



JUST ASKING

BY MARY KLEST

Which Barrington area community recycles the most and where does all that stuff go?

We asked Frank Hillegonds at Groot and Bill Plunkett at Waste Management.

Barrington area villages contract with a waste management company to collect garbage and recyclables weekly. Frank Hillegonds, Groot's municipal affairs manager, reports that Barrington residents outpace those in South Barrington, Barrington Hills, and Deer Park, making them the biggest area recyclers amongst those serviced by Groot. Described as "above average," Barrington residents recycled a total of 1,827 tons of material during 2007. With 39,348 households, that means almost 92 pounds per month per household. The highest collection month was November followed by June.

According to Groot, each ton of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill space, 4,000 kilowatts of energy, and 7,000 gallons of water. By adding a stack of newspapers 3 feet high to the recycle bin each month, you can save 12 trees annually. As a community, Barrington recycled 2,694,357 pounds of paper.

Of the towns serviced by Waste Management, Bill Plunkett said that Lake Barrington residents recycled a total of 800 tons compared with 584 tons in North Barrington and 183 tons in Tower Lakes during 2007.

Where does all that stuff go? After curbside pickup, recyclables are dumped at a single-stream recovery facility in Elk Grove for Groot



and Grayslake for Waste Management. Single-stream means residents do not have to separate plastic from paper anymore. Machines do that at the plant.

China and other Asian countries are keeping the recycle market strong through a lack of raw materials. "China buys 95 percent of our paper product," Hillegonds said. "They come and pick it up at our dock in Elk Grove Village and ship it overseas. They love office paper." At Waste Management, trailers loaded with paper products are shipped from Grayslake to the Pacific Northwest then overseas to Asia.

Both service providers sell aluminum, tin, plastic, glass, and metal to end markets in the United States. Our castaways come back to us in the form of new products. Recycled paper products boomerang back in the form of packaging for toys and other products exported from China.

Groot runs its trucks on 100 percent biodiesel fuel. Waste Management is experimenting with different types of alternative fuel, including methane gas created naturally by garbage heaps in the 300 landfill sites they operate.

Food is not recyclable. Spaghetti jars

QB's

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should be emptied before throwing them in the recycle bin. When asked about frustrations, recycle collector Mike Beckett said, "People should anchor plastic grocery bags so they don't blow away. Animals can digest them and die." It's also an eye sore to the rest of us. He recommends stuffing the bags into something heavy such as a box to keep them from becoming airborne.

Groot has recently introduced a 95-gallon cart to replace or add to the 65-gallon cart. The cost is \$25 and can be ordered online through Groot's Web site at www.groot.com. "We've proven that when you give people a bigger cart, they'll recycle more," said Hillegonds.

For those of you who have finished reading your copy of QUINTESSENTIAL BARRINGTON magazine and no longer wish to hold onto it, please recycle it. Glossy magazine pages are valued in the recycle market.