



# Diversions

Spring 2005

A Publication of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority



## BILLING CYCLE CHANGES

### ATTENTION Danville and Walnut Creek Residents:

This current bill reflects a two-month billing cycle (March-April). You will receive your next bill in May—one month earlier than usual. Future bills will return to a three-month billing cycle.

Quarterly bills will be distributed according to the following schedule **beginning May 1, 2005:**

#### Danville and Walnut Creek:

May 1, Aug 1, Nov 1, 2005; Feb 1, 2006

#### Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and Unincorporated Central County:

June 1, Sep 1, Dec 1, 2005; Mar 1, 2006

If you have questions, contact Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal at 925-603-1144.

Go with the Flow

## Single-Stream: Central Contra Costans Jump into the Current

Single-stream recycling is coming soon! Between March and May, Valley Waste Management staff will be replacing the lid and removing the divider from your burgundy cart. Once you receive the new lid, you can mix paper and containers together! See insert for more details on what can and can't be recycled in this new program.

Now you may be wondering: once the paper is mixed with plastic, metal and glass, how does it get separated again for recycling? The answer is part modern technology and part old-fashioned hard work.



Pacific Rim sort line workers must remove any non-recyclable material from the paper "stream." Residents can make their work easier by putting only, paper, glass, metals and certain plastics in their carts.

Once commingled recyclables arrive at the recycling facility, they're loaded onto an automated conveyer belt for a "presort," where trained workers pull out cardboard and trash, such as plastic bags and STYROFOAM®. The material is then screened to remove broken glass and grit. Another screen separates containers from paper. Magnets then remove ferrous metals (like steel cans) from other containers and "sort line" workers separate plastics and glass by hand. All the materials are prepared for shipment to local or international re-manufacturers.

"Single-stream recycling is a new ball game," says Steve Moore of Pacific Rim Recycling. "It's easier for the public and creates a whole new and exciting challenge for us."

**"Residents can help the recycling effort by keeping plastic bags, STYROFOAM® and other trash out of the recycling bin," says Moore.**

Single-stream recyclables from the Lamorinda area will still be sorted at the Davis Street Transfer Station in San Leandro. Materials from residents along the 680-corridor communities of Danville, Walnut Creek and the unincorporated areas will go to Pacific Rim Recycling's brand new, single-stream processing facility in Benicia.

## • The Waste-Cutting Edge •

What's Black and White and Green All Over?

## CCCSWA's Resource Library Debuts

Trying to find information about a "green" topic on the Web can be a daunting task of sifting through countless websites and documents. Besides the drudgery, you may end up missing certain non-digital sources of information, like printed brochures and guides.



CCCSWA invites you to visit its new resource library. Make an appointment by calling 925-906-1801.

CCCSWA has made it easier for local residents to get the information they're looking for by developing a "green" resource library, (think of it as a resource about resources!)—and it is now officially open to the public.

The CCCSWA's resource library has an extensive green building section but also includes such topics as environmentally preferable office and cleaning supplies and recycled-content promotional items. There are even product samples for you to look at. To view the complete list of topics, visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org). Please call 925-906-1801 before visiting to schedule an appointment. We look forward to seeing you!

## Confessions of a Local Composter

*Ever wonder what it's like to compost? Well, wonder no more. Lafayette resident and new composter Rachel Jackson has agreed to share her diary pages with us. We hope her true-to-life experiences inspire you to try composting.*

**August 7, 2004**

Today David and I set up the new Biostack™ composting bin and added grass freshly cut from the lawn. I thought we wouldn't find enough dry brown stuff for the right combination of ingredients. But David cleaned the gutters and behold; mounds of pine needles! I mixed them in the half-full bin with a pitchfork and watered 'til moist.

**August 11**

I opened the lid to the bin today and felt a warm humidity— it's working!

**August 14**

Today I added food scraps to the bin for the first time.

**August 21**

Lesson One: Bury food scraps. We didn't at first and oh, the flies! Now we bury the food like hidden treasure, and haven't had a fly problem since.

**September 10**

I cleaned out the refrigerator and put the old produce in the compost bin, buried the food scraps, mixed and watered. It had dried out because of hot weather. Luckily, composting doesn't seem to be an exact science. It's more like tending a living thing. So I've added composting to my weekly to-do list: water plants, buy groceries, tend compost.

**September 26**

Added food scraps. Spread grass over scraps. Moisture OK. Note: Water in one week.

**November 1**

We carved pumpkins last night for Halloween. I put the guts and kitchen scraps in the pile. David added grass and leaves. With this witches' brew I figured I should aerate the pile completely, so I pulled a rung off the bin and put it on the ground to relocate the pile. I pitched the pile into the rung. It was fun to see the progress made since the summer. At the bottom of the old pile we had dark loam. Compost!



**Sunday, December 12**

The compost is slowly cooking. Even though it's chilly out, the compost was warm. It's a good time of year to let it fully decompose. I won't add anything substantial for the next month or so; with the hope that by spring we'll have a bin full of compost ready for the garden.

To find out more about composting, including where to take **free classes**

and how to order a discounted bin, call the Home Composting for Busy People Hotline at 925-906-1806, or visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org).

# Green Homes on Display This May

This spring, besides the usual daffodils and freesias, the world seems nearly bursting with green homes.

We often hear about green homes helping the environment flourish, but most people don't realize that green homes can also help our health blossom. For example, EPA studies have shown that air quality inside a typical home can often be worse than the air outside. Conventional building practices and products often contribute to this problem. Since Americans spend up to 90% of their time indoors, healthy interior environments are crucial to our well-being. Don't worry—the potential to improve the health of our home and ourselves is huge, if we only consider greener options.

