



# Diversions

Spring 2003

A Publication of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority

## Central Contra Costa Helps Rebuild a Nation



Janet Schneider, CCCSWA; Nafisa and Nadir Rouhani, Afghan Center; Linda Levitsky, East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse, Inc.; and Richard Navarro, UNICEF, pose in front of some of the 150 bicycles collected from Central Contra Costa residents. The bicycles will find new homes next month in Afghanistan. Working together with UNICEF and the Afghan Center in Fremont, Linda Levitsky secured space for the bicycles on a ship that sails this spring. Refurbished by the local nonprofit One Family, the bicycles will help support UNICEF projects. "This story is a great example of successful cooperation between non-profit and government organizations and the general public," says Janet Schneider, Executive Director of the CCCSWA. "We thank our residents for donating items instead of throwing them away. Their efforts do make a difference, and in the case of bicycles, provide essential means of transportation."

## The New Year Focuses CCCSWA on the Future

How do you view the year 2003? Is it the third year of the millennium? Two years until retirement? Twenty years after high school graduation? To the CCCSWA, it means year eight of a 10-year solid waste and recycling services contract, and time to plan for the future.

The CCCSWA has been busy comparing its collection rates with surrounding areas, examining programs and recycling rates, reviewing customer satisfaction feedback, assessing landfill disposal options, and completing state-required annual reports documenting that we have one of the most comprehensive waste reduction programs around.

Consequently, at its January Board meeting, CCCSWA decided to begin negotiations with Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal for the continuation of garbage and special cleanup services, and with Valley Waste Management for the continuation of recycling services beyond 2006. If these negotiations fail to produce the desired results by 2004, the CCCSWA will begin a new procurement process.

## Attend the Public Hearing on New Service Contracts!

March 27 at 4:00 p.m.  
Civic Park Community Center  
Social Hall  
1375 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

At its March meeting, the CCCSWA will hold a public hearing on what service enhancements to pursue, such as single-stream recycling, food scrap and yard waste collection, electronic waste collection programs, construction and demolition recycling incentives and commercial wet/dry collection systems.

Do you have an opinion on services? Write to the CCCSWA at 1280 Civic Drive, #210, Walnut Creek 94596, email us at [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org), or attend the hearing and tell us what you'd like to see in 2006.

## • The Other 50% •

Innovations May Help Landfilled Waste Biodegrade

## Bioreactors: Landfills of the Future?

In our last installment of "The Other 50%," we examined the issue of biodegradability in landfills. Current procedures result in what the industry calls a "dry tomb" — an anaerobic environment in which biodegradable waste does not break down efficiently over time.



Leachate, the liquid produced by decomposing waste in a landfill, is usually collected in tanks such as these and treated. In bioreactor landfills, leachate would be used to enhance the natural breakdown of garbage.

Cutting-edge research into "bioreactors" seeks to correct this problem. Although not a substitute for waste reduction, bioreactor landfills use techniques designed to inject air and moisture into the landfill, enhancing the microbial processes that break down waste. Currently, there are several pilot bioreactor projects across the country, including the Central Landfill in Yolo County, Calif. These projects will provide valuable data that will enable the EPA and other private and public agencies to regulate larger-scale bioreactors.

By employing bioreactor methods, waste decays more quickly and becomes fully decomposed, or stable, in a matter of years instead of decades. Benefits include:

- Reduced leachate disposal costs
- A 15 to 30 percent gain in landfill space due to increased density of waste mass
- Increased landfill gas generation that, when captured, can be used to create electricity or sold as an energy source
- Reduced post-closure landfill maintenance.

Negative aspects that warrant further consideration include increased odors and gases and landfill instability.

Once again, we are reminded of the enormously complex infrastructure our society needs to deal with its waste in an efficient manner. Please do your part and help stop waste before it starts!

