



**Here it is. Your NCRA News for December 2010.**

*Don't forget, NCRA Meetings are the third Thursday of every month!* Don't forget, NCRA Meetings are the third Thursday of every month! **Meet us in Oakland on Thursday, January 20 at 6:00pm (dinner)/7:00pm (meeting starts) for our Annual Membership Meeting.** More details can be found below.

## **HEADLINES**

- Annual Meeting, January 20, 2010
- Call For Board Nominations
- Annual NCRA Membership Directory
- Save The Date: Recycling Update #16, March 29, 2011
- Solano County Update - Measure E and Potrero Hills Landfill
- NCRA To HANC - Hang In There!
- Yuba And Altamont: The Dance Goes On
- Zero Waste Futures Session In Development
- Why Compostable Plastics are a Problem for Organic Compost Producers and What Might Be Done About It.
- Report from the 7th ZWIA International Zero Waste Conference and Dialog, Florianopolous, Brazil.
- November NCRA Board Meeting Minutes

## **This is the newsletter of the Northern California Recycling Association.**

NCRA is a non-profit trade organization of recycling businesses, community groups, municipalities and individuals. We promote waste reduction, reuse, salvaging, recycling, and composting as vital tools for resource and energy conservation and as cost-effective, environmentally sound methods of disposing of discarded materials. Founded in 1978, we have more than 200 members, the majority of whom are located in Northern California. For more information, please visit [www.ncrarecycles.org](http://www.ncrarecycles.org).

Portia Sinnott has been the editor since October 1, 2010. She, with the assistance of the Newsletter Committee, is currently developing a Green Jobs and Recycling Series. The San Francisco Green Jobs Program, lead by NCRA Board Member Donnie Oliveira and the Cypress Mandela Training Program have been invited to take part. Suggestions, comments and opinions on this and all topics are very welcome. Please send them to [news@ncrarecycles.org](mailto:news@ncrarecycles.org).

The committee will also be contacting members and others for short articles about themselves, their city or county, as well as longer articles of interest. The newsletter structure and format will evolve as we learn to use the new website. On-line forums are being developed to make it easier to submit articles, interviews, event reports and job listings.

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## **Annual Meeting, January 20, 2011**

The NCRA annual meeting will be held the evening of January 20, 2011 at StopWaste.Org, 1537 Webster Street, Oakland, CA 94612. Please plan to attend this very important meeting at which we set the agenda for the coming year.

Directions can be found here: <http://bit.ly/fF0iQZ>

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## **Call for Nominations - Join The NCRA Team In Shaping The Future Of Our Organization**

Due to expiring terms and a few resignations, we have 5 slots to fill - almost half the board. Benefits include an opportunity to have a voice in regional and national recycling issues, hone your activist skills, becoming well known and 10 or more dinners per year. The nominating committee, led by Donnie Oliveira and Teresa Bradley, was initialized at the November meeting. Please put your hat in the ring now or by December 15 by

sending your name and contact information plus a 200 word ballot statement to Donald Oliveira <Donald Oliveira@sfgov.org> and Teresa Bradley <teresa@revolutionarygreensolutions.com>. They will help you polish it as needed. NCRA has no other hands but all of our hands and we'd love to see more nominees.

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### **Annual NCRA Membership Directory**

In about two weeks we will publish our annual listing of all our members; this is an all-electrons issue. If your membership has expired you will be soon sent a request to renew. The computer is not friendly to recently-expired memberships so if you're late in renewing, you won't be on the list. Please pay online <<http://www.ncrarecycles.org/join.html>> using PayPal and any major debit or credit card. There is a \$2.00 fee for this service, which saves an envelope, a stamp and a lot of staff time, so the total will be \$52. You may also send a check for \$50 to NCRA, PO Box 5581, Berkeley, CA 94705. Also, if your contact information has changed since the last publication, please send a note to [ncra@ncrarecycles.org](mailto:ncra@ncrarecycles.org) asap!

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### **Save The Date: Recycling Update #16**

Considered by some to be the best recycling conference in North America, Recycling Update 16 will be held on March 29, 2011 at the Elihu Harris State Building, 1515 Clay Street in Oakland. Arthur Boone, who initialized the unique event in 1995, has passed the baton to Donnie Oliveira who is already busily planning the program. The very successful formula involves 20 or more ten minute presentations followed by a compare and contrast by experts familiar what is going on locally, nationally as well as internationally. Reserve the date now! This is one event not to be missed!

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### **Solano County Update - Measure E and Potrero Hills Landfill**

*By John Moore, Henn, Etzel and Moore, Inc.*

Although NCRA was announced the winner in May 2010, in its Solano County lawsuit to enforce Measure E, the formal Judgment of the Court was not entered until recently, on November 30, 2010. In addition to ordering Solano County to enforce Measure E's 95,000 tons/year waste import limit (but not extending to out of state waste per the Court order), the Court ordered the County to file papers with the Court within 60 days detailing whether and how it will comply with the Judgment. The entry of Judgment also triggers the 60 day time limit in which the County is required to file its expected appeal. Many observers believe that an appeal will stay the Judgment until the appeal is resolved, though exceptions to this rule may apply. NCRA will also request compensation for its legal fees at a motion hearing in March, 2011. This one is a long way from over yet.

