

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



**Costa Mesa Sanitary District**  
 (949) 645-8400  
[www.cmsdca.gov](http://www.cmsdca.gov)  
 Summer 2014



## Year-round disposal options available for hazardous waste



On Saturday, May 10, the Costa Mesa Sanitary District (CMSD), Orange Coast College, and OC Waste & Recycling partnered to offer a Household Hazardous Waste Collection event locally. Approximately 236 households took advantage of this opportunity, dropping off over 20,000 pounds of household hazardous waste (HHW) for proper disposal. If you missed this event, don't worry! There are convenient year-round options for proper disposal of HHW.

The CMSD sponsors a FREE Door-to-Door Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection program for individuals who may not have the ability to recycle or dispose of their hazardous materials at Orange County's

HHW Collection Centers, which are open year-round. To be eligible for the door-to-door service, residents must be 62 years of age or older or be a person with a certified disability.

CR&R, under a contract with CMSD, provides the door-to-door HHW service. To arrange for service, eligible residents must call CR&R Customer Service at (949) 646-4617 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the call, CR&R will ask about the types and quantities of HHW, provide information on how to properly store and package the HHW, and set up a collection date. On the designated collection day, eligible residents must place bags or containers at the front of their house by 7 a.m. The resident does not need to be home when the HHW items are picked up.

Other residents can drop off HHW at one of the four Orange County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers (HHWCCs). All Orange County residents can use these facilities at no charge. The nearest HHWCC is located in Huntington Beach at 17121 Nichols Street (use Gate 6). Hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday; centers are closed on major holidays and rainy days. For more information, call (714) 834-6752 or visit [www.oilandfills.com](http://www.oilandfills.com) and click on "Household Hazardous Waste."

## Your opinion counts!

To help us better serve you, please take a few minutes to complete our customer service survey online. Your responses will assist us in the decision-making process as we work to enhance the services we offer. Find the survey online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CFRKHQK>

Costa Mesa Sanitary District  
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## Learn how to compost

Backyard composting is a great way to keep yard waste out of your trash cart and create a useful soil amendment for your garden. The CMSD offers free backyard composting workshops throughout the year. This summer we'll offer composting workshops at the OC Fair & Event Center under the Silo Overhang. Dr. Francene Kaplan, who is known as the "Priestess of Rot," will be leading these workshops.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend a workshop:

- Thursday, July 17, 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday, July 19, 5:30 p.m.
- Sunday, July 20, 1:30 p.m.
- Friday, July 25, 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday, July 26, 1:30 p.m.
- Sunday, July 27, 1:30 p.m.
- Saturday, August 9, 1:30 p.m.
- Sunday, August 10, 1:30 p.m.

The OC Fair & Event Center is located at 88 Fair Drive in Costa Mesa. Sessions



are free to the public, but admission to the fair does require a ticket. If you have questions about these or other workshops, call CMSD at (949) 645-8400 or visit the website, [www.cmsdca.gov](http://www.cmsdca.gov). With specific composting questions, email Dr. Kaplan at [priestessofrot@yahoo.com](mailto:priestessofrot@yahoo.com).

The Costa Mesa Foundation and the City of Costa Mesa  
 present **CONCERTS**  
 in the park  
 Tuesday Evenings  
 In July  
 Fairview Park  
 5:30-7:45 pm  
 Music begins at  
 6:15 pm

2014

[www.costamesafoundation.org](http://www.costamesafoundation.org)

**FREE LIVE MUSIC**  
 Kids Activities  
 Gourmet Food Trucks  
 Drawing Prizes  
 Community Booths  
 Beer & Wine Garden

7/1 The Answer (Classic Rock)  
 7/8 Wreck N Sow (Bluegrass & Roots Country)  
 7/15 Ronnie Gutierrez (Latin Jazz)  
 7/22 Kenny Sara & The Sounds of New Orleans (New Orleans Jazz)  
 7/29 Stone Soul (Classic Soul and Motown)

Costa Mesa foundation Costa Mesa

# Waste in Focus



**The Griffin family of Atlanta, Georgia, agreed to collect their waste for a week. They ended up with 31 pounds of trash for the landfill and 10.1 pounds of recyclables.**

Peter Menzel, whose previous photo-essays include *Material World: A Global Family Portrait* and *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats*, teamed up with frequent collaborator, Faith De'Aluisio, to create the Waste in Focus Project, a look at eight American families and their trash. Families were chosen from around the country. Each family collected all garbage, recyclables, and compostables for one week. At the end, everything was weighed and displayed for a family portrait.

In an interview with Isabelle Raphael in *Parade* magazine in April, Peter Menzel said, "This was not really an exercise to compare the families one to another. It was more of an exercise for each to learn what they could do better—both to lessen their total household waste and to properly manage their recycling. For instance, while many of our families were already fairly adept at following their municipality's waste collection rules, nearly every family had put some amount of recyclables in their trash bin."

To see the photos, read the families' stories, take the waste quiz, or find answers to some of our frequently asked questions, go to [www.WasteinFocus.com](http://www.WasteinFocus.com).

The project was funded by the Glad Products Company, in partnership with Keep America Beautiful.

## QUOTES REQUOTED



Photo by Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress

When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.

George Washington Carver, 1864-1943  
Scientist and Inventor

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## Beyond bottles

According to a study prepared by Moore Recycling Associates, recycling for non-bottle rigid plastics rose to 1.016 billion pounds in 2012, triple the amount recycled in 2007 when tracking of rigid plastics recycling began. Rigid plastics include containers and packaging, such as cups, trays, lids, and food tubs, as well as bulky items, such as crates, buckets, baskets, toys, and lawn furniture. About three-quarters of these items are made from either polypropylene (PP, #5) or polyethylene (PE/PET, #1).

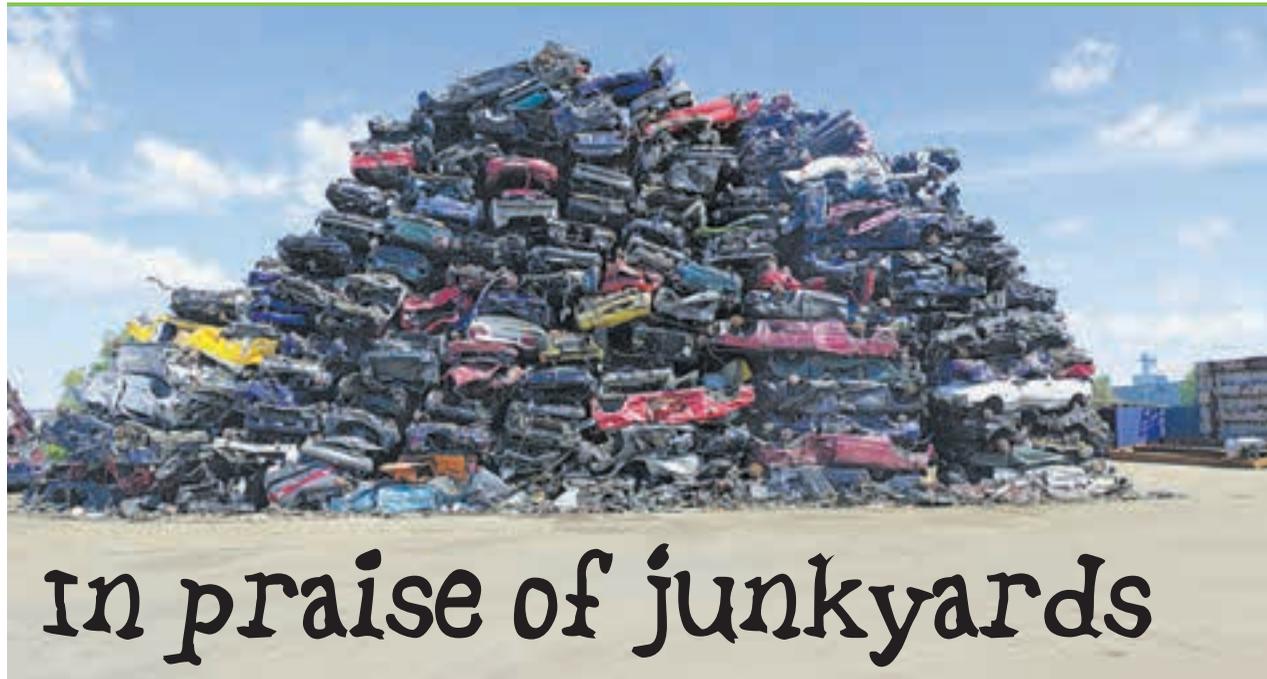
Almost all recycling programs nationwide have long accepted plastic bottles and jugs, such as soft drink bottles, water bottles, milk jugs, and detergent jugs. However, non-bottle rigid plastics are new to the mix. More than 60% of U.S. residents now have access to non-bottle rigid plastic recycling, either at curbside or drop-off centers.

