

# There's no 'away' to throw your scrap

**M**AY 3-9 is Michigan Recycling Week. Recycling as an American tradition began with the Revolution. A statue was recycled into bullets for the patriots. During World War II, there were children's scrap drives where everything from tin cans to animal fat was collected for reuse. Oil recycling began during WWII, and service stations still continue the practice today. Since WWII, however, Americans have been conditioned to think that anything old, empty, broken or

**Terry Gibb**  
worn-out should be thrown away. It wasn't until the late '60s and a re-emergence of the importance of protecting our environment that people discovered "when you throw something away, there really is no 'away.'"

THE 1974-75 recession ended that phase of recycling prosperity, and many of the country's 3,000 recycling centers closed down. The early '80s brought another look at recycling from an unlikely source — local government officials. These officials were beginning to face a problem of increased trash disposal costs combined with fewer landfills available to receive the trash. But progress has been slow because most of us are unaware we face a crisis: There really is no "away" any more, even though our

trash still disappears from our curb weekly. The time has come to join (or re-join) these recycling "fanatics" to solve this increasing solid waste problem. Recycling in the broadest sense refers to any process that reclaims materials for reuse. Recycling can play an important part in reducing the amount of waste produced and achieving a more sustainable way of life by conserving resources. However, recycling is really only half the answer to our growing waste problem.

- Avoid products with "built-in obsolescence" such as disposable lighters, batteries and machines that do not have available replacement parts.
- Avoid goods made from a combination of materials that are difficult to separate for recycling.
- Avoid long-life materials when they are for disposable items, such as plastic bags and styrofoam cups.
- Avoid goods that are unnecessary or wasteful of resources, like electric knives.
- 2. Products should be designed for reuse.

Reuse is usually more energy efficient than recycling. Melting down glass containers saves only 2 percent more energy than making new ones. Reuse can save from 25-40 percent of the energy consumed to make new containers. Only nine states thus far have enacted returnable beverage deposit laws despite the proven savings of our resources.

3. When reuse is impossible, materials should be broken down into their basic components and recycled. Many materials can be reused in this way including the lead in batteries, copper products, tin and aluminum, and motor oil. Paper is a major recyclable material, but normally can only be recycled once or twice, as repeated paper pulping shortens the fibers until they won't hang together. 4. If materials are not reusable or recyclable, they can be used for energy generation. Energy can be recovered from waste through burning and using the heat created either directly or as a power source for electricity or steam generation. Pyrolysis can change waste into gases for fuel or as resources for the chemical industry.

**ECO-TIP: Recycling Centers:**  
Oakland County: Birmingham Recycling Center, DPW Yard Corner Eton-Holland Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Glass, paper, cans 545-0322.  
Wayne County Recycling Center: W. Jefferson, in front of the Detroit Edison smokestack (Downriver area), Saturdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Newspapers, glass, cans 871-0170.  
Huntington Woods has a newspaper dropoff. Call 541-4300 for details.

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to the Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit Inc., 1025 Shelby, Detroit MI 48226.



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## Hough: At 65 limit, they'll drive 72

**AP** — The director of the Michigan State Police says motorists on average would drive 72 mph — 10 miles faster than they usually drive now — if the speed limit were raised to 65. Col. Gerald Hough also criticized radar detectors and lawmakers such as Sen. Richard Foster, R-West Bloomfield — who support them,

saying the devices encourage lax speed limit enforcement. Hough said state policy gives motorists a 5 mph tolerance, but troopers often allow higher speeds. He said a 65 mph limit would encourage speeds on major highways to move from the current 62 mph average to "right around 72."

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