

THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Winter 2021

Tennessee Has a Waste Crisis, Says Speaker

Tennessee Environmental Council
<https://www.tectn.org/>

Among the evidence cited for this assertion by Jeffrey Barrie, chief executive officer of the Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC), were **diminishing landfill space, increasing amounts of trash, failing to recycle—and often doing it incorrectly.** Barrie presented his remarks at Recycle Rutherford's Fall meeting in October, held as a Facebook Live event.

Barrie pointed out that there are **only 35 active landfills in the state**; 159 have closed, and 138 are in post closure. Of course, we are familiar with decreasing space in landfills; estimates of remaining space in Middle Point landfill vary. Barrie says the crisis is more acute in the middle of the state; however, it isn't necessary to have a landfill crisis to recycle.

"COVID has caused a sharp increase in trash," says Barrie, "and because people are staying home more, we can't reuse as much." The upside is that air pollution has decreased. **Tennessee creates more trash per person than the national average.** According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the average Tennessean generates 6.56 pounds of trash daily; the national average is 4.51 pounds.

"We can adjust the ways we deal with wastes," he says. "\$180,000,000 of waste annually could be recycled in Tennessee, but only 10–20 percent actually is." Barrie contends that **making minor adjustments in our lifestyles could have major impact on our environment.** He believes that everyone could increase what they recycle—citing scrap metal as something that is often overlooked. Food and yard wastes make up 30 percent of the waste stream. Compost generates topsoil or soil amendments. The TEC has a program on their website—see the link above.

Unfortunately, many times people think they are recycling but end up making a load unusable because of contamination. Barrie: "When in doubt, throw it out." He added the tip that soiled paper towels compost well!

Avoiding creating waste in the first place is key to reducing the amount of trash. Staying away from single-use plastic is an important step; most products can be bought in metal or other containers. **Look at the Zero Waste section on TEC's website** for a list of practices listed room by room in your house.

Barrie says that Davidson County has a solid waste master plan that calls for zero waste, which translates to 90 percent reduction. The lack of markets for recyclables adds to the challenge, but he says markets are beginning to recover from the situation created when China refused to take our contaminated plastics.

The following is from TEC's website, which has excellent information and numerous ways to be involved:

While recycling varies from place to place, there are some general rules that apply everywhere.

- Always check with your local recycling hauler to see what the specific rules are where you live.
- Always make sure your recycling is clean and dry and bottles containing liquid are empty.
- Never add plastic bags, film, or other tangles to single-stream recycling.
- Never add Styrofoam/polystyrene to single-stream recycling.
- Never add clothing or other textiles to recycling.
- Never add food waste or yard waste to recycling.
- Never add glass to single-stream recycling.
- Most places ask that your recycling be loose and not contained in bags.
- Greasy pizza boxes are typically not accepted in single-stream recycling. You can rip off any non-greasy parts and add just those parts to your recycling. Greasy box parts can be composted.

Important things to remember:

- Anyone can mail #5 plastics to [Preserve Products Gimmie 5 Program](#) for recycling.
- Many products can be recycled through [Terracycle](#).

Businesses Promote Sustainability

Since its founding in 1990, Recycle Rutherford has sought to recognize local businesses that promote sustainable living. An outgrowth of this effort launched the “Spirit of Recycling Award” in 2018. That event was intended to be biennial, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced cancellation of the 2020 awards and banquet.

To recognize businesses this year, we are doing something different. Board members selected businesses that embody the primary principles of sustainability—reduce, reuse, and recycle—in their daily operations. We are featuring these businesses in our newsletter. Articles on four businesses appeared in the summer *Recycler*. One business was featured in the Fall newsletter. Back issues of *The Recycler* can be seen on our website at www.recyclerutherford.org

A unique consignment shop is featured below and pieces on other businesses will appear in the Spring issue.

Several board members have shopped, consigned, used, and volunteered at the featured businesses and write from first-hand experience.

