

ENVYIRO NEWS

SEEKING BALANCE

By Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett

We've just spun through the autumnal equinox, a time of equity between night and day, with the glorious transition of season and October's Libra in the balance. 'Tis the season of new beginnings, reconciliations, harmony and resolve.

Reinforce this new academic year of the three Rs with a resolve to find balance and harmony in your many endeavours, including all those little things you do during the school day. When we think of school, there is always paper involved and perhaps a packed lunch or snack to see you through. There lie the daily challenges for your resolutions regarding the four Rs of sustainability: reduce, reuse, recycle and, above all, rethink.

What follows are a few ideas to apply to your school, organization, workplace or home. If there are not already recycling initiatives in place, why not start a few? Or add and refine a few more.

The Great Paper Chase

Ah, the paperless computer age. How does one cope with the forests of paper that continually seep through the doors, blow in through the windows and drift home in the kids' backpacks until the house is awash in memos and notices of accountability-seeking communiqués?

Go electronic. Post notices, agendas, reminders, minutes, newsletters and announcements to undisclosed recipient e-mail circulation lists and/or Web sites. Be inclusive and get your messages out. Send hard copies only to those without computer access. Post a single hard copy in a sensible place for others to access. Monitor appropriate frequency, minimize less important notices and don't forget to check your own e-mail!

Use sorting bins as a place for paper that is still useable on one side. It's great for taking or writing notes for short timeline use. If it's not going to be kept, it doesn't need to

be on good paper. Use it for transient uses in the photocopier or printer as well.

Have one place for useful scraps of paper and another for used recyclable paper. Most paper products are now fully recyclable and do not need to be separated into colours or types. Newspapers, magazines and corrugated cardboard can all be mixed together. However, if the amount of one type of paper is low, just chuck it in with the other, relentless buildup of mixed paper.

Refueling and Refundables

What does one do with all those drink bottles, cans and cartons generated at meal and snack time? Take them back and use the refunds to support and streamline your recycling program. You can even invest in an environmental initiative, such as the purchase of wind-generated green energy through Enmax. Check out www.greenenergy.com.

Nobody likes a sticky mess, so a place to drain those unfinished containers is a good idea. A bucket and a bin can do the trick if a sink is not accessible. One northwest school has student monitors at recess and lunchtime encouraging their peers to deal with their juice boxes responsibly. These students are recognized for their efforts with certificates. Of course, going for a garbage-free lunch with reusable containers is the optimal solution. Buying in bulk and decanting as needed not only saves on overpackaged consumption, but it's a whole lot cheaper and doesn't really take much longer once you're in the swing.

Biodegradables

Composting in Calgary is becoming a no brainer. Did you see that amazing indoor composting bin at Mountain Equipment Co-op last year? Those red wrigglers would love to finish your fruit and vegetable leftovers. They don't even mind those little stickers, which are just as shiny in

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Book Launch

Stories of Community

Edited by Karen Gummo and Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett

Monday, Oct. 28, from 7 to 9 p.m. • Dr. Coffin School, 5615-Barrett Dr. NW

Tales of Dr. E.W. Coffin School

Do You Remember?

Two years ago, Dr. E.W. Coffin Elementary School in Brentwood Heights hosted a 25th anniversary celebration of its reopening after being destroyed by fire in 1974. Many felt the devastation wrought by arson one extremely cold winter's night, then rejoiced the following year with the opening of the new building in the spring of 1975. At the time of the celebration, stories and reminiscences were collected regarding the entire, now 35-year, history of the school.

At last, hot off the presses, you can own the book that rediscovers the story of a people who pulled together to rebuild what they had lost and what was so precious to them. What was never lost, however, was a powerful sense of community and purpose.

In chronicling the history of Dr. Coffin School, *Stories of Community* has become much more than just a recording of school events. It showcases ideas and environmental projects at Dr. Coffin which have had a significant and ongoing impact on a



far-ranging community.

Dr. Coffin School has been very important in the lives of many community members, students, teachers, staff and parents, now scattered throughout Calgary and beyond, during the years since it was first built in Canada's centennial year.

Stories of Community features over 160 pages of original prose, poetry and art work, as well as colour photographs and archival documents. This non-profit publication was supported by a neighbourhood grant from the Calgary Foundation. Thus, the cost per book is only \$25, and we all share in the benefits of the grant. Ensure your copy is held for you by pre-ordering!

To RSVP for the book launch and to pre-order your copy of this extraor-

dinary pocket of Calgary history, please contact the editors (below), fax the school at 777-6192 or send to:

Book Launch Committee, Dr. E.W. Coffin School, 5615-Barrett Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2L 1W4.

Pre-orders can be made by cheque (\$25 per book), payable to Dr. Coffin School Council.

Editors: Karen Gummo at 284-0747 or karengummo@shaw.ca.

Polly Knowlton Cockett at 282-2014 or plknowlton.cockett@shaw.ca.

We look forward to seeing you on Oct. 28!

Copies will be available for sale and pickup at that time, and thereafter at the school.

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the compost as they were the day they went on the fruit.

Build an outdoor composter, if your site is appropriate, or get a bin from the city during their spring sale. Again, student monitors in classrooms across Calgary are turning apple cores and orange peels into future soil for school gardens or potting soil for science classes.

Implementing a Program

Who's gonna deal with it? Set up a roster, then be realistic and equitable. Maximize participation with minimal effort and make it easy to do it. Go for participation from the ground up. Get your students or classmates or family members involved. Going on scrap patrol or emptying the mixed paper bin is every bit as exciting a responsibility for a school child as taking the attendance to the office. Consolidating recyclable waste should be as much a part of a facility operator's job description as dealing with regular trash; it's the new millennium afterall!

Encourage management to deal with recycling on a larger scale. That might mean contacting the city government, your business or board of directors, your college or university department, a school board or individual school, your teacher or even your parents.

Get a plan going, but do not burden your group with

overambitions – take it one

step at a time. Get a couple of little things working well, then it's a breeze to add

on. It is truly amazing how dealing with garbage appropriately can become second

nature. And when you see how it piles up, rethink how you might reduce it altogether.

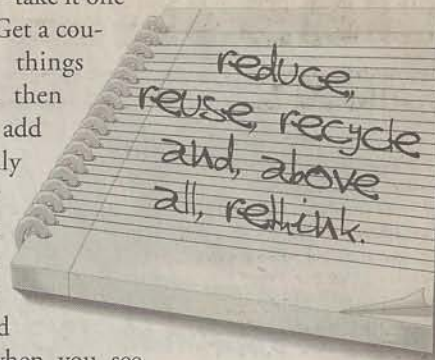
When you no longer notice how automatically it all happens or when you find you are entirely unable to throw a perfectly good piece of paper into a trash can headed for the landfill, then you know you've made the transition to incorporating the four Rs into your daily life.

Take the challenge to bring your local setting, whatever the size, into stronger harmony and balance.

Environmentally yours,

Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett

plknowlton.cockett@shaw.ca



FREE Health and Wellness Fair

OCT. 5

at the Calgary
Marlborough
Community Centre
(636-Marlborough Way NE)
from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Advice on child seats, school busses and other safety concerns will be available, courtesy of Alberta Transportation;
- Blood pressure testing will be available from the Calgary Fire Department; and
- More than 40 exhibitors will be on hand to answer questions on health and wellness.

DOOR PRIZES! KIDS ACTIVITIES! SNACKS!



YMCA BIG EVENT

The YMCA is hosting
"The BIG Event"

in celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2002.

**Join us on Wednesday evening,
OCT. 23 at the Calgary Stampede
Roundup Centre, Hall C.**

*This reunion-style party features a reception at
5:30 p.m., dinner and program at 6:30 p.m.
and dancing to the Dino Martinis at 8:30 p.m.*

Tickets are \$35 per person.

The BIG Event is a chance for anyone who's had a YMCA experience during the past 100 years to reconnect, reminisce and celebrate!

**For tickets, call 269-6701 or call
or drop by your local YMCA.**