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### **NCRA To HANC - Hang In There!!**

Thirty-six years old, Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC) Recycling Center is one of the oldest still operating recycling centers in San Francisco and the only independent center west of downtown. It is now is fighting for its life - or at least its city-owned location near Kezar Stadium. A buyback for CRV bottles and cans, it is also accepts for drop-off multiple grades of paper, bottles and cans, cooking oil and holiday trees plus it's been home to a native plant nursery for over 7 years.

Called a magnet for recycling poachers, the recycling center also stands accused of being a noisy eyesore, a nonconforming use and of encouraging homeless camping in nearby Golden Gate Park. This issue, which has been simmering for at last 20 years came to head on last Thursday, December 2, when the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission voted to evict the non-profit. But the commission was then forced to delay having the center out by the first of the year when HANC's lawyer sent notification that the terms of the lease

meant the earliest the eviction would be in June 2011.

HANC has been present in every resource conservation fight and policy campaign in the state and Bay Area over the years, from AB2020 and 939 to the recent plastic bag ban and passage of Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance. HANC's operation has given San Francisco a highly skilled, independent, public service oriented operator in the quest for Zero Waste. As is too often the case, the political and service provider infrastructure either overlooks, or worse disavows, these attributes.

An adhoc committee of NCRA Boardmembers Mary Lou Van Deventer and Arthur Boone wrote a letter to the Commission supporting the continued use of its current space. Copies of NCRA's letter is available from Mary Lou. NCRA congratulates the HANC Board on presenting a strong case for preserving this vital function on public space in the City. The Commission's negative vote may well be overturned after the current mayor moves on to Sacramento and a new mayor and a reconstituted board of supervisors is in charge.

HANC is not alone in these challenges and these issues need addressing sooner than later: What is the role of drop-offs in a curbside world, of non-profits competing with for-profits, as well as why some service providers can make noise in some neighborhoods but not others. Another issue is how new zoning often pushes waste related services such as composting and processing away from source of generation.

Let's get this dialog going... When the new NCRA website is up and running, please submit clear and concise comments.

#### Related articles:

*Recycling center gets 90-day eviction notice* <[http://articles.sfgate.com/2010-12-04/bay-area/25007191\\_1\\_recycling-center-community-garden-haight-ashbury-neighborhood-council](http://articles.sfgate.com/2010-12-04/bay-area/25007191_1_recycling-center-community-garden-haight-ashbury-neighborhood-council)>, Rachel Gordon, San Francisco Chronicle December 4, 2010

*Haight recycling a fight for soul of S.F? Nah* <[http://articles.sfgate.com/2010-12-02/bay-area/25002946\\_1\\_recycling-center-bins-haight-ashbury-neighborhood-council](http://articles.sfgate.com/2010-12-02/bay-area/25002946_1_recycling-center-bins-haight-ashbury-neighborhood-council)>, C.W. Nevius, San Francisco Chronicle December 2, 2010

Interview with HANC Executive Director Ed Dunn, and Phil Ginsburg, General Manager of the city's Department of Recreation and Parks <<http://www.kqed.org/a/kqednews/RN201011301730>>, KQED Radio, November 30, 2010.

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#### **Yuba And Altamont: The Dance Goes On**

When the proposals were released in late September, the big surprise was that Waste Management had quoted a basic fee of \$46 per ton for Altamont while Recology quoted \$22 for garbage delivered to its Yuba County landfill, a spread of \$24 per ton. Higher transportation costs in Yuba balanced by higher governmental fees in Alameda led to the net price at Yuba being about \$26 per ton cheaper than Altamont. On November 9th, the Waste Management area vice president, David Skolnick wrote to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors alleging that city staff provided information to Recology to their own exclusion and thus tampered with the purity of the bidding process. There was some confusion about how transportation was to figure into the bids and, at NCRA News press time, this charge has dropped a big rock in the path of a quick adoption of staff's proposals with uncertain repercussions. As noted below, NCRA is currently considering Boardmember David Tam's resolution commending the Altamont Landfill as the continuing destination of SF garbage although it doesn't look like anything will be decided before year's end. - ARB

Found on the SFE website: Tale of two landfills <<http://www.sfbg.com/2010/06/15/tale-two-landfills>>, Sarah Phelan, *SF Bay Guardian*, June 18, 2010

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## Zero Waste Futures Session In Development

NCRA Boardmember and San Francisco Department of the Environment Green Jobs Coordinator Donnie Oliveira reports that things are going great with the Zero Waste Brain Trust session now planned for mid-January. The planning team - led by Donnie, includes Steven Chiv and Alexa Kielty from the San Francisco Department of the Environment and Zea Luce from GreenWaste plus Jessica Hiller, John Moore's intern. Kevin Drew and Portia Sinnott are advising the team. The target audience is the entire ZWBT- especially younger practitioners interested in more sharing and action items. They have a list of about 40 people to invite plus the previous participants, and two strong leads for a no or low cost SF venue! Invitations should be sent out in mid-December.

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## The NCRA 2010 Holiday Party

The Holiday Party was well-attended in Berkeley on a cold and rain night with appearances by Ruth Abbe, daughter Linnea and niece Greta (daughter of NCRA Players funnyman Kevin Good), Jon Bauer, AR Boone and Natalie, Gretchen Brewer, Gina Depper, Kevin Drew, Zenaida Garvey with husband Fred, Alice Green, Eric Havel, Dan Knapp, Justin Lehrer with wife Lisa and infant daughter Brookelle, Jack Macy with wife Charlotte and daughters Lydia and Eliza, Laura McKaughan, Shauna Rabinowitz with husband Tor and children Dakota and Ezra, David Tam, Mary Lou Van Deventer, and Tom Wright. A wonderful artichoke dip and some lumpia made the food scene. No real booze hounds showed up. As often said, "A good time was had by all." Hope you can come next year. - ARB

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## CONTINUING EDUCATION

### Why Compostable Plastics are a Problem for Organic Compost Producers And What Might Be Done About It.

*By Will Bakx, Soil Scientist and Co-owner, Sonoma Compost Co.*

**1. Compostable plastics look very similar to conventional plastic.** Unless the industry adopts a marker that is clearly identifiable in the feedstock sorting process, compostable plastics are seen as conventional plastic and will therefore be landfilled.

**Remedy: Compostable plastics, identify yourselves!**

**2. Most composters want to make compost that can be marketed as organic, but they cannot do so if the feedstock contains compostable plastics.** Compost facilities that try to list their products as organic cannot process compostable plastics because they are defined as "synthetic" products. The National Organic Program does not allow synthetics as feedstock for products labeled organic. The OMRI, TSA, PCO, and WSDA organic programs follow NOP and do not allow compostable plastics as feedstocks, either.

**Remedy:** Work with the National Organic Program to change from prohibiting to allowing compostable plastics, particularly bags, as a feedstock for compost products labeled organic.

**3. Many compostable plastics do not biodegrade within time frames that are standard and easily attainable for efficient compost producers.** Sonoma Compost diverts about 100,000 tons of compostable organics from the landfill each year. We produce finished compost in 70-100 days, depending on feedstock, much faster than standards required to be met before plastics producers can have the right to call their plastics compostable. ASTM, ISO, and DIN standards require 60% biodegradation within 180 days. For most compost facilities, 60% in 180 days is neither complete nor fast enough. So, compostable plastics that do not break down in the compost process are likely to end as screened 'overs' rather than marketable product.

**Remedy:** Revise standards to tie the required rate of decomposition of compostable plastics more closely to the actual rate of decomposition being recorded by efficient compost facilities, regardless of commonly used compost methods, Don't allow plastics to be called compostable unless they meet this decomposition standard.

**4. Current plans to increase the marketing of compostable plastics should be put on hold.** Nature Bottles is already using compostable plastic bottles. Coca-Cola is studying the same concept. These bottles should not be called compostable, they have a higher and better use when these are recycled.

**Remedy:** Call the product recyclable, not compostable, and include the product in container redemption programs so that collectors will pick them up from wherever they are tossed, and deliver them to buybacks.

**5. The biological and environmental effects of compostable products have not been studied and are little understood.** Compostable plastics are often manufactured from genetically modified grains or other non-organic sources. Studies to measure bioaccumulation of embodied chemicals from the plastics have not been done sufficiently.

**Remedy:** Fund comprehensive research to identify problems and opportunities in producing plastic products that are compostable.

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#### **MEMBER'S CORNER:**

##### **NCRA Member Saskia Van Gendt Wins Prestigious Service To America Medals, November 2010**

From the EPA website: "Saskia Van Gendt is a scientist at EPA's Pacific Southwest regional office in San Francisco. She is one of eight winners of the prestigious Service to America Medals awarded to federal employees. Van Gendt was recognized for her innovative efforts to help foster green building construction, and promote the design and development of reusable packaging to significantly reduce waste. She received the organization's Call to Service Medal which recognizes a federal employee whose professional achievements reflect the important contributions that a new generation brings to public service." For a photo of Saskia with Michele Obama and the remainder of the article, please visit the EPA website...<<http://www.epa.gov/region9/waste/features/saskiavangendt/index.html>>

##### **Report from the 7th ZWIA International Zero Waste Conference and Dialog, Florianopolous, Brazil**

By Richard Anthony, [ricanthony@aol.com](mailto:ricanthony@aol.com), [www.richardanthonyassociates.com](http://www.richardanthonyassociates.com)

Thirteen months, ago Rodrigo Sabatini, an engineer with NovoCiclo Ambiental S.A. <<http://www.harpiaventures.com/ct/en/portfolio.php>>, possibly the first zero waste consulting company in Brazil, came to Massachusetts to learn more about zero waste. The planned National Recycling Congress in Oregon had been canceled and the Grassroots Recycling Network (GRRN), had stepped up to fill the void via the National Recycling and Zero Waste Conference 2009 in Devens, Massachusetts.

This October, Resource Recycling Magazine produced a national recycling conference in San Antonio, Texas. On October 25, the Monday before the conference, the GRRN held a zero waste communities workshop attended by dozens. Afterwards, GRRN presenter and ZWIA Boardmember Gary Liss stayed for the Resource Recycling trade show, but I went south - 24 hours travel and airport waiting time, to chair the 7th International Dialog. Hosted by the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA), Instituto Brasil Lixo Zero (Brazil Zero Waste Institute) and NovoCiclo, the Dialog was held at the Centro Multiuso Hotel in Florianopolous which is located in the state of Santa Catarina on the east coast of Brazil.

Rodrigo had liked what he saw and heard in Devens and offered to raise the travel and lodging expenses to hold a ZWIA Zero Waste Dialog <<http://conferencialixozero.com.br/en/>> in Brazil. Brazil has a new law that requires source separation and plans. Rodrigo wanted to know everything about zero waste that is happening on

the planet. ZWIA, through our network, asked for volunteers willing to give their time exchange for a trip to Brazil. Our condition was they had to attend the whole Dialog and speak at least twice. We had twenty on our team, coming from the UK, Italy, Philippines, South and North America including former NCRA president Ruth Abbe, CRRA Board Member Leslie Lukacs and NCRA members Christopher Hash, and Christopher Sprague of Urban Ore.

Most of the ZWIA team had arrived in Florianopolous the previous weekend. They had met with the Federal University of Santa Catarina (in Portuguese Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, UFSC) a public university located at Florianópolis and had already started speaking to the high school zero waste clubs. I was picked up at the airport by Gustavo Abdula, also with NovoCiclo, who was instrumental in helping us organize the program and conference. We were taken to the NovoCiclo offices for Rodrigo's birthday party, and samba they did - we were well introduced to Brazilian drinks, food and dance!

Wednesday morning we met dozens of non-profit organizers interested in community organizing for zero waste and the new Brazilian National Solid Waste Act <[http://www.brasil.gov.br/sobre/environment/solid-waste/solid-waste/br\\_template\\_completo?set\\_language=en](http://www.brasil.gov.br/sobre/environment/solid-waste/solid-waste/br_template_completo?set_language=en)> which requires source separation and formal inclusion and recognition of independent recyclers and waste collectors. The law sets out guidelines for reducing waste generation and combating pollution and the waste of materials discarded by commercial establishments, households, industrial facilities, companies, and hospitals

In the afternoon we held our scheduled annual ZWIA meeting. Our key issue was whether a business or government could be considered having reached zero waste if they recycle and compost 90% but burn or bury the rest. We all agreed that zero waste meant not burning nor burying - so at 90% you could be considered "working toward zero waste". The site of the 2011 dialog was suggested as Vancouver, because of the new incinerators proposed there, or Hawaii, where the existing system is at capacity and there is a zero waste movement on several islands. Hosting responsibilities were discussed.

The next day, the first formal day of the event, Rodrigo and Gustavo made sure the Centro Multiuso Hotel hall was full of hundreds - professionals, interested citizens and university and high school students with their teachers and professors. The audience was attentive and passionate. The presentations were given for the most part in English. All of us had headphones and there was a booth with professional translators to interpret Portuguese/English. For the most part this worked very well.

The program started with the announcement of the university's new zero waste program and then introduced the new federal rules. The ZWIA team followed with reports on zero waste projects from around the world. This was followed by education programs examples and zero waste plans. The first day lasted until 7pm and everyone was still there in the end. Many of the ideas that we presented became the topics of discussion that evening.

The second day involved organics and producer responsibility issues that occur in most regions of the world. In the morning we all went outside and took a group picture next to the zero waste hot air balloon. During the dialog several TV news stations came and took interviews from the local and international speakers. In the end last panel the questions turned into observations and a discussion of who was responsible. That night we celebrated the new friends and direction we all felt we had. As many of the team prepared to head home and other places, we talked throughout the night.

Saturday night it was just Leslie, Pal Martinsen of Sweden and I left, as the others had flown off. We had spent most of the day on the beach with hundreds of locals. The weather was warm and humid and it was the late spring in Florianopolous. The sands are clean and the seas are blue. "Over there", our friend Rafi points to the Atlantic Ocean, "is Africa".

By the time I left Brazil the following Wednesday, I had been to the beach, the forest and areas around Santa Catarina and was thinking - how could I work on zero waste and go to the world cup in Brazil as well? Low hanging fruit on the path to zero.

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### **NCRA Highlights – prepared by President Arthur R. Boone**

**November Boardmeeting:** Boardmember David Tam submitted a draft proposal to the Board that would recommend the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco suspend or delay the procurement process for securing future landfill capacity until the SF Department of the Environment considers the StopWaste.Org April 2010 proposal for a two-county Extended Producer Responsibility Zone. See story below.

Boardmember Mary Lou Van Deventer's well-written resolution putting NCRA in support of zero waste policies, programs, and practices was adopted unanimously. See story below.

NCRA voted a \$500 gift to the Container Recycling Institute and now has over \$49,000 in the bank with \$10,000 held in reserve for specific, grant-funded, projects. We have received \$18,000 in Altamont Education Advisory Board funding in the last three years. Portia Sinnott's salary as NCRA News Editor was fixed at \$500 per month for the months when the News is published; Urban Ore graciously offered to cover \$100 per month of that cost, starting October 2010.

**WMI Supports Repeal of Florida Yard Debris Landfill Ban:** The matter of criticizing Waste Management Inc. for supporting the repeal in Florida of the landfill ban on yard debris was held over until Chuck White's three-page explanation of the company's action could be widely disseminated and discussed. The letter will be posted on the website in mid December.

**HANC:** A committee of Mary Lou Van Deventer and Arthur Boone was appointed to look into the affairs of the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC) Recycling Center near Kezar in SF and to act for NCRA as appropriate. Since the meeting Mary Lou and Arthur wrote a letter to the San Francisco Rec and Park Commission supporting HANC continued use of its space. Copies of NCRA's letter is be available from Mary Lou. NCRA congratulates the HANC Board on presenting a strong case for preserving this vital function on public space in the City. The Commission's negative vote may well be overturned after the current mayor moves on to Sacramento and a new mayor and a reconstituted board of supervisors is in charge.