Funtiques

118 South Maple St

Murfreesboro, TN

615-867-2896

Hours: Th, F and S 10am-5pm

<https://www.funtiquesconsignment.com/index.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/funtiquesconsignment>

Instagram @funtiques_

Funtiques is a consignment shop, described as “consignment with a twist,” meaning it’s a fun, unique shop featuring ever-changing furniture and decorating accessories creatively displayed in vignettes each month to show different ways in which you can decorate your home.

Items you will find—or can consign—include furniture, artwork, lamps, pottery, glassware, decorative pillows, and garden décor; if you have an item you’re unsure about, it’s best to contact the owner, Barbara Wall. Acceptance is affected by several factors, including existing inventory and time of year. Styles include traditional, classic, contemporary, antiques, and flea market finds.

Funtiques has been a local business in Murfreesboro since 2002. After working several

years at Funtiques, Wall purchased the consignment business from her friend, Dawn Eaton, in 2009. Wall had had a successful banking career and then found the joy of creativity and love of repurposing items—items that have been gently loved and are ready for a new home. Repurposing, or re-using, is one of the main tenets of sustainability. So many of her beautiful pieces would have found their way to the landfill if they had not been given another opportunity for their next life.

It’s a fun, unique shop featuring ever-changing furniture and decorating accessories creatively displayed.

Funtiques is located right off our beautiful Murfreesboro square and is open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday weekly from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. for shopping. You can contact Wall by phone to arrange an appointment for consigning your items; she is skilled in the business of consigning and antiques, pricing your consignment items competitively for their value to you, and as a deal for their new owner. As the consigner, you earn 50 percent of the selling price of the item.

She has three part time employees. In addition to floor sales, most all items make it to the Funtiques website, Facebook, or Instagram pages for advertisement. She turns her inventory over quickly, making it a fun place to visit for inspiration and great items.

Thank you, Barbara, for embodying the “Spirit of Recycling” and the primary principles of sustainability—reduce, reuse, and recycle!

Looking Ahead to Spring

It’s not too early to think about what you will plant and grow when winter cold gives way to warm spring days! Even if you don’t have a garden and grow vegetables, think ahead about what you can do to make your yard more sustainable.

Climate change is causing more extreme weather, which affects yards. If you plant native plants, they likely will require less water and will help support valuable pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

Planting trees and shrubs offers several advantages. They absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, provide habitat for small animals, hold soil in place, and provide cooling shade.

Make the most of your water by mulching, using rain barrels, drip irrigation, and watering in the coolest part of the day.

Lower Your Carbon Footprint

Recently I joined Green America and received their publication *Your Green Life*, which includes information on activism, reducing waste, good food produced responsibly, living and gardening greener, finding green businesses, and other ways to live sustainably. The following information is taken from an article in that publication.

We know that it's best to buy locally and eat seasonably, but some things are not available. Thus, we are faced with deciding on the climate impact of our favorites. Since I like almond milk, I was interested to learn about **plant-based milks**.

The article **compared soy milk and oat milk** and deemed that oat milk is slightly more climate friendly. A gallon of oat milk is responsible for 67.7 pounds of CO2 equivalent (CO2e), about the same as driving a car for 76 miles, while producing a gallon of soy milk creates 73.4 pounds of CO2e

Per this article, carbon footprints vary between brands depending on manufacturing practices, transportation, and packaging. **Green America recommends purchasing organic options as these do not use ecosystem-damaging pesticides in production.** The comparison concludes that both soy and oat milks are better than dairy milk, which produces at least three times more emissions than plant-based milks, and almond milk, which is made from water-intensive almonds. (I was sorry to see this last assessment!)

Two favorites were compared next: **salmon vs. shrimp**. The source says that most salmon consumed in the US is Atlantic salmon, farmed and imported from Canada and Norway. Farmed salmon from Canada is responsible for 4.8 pounds of CO2e for every edible pound produced.

