

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Public Works Department

(831) 420-5160

www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/

Summer 2006



Are You "Good-to-Go"?

by Chris Moran

Candlelight sent a muted glow off the white linen tablecloth. The gold rim of the bone china emitted a soft radiance and the water glasses dripped like a windowpane in winter. Tantalizing aromas of sage and garlic drifted through the small cafe. Spinach salad arrived, piled with a mix of wrinkled cranberries and crunchy pecans, generously doused with raspberry vinaigrette. This was a meal to remember. With no room for dessert, we ordered cheesecake to enjoy later. The waitperson brought us our "to go" order in a big Styrofoam clamshell. Wait a minute! That's when I woke up. This was a dream gone bad!

Polystyrene (commonly called Styrofoam) shows up everywhere, at our homes, businesses, and sometimes even at a nice restaurant. We might order a cup of coffee "to go" and receive it in a white foam cup. Or maybe we order something online or by mail and receive the package at our home packed in Styrofoam peanuts or block Styrofoam. Regardless of how it comes into our lives, **Styrofoam is not recyclable.** That means that it cannot be turned into another product. It doesn't seem right to throw it away, but simply stated, it's garbage.

Styrofoam usually has a one-time use. When the container is discarded, the material persists long after its usefulness is over. The foam cup holding that coffee for just a few minutes this morning will still be around 500 years from now—it just won't go away.

It's Great to Be Green!

When you go out to eat or mail a package, ask

for containers or material made of paper, aluminum, cane, rice, or corn. If organic containers become litter, they will break down and not become a permanent blight on our landscape. Choosing aluminum means that the container will be recycled because it is valuable and usually finds its way to a recycling center.

Next time you go out to eat, take along your own "to go" container.

How Would a Turtle Feel?

Polystyrene and certain plastics are a threat to wildlife. When these materials break up, the pieces are ingested by animals, often causing



Be Good to Go! Next time you go out to dinner and need a "doggie bag," request a piece of aluminum foil or a paper box rather than accepting a foam clamshell. Better yet, take along your own "to go" container! When you go out for coffee, take your own mug—and don't accept foam cups. Be "good to go" with eco-friendly packaging!

death. When birds feed plastic pieces to their young, the plastics block the digestive system, and the young birds die. According to Earth Resource, "100,000 marine mammals die each year from plastic debris." (Visit www.earthresource.org for more details.) Knowing the impact of plastics is especially important because Santa Cruz sits at the edge of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Styrofoam Comes in Many Shapes and Sizes

Block Foam — You have probably received block Styrofoam when purchasing a television or stereo. Block foam protects fragile merchandise from shipping damage, but after this one-time use, the Styrofoam must be thrown away. If you receive this type of packaging, consider writing the company to encourage them to protect their products in environmentally friendly material, such as blown cardboard.

Cups and Clamshells — Did you know that Americans use more than 25 billion polystyrene cups each year? Styrofoam cups, plates, and clamshells are not recyclable. They serve a one-time use and are discarded. The best way to handle these products is to not buy or take them in the first place! When you go out for coffee, take your own "travel mug."

Packing Peanuts are another form of polystyrene. Peanuts are difficult for City refuse workers to handle. When transferring garbage into refuse trucks, peanuts are often caught in the wind, becoming litter. Ultimately, they will make their way to the ocean.

The good news is that although peanuts

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Clip & Use

I CARE!
I choose to reuse Styrofoam peanuts!
Polystyrene is not recyclable, but it is reusable.
Please use these over and over!



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Rex Stewart, owner of New Leaf Community Market on Pacific Avenue, and Nancy Weimer, Food Service Director — Charged with the mission "to nourish and sustain our community," New Leaf, a Clean Ocean Business, chooses environmentally friendly packaging. Deli sandwiches are wrapped in brown Kraft paper and their healthy salads come in easy-to-use, paper boxes. New Leaf is looking into additional packaging made from corn, rice, cane, or paper for their new deli opening this year—the choices are out there. Nancy Weimer, a 10-year New Leaf employee and food service veteran, knows that for her customers, "the packaging is just as important as the product inside." According to Rex Stewart, "As a leader in the organics industry and the community, we provide high quality, sustainable food packaging for our customers and for the environment. It's the right way to do business."

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ — MUNICIPAL CODE LANGUAGE

FOOD PACKAGING GOALS — 6.48.030
(a) Use of Polystyrene Foam in Packaging Materials

It shall be a policy goal of the City of Santa Cruz that no retail food establishment shall package food or beverages in any food packaging which utilizes polystyrene foam; or purchase, obtain, keep, distribute or sell for home or personal use, or give, serve, or otherwise provide to customers any food packaging which utilizes polystyrene foam. The City of Santa Cruz shall encourage, on a voluntary basis, the elimination of all food packaging which utilizes polystyrene foam. . .

The above language is for your information; please notice that compliance is voluntary.

Look for the CLEAN OCEAN BUSINESS sticker!



Did you know that the City has a Clean Ocean Business Program for local food service and vehicle service facilities? This year the City will be educating all food service facilities about our Polystyrene Food Packaging Goals. Clean Ocean Businesses of the future will choose to use environmentally friendly food containers and packaging materials. These businesses take action to protect our environment, so please support them!

For information, contact the Environmental Compliance Office at 420-6048.

10 TIPS for a Healthier Home

The chemicals that you use in and around your home affect your budget, your indoor air quality, your family's safety, and our hazardous waste disposal programs. As you clean, maintain, and improve your home, think about the air you breathe and the water we share.

1. Read the labels on household cleaners and garden chemicals. Look for "signal words." Signal words tell you how hazardous the product is to humans. Here's what you need to know: "Poison" means highly toxic. "Danger" specifies that the product is extremely flammable, corrosive, or toