

Ridge Meadows Recycling Society

Recycling Report

AUGUST, 2014



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Do you remember seeing your Grandma's sewing box while growing up? Very likely it might have been a tin box once used for cookies, or an old sewing box she got from her own Grandmother. If not a sewing box, maybe you've got a pocket or hunting knife, a set of china, or some other antique which was handed down by previous generations. They didn't know it then, but they were practicing the second of the three R's: **Reuse**.

by Ash Milton



It's always interesting to see how artistic and well-made many regular items were in those days. That cookie tin might very well have paintings on it which look far more like artwork than the streamlined logos which got used in later decades. Companies knew that people would be reusing the packaging and they wanted to ensure that anyone looking at it got a good impression of their company as being associated with **quality** and **culture**. It's simple economics: when customers want durability and quality from suppliers, that is what suppliers will have to compete to provide.

Reusing is more than just finding new things to keep in old packaging or fixing up an old bike instead of buying a new one. When reuse stops being a *change* which requires effort and sacrifice and starts being something we look for in our products, our buying habits begin to be transformed. Are you going to buy something cheap which is made to be thrown away in a matter of months when you want to depend on it for some time to come? Of course not. You'll save and make the investment in a good quality product. Imagine what that kind of outlook can do for markets when shared by huge numbers of customers.

"Companies knew that people would be reusing the packaging"

What if we could buy drinks in bottles which were made to be reused? What if your takeout chopsticks or detergent bottles or other packaging were made to be enjoyed for months or even years afterward? It's not hard to imagine that we might start seeing more durability and craftsmanship in those products we currently throw into the recycling (or worse, the garbage) without a second thought. If we stop approaching "reuse" as looking for new things to do with what we're buying now and instead a way to improve the quality of what we buy in future, we might find ourselves pleasantly surprised by what can happen.



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Mike Mulcahy, Board Member, Ridge Meadows Recycling Society, Chef/Owner, Big Feast Bistro

Chef Mike Mulcahy reveals Opportunities for Restaurant Reuse at Big Feast Bistro

Mike Mulcahy moved to Maple Ridge in 2007 and owns Big Feast, a local bistro & catering company. Big Feast is working on becoming a zero waste business and leading the way to an urban composting program for all restaurants partnered with the CEED Center. Mike has 3 children who are all growing up with the environment in mind and attend the Maple Ridge Environmental School, which began in the fall of 2011.

Re-use – verb (re yooz): To use again or more than once....

Almost sounds funny to say it that way, doesn't it?.

What does it mean to reuse something? Why do we reuse? What benefits come from this?

I clearly spend too much time thinking about this subject because I believe it is important and will make a difference in how our society moves forward towards the 22nd century and beyond. Almost everything we grow, buy, sell, trade or harvest has another life after its initial use. Our responsibility to our future generations and ourselves is to find unique ways to re-use.

“As a restaurateur and environmentalist, I have challenged myself and my team to look at ways to reduce our carbon footprint.”

As a restaurateur and environmentalist, I have challenged myself and my team to look at ways to reduce our carbon footprint. It is almost like a game to us.....take the example of our restaurant chairs. We have been open now for almost 5 years and would have seen many of the chairs we have used hit the top of a landfill pile, but we have saved them and had a couple more years of use out of them. We source the chairs at thrift stores, garage sales, restaurant closures etc. and use them until they cannot be sat on any longer. This gives the bistro character and our guests something to talk about.

Another great example is the way we re-use our organic waste. For the past 2 years we have had our waste picked up and sent to a couple small pig farms where it is turned into feed. We have been lucky to get much of the final product back in the bistro for use in our meatballs, pulled pork and hams.

I spent many years as a corporate chef which saw endless restaurant equipment hit the landfill when we took over an restaurant that had closed its business. I have modeled our current restaurant in a way that we can re-use many products moving forward and as we grow with more locations, it excites me to think of the great discoveries I will find to furnish them. I encourage you to think of ways to re-use as many items as you can around your home or place of business.



Mike & Big Feast served up Judge's Choice-winning chili at Celebrate Earth Day 2014's Iron Chefs Tasting Challenge!



Catch Mike & Big Feast Bistro featured on The Food Network's hit show, "You Gotta Eat Here."
The episode first aired on June 20, 2014, and can be found online at www.foodnetwork.ca

The Challenges of Reuse

by Leanne Koehn

Looking up “Reuse” on the internet, there is no end to the number of innovative, imaginative, outside-the-box ways to reuse everyday household items into cute, crafty, or ingenious creations. The goal of all of these seems threefold: 1. keeping things from the landfill (or recycling box) by cleverly repurposing them, 2. lessening the amount of new products we bring into our homes and raw material used to create them, and 3. artistic projects. Ironically, in some cases, in order to make a “reuse” craft, one must buy brand-new items like popsicle sticks or pipe cleaners from a craft store - because who in their right mind saves used popsicle sticks nowadays?



Julie & Dave Koehn

Meet my parents, Julie & Dave Koehn. As two of the founders of Ridge Meadows Recycling, my mom & dad have been practicing the 3 Rs for many decades now.

Their house & yard, while beautiful & inviting, is what many would call “cluttered.” When I was growing up, they had practically a whole wall in the basement filled with empty containers of all kinds, from glass jars to plastic jars to plastic take-out containers. They also have, as many of us do, collections of plastic bags, twist-ties, bread bag clips, wrapping paper, and single-serving soy sauce and ketchup

packages. This is what practical reuse looks like - making do with what you already have so you don't have to buy a new product for the same purpose.



Jars & more jars!

However, there is a dichotomy between “practical” reuse and the ideal of simple living, free of excess “stuff.” There is a social value of uncluttered cleanliness, especially in our homes, and an ideal of paring away anything you don't need so the things you love have room to breathe and grow. Where is the line between these values & ideals and the practicality of having things on hand so you don't consume more? While it is possible for today's environmentalists to simply recycle things instead of keeping them, what happens when they suddenly have a need for the things they've already recycled? Do you keep or let go of things you don't need but may have a use for in the future? Where is the balance?



There has also been an evolution in packaging that has shifted from companies using quality materials that they assume will be used again to creating single-use packaging. Some take-out containers seem to currently be a hybrid of the two, made with strong enough materials to be used over and over again, but most likely used only once by 90% of users. Hopefully now, under the new Multi Materials BC program, this type of packaging will become completely recyclable, but it is still new materials being used and discarded each time as most recycled plastic is not able to be remade into food-quality packaging.

Where do your values lie in the challenge to reduce AND reuse?

We would love to hear your ideas on finding this balance.

Email leanne@rmrecycling.org with your feedback & comments.



Just a few reuse ideas...and a cat.



Catch Ridge Meadows Recycling at these Upcoming Events...

GETI Fest

Saturday, September 20 at Peace Memorial Park, Maple Ridge

Join the Golden Ears Transition Initiative from 10am-3pm in Memorial Peace Park to learn about and celebrate resilient localized community. There will be a parade, an artisan fair, entertainment, and food!



Rivers Day - Sunday, September 28:

Alouette River Management Society - www.alouetteriver.org/events

11am - 3pm at Allco Park (24959 Alouette Road, Maple Ridge)

Come celebrate World Rivers Day at this FREE event in Maple Ridge. Great for the family with lots of activities for kids. Live entertainment, BBQ, children's fishing pond, environmental displays, nature tours, and much, much more!



Metro Vancouver - Kanaka Connections Information: 604-462-8643

11am - 3pm at Kanaka Creek Regional Park (River Road, Maple Ridge)

Celebrate World Rivers Day with canoe tours, children's activities and stewardship displays. Allow 1.5 hours to complete all activities.



L.A.S.T.

L.A.S.T. Committee Free Community Living Month BBQ

Wednesday, October 15, 11:30am - 2pm at the Greg Moore Youth Centre

Community Living Month is a time when we celebrate the abilities & achievements of people with developmental disabilities. Come drop by & enjoy hot dogs, pop, chips, cookies, coffee, tea, face painting, balloons, music, & more!

Waste Reduction Week - October 20 - 26

Join us on Tuesday, October 28 at Maple Ridge Council Chambers as we partner with local Scout & Guide groups to give a special presentation to Mayor & Council for Waste Reduction Week. 2014



Girl Guides of Canada
Guides du Canada



Waste Reduction Week
in Canada



October 20-26, 2014

Mission Statement

"Ridge Meadows Recycling Society is a community-based, non-profit organization, advocating zero waste, operating responsible waste reduction services and providing environmental education. We employ people with developmental disabilities assisting their integration into the community."

Vision

"A waste free, socially responsible community."



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