In 2012, 57% of the rigid plastics were processed in the United States and Canada, while the rest was exported, mainly to China. End uses for non-bottle rigid plastics include crates, buckets, pipes, automotive products, lawn and garden products, and industrial drums.

Not sure what plastics you can recycle? Find out by calling us or visiting our website.

The study by Moore Recycling Associates was funded by the American Chemistry Council.

**New crates are one of the many products that can be made from recycled rigid plastics.**



## In praise of junkyards

Adam Minter is a journalist from a family of “scrappers,” so it isn’t surprising that his debut book, *Junkyard Planet: Travels in the Billion-Dollar Trash Trade* (Bloomsbury Press, 2013), explores the vast expanse of the global recycling economy. The result is an unexpectedly interesting tale that aims “to explain why the hidden world of globalized recycling and reclamation is the most logical (and greenest) endpoint in a long chain that begins with the harvest in your home recycling bin, or down at the local junkyard.”

Minter knows that the numbers can be astonishing—American consumers produce 251 million tons of trash annually, of which almost 87 million tons are recycled and composted. But he gives life to the recycling and scrap industry by introducing people who handle scrap—sorting, buying, selling, or remanufacturing—in the U.S. and China. As he introduces these people and businesses, Minter takes the reader on a journey from scrap men of the early 20th century to the boom of the 1960s American recycling industry and around the world, showing us the growth of the global recycling industry. Along the way, he explains what happens to the plastics, papers, and metals thrown into recycling bins and carts.

Minter is uniquely qualified to offer this perspective. Minter’s family owns a scrap yard in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Founded by his late great-grandfather during the Great Depression, the junkyard was a business born of poverty-driven ingenuity and a desire to find a way to earn a living for himself and his family. This entrepreneurship was passed down through the generations. Minter grew up in the junkyard, run by his father and grandmother, and the yard holds many special

memories from his childhood. He notes that, like many of China’s growing recycling companies, “the world’s largest recycling industry—the U.S. one—was also born from self-interested motives.” Today, Minter is a journalist for *Bloomberg World View*, based in Shanghai, China.

The book begins with a trip to Texas to visit one of the largest sorting facilities for household recyclables in the United States. Minter describes the recycling facility as a “Walmart-sized space.” He likens it to “Willy Wonka’s chocolate factory: conveyors of trash

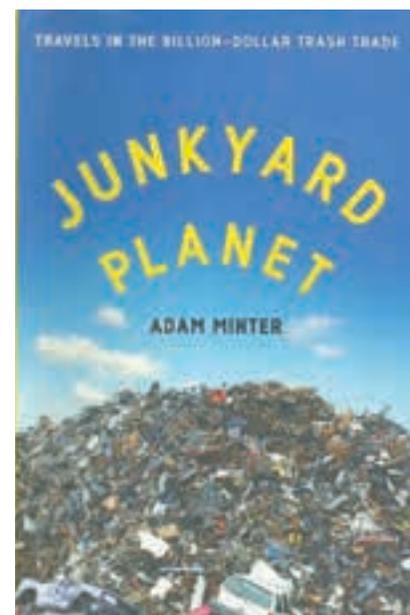
rush upward and release their cargo into spinning stars that toss it about in a manner that I can only describe as joyful, like popcorn jumping in a frying pan.” This plant accepts mixed recyclables, also called “single-stream recycling,” meaning the consumers don’t separate their recyclables. Instead, machines and workers along the system of conveyor belts separate materials by type, which are then baled or packaged for shipment to processors and manufacturers.

Reuse and recycling require, as Minter notes, ingenuity and entrepreneurship. Most scrap and recycling businesses begin in “backpacks, pickup trucks, and perhaps a discrete backyard or two.” For instance, in Shanghai, where peddlers scrounge for cans and other recyclable items, Minter sees a migrant woman with a fanny pack filled with scrap money “presiding over a system that harvests recyclables from the trash.” Worldwide, the industry has grown, not for altruistic or environmental reasons, but because “somebody was short a resource, and somebody else with some ingenuity and entrepreneurship had an idea for how to provide it.”