Salmon farms can cause a host of other environmental problems. **Line-caught salmon is better for local ecosystems and has a lower footprint.** Vital Choice Seafood offers sustainable caught fish from the west coast, including salmon.

Most shrimp eaten in the US is farmed in southeast Asia, where it is responsible for massive deforestation. Between that and the impact of transportation, shrimp has an outsized footprint of 3,534 pounds of CO2e per edible pound of shrimp, which is the equivalent to driving 3,978 miles! (I felt guilty for all the shrimp I've eaten through the years!)

In 2014, several investigations revealed widespread use of forced labor in Thai shrimp farming, but the industry has not made much progress in eliminating that. The recommendation: **if you do eat shrimp, check the label to make sure it comes from the US.**

Finally, the article looked at **beer vs. wine**. The **carbon footprint of wine depends more on packaging** than the wine itself because of transporting heavy glass bottles. **The same can be said for beer—packaging accounts for 40 percent of an average beer's emissions.** Per Carbon Trust's Tom Cumberlege: "As a rule of thumb, the higher the alcoholic content of a drink, the higher the carbon footprint per liter—so beer is lower than wine, which is lower than spirits."

Luckily, both options are now often available in cans. The light weight of the aluminum makes transporting them less carbon intensive. All in all, beer has the lower carbon footprint, but **buying local beer or wine will drastically reduce your happy hour emissions!**

---Suma Clark

Recycle Rutherford Membership Form

I enclose my annual dues to support Recycle Rutherford and receive the newsletter.

- \$25.00 supporter \$15.00 student \$100.00 patron
- I am contributing \$_____ in addition to dues.
- I prefer the newsletter to be emailed and am providing my email address.

PLEASE PRINT:

name _____ amount enclosed _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

telephone: day _____; evening _____

email _____; volunteer interest _____

Please make check payable and mail to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804

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Green Household Cleaners

This article, also from *Your Green Life*, looks at **green vs. greenwashed products** and was written by Mary Meade; following are excerpts from the piece.

Companies sell us cleanliness with imagery of fresh linens, citrus, and sea breezes, but the labels often tell different stories. US law allows manufacturers to use known carcinogens and substances harmful to child development in cleaning products. It's called greenwashing when a company uses empty claims of sustainability to market their products, and it's up to us to carefully choose what we use inside our homes.

Demand for household cleaners surged during 2020 because of the pandemic, and people tried to keep their personal spaces clean and safe.

We can choose products free of harmful chemicals by checking the Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning, which contains information and hazard assessments for over 2,000 products available.

Find out about a product at
<https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/>

The piece included several examples of popular cleaning products that are greenwashed, and truly green alternatives that have passed Green America's Green Business Network rigorous social and environmental responsibility standards. One in particular caught my eye because I have used: Green Works all-purpose cleaner states that the product is "naturally derived." Meade describes this as Chorox's greenwashing at its finest. Instead, choose Planet's all-purpose cleaner, which is certified by Green America.

Find other Green Business Network certified companies at GreenPages.org.

You can make your own all-purpose citrus cleaner. Save lemon and orange peels in your freezer. Once you have a container full—the size depends on how much you want to make—saturate in distilled white vinegar for two weeks. The vinegar should take on a yellow or orange color. Strain out the peels and put in a spray bottle. Dilute with water one to one or as you prefer. You have an effective cleaner without chemicals.

2020-22 Officers and Board

Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.

The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.

Rachel Cornett, president
Bonnie Black, vice president
Suma Clark, secretary
Rick Racker, treasurer
Glenn Himebaugh, past president

Board Members:

Linda Hardyman, 2022
Diane Parker 2022
Beth Spivey, 2022

**Reminder: To renew your membership,
please see the form on page 3.
Dues are only \$25 per year.
We don't want to lose you!**

**For more information, go to
www.recyclerutherford.org**

Like us on Facebook!

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Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804