**Boardmember Tam Wants SF Garbage To Stay Local:** At the November 18th board meeting, David Tam introduced a board resolution entitled Support StopWaste EPR Zone and Oppose Recology Green Rail-Haul. The draft resolution recommends the San Francisco Board of Supervisors suspend or delay the procurement process for securing future landfill capacity until the SF Department of the Environment considers the StopWaste.Org April proposal for a two-county Extended Producer Responsibility Zone. The resolution also states that switching the garbage to Yuba County would 1) create an unnecessarily long-haul for garbage to Yuba, 2) turn Yuba's Ostrum Road Landfill into a regional, cut-rate dump - like Potrero Hills, 3) increase vertical integration of SF waste practices to the exclusion of other available firms, 4) deprive Alameda County of useful funds to protect open spaces, fund educational programs, etc.

This action could be viewed as backing the Altamont Landfill in the competition between Waste Management and Recology of Yuba County as the destination for future SF garbage; various Recology and SFDoe staffers attended the NCRA meeting and spoke. The board agreed to hold a public meeting to discuss the proposal after a revised proposed resolution is submitted. The full text will be posted on the website - when available.

### **NCRA Board Adopts Zero Waste Policy:**

At our November Board Meeting, we adopted a resolution on Zero Waste that reflected the well-made phrases

of our former president, Mary Lou Van Deventer.

The Resolution:

Whereas, the Northern California Recycling Association has, from its inception, worked to maximize the reuse and recycling of resources extracted and developed from our Mother Earth; and

Whereas in recent years it has been understood that wastes and wasting should not simply be reduced, but rather eliminated entirely by changing the mechanisms and methods of human cultures, especially eliminating mixing resources in such a way as to render them unrecoverable, and eliminating landfilling, and eliminating incineration before landfilling;

THEREFORE, the Directors of the Northern California Recycling Association resolve that:

1. Eliminating all waste, wasting of resources, landfilling, and incineration before landfilling, and achieving the condition of Zero Waste, is a worthy goal that the organization adopts; and
2. To further this goal, NCRA will make common cause with persons and groups who have also adopted this goal; and
3. NCRA will, as a routine part of its own operations, plan and implement its programs and activities to eliminate all waste and wasting.

President's Commentary - I was particularly happy with this resolution because it did not follow the Zero Waste International Alliance's definition of zero waste that looks at 90% landfill load reduction as a goal but rather says that the goal should be that "all wastes" should be eliminated. If you pay attention and have markets for the materials that come into your hands, 90% recovery of goods and materials is an absolute no-brainer. Hats off to Mary Lou and the NCRA Board (voting unanimously) for this well-worded resolution. A little late, maybe, but well said. Next we look at EPR.

## CHIT CHAT

**Multi-Family Rules In SF:** The November 28th Chronicle notes that SF now has 70% of its apartment buildings with functioning green cart systems, up from 20% a year ago. SFDE Communications Manager Mark Westlund attributes the increase to mandatory rules, but we know it was the lid-flipping and fieldwork of Donnie's Rangers, the Green Jobs program led by boardmember Donnie Oliveira.

**Exchange Students:** On November 23rd Urban Ore asked if I would give Rick Anthony and Gustavo Abdula from Brazil a tour of the MRFs in Union City, Sunnyvale, SF, and Berkeley. We had a great tour, each facility very different from the other. It was fun to catch up with Rick who did the first waste audits in California with SCS Engineers in the early 70s after his graduation from Long Beach State.

**Oakland Army Base Reuse:** On the 20th I sat through a public meeting in Oakland while West Oaklanders expressed their hopes for the rebuilt Oakland Army Base. The 100+ acres could become almost anything; some of those enjoying the upgrading of West Oakland neighborhoods (read expensive condos coming in) would like all the buyback recycling facilities moved to the OAB land but that could get expensive. City staff and councilmembers were non-committal on that proposal while I was there.

**Another Movie Coming This Way Soon:** Amir Soltani's film, REDEMPTION, about the buyback system in the Oakland flatlands has won another award; check out its website  
<<http://kpacific.wordpress.com/2010/10/11/redemption-22-minute-sample-cut/>>.

**Banning The Plastic Bag:** On Monday, November 29th, the Bag Ban stakeholders held a press event on the west steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento. This event picked up where AB 1998 left off; the Governor and

Assemblyperson Brownley, author of AB 1998, both spoke. Contact Carol Misseldine or Leslie Tamminen <leslie.tamminen@gmail.com> if you want to be a part of this group. This has not been a big issue for NCRA but we support the work. City of San Jose will consider its bag ban law on December 14th. For more information, visit [www.savesfbay.org/bay-vs-bag](http://www.savesfbay.org/bay-vs-bag), Bay vs Bag, and then contact Emily Utter <Emily@savesfbay.org> for more details.

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## **NCRA Board Meeting Minutes, November 2010**

Respectfully submitted, Dan Knapp, Secretary

**Over a dozen Northern California Recycling Association members gathered on November 18, 2010** for a facility tour in the afternoon at Waste Management's Davis Street Transfer Station in San Leandro. This tour was kindly hosted by Rebecca Jewell of WMI. Afterwards, we returned to the headquarters building for pizza and the meeting. Our sincere thanks to WMI and especially to Rebecca Jewell for this tour and for answering NCRA members' many questions. No notes were taken but here are some impressions:

WMI's site is huge, 53 acres. It is situated on a closed landfill east of San Francisco Bay and west of Interstate 880 in San Leandro. Most of the 3,200 discarded tons per day (on average) that are dumped at the facility come from Oakland and surrounding East Bay cities. The basic layout of the materials recovery and waste disposal hardscape was designed and built by Oakland Scavenger before it sold itself to WMI over 20 years ago. The facility undergoes constant maintenance, and there have been many design changes and upgrades over the years.