Contra Costa and Alameda Counties are combining efforts to make it easy and fun to learn more about green building by organizing a megatour of nearly 30 green homes. On May 1, from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., you can take the self-guided tour using the Green Home Tour Guidebook, which will also serve as your ticket. The guidebook provides details on each participating home's green features,



and can be bought at local public agencies and retail stores for \$10 each. (See [www.buildgreennow.org](http://www.buildgreennow.org) for a list of locations.)

The Build It Green Home Tour will feature a mixture of newly constructed and remodeled homes, including single family, multi-family and "cohousing" units that incorporate a variety of green building techniques and technologies. (Cohousing is a hybrid form of housing that combines private and communal forms of living.) The featured homes range from affordable housing to multi-million dollar single-family homes. All incorporate green building techniques and materials, including environmentally friendly flooring, low toxicity paints and varnishes, healthy ventilation systems, photovoltaic systems and much more!

Tour organizers include Build It Green, Green Building in Alameda County, the Green Resource Center, and Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. To learn more, purchase guidebooks and register for the May 1 event, please visit [www.buildgreennow.org](http://www.buildgreennow.org) or call Michele Brown at 510-845-5106, ext. 230.

Spring Cleaning Made Easy!

## Reuse and Cleanup Days Now Including Electronics!

Donate reusable items and electronics at the curb one day before your regularly scheduled bulky cleanup. Watch for the yellow flyer in your mailbox for your scheduled reuse and cleanup dates and details on acceptable items.

| Community | Date |
|-----------|------|
| Moraga    | May  |
| Orinda    | May  |
| Lafayette | June |



## Can't Make It to the Green Home Tour?



Take a virtual tour of Dilbert's Ultimate Home instead.

Cartoonist Scott Adams invited architects, environmental experts, and others among his fans to help design "Dilbert's Ultimate house" or (DUH for short).

Dilbert's requirements included "energy usage approaching zero, green building materials where practical, and healthy indoor air quality"—in other words, a green home! To accomplish this, the architects used green features such as light colored roof tiles to reduce thermal sun impact, Energy Star appliances, low VOC paints, and bamboo and recycled-content porch flooring. To tour Dilbert's green home and see more features, visit [www.dilbert.com/comics/dilbert/duh](http://www.dilbert.com/comics/dilbert/duh).

## Calendar of Events

- Apr 1-3** Contra Costa Home and Garden Show
- Apr 22** Earth Day
- May 1** Green Home Tour  
*See article above for more information.*
- May 1** Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour  
*See over 40 East Bay gardens. Free. Register by calling 510-236-9558.*
- Jun 1-5** United Nations World Environment Day  
*Held this year in San Francisco! [www.wed2005.org](http://www.wed2005.org).*



Kendall Green (far left), Kevin Camporeale, Connor Reid and Bradley Green of Lafayette Elementary enjoy lunch without the waste of disposable trays.

## Reusable Trays Mean Less Trash

For more than three years the kids at Lafayette Elementary used polystyrene disposable trays to tote hot lunches. With a school population of about 350, that meant as many as 63,000 trays per year could end up in the landfill! The unnecessary waste disturbed parent Linda Rosenthal, so she consulted with Debbie Leder, owner of Heaven Scent Catering (a company specializing in hot buffet lunches for schools). Debbie suggested using reusable trays. Linda received support from the school administration. The only obstacle: funding. Fortunately, the PTA came to the rescue—contributing \$1,600 for Heaven Scent to buy reusable trays for the kids.

Sixteen hundred dollars may seem like a lot of money, but CCCSWA did some number crunching and found that even though the trays cost nearly five dollars each and there are additional washing expenses, reusable trays save money when compared to purchasing and disposing of foam trays.

"This is our small attempt to make a difference," says Traci Reilly, the current hot lunch coordinator. "The reduction of waste has been so huge that the school reduced its garbage service and actually saved money."

## Ask the Authority

Dear Authority,

How can I order a dumpster? My wife and I will be cleaning out my father's house next month (he recently passed away) and there is a lot of stuff we don't want.

Organizing in Orinda



Dear Organizing,

Going through a lifetime of belongings can be quite an undertaking. Although it's tempting to order a dumpster and throw everything away, we encourage you to try some of the following options. You may be able to pass your father's cherished possessions to someone who will appreciate them.

**On-property recyclers:** CCCSWA permits recyclers that, for a fee, will haul away reusable and recyclable items. For a list of these on-property recyclers, visit [www.wastediversion.org/appl-furnrecycle.htm](http://www.wastediversion.org/appl-furnrecycle.htm).

**Estate liquidators:** These professionals can assess and sell the most valuable items.

**Charities and thrift stores:** Many will come to your home and pick up the items they are interested in. Your donation helps those in need and may be tax deductible.

**Consignment stores:** These are a good option if you have only a few valuable items you'd like to try to sell.

**Garage sale:** With a little effort you may be able to make some money while keeping usable goods out of the landfill. Whatever doesn't sell can be donated.

See the Contra Costa Reuse and Recycling Guide in your SBC Smart Yellow Pages or online at [www.cccrecycle.org](http://www.cccrecycle.org) for listings.

## Contact information

**CCCSWA** ..... 925-906-1801  
 fax: 906-1805 ..... web: [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org)  
 email: [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org)

**PLEASANT HILL BAYSHORE DISPOSAL** .. 925-603-1144  
 fax: 685-8153  
 web: [www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com](http://www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com)

*For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, computer & TV collection, new service or your blue garbage cart.*

**VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT** ..... 925-935-8900  
 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 information on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.*

**CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE** .. 1-800-750-4096  
**HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING** .. 925-906-1806  
**HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE** .. 1-800-646-1431