

You Can Recycle That?

By Sophie Braccini



Clear plastic, tubs and boxes; Sandy Jones knows what plastics to recycle

Photo Rod Jones

When Sandy Jones of Orinda first heard about the Recycle Bank it seemed the perfect opportunity to augment her recycling habit. But she had questions; she already recycled quite a bit and was not clear on what else she could do. She contacted the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) and got an education. “There were many things I could have recycled that I didn’t know about,” she says, “such as cottage cheese containers and aluminum foil. Now I feel that I do the best I can. We are so lucky to live in this country that it’s nice to be able to help to preserve it,” says Jones.

How can we tell which plastic containers can be recycled? The number on the bottom of the container indicates what it’s made of and how it can be recycled, according to Bart Carr, Senior Project Manager with CCSWA. “Every container with numbers 1-7, except 6, can be recycled,” says Carr.

Number 6 containers are the Styrofoam packaging that’s light, cheap and can be easily molded. Plastic tableware, meat trays, some egg cartons, and shipping blocks are made of this polystyrene and cannot be recycled. But many other plastics can (the below is not an all-inclusive list, just a sampling):

- #1 – these containers include water and cooking oil bottles, and peanut butter jars;
- #2 – such things as detergent bottles, milk jugs, and yogurt cups;
- #3 – shrink-wrap and certain outdoor furniture;
- #4 – dry cleaning bags, trash can liners, food storage containers;
- #5 – ketchup bottles, drinking straws, aerosol caps;
- #7 – includes Tupperware and bio-plastics.

“How about paper cups, paper take-out food containers, or big soiled pizza delivery boxes made of cardboard?” asked Jones. “The question about paper cups is com-

plex,” answered Carr, “if it is coated with a plastic film you cannot recycle it, but if it is waxed, you can.” Figuring out the difference is not easy. Carr recommends scratching the surface with a nail; if what comes out is wax-like, recycle it, if not, abstain. “As far as paper goods that have held food, those can go into the yard waste container (the green one),” adds Carr; our collection district recycles food waste.

As of today, about 20% of all Moraga and Orinda residents are registered with Recycle Bank, a program that gets you points for recycling that can be converted into goods for yourself or funding for local schools.



#5 at the bottom of a yogurt container.

Photo Sophie Braccini

To register with Recycle Bank:

If you’ve lost the letter that contained your PIN number, no problem – Go online to recyclebank.com and click on ‘register.’

Enter your information, including your address.

Get a new pin by mail or immediately with a message sent to your cell phone; now you can complete your registration.

Recycling in Lamorinda

The numbers below are provided by the Central Costa County Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) and will be included in the Lamorinda Weekly on an ongoing basis when available.

January 2011	Tons Recycled		Tons Landfill		% Recycled
Lafayette	717		435		62
Moraga	445		243		64
Orinda	601		362		62