Minter explores the stories of some of these entrepreneurs who have made recycling more efficient and feasible. Leonard Fritz began “grubbing,” or scrapping for metals, in 1931 in order to make money for school clothes. Fritz now owns one of the largest scrap companies in the United States, the Huron Valley Steel Corporation, which, in 2007, received over 1 billion pounds of scrap. Similarly, Alpert & Alpert in Los Angeles started in the 1950s when the company bought scrap from peddlers and sold to only three steel mills. They now ship billions of dollars’ worth of scrap to Asia. Minter also visits OmniSource in Fort Wayne, Indiana, which has some of the most expensive and high-tech metal separating equipment in the world, and Scott Newell in El Paso, Texas. Newell created the auto shredder and is now the supplier of more than 30% of the world’s metal shredders.

While explaining the vast expanse of the recycling world, Minter also relates how cyclical the industry is, mirroring the larger economy. “The global recycling business, no matter how sustainable or green, is 100

According to Adam Minter, “the world’s most recycled product (by weight) isn’t a newspaper, a notebook computer, or a plastic water bottle—it’s an American automobile, most of which is metal. In 2012, the United States recycled nearly 11.9 million cars..., generating millions of tons of metal that was quickly and efficiently recycled into a range of new products (mostly parts for new automobiles) around the world.”



percent dependent upon consumers consuming goods made from other goods,” writes Minter.

According to Minter, “U.S. manufacturers (second only to China in total output) still use roughly two-thirds of the recycled materials that are generated within the

U.S. borders.” The next largest user of American recyclables is China, where companies use these raw materials to manufacture exports, as well as to serve their own growing economy, much as the U.S. recycling industry boomed in the 1960s as the middle-class grew in this country.

Minter travels through China, following various recyclables as they are sorted, processed, and reused or remanufactured. In Foshan, China, migrant workers separate metals used to build the numerous buildings in China’s cities. This process is mainly done by hand labor, which provides a better living for the migrant workers than subsistence farming in their villages. This metal separation is also, environmentally, a better alternative than mining for new metals. In Taizhou, China, old automobiles are taken apart, parts are sorted by hand, and then reused to repair cars in China. If a part cannot be reused, it is recycled and sent to Japan. Wen’an County in northern China is the heart of the global scrap-plastics trade, and, unfortunately, one of the most polluted areas in the country. However, the plastics sorted there are used, as Minter notes, to “make everything from cell phones to coffee cups.” In Guiyu, China, old iPhones and other electronics are refurbished and used by people who cannot afford to buy a new phone. However, some products prove difficult to recycle. For instance, many touchscreens are made in such a way that it is not profitable to extract the valuable rare earth minerals found in them.

In describing this vast journey of recycling and the immense volume of resources that come from it, Minter shows that, while recycling is good, it is important to reduce and reuse first. He cites several studies that have found when recycling bins are present, we actually use more. “Above all, though, I encourage people to think about what it means to recycle, and make smart choices as a consumer before you buy that thing you’ll eventually toss out,” he writes.

As Minter notes, consumers play an important role—and not only by recycling. He suggests that consumers ask companies to design products for repair, reuse, and recycling. For instance, in electronics, companies could make it easier to replace batteries or disassemble components for recycling. He recommends that the U.S. dedicate more research and development money to recycling technologies, something that is already occurring in China and other Asian countries on a larger scale. Finally, he supports policies that encourage recyclable materials to move around the country and around the globe to businesses that can most efficiently extract and reuse the resources.

For Minter, and for all of us, junkyards are a good thing—places where what might have become waste is re-imagined. This book will leave you contemplating where that plastic bottle and cereal box you throw into the recycling bin will go, and the numerous lives they may change along the way.

“The world is a better, cleaner, and more interesting place for its junkyards. I wouldn’t want to live on a planet without them.”



Workers pull recyclables off a moving conveyor belt in a recycling sorting facility. Materials coming into this facility come in as mixed recyclables from “single-stream” carts and bins.



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## Employee Spotlight



*This quarter we spotlight Elizabeth Pham, Management Assistant. Elizabeth started as a Management Intern in January of 2013. Since then, Elizabeth has proven that her technical and analytical skills make her an asset to the CMSD team. She manages and updates the District website. She is responsible for managing the District's solid waste programs, such as sharps and pharmaceuticals, composting, large bulky item collection, etc. She is responsible for the quarterly newsletter and various staff reports. In addition, she follows the legislative initiatives that affect the District and provides detailed reports about how the legislation will influence the District's activities. She is also responsible for researching and applying for grants that will help offset the District's operational costs.*

*She is a member of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA), the leading professional association in the solid waste management field. She graduated from the University of California Irvine with a Bachelor's Degree in History, minoring in Political Science. She continued to advance her education with a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Cal State University of Fullerton with an emphasis in Human Resources. She has over seven years of experience working in government agencies and loves working with the public.*

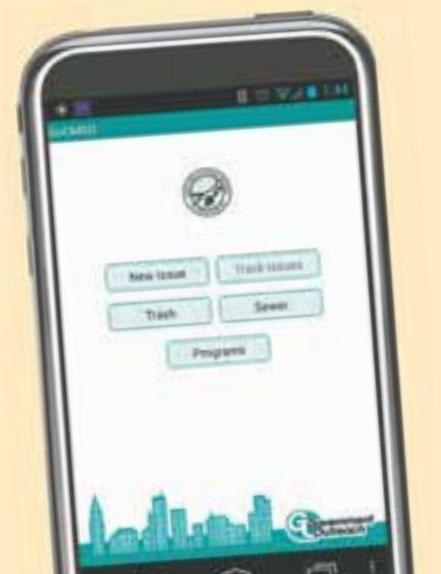
*The Costa Mesa Sanitary District would like to recognize Elizabeth Pham in the Employee Spotlight for this quarter and thank her for a job well done. Keep up the stellar work, Elizabeth!*



### Have you downloaded the CMSD app? If not, now is the time!

The CMSD is the first Independent Special District to provide a customized mobile app for our residents! In developing the app, our goal was to provide residents with convenient access to District information on their smartphones. The app features easy-to-use widgets. Using the app, residents can find information on District programs and events. In addition, residents can report issues directly to the District through the GOREquest system and then track the status of those issues.

The free app is available for download at the iTunes App Store or the Google Play Store. Simply search for "Costa Mesa Sanitary District" or type in "gocmsd."



## Preparing for summer picnics

During the summer, we enjoy many picnics and barbecues. While you're enjoying the great outdoors, don't forget the three R's. Here are simple tips for reducing, reusing, and recycling:

### Reduce

- Plan ahead so that you don't have too much food. Pitch-ins, in particular, often lead to a lot of food waste (which translates to wasted money and time on food purchases and preparation). Rather than asking everyone to bring food, consider assigning other tasks, such as bringing cloth napkins or monitoring recycling bins.
- If you'll be somewhere without running water, take along a jug of water and soap or a bottle of hand sanitizer rather than moistened towelettes or wipes.

### Reuse

- Select washable plates, cups, and silverware. For outdoor use, especially around swimming pools, rivers, and lakes, use plastic and metal rather than glass.
- Instead of paper napkins, which can easily blow away and become litter, take along washable napkins, small hand towels, or washcloths.
- If you need a new cooler, select one that is sturdy and will last for many years.
- Consider washing and reusing "disposable" plastic cups, plates, forks, and spoons.

### Recycle

- Collect bottles and cans for recycling. You can put empties back into your cooler or use a bag or box.
- Place empty recyclables into bins provided at parks or take the recyclables home for recycling.

### A Few Words on Food Safety

Carrying our food outdoors creates more risks than just eating too many ribs or too much homemade ice cream. Summer temperatures combine with long hours outdoors, allowing foodborne bacteria to thrive. Food that sits out for more than two hours (or more than one hour when the temperature is above 90° F) should be thrown away.

To improve food safety and decrease food waste:

- Keep cold foods cold by placing them into a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at 40° F or below to prevent bacterial growth. Meat, poultry, and seafood may be packed while still frozen so that they stay colder longer. Consider packing beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another. That way, as the beverage cooler is opened again and again, the perishable foods won't be exposed to the warm outdoor air. Don't remove perishable cold foods from the cooler until you are ready to serve them.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped so that their juices don't contaminate prepared or cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables. Don't spread bacteria from raw to cooked food, especially at the grill. Never reuse for serving a plate or utensils that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood—unless they've been washed first in hot, soapy water.
- Keep hot food at or above 140° F. You can cook food at home, wrap it well, and place it in an insulated container until serving. Or, you can cook food outdoors and serve it immediately.



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## Bulky item pickup available curbside

CMSD customers can request convenient curbside collection of large or bulky items at their home. Residents are eligible for three complimentary pickups per year. There is a limit of 10 items per call. However, collections can be combined for a total of 30 items per calendar year. To schedule this service, please call CR&R Customer Service at (949) 646-4617, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Residents must provide a detailed list of items to be collected. Drivers will not collect any items not listed when the appointment is scheduled.

Residents who use dumpsters at their property are not eligible for this program.

**We want your suggestions, questions and comments!**

**Costa Mesa Sanitary District**  
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Costa Mesa, CA 92627-2716  
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