



Have you recently visited the Barnstable Disposal Area, otherwise known as the Town Dump?

It's not likely you'd go there often unless you had an important errand, but an occasional trip is an eye-opener.

Every couple of months I go to the dump to deposit my supply of newspapers in the van and leave my collection of bottles, glass and flattened cans for recycling.

Believing we should all practice what we preach, I've been saving old newspapers, washing and squashing tin cans, and gathering clean jars and bottles even though the Recycollect effort at the Osterville Community Center was long ago discontinued.

Newspapers and magazines fit nicely into paper grocery sacks and stack easily in a corner of the garage.

Glass bottles and jars, with all metal rings and caps removed, of course, can be safely stored in a plastic trash can.

Flattened cans with labels removed take up little room, and any cardboard box holds a lot of them.

However, a trip to the dump had become imperative if I was to continue using my garage for it's original purpose. Last weekend was the time the errand was scheduled. I couldn't help being impressed.

The entrance to the dump is, itself, an experience in good humor. As you drive up the small hill to the gate house, you're greeted by a sign indicating motel rooms are for rent, and another declaring "No Vacancy".

A sticker is required for admittance; one of the signs of our times -- since space in the area gets scarcer by the minute, only residents and town tax-payers are eligible. The sticker, however, is also your "Open, Sesame" to all town beaches, so most of us want one.

The gentleman at the gatehouse checks your sticker and if it's out of date (it was), advises 1975 ones are available at Town Hall in Hyannis. He waves you through.

Turning right towards the glass bins constructed this winter with the approval of Town Meeting, we found huge mounds of glass looming.

Surely I should have been prepared, for I well know the quantity we collected during our Saturday morning volunteer duty a few years back. But I was amazed at the size of the heaps of glass, almost overflowing the bins.

And the bins have been emptied more than once since they were built.

Along with glass, tins, and paper, there are also in my collection a small quantity of aluminum -- foil, tins, cans.

The attendant carefully separated the aluminum from the other metal and put it aside. It sells for a better price than other metals and is treated with care.

Clear glass was tossed into the bin filled with thousands and thousands of other clear glass jars. Green and brown bottles each had their separate sections. The brown glass bin was filled almost to capacity. The glittering piles were a gladsome sight for they represent many many cubic feet of dump space that would otherwise be occupied with this non-biodegradable material.

Glass doesn't rot, rust, corrode or break down through bacterial action. It retains its hard shiny physical properties until it's melted

down, remolded into a new shape and used again.

In time, of course, most metals oxidize but the process takes many years. If recycled, metals can be reused over and over. This depends on metals being turned in at the center. If they go to the dump with ordinary trash, they take up space and are wasted.

While we chatted in the bright sunlight with the attendant, I noticed the air was clean and bright. There wasn't a hint of odor about the place. Other cars pulled in; people left their glass and metal, then drove away. It took less than two minutes for each of them to make the extra stop.

Leaving, we turned back toward the gatehouse where we stopped long enough to drop the bagged newspapers and magazines in the van. It, too, was nearly full. Soon another load of paper must go over the road to be processed for reuse.

It all comes to the Cape over the road; what a wonderful way to rid ourselves of it: ship it back, process it for a second-time-around, and save our precious dump space for things we can't dispose of this way. Would it were possible to do the same with all our other problems!

As we departed I checked the Bizarre Bazaar for possible treasure. It's a small collection of items that may still be useful to someone. Behind it a neat and tidy vegetable garden seemed to be progressing very nicely.

Perhaps the most heartening thing is the solid evidence Barnstable citizens are cooperating in the effort. Instead of filling their trash cans with glass, tin cans, newspapers and magazines, and paying to have it carted away, Barnstable people are taking individual responsibility for reducing the cubic footage their trash occupies and, at the same time, participating in the resource recovery program.

It takes more than a small group of "Eco-nuts" to build a mountain of glass, fill a van -- van after van -- with paper, and collect such a heap of metal.

The Barnstable Board of Health, and Mrs. Eshbaugh, in particular, are to be commended for only through their cooperative effort could this project have been successful.

The people of Barnstable, all who participate, are also to be congratulated. Only through their individual concern for their own welfare and that of all their neighbors could the project be continued.

To be sure, it's a little easier not to bother. Unquestionably it's an extra chore, takes more effort, requires additional steps and planning to join with others and be a recycler. It gives all those who do it a good feeling about themselves and their neighbors to see those piles of glass, heaps of cans and stacks of paper, though. It's worth it.

Barnstable is still looking for volunteers to help man the recycling center on Saturdays, the busiest day, between 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. Volunteers may serve for only one hour; they greet other recyclers, instruct, and help separate material.

There's no heavy work. If you're interested in giving an hour of your time, meeting some mighty nice people, and feel you've accomplished something worthwhile, call Mrs. Eshbaugh at 428-8335 or at the Board of Health office.

See for yourself what recycling has done for you, for the town, for your country. All over the nation other towns are participating in similar activities.

Let's join in winning back our reputation for Yankee frugality and ingenuity. Lots of people are showing they care. You, too, will be welcome as a person willing to take a few minutes a day -- and give an hour or so every year -- to do your part.