## Make Everyday Earth Day

## Contra Costa Earth Day Celebration is Discontinued



In 2002, organizers of the Contra Costa Earth Day Festival, held annually at the Chronicle Pavilion at Concord, had to make a difficult decision to suspend the event. This year they made that decision permanent. "While the event was always successful, festival costs increased at the same time our sponsorship began to decrease," says Karyn Wagman, former Contra Costa Earth Day Coordinator. "We had to make the tough decision to

discontinue the celebration." Although the big festival may be gone, Earth Day is here to stay, and there are plenty of ways Contra Costans can celebrate.

This year, Earth Day falls on April 26. We urge you to spend some time that day thinking about the importance of a healthy environment and the limited availability of natural resources. Or better yet, make every day Earth Day and institute some lifestyle changes that reduce waste, pollution and over-consumption of resources. Here are some ideas:

- Use cloth bags when shopping for groceries
- Buy in bulk instead of single-servings
- Buy recycled-content products
- Start a compost or worm bin
- Recycle construction & demolition materials if you remodel your home
- Carpool, take public transit, or bike to work one day a week
- Find reuse or donation alternatives for items you no longer want or need

The CCCSWA can help you with all of these waste-preventing practices. Visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) to learn more from our FREE informational resources.

If you feel like celebrating with others, visit the West County Integrated Resource Recovery Facility (IRRF) on April 26 for its annual event. Call 510-215-3125 or visit [www.recyclemore.com](http://www.recyclemore.com) for more info.

# Ecohouse is Green and Gorgeous!

When you picture a "green" home, what comes to mind (other than the obvious color scheme)? Is it covered with vines? Made out of strange materials? Built with scrap wood and looks scrappy? Well, look at Bob and Lily Joe's "Ecohouse," in Walnut Creek, and you'll see nothing of the kind. Instead, you'll see a beautiful, modern home with all the amenities. However, it's what you *can't* see that really makes this house interesting.

The Joes started their Ecohouse project literally from the ground up two years ago after reading an inspiring article in *Sunset* magazine and subsequently researching green building practices. The home, to be completed this spring, features an impressive range of environmentally sustainable materials, including straw bale walls (which, surprisingly, act as a superior fire retardant to a standard wall), a recycled steel frame,



Bob & Lily Joe stand in front of a partially finished wall of their nearly completed Ecohouse. On the bottom left, you can see the exposed straw bale wall. On the bottom right, the wall insulation beneath the window is made from recycled denim.

concrete containing 50% recycled fly ash, reused clay roofing tiles, and recycled rubber tire flooring in the exercise room. Many of the home's architectural features are also "green," including passive cooling, which eliminated the need for air conditioning. Even the exterior stucco walls contain fly ash and heat-reflective pigment.

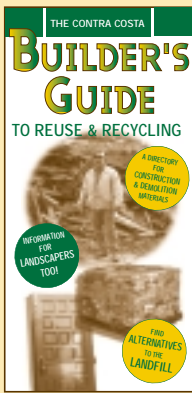
The Joes consider Ecohouse their dream retirement home. They proudly declare their home as "a symbol of hope that, in this twenty-first century, we can all live a life that is simpler and healthier ... in homes that are built with love and concern for our environment." If you'd like to keep up with the Joes, visit [www.ecohouse2002.com](http://www.ecohouse2002.com). For an overview on green building practices, see [www.ciwmb.ca.gov/GreenBuilding/Basics.htm](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/GreenBuilding/Basics.htm).

Remodeling = Recycling

## New C&D Recycling Guide!

Construction and demolition (C&D) debris makes up 15-20% of the waste in California landfills. In terms of diversion rates, C&D debris disposal often offsets waste reduction activities such as recycling, reuse and composting. In fact, some CCCSWA cities' diversion rates approached 50% in 2000, only to decrease in 2001 due to C&D debris going to the landfill.

To address this concern, many Contra Costa cities are implementing C&D recycling ordinances, requiring builders to divert at least 50% of their job debris from the landfill. Although small jobs may be exempt from certain requirements, every bit of C&D debris recycled makes a difference. If you're planning a remodeling project, why not request a FREE copy of CCCSWA's new C&D guide? Use it yourself or pass it on to your contractor. A small effort may result in big gains for your city's recycling rate and may save you money on disposal costs.



