

'Tis the Season

The holiday rush is on and perhaps you're already getting geared up for the holidays.

Each year it seems to start earlier and earlier, with catalogs being delivered, department stores putting up decorations, and TV ads bombarding our living rooms even before the autumn leaves have fallen. You've probably noticed that the traffic heading to the mall keeps growing, the lines at the stores get longer, and the bills that show up in the mail in January are higher and higher.

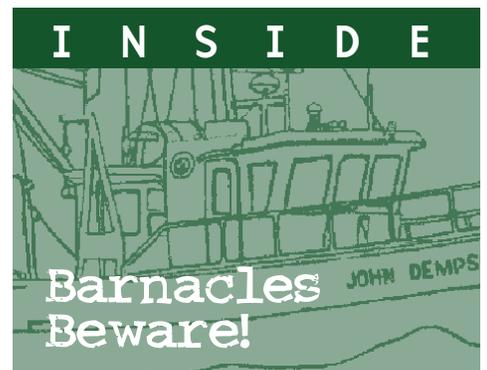
Holiday preparations can lead to a buying and spending frenzy. You count up all of the hours and money you spent getting ready for the holiday, and in minutes the gifts are opened and a big pile of trash has taken over the floor space. All the buying and spending has left some of us anything but jolly!

The Center for the New American Dream reports that 70% of Americans would welcome less emphasis on gift giving and spending; the American Banking Association stated that on average it takes four months to pay off holiday credit card bills; and the Use Less Stuff report notes that each year the U.S. generates 5 million extra tons of trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Make your 2001 holiday season joyous by taking just a few steps to simplify the occasion. Start by buying less and spend more time with your family celebrating the holidays. Go caroling in your neighborhood; bake and give away your special homemade cookies; sip eggnog by the fireplace; or volunteer to help those in need. You might end up feeling more satisfied and will have produced less waste and used fewer natural resources. ■

MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY "GREEN"

- **Think re-useable** when it comes to decorations for your tree, wrapping gifts, and dinnerware for parties so that you generate less waste. For example, hair bows and cinnamon sticks dress up a package and won't end up in the trash, and gift bags get used again and again!
- **Buy less stuff** - give your time and companionship, tickets to an event, a membership to a museum or fitness club, a gift certificate for lessons or an adult-ed class, phone cards, a donation to a charity, a gift certificate to a restaurant, a ride on a hot air balloon, or a massage.
- Enjoy holiday lighting, but **be mindful of energy use.** Consider turning on lights for fewer hours each night.
- **Give a meaningful homemade gift**, like a photo album or collage with memories.



Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) and the Three E's

What can help towns control escalating costs for trash services, provide an equitable way to charge residents for garbage, and benefit the environment?

A Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) program!

There are more than 6,000 of these programs nation-wide, but PAYT is not yet a household word in Connecticut. There are only ten programs in the state, but as trash collection and disposal costs continue to rise, Connecticut towns are looking for ways to maintain the level of service residents are accustomed to and keep property taxes down. PAYT may be the solution.

EQUITY. In towns where the fee for trash service is included in property taxes, it doesn't matter how much garbage a household makes, the rate per household is the same. So residents that recycle, compost and make an effort to make less garbage are subsidizing those who don't. In a PAYT system, residents pay for garbage similar to the way they pay for utilities – by the amount used, or in this case, generated.

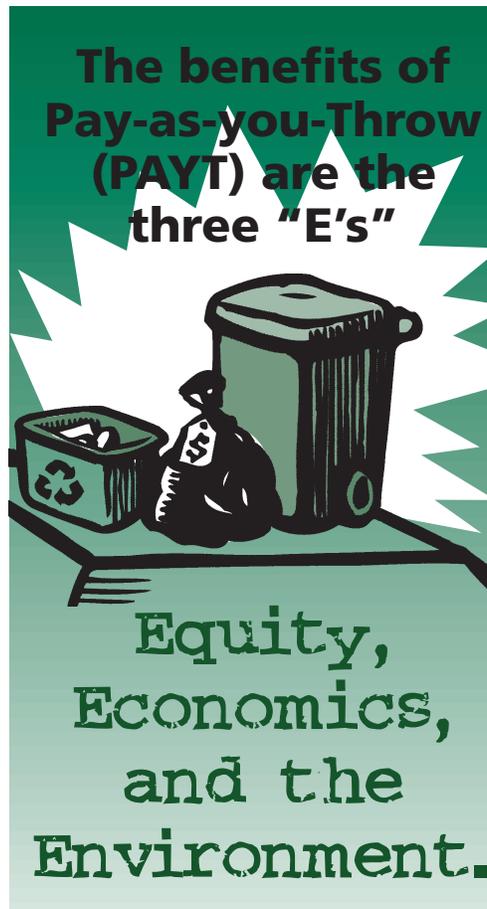
In most PAYT programs, residents pay for trash "by the bag." The cost of the bag offsets some or all of the town's collection and disposal costs, so a PAYT bag costs more than a regular trash bag. But, if a household takes steps to reduce its trash, it will pay less than one that doesn't. So, PAYT programs give residents greater control over how much they spend on garbage.

ECONOMICS. PAYT can help keep taxes down and create a new source of revenue for the town's trash service expenses. Since municipalities pay for garbage disposal by the ton, the savings can be significant when residents reduce their trash. Increased recycling can also save a town money since the costs for handling recyclables is usually much less than the disposal fees for regular trash.

ENVIRONMENT. PAYT can help create a cleaner, greener, and healthier environment. When residents have a financial incentive to trim their trash, they purchase products with less packaging and they compost and recycle more. PAYT programs increase environmental awareness, too. People may buy products with more recycled content, or consider the environmental impact of their purchase before they buy. And producing less garbage can reduce air and water pollution and eliminate the need for another trash incinerator in the state.

Even considering the benefits, implementing these programs can be a challenge. Sometimes there is initial resistance from residents who see PAYT as another tax. Town officials may fear illegal dumping or impacts on elderly or low-income residents. The good news is that there are solutions to these potential barriers. And once residents have PAYT, they don't want to go back to the old system. In Mansfield, CT where there has been a PAYT program since 1990, one resident says it all: "I would resent a system where we all paid the same amount ... I feel PAYT is very fair. It also makes an average person like me want to compost and reduce their garbage to get a financial benefit."

If you are a municipal official, you may want to learn more by attending a DEP-sponsored roundtable where towns with PAYT share their experiences. Your town may be eligible for a grant to help get PAYT started. If you are a resident and want PAYT in your town, contact your local elected officials and let them know. For more information, contact the DEP Office of Recycling and Source Reduction at (860) 424-3365 or visit the DEP website at www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/recycle/newpayt.htm. ■



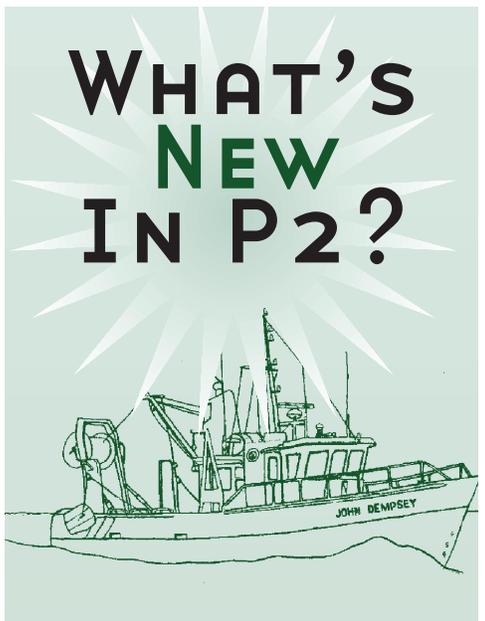


Fairgoers Learn How to “Shop for a Better Environment”

As part of Connecticut’s celebration of Pollution Prevention Week, DEP sponsored a “Shop for a Better Environment” Fair to promote “environmentally preferable purchasing.” The fair was held on September 19th in Bushnell Park, located in downtown Hartford.

Attendees visited a variety of booths where they learned ways to be environmentally aware when considering purchases – including buying recycled products, local organic produce, renewable energy, and energy efficient homes. In addition, there were booths on reducing mercury in the environment, shopping second-hand, green landscaping, and bicycle commuting. Demonstrations were given of a battery-powered mulching mower and on how to clean windows, shower doors and sink drains with non-toxic products.

If you are interested in obtaining any of the handouts from the fair, please contact the Office of Pollution Prevention at (860) 424-3297 or by e-mail at kim.trella@po.state.ct.us. ■



Barnacles Beware!

DEP’s 50 foot aluminum research vessel, the **John Dempsey**, has used a **less toxic hull paint** for the last 3 years with excellent results. It was previously painted with an antifouling paint so toxic that it even required the applicator have a special license due to health and safety concerns. The paint contained tributyltin (TBT) and when the Dempsey was built in 1990, it was the only antifouling coating available for aluminum boats.

Along with a biocide, the **new paint has Teflon® added to increase the hardness** - making it difficult for barnacles, algae and other aquatic organisms to attach to the hull. Another benefit of the new paint - it can be left on the hull when a new coat is painted over it. The hull would have had to be sandblasted before repainting with TBT paint, creating a hazardous waste each time the boat was painted. There are even **more environmentally friendly bottom paints now available**, including biocide-free formulas containing silicon polymers. Their slippery surface makes it extremely difficult for aquatic organisms to attach themselves and provides the added benefit of improved fuel economy. If you have to maintain a boat and use antifouling paint, check with your supplier about a less toxic alternative. You may save money and help the environment.

P 2 C A L E N D A R

A S E L E C T I O N O F P 2 R E L A T E D E V E N T S

APRIL 2-5, 2002

NPPR Spring 2002 Conference

Portland, Oregon

The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable Spring Conference will focus on the latest in pollution prevention (P2) policy, regulatory and technical innovations and sustainability practices. For more information call Ericka Alonso at (202)466-7272 or visit www.p2.org.



P2 Lecture Series

DEP sponsors a monthly lecture series on pollution prevention topics. Lectures are held from 11:00 a.m. to noon in the Phoenix Auditorium, DEP Building, 79 Elm St., Hartford. All lectures are free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Lynn Stoddard at 860-424-3236 or visit the DEP calendar at www.dep.state.ct.us/calendar

December 17, 2001, Turn the Tide: Individual Actions for a Sustainable Planet.

January 15, 2002, Organic Land Care Standards

February 13, 2002, Empowering Urban Residents with Environmental Information

March 21, 2002, Green Roofs, The Ecology and Benefits of Roof Gardens



Green Buildings Come to CT

A kick-off event featuring national experts on green buildings was held in October to launch the CT Green Building Council. The Council's purpose is to promote the construction and maintenance of buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work in the State of Connecticut. Future educational sessions will cover topics such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) training, green building design and financing, and building materials and systems. For more information, please contact CT Green Building Council, c/o CT Clean Energy Fund, 999 West Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 or visit their website www.CTGBC.org.

Want more ideas on simplifying the holiday season?

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING BOOKS AND WEBSITES:

Hundred Dollar Holiday:

The Case for a Joyous Christmas by Bill McKibben

Unplug the Christmas Machine:

A Complete Guide to Putting Love and Joy Back Into the Season
by Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli.

Simplify your Christmas by Elaine St. James.

www.newdream.org/holiday/home/html

www.consciouschoice.com/note/note1212.html

www.moea.state.mn.us/reduce/nowaste.cfm

www.use-less-stuff.com/ULSDAY/42ways.html

www.ciwmb.ca.gov/publiced/holidays/default.htm

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127
<http://dep.state.ct.us>
Arthur J. Rocque, Jr., Commissioner

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