful and the ornamental.

Don't forget the clothes! Old jeans, T-shirts, and more, which are found in the back of nearly every closet, can be turned into all sorts of creative clothing and accessories. Turn an old backpack into a new fanny pack. Repurpose an old T-shirt into a shopping bag or a scarf. Create capris, shorts, or a skirt with an old pair of jeans. Or, turn the jeans into pot holders, bags, or a rag rug. For ideas, visit www.threadbanger.com, www.generation-t.com, or www.eHow.com (search for recycled clothes).



WHAT'S UP?

Let it rain! This past spring, three North Andover schools received free rain barrels from the New England Rain Barrel company. The lucky schools were Sargent,



Kittredge, and Atkinson. Each of the schools is using its barrel to water plants around the property. Kittredge kids have planted a garden and now have easy access to water. Not only can the water be used for outside, but the indoor plants love the rainwater, too. The kids and adults are learning that you can recycle just about anything. So, let the rain fall and fill up those blue barrels! Let's recycle and reuse the water.

For more information about rain barrels, visit The New England Rain Barrel Company's website, <http://nerainbarrel.com>. If you are interested in a rain barrel, consider entering our raffle. For \$5, you can be entered to win a new rain barrel. For entry information, email larconti@yahoo.com.



The North Andover Sustainability Committee has a school liaison who is in contact with each of the eight schools in the Town. At each school, at least one parent or teacher is also involved in helping to lead the "green" efforts. Each year, we plan activities for the schools that focus on waste reduction, recycling, and environmental friendliness. This fall, in celebration of America Recycles Day, we'll be working with the schools to perform waste audits. A waste audit takes a picture of what is being thrown away and helps figure out how to recycle more material.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS**

Please recycle this publication after you have read it!

Tina Talks Trash!



Reducing your waste is easy—stop accepting the free paper and plastic bags at the store. Once you get home to put away your groceries or other purchases, you are stuck with these bags. The bags are reusable, but a lot of them just go into the trash. Plus, many of the lightweight plastic bags end up on our roadsides or hanging from trees as litter.

You probably already have several canvas bags that you can reuse. Put some in your car. Then remember to grab the bags on your way into a store. Some supermarkets actually pay you to bring in your bags!

If you don't have lots of extra canvas bags, you can purchase reusable shopping bags. Some are so small and lightweight that they fold up to fit into a pocket or

purse. The North Andover Sustainability Committee sells reusable bags at Town events where we have an information table. The bags, which were designed specifically for North Andover in 2005, are \$1 each. Our local grocery stores, Market Basket, Stop-n-Shop, and Whole Foods, sell reusable bags for about a dollar each, as well.

Many of these reusable bags will hold as much as three to four plastic or two paper bags full of groceries. That also means fewer trips from the car to the house while you are unloading—and we know you'll like that!

Each year in the U.S., retailers hand



out more than 380 billion plastic shopping bags and another 10 billion paper bags. When you say, "No, thanks" to plastic and paper bags, you reduce the potential for litter and your weekly waste, and you conserve the fuel that would have been used to make the bags and deliver them to the store. Many people

are under the false assumption that paper is better than plastic. Carrying your own reusable bags is the best choice and an easy way to help our environment, keep our community cleaner, and make your unloading a breeze.



Litter...

(Continued from Page 1)

deposit on all carbonated and malt beverages as a means to combat litter. It works: 75% of all deposit containers are returned and the customer gets the nickel back. Anybody that does litter cleanup around a ballpark or soccer field can tell you, you'll find lots of water bottles and sports drinks, but no soft drink bottles.

When the original bottle bill was passed, nobody dreamed we'd be bottling water or that we'd see such an explosion in the number of non-carbonated beverages. Today, 1.5 billion non-deposit beverages are sold each year in Massachusetts, surpassing soda, and only 35% get recycled. Maine, Connecticut, and New York have all recently expanded their bottle deposit law.

An expanded bottle bill will go a long way toward minimizing the litter from beverage containers. We will no longer have overflowing trash receptacles at athletic fields across town. Even though these drink containers (water and sports drink bottles, etc.) are recyclable, people do not seem motivated to carry them home for recycling.

At their meeting on June 29, the North Andover Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to support the expansion of the bottle deposit law by signing a resolution in support of the expanded bottle bill. This law would increase recycling, reduce trash disposal costs, reduce litter on our streets and in our parks, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40,000 metric tons annually in Massachusetts, and result in over 1.4 million BTU in energy savings. On behalf of the North Andover Sustainability Committee, I'd like to thank the Board for their support of this proposed legislation.

For more information about the bottle deposit law, visit www.massrecycle.org/bottlebill/.



Re-leaf

The trees are changing colors. The leaves are about to fall. You know what that means—the chores are about to begin! Here are some ideas for reusing and recycling your fall leaves:

- Make a pile and let the kids jump into it with their friends. Remember to record the good times by taking pictures.
- Using a mulching mower, shred leaves and let them stay on the grass. The shredded leaves will provide a protective winter cover and decompose by spring. If you have a lot of leaves, you'll need to mow often during the weeks with the heaviest leaf-fall.
- Use your mower to pick up leaves. Simply attach the bagger and collect the leaves. Your mower will shred the leaves as it picks them up, creating a great mulch. Put the leaf mulch on your garden or flower beds, around trees, or on paths.
- Pick up shredded leaves with the mower or rake up whole leaves and add them to your compost pile.
- Gather your leaves for Town collection. Leaf collection is scheduled for Monday, November 2 through Friday, November 20. Your collection day will be the same day as your trash and recycling service. Because of Veterans Day on November 11, collections for the remainder of that week will be one day later. Leaves must be in paper bags and placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on your collection day. Leaves can also be dropped off at the Cyr Recycling Center on Sharpner's Pond Road on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Center will close for the season around mid-December.

Mark your calendar!

Our next **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Drop-Off Event** will be held on **Saturday, October 17**, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the North Andover Drop-Off Center, which is located at the TBI Facility at 210 Holt Road. HHW includes household chemicals, lawn and garden products, and automotive fluids. Residents are allowed to drop off HHW at no charge. Residents will have to pay a nominal fee for car batteries, propane tanks, paint, TVs, and computer monitors. (Motor oil is only accepted at the DPW and will not be accepted at this event.)



After the holidays, **recycle your "real" Christmas tree**. After you remove all of the lights, decorations, and tinsel from your family's cut holiday tree, give it another life with recycling. The tree must be loose—do not place the tree into an extra-large tree bag. Place the bare and unbagged tree at the curb. It will be picked up on your regular trash day between January 4 and January 15. Don't forget to remove the stand.

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