



# RECYCLING ADVOCATES

December 2003

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*Involving people in creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle*

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## **Simplifying the Holidays**

*How can we spread the idea of alternative gift giving?*

The holidays have arrived and Americans will once again rev up their consumer engines. According to the Center for the New American Dream, the average American planned to spend over \$1,000 per year on holiday gifts in 2001. As a result of the holiday spending binge, many Americans will take on credit card debt, adding to the over \$600 billion of existing credit card debt. Emotionally, the holidays can add stress to already stressed lives. Whether Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa, many people can feel pressured to spend money on gifts by scurrying around malls and shops to buy presents for loved ones. The weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's will add five million extra tons of trash to the waste stream in the U.S.

RA members are already aware of the wasteful traditions of the holiday period, but how can we spread the word of increasing the meaning of the holidays while reducing waste? And how can we ourselves do more to celebrate sustainability along with the holidays?

*Approaching others: a touchy subject for some*

- When we broach the topic with friends and family members, they can become defensive or feel powerless in the face of the onslaught of holiday advertising. Fortunately, there are many ways to celebrate creatively, and we can communicate to our friends and family these alternatives to the traditional consumer-driven holidays. Many of the following ideas may help us help our friends and family

*Continued on page 2, column 1*

## **E-waste Forum in Review**

*Event provides update on electronic waste issues in Oregon*

*By Lori Stole*

Recyclers, government folks and a variety of other stakeholders came together in Salem last month for a day-long forum to learn about the issues surrounding electronic waste, and to take a look at the tasks called out in SB 867, RA's recently passed legislation. The event was sponsored jointly by the Association of Oregon Recyclers, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association and Oregon Recycling Markets Development Corporation.

While many in the audience were hearing for the first time about the complications of managing this waste stream, it was clear that the word has been getting out since e-waste started being discussed several years ago. Many of our previous newsletters have delved into these issues, and can be accessed from our website.

Collection programs are finding that citizens no longer expect recyclers to pay donors for their originally very expensive computers; in fact, many are now willing to pay the recycler when they drop their items off. Many and varied collection events have taken place in the last years, and organizers are recognizing that permanent collection programs are needed both from an economic standpoint and for convenience. The City of Seattle is considering a curbside collection program for the near future.

*Continued on page 2, column 3*

## **Welcome Rick Paul to the RA Board**

*New board member brings expertise and management insight*

In October, the Recycling Advocates board of directors elected Rick Paul as RA's newest board member and treasurer. He brings a wealth of experience in the recycling field. Since 1983, Rick has been involved in recycling, first as general manager of Northwest Resource Recycling in Eugene in the 1980's and currently as the administrative manager of Far West Fibers in Portland. He was a board member of the Association of Oregon Recyclers.

Rick also brings political experience to RA. From the 1970's through the mid-1990's, he worked as a lobbyist on education and environmental issues.

He and his wife, Diane, have two children and live in southeast Portland.

Tanya Schaefer, who has been interim treasurer, has returned to her original at-large board member position.

Welcome aboard Rick, and many thanks to Tanya for pitching in as treasurer!

## **RA Seeks Member Volunteers for State of Recycling in Oregon**

The new year will see us starting on a new and exciting project. RA member volunteers will plan and create the first issue of a State of Recycling in Oregon report. We've had many ideas about what topics we could include and how to approach them. The first task will be to narrow these down to a useful and workable list, followed by identifying the necessary resources, research, preparation and publication. If you would like to participate on the project team, please contact us at [info@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:info@recyclingadvocates.org) or (503) 777-0909.

### **Holidays, continued**

members get over the holiday spending binge:

- Set an example and declare a no-presents holiday. Just tell your friends and family to forgo giving you material gifts, or tell them that the greatest gift would be no present or something simple like a note or some time together.
- Focus on relationships, not material stuff. A gathering is an opportunity to share stories, thoughts, or a meal together. We can make family gathering simpler by having potluck events or by inviting people over for coffee and dessert after a meal.
- Find out how the holidays affect your loved ones. For many, their levels of holiday spending outpace their incomes. Most people are aggravated by the shopping-induced stress. Some dislike the wastefulness of the holiday season. By discovering what triggers stress around the holidays, we can better address how to celebrate in an alternative way. For example, someone who spends within his or her means but who hates the shopping stress would find a discussion about simplifying the holidays by reducing shopping more compelling than talking about all the money he or she spends.
- Help children avoid the problem of the holiday frenzy before they get hooked. If you have children, you can do your best to convince family members to limit what they give them. You can also introduce alternative ideas to your children

while they are young such as giving experiences or focusing on family gatherings.