Request your free copy at [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) or call 925-906-1801

Bored by the Basics?

## Become an "Advanced Composter"



Starts April 16th • 6 weeks • 6 classes  
NO CHARGE

For the first time, Home Composting For Busy People! is offering master training and certification in small and large scale composting systems. The training is excellent for established composters who want to improve their practice. It is also a great opportunity for landscape contractors and owners or managers of large landscaped areas to learn about composting as a way to recycle green waste. Training will include:

- the biology of composting
- a review of techniques and systems
- compost feedstocks and "recipes"
- finished compost applications
- presentations from local experts
- a field trip to a large scale compost facility.

Participants are encouraged to contribute 12 hours of volunteer time to assist the CCCSWA in promoting or instructing composting. Please call 925-906-1806 for additional information.

## Electric Grasscycling Mower Sale!

Electric-grasscycling mowers recycle your grass clippings without polluting the air!

A limited number of \$100 rebates will be available when you trade in your old gas mower for an electric mower. Open to Contra Costa Residents only. Rebates given on a first-come, first-served basis.

Black & Decker  
corded mower

\$79  
after rebate

### Sale Dates:

April 26: Home Depot  
in Concord

May 3: Home Depot in Pittsburg

Call 906-1806 for starting times.



## Ask the Authority

Dear Authority:

Each time I turn around, it seems cell phones get smaller and more sophisticated. I'm thinking of upgrading my phone, but I don't know what to do with my old one. It still works and shouldn't be thrown away. What should I do?



Cell Crazy in Walnut Creek

Dear Crazy

Inform, Inc., an environmental research firm, estimates that cell phones are replaced on average every 18 months, resulting in over 130 million phones disposed of annually by 2005. Cell phones contain toxic elements like lead and mercury, so it is important to keep cell phones out of landfills and incinerators. There are opportunities to donate your old cell phone. Try one of the options below:

### Verizon Wireless

Any Verizon store accepts donations of cell phones and accessories, including 1141 Locust Street in Walnut Creek. (925) 988-6990. Phones are used in the HopeLine program to help non-profit domestic violence prevention programs.

### Wireless Foundation Call to Protect Program

In this national mail-in program, donated phones aid victims of domestic violence. The website, [www.donateaphone.com](http://www.donateaphone.com), also has information on organizing a local collection site. Mail the phone, battery and charger to: CALL TO PROTECT, c/o Motorola, 1580 E. Ellsworth Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

### Keep California Beautiful

Mail phones to: 3914 Murphy Canyon Rd., Suite A218, San Diego, 92123. Keep California Beautiful will receive \$1-\$15 per phone to support statewide environmental efforts.

Send questions to [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org) or 1280 Civic Dr., Suite 210, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

## HHW & E-Waste Collection Event

Saturday April 5th in Lafayette  
Call 1-800-207-8222 for an appointment.

Safely and conveniently dispose of household hazardous waste (HHW) such as motor oil, paint, auto and alkaline batteries, cleaners, solvents and pesticides. Also get rid of unwanted electronics such as computers, TVs, monitors, stereos, cell phones, answering machines and more.

## Contact information

CCCSWA ..... 906-1801  
fax: 906-1605 ..... web: [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org)  
email: [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org)

PLEASANT HILL BAYSHORE DISPOSAL .... 603-1144  
fax: 685-8153  
web: [www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com](http://www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com)

For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, new service or your blue garbage cart.

VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT ..... 935-8900  
fax: 935-1617 ..... web: [www.valleywaste.com](http://www.valleywaste.com)

For questions concerning the service of your burgundy recycling or green yard clippings carts, to request motor oil disposal containers, for recycling cleanups or info on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.

CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE ..1-800-750-4096

HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING .... 906-1806

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ... 1-800-646-1431