Incoming traffic separates into lanes by type of truck and load. Drivers go through loadchecking and fee-paying through gates that resemble those found at bridges or toll roads. Self-haul vehicles use a separate tipping area on a flat site south of the main tipping pit. Trucks and other conveyances dump discards too mixed to be separated into a pit. This material is then mixed with residue from self-haul loads, the C & D sort line, etc., and is loaded into long-haul trucks. There is a construction and demolition semi-automated MRF, but no salvaging for reuse is allowed at the self-haul tipping area. Besides unrecyclable residues, the main products of the C & D system are recycling substreams such as metals and fibers; residue wasting by burial at WMI's landfill in the Altamont hills and Alternative Daily Cover is also buried at the Altamont landfill.

### **Sharing**

President Arthur Boone called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. He said that we had agreed to be out of the room by 9:15. He cited a four page formal agenda with "lots of business" as evidence that we will need to be efficient in our discourse. Sharing was duly truncated.

**Laura McKaughan** is not moving to Arizona as some may have heard but is now reconsidering her prospects in this area.

**Teresa Bradley** continues to organize recycling at green events. She is serving as a student intern at the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board where her focus is preserving wetlands from invasive trash.

**Portia Sinnott's** Sonoma County non-profit, LITE Initiatives, teaches sustainable skills, and she serves as the Executive Director when she is not in the Bay Area on NCRA, Brain Trust or consulting business. As NCRA News editor, she is looking for content: articles, quotes, facts, and other things of interest to NCRA members.

**Jessica Connolly** is a student at SF State who will graduate in 4 weeks. She has been an intern for Recology, and is now interviewing for a position there. She recently purchased the domain name "single-use planet.com" and has "given up single-use plastics" as a personal commitment.

**Heidi Obernite** works for Recology in San Francisco.

**Jay** is assigned by Recology to maximize recycling in hotels and city and government buildings around San Francisco.

**Maria** promotes sustainable practices for Recology.

**Aaron Lee** works for Recology by helping small businesses to recycle more, especially Chinese-speaking businesses.

Longtime NCRA member **Bob Besso**'s job with Recology is to figure out "what's next for the black cart" now that the company has rolled out a service that co-collects food scraps, food paper, and plant debris.

**Dan Knapp** said Urban Ore sent three employees to Brazil in October to participate in international zero waste meetings as representatives of a large North American labor- and skill-intensive reuse enterprise. Their message that this business model is one that works well was conveyed via 3 powerpoints, the last one a primer on optimizing site design for zero waste.

**Mary Lou Van Deventer** of Urban Ore has been working on an Urban Ore Hazardous Waste Business Plan for the City of Berkeley. The requirement to write the plan was triggered by a routine city inspection that discovered four propane fuel tanks used to power Urban Ore's forklift. Van Deventer is also working on applying to the state for a universal waste handler's license, which will allow Urban Ore to continue collecting low-level hazardous materials such as fluorescent light bulbs or capacitors.

**Rebecca Jewell** said, "I work here", meaning here in the building where we were meeting. As a committed environmentalist, she is proud to be part of Waste Management of Alameda County because they try very hard to do the right thing. She is getting married in December. Congrats!

**Jessica Hiller** works for John Moore as a research assistant in his law practice.

**John Moore** was pleased to report that some people still don't comply with the law, and they still are finding ways not to get along, a situation which he says is good for his business.

**Donnie Oliveira** serves as Green Coordinator for the San Francisco Department of the Environment. He is working on a Zero Waste Brain Trust Futures session. He is trying to create workable tools for zero waste. He hopes to get it together for December 17. Being a young person himself, he wants people to come who are "young at heart".

**Kevin Drew** represents City of San Francisco Special Projects. One new city decision currently under review would evict the long-time recycler Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Recycling Center from its location in Golden Gate Park. Kevin is a former HANC board member and thinks HANC is a "worthy organization that needs an advocate". Ten full time jobs are at stake. All the employees want to keep on working. Since they have no alternative location, all HANC employees will be laid off if they have to vacate. HANC collects and processes about 160 tons per month of recyclables.

## **Business**

MSV to approve minutes; vote is unanimous.

Boone reported that NCRA board member Chris Lehon had a conflicting board meeting this hour at work to which he must attend; boardmember Douglas Anthony was in Ventura on business.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Although the Treasurer was absent, Van Deventer printed his posting of the latest banking figures which noted that NCRA currently had \$49,369 in the bank account; she did not know how much of that is encumbered. No discussion on the budget or on general liability insurance.

Boone said he wants to settle the NCRA News editor's compensation issue by paying \$500 per month for her service, noting that Urban Ore offered to pay \$100 of the \$500. Van Deventer supported this concept, and moved to make it so; MSV was unanimous with Sinnott abstaining.

Sinnott moved and Oliveira seconded a motion for the Treasurer to reimburse Boone \$50 for a group bar tab after the Zero Waste Brain Trust Roundtable #4 session; passed unanimously.

Boone asked that NCRA donate \$500 to Container Recycling Institute. Susan Collins is Executive Director, and he thinks she is doing a good job. He said CRI is important because it is a major proponent of bottle bills. Sinnott moved to donate \$500 to CRI, Knapp seconded, passed unanimously.

## **President's Report**

Boone said Elizabeth Quinn had resigned from the board, raising the question of whether formal board acceptance was necessary. Someone pointed out that Elizabeth's term would be up in December anyway, so no action was taken. Boone has been giving some time to get a handle on NCRA's role in our three zero waste projects; see below on ZWBT et al.

Boone has studied the competing claims swirling around the issue of railhauling San Francisco's garbage to a Recology-owned Yuba City landfill for burial rather than trucking it to the WMI-owned Altamont landfill in Livermore. In late October he and David Tam met with Yuba County leaders and visited the Yuba County landfill. He reported that "a lot of people up there don't like the idea" of taking San Francisco's trash.

Boone had also attended a working session of recycling leaders in the state that were planning for next year's legislative session. Boone thinks having Jerry Brown as governor will be a "big plus" for materials recovery. He has written to Nancy Skinner asking for time to confer about recycling issues, and she is expected to do so after the election.

Representing NCRA, Boone attended the Resource Recycling Conference in San Antonio, Texas in October. Jerry Powell's magazine Resource Recycling sponsored and managed the main event, which drew about 475 people. Boone also attended organizing meetings for the two national recycling organizations - Recycling Organizations of North America, RONA - the newbie, and the National Recycling Coalition, NRC, back from a near-death experience in 2009. The NRC's old board announced that they have a debt reduction plan which appears to be being accepted by their creditors which will pay note holders 15 cents on the dollar. A new NRC board was elected at meetings at the RR Conference and Richard Gertman and Susan Collins from CA are two of its 11 members; Bob Gedart (known to many) is also a new NRC boardmember. Boone predicts that the NRC will do little until its money woes are resolved and it's not clear yet exactly what RONA's plans are.

Boone also announced that the state Sierra Club is considering Gary Liss, Rick Anthony, and Wayne Williams to push for head of the CalRecycles department. "We are trying to define the future," he said.

## **Teresa Bradley And Others On the Keep America Beautiful Event in Berkeley**

Teresa Bradley attended the KAB event at the Brower Center on November 4. She noted it was similar to NCRA's Recycling Update in its organizing framework, but the speakers were mostly from big corporations like Nestle Waters. They all seemed to be saying "leave government out of bottle bills". Heidi Sanborn of the

California Product Stewardship Council was one of the speakers. She is concentrating on getting statewide EPR legislation passed that would further control disposal of paints and carpeting. Some recyclers who attended asked the corporate reps why they don't get behind bottle bills and stop opposing them? Some contended that bottle bills work well in Canada and Europe, so why not here? Kevin Drew, who also attended, commented that the featured speakers were "all about absorbing our blows". "They are not able to take positions", he said. "They are all just flacks; we've got to lead". Rebecca Jewell said she didn't recognize very many people at the event. There were "people from all over". She got "turned off" after about three hours, and left early. The conference was a "blunt instrument", she said, with "weak presentations -- nothing practical". Meanwhile, out in front of the Brower Center, Arthur Boone was on the sidewalk doing an informational picket critical of Keep America Beautiful for its long opposition to bottle deposit legislation.

### **Portia Sinnott on the status of the NCRA Co-sponsored Zero Waste Brain Trust Meetings, the EAB Grant and the EPA Project**

After handing out a two page document on the three separate but interrelated zero waste projects, Portia briefed us the status of each:

**Brainstorm Series** - The ZWBT met four times in about three months. The last meeting was held at the EPA in San Francisco and was the largest, with about 75 attendees from scores of organizations. Lots of businesses were there, including reps from large hauling companies. "A paper product (report) is pending", Sinnott said, that will cover all the brain trust meetings, which were recorded. Likewise, best practices for zero waste will be listed and described. Most of it has been typed up; now the ideas must be "winnowed" she said.

**Best Practices Survey** - NCRA's Zero Waste Franchising and Contracting Advocacy Project, also known as The Zero Waste Best Contracting Practices Survey, is researching and collecting best practices and document links from around North America. In beta test phase, the national survey will be initiated after the holidays. In Spring 2011, after the results are organized, processed and evaluated, one or more NCRA focus groups will be held to discuss the findings.

**E-Guide** - The EPA Zero Waste Franchise Project is now underway. Initiated by EPA Region 9 Administrator Jared Blumenfeld, this project was developed by EPA staff, a RFQ was released to a number of EPA contractors and the project was awarded to HDR Engineering. Tasks include targeted research, expert interviews, multiple case studies, a Region 9 specific decision matrix, template contract language and website content.

Portia also praised the brain trust steering committee for designing a program that "swept people up in the excitement" of zero waste.

### **NCRA Website**

Sinnott said the NCRA website will "go live soon: it's no longer a test". She thinks the website will change things "quite a bit"; for example by allowing the website to format the newsletter. NCRA got a grant to expand the distribution of the newsletter. Making it look and sound more professional and going live with the new website should really help. She thinks we may be able to post content to the website some time in mid-December. She is not expecting to do an issue of NCRA News in December.