One of the most important things we can do for others is to share ideas for alternative celebrations of the holidays. The Center for a New American Dream publishes "Simplify the Holidays" on their web site. Visitors can download the pdf. version or buy hardcopy brochures. The publication provides readers with a wealth of ideas about fun meaningful ways to celebrate the holidays. The brochure is much like a self-help guide for those who want to kick the holiday spending habit and for anyone who wishes to help family members develop new practices. Some of the topics include gifts of time, giving experiences, holidays on a zero budget, homemade gifts, and gifts to charity. To download the "Simplify the Holidays," go to [www.NewDream.org/holiday/brochure.html](http://www.NewDream.org/holiday/brochure.html) or call (800) NEW-DREAM to order printed copies. The holidays are filled with positive themes such as peace, renewal, love and friendship. By redirecting our friends and families' focus to simplicity, we offer them the opportunity to experience both the higher purpose of the holidays and a sense of what it means to apply sustainable practices.

### **SCRAP Happenings (School and Community Reuse Action Project)**

#### ***Open House/Open Workshop***

Date: December 7, 2003

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: Portland, 3625 B North Mississippi Ave.

Learn about holiday alternatives, re-use ideas, easy-to-make gifts and SCRAP's Wrap-O-Rama.

#### ***SCRAP Holiday Bazaar***

Village-style marketplace of re-use arts and crafts. Live music and merriment.

Date: December 7, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: Portland, Mississippi Pizza Pub, 3552 North Mississippi Ave.

For more information about SCRAP and its events, call (503) 294-0769 or visit [www.scrapaction.org](http://www.scrapaction.org).

### ***E-waste Forum, continued***

The Basel Action Network video "Exporting Harm," which was released nearly two years ago and documents some *very* bad e-waste recycling practices in China, continues to have a big impact as recyclers ponder whether they will ship computers or parts of computers to recyclers overseas. This video was shown during the forum lunch break. If you have not yet seen "Exporting Harm" but would like to, please contact RA at (503) 777-0909 to borrow our copy.

The forum concluded with a panel of speakers, who will be involved with the new state electronic product stewardship taskforce. At the time of going to print, the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department had yet to announce the complete list of taskforce appointments. Look for an update on who is serving on the taskforce in January's RA Newsletter.

### **Do Not Call, and Do Not Send Junk Mail!**

*Is a bulk mail registry in our future?*

The Center for the New American Dream's junk mail campaign is back and this time the Center is asking Congress to commission a national opt-out registry modeled after the new telemarketer "do not call" list.

According to the web site, the junk mail list could operate like the FTC's telemarketer registry. It could be funded by the ad industry and therefore not place a financial burden on taxpayers, and not apply to charities and political groups, though they would have to honor citizen requests not to receive further mail.

To obtain more information and to e-mail letters for your senators and representative, visit [www.newdream.org/junkmail/campaign2003.html](http://www.newdream.org/junkmail/campaign2003.html).

### **SCRAP is Moving Soon!**

Join in the Parade and SCRAP Happening! Join the box brigade! Bring your wagon, wheelbarrow, or bike trailer. For more information, call (503) 294-0769 or visit [www.scrapaction.org](http://www.scrapaction.org).

## **RECYCLING ADVOCATES**

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Rob Guttridge, President

Lori Stole, Vice President

Wayne Rifer, Secretary

Rick Paul, Treasurer

Tanya Schaefer, At Large

Jeffrey White, Newsletter Editor

## Thank You to Those Who Contributed Through Earth Share of Oregon

*If you don't have Earth Share at your workplace, give them a call!*

If you count yourself among the thousands of Oregonians who donated to Earth Share of Oregon (ESOR) last fall, thank you! Employees in over 75 businesses and public agencies committed their support for Earth Share's 66 members who work to protect human health, preserve wildlife habitat and promote alternatives that will reduce the effects of global warming. Recycling Advocates is strengthened by our membership in Earth Share and by support from donors like you.

If your workplace is not currently involved in an ESOR giving program, this is how it works: ESOR works with employers to set up a program that allows employees to support environmental programs through payroll deductions. Through this program, employees can choose to support Earth Share as a whole, enabling all of ESOR member groups to benefit, or to designate their support for one or more specific groups. In this way, even a small gift of a dollar or two per paycheck adds up to a generous contribution. It's easy and it makes a difference! For more information, please contact Ron Shoals at ESOR: (503) 223-9015 or rrs@earthshare-oregon.org; or visit www.earthshare-oregon.org.

## Join RA's New Marketing and Outreach Team

How can Recycling Advocates best elevate its visibility among existing and new groups of constituents, attract new members and increase public recognition of the waste prevention issues that RA promotes? These are the key issues that RA's new Marketing and Outreach Team (M.O. Team) will tackle in the coming months. We are seeking volunteers with market research, outreach, training, and graphic design experience as well as individuals with connections to other environmental and civic organizations. For more information, please contact us at info@recyclingadvocates.org or (503) 777-0909.

## Have You Heard of Freecycling?

*Oregon communities jump on Freecycling bandwagon*

It's new. It has kinks to work out. But Oregonians from Ashland to Astoria are trying it. Freecycling originated in Tucson as a type of online materials exchange and has now become a worldwide network. Anyone who joins a local Freecycle discussion group on Yahoo can offer or request an item. Members of the online group exchange communications about the items and how and where to pick them up. All items must be free (no monetary or material exchanges), thus the name "Freecycle."

In Portland, Albert Kaufman has been busy organizing the network since late September. Users of the system report both satisfaction and some frustrations. For example, materials are free (a certain plus), but they can go fast. Also, one RA member reported that she received the same message thousands of times from the discussion group in one day. Freecycle members who opt to receive the digest of messages once a day avoid receiving numerous e-mails, but they may also miss out on obtaining items before others do. Kaufman notes, "Well, we're all figuring this out right now. It's a new system, and a new kind of being with one another, so there are plenty of hurdles and discussion." He hopes to run the discussion group through the Freecycle web site in order to overcome the limitations of Yahoo and to give people a bit more functionality while keeping the discussion group intimate and local. Kaufman also has a vision of a "Freecycle Portland Day" modeled after a similar event that Freecycle advocates held in Seattle.

To find out more about the Freecycle wave, visit [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org).

## Is There Gold in Those Goodwill Bins?

*New clothing designs from recycled and vintage materials*

Since 2002, Genna Golden has been selling her designer women's clothing at her shop, GOLD Boutique, on Alberta Street in Portland. She has developed her niche by creating new designs made from reused and vintage fabrics. She finds most of the fabric at yard sales, in Goodwill bins, and at thrift stores. For much of her line, the only new materials include zippers and binding. Golden's designs incorporate materials from embroidery pieces, tapestry wall hangings, and Hawaiian muumuus. She even reuses buttons. Another designer in her shop creates sweaters from reused sweater material found in Goodwill bins.

According to Golden, her hottest items are skirts made from vintage fabrics. Golden is always on the hunt for materials, so if you have vintage or used materials, contact her at (503) 284-4645 or by e-mail at [genna@gennagolden.com](mailto:genna@gennagolden.com). GOLD Boutique is located at 1524 NE Alberta Street in Portland.



### RECYCLING ADVOCATES Membership Application

- \$25 Regular    \$10-24 Living Lightly    \$50 Sustainer    \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 *I'm giving a gift membership to the recipient below.\**  
 *Sign me up for Action Alerts*    *Contact me about volunteering for RA*

Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228-6736

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  Send my newsletter by e-mail

\*Your name, if this is a gift membership: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your membership contribution to RA is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.*

**Recycling Advocates' gift memberships: A Holiday Alternative!**

**Upcoming Events and Workshops**

**City of Portland Solid Waste & Recycling Division**

*Public Hearing on Administrative Rules*

Date: December 4, 2003

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Conference Room on the 3rd floor of the Ecotrust Building at 721 NW 9th Ave.

The Solid Waste & Recycling Division is beginning a review of the City’s administrative rules which cover garbage and recycling for residential and commercial sectors. For more information, visit [www.sustainableportland.org](http://www.sustainableportland.org).

**Metro’s “Buy recycled” Holiday Gift Fair**

Date: December 5, 2003

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave.

Shop, enjoy and buy gifts made from recycled material. You’ll find a variety of items – useful, whimsical, unique and

beautiful – and all made from materials that used to be something else. There will be something for everyone at this year’s fair, with prices to fit every budget.

Featuring many new and repeat artists and retail stores with items such as jewelry, toys, garden art, sculpture, ceramics, clothing, household accessories, holiday ornaments and cards as well as other fun gifts.

For more information, call Metro Recycling Information at (503) 234-3000.

**Portland Office of Sustainable Development**

*Fix It Fair: Resource Saving Strategies for Your Home, Garden and Community*

Dates: January 10 and 24, 2004

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: (1/10) Kellogg Middle School, 3330 SE 69th Ave.

(1/24) Blazers Boys and Girls Club, 5250 NE MLK, Jr. Blvd.

The Fix-It Fair is an event designed to connect Portland-area residents with public resources that save money,

conserve resources, and improve the home and neighborhood. City, County and community non-profit agencies provide information, hands-on demonstrations and over a dozen how-to classes on various home and garden topics throughout the day. Workshop topics range from home weatherization, and composting. For more information, call (503) 823-5311 or visit [www.sustainableportland.org](http://www.sustainableportland.org).

**Recycling Advocates Board Meeting**

Date: TBA

Time: 7:30 p.m.

For location and information, call (503) 777-0909.

**Recycling Advocates is proud to be...**



a member of Earth Share  
OF OREGON

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**Holiday Alternatives Inside!**

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