### **New Board Members and Officers**

Anthony, Boone, Tam, and Van Deventer's terms are expiring this year. It was agreed that a nominating committee of Oliveira and Teresa Bradley should look for some new directors who want to run for the board.

### **Policy Resolution on Zero Waste**

Van Deventer passed out twelve copies of a proposed zero waste resolution. It is short enough to read aloud, and so she did. Work on it began two years ago, she explained, but it went into a "holding pattern" for about a

year while the board was preoccupied with other matters. She thought now would be a propitious time to pass the zero waste resolution. MSC to make it so; passed unanimously.

### **Tam on Future Destination of SF Garbage**

Tam said he has written a draft resolution on the future destination of San Francisco's garbage that he will not formally introduce tonight because of "awkwardness". He noted that WMI had submitted a rebid to the City and County of San Francisco that dropped their price \$15 per ton, making it more competitive with Recology. He thinks he can have a final resolution in December or January. Moore asked if NCRA decided to take a position, to whom would we take such a position? Tam said it should go to the Budget and Finance Committee of the SF Board of Supervisors; he would like to see some analysis done of Gary Wolfe's recent position paper. He thinks the issue may be decided early in December, either on the first or the 8th. He has four main objections to the Recology agreement listed in his draft resolution.

Kevin Drew said both the City and County of San Francisco and Recology think it is urgent that the railhaul project be decided. At the same time, he thinks Gary Wolfe's ideas should be discussed. Even if the Supervisors vote for the railhaul plan, he thinks it will take 5 years to bring to full implementation. "It's hard because we are inventing the future", he said. The opinion of the city's Budget Commission on whether the project is financially sound will be of great importance to the Supervisors. NCRA should recognize that it is not a big player in all of this. But NCRA can play a valuable part in fine-tuning whatever plan is approved.

Arthur Boone said his personal goal is to keep the issue off NCRA's agenda because he doesn't want to, nor does he think it necessary to, split the membership over which side is best. A special board meeting has been proposed to address this issue; Boone thinks it should be sooner rather than later - best within the next three weeks.

One NCRA member said WMI's effort to change the bid is unethical. Another observation was that WMI didn't make its original case on environmental grounds, and Recology did.

Van Deventer said she thought Tam's issues and objections are important and require more time to discuss. She floated the idea of a conference call. It was agreed to try for a conference call with members invited to join, sometime before December 7.

### **Zero Waste Advocacy Committee**

John Moore recounted our efforts over the last couple of years to support legislation and oppose cheap regional landfill expansion. Right now he is of the opinion that the most important and promising work is "what the Brain Trust is doing". In particular, he cites the ZWBT's work on procurement documents to provide customers with cleaner, safer, less wasteful disposal alternatives. On a larger scale, John thinks Pennsylvania's sponsorship of zero waste procurement is "an opening", and he notes that EPA is contracting separately with Ruth Abbe's company HDR. What John would like to know is what are the deliverables in each of these cases, and who is responsible for delivering them?

### **Industry Support Services**

Teresa received ideas of potential tour and meeting sites for 2011.

### **Internal Affairs**

Boone now has a proposal from Stephanie Pruegel on NCRA's booth for events; Bradley, Sinnott and VanDeventer will join him in a review of this proposal. Boone noted the list of EAB grants in the board packet that NCRA has received in the last three years, totaling over \$18,000.

### **Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council Recycling Center Possible Eviction**

Time being short, it was voted unanimously to establish a committee of Van Deventer and Boone to evaluate the HANC situation and to articulate a position consistent with NCRA's status as a 501-C-6 nonprofit.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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## CALENDAR

### 2011

January 20, NCRA Annual Meeting at StopWaste.Org in Oakland.

January 22, **BAEER Fair** <<http://www.baeerfair.org/>>, 10 am – 4:30 pm - Marin Civic Center Exhibit Hall, San Rafael. 34th annual Bay Area Environmental Education Resource Fair: Conference on Engaging Youth in the Environment

Jan 24-27, **19th Annual US Composting Council Annual Conference and Tradeshow** <<http://www.compostingcouncil.org/conference/>>, Santa Clara, CA

February 17, NCRA Monthly Tour and Board meeting

March 1-2, Plastics Recycling 2011 Conference and Trade Show, New Orleans, LA. Produced by Resource Recycling magazine.

March 17, NCRA Monthly Tour and Board meeting

March 29, Recycling Update #16, Elihu Harris State Building, 1515 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612

March 29-31, **Residential Recycling Conference** <<http://www.residentialrecyclingconference.com/>>, Nashville, TN. Co-organized by Waste & Recycling News and Republic Services, Inc.

April 11-14, **Biocycle's Global 2011** <<http://www.jgpress.com/global2011/index.html>>, International Conference on Composting, Renewable Energy and Organics Recycling, San Diego. Call for papers open until December 30.

April 21, NCRA Monthly Tour and Board meeting

May 15-19, Decon '11. Salvage, Reuse and Recycling of Building Materials. New Haven, CT. See Building Materials Reuse Association's website.

May 19, NCRA Tour of Urban Ore and board meeting.

June 16, NCRA Monthly Tour and board meeting. TBA.

July 31- August 3, **CRRA 35th Annual Conference** <<http://www.crra.com/>>, "Zerowaste: Ride the Wave to Sustainability", San Diego

September 27-29, **Corporate Recycling and Waste Conference** <<http://www.crwconference.com/>>, Orlando, FL. Sponsored by Waste & Recycling News and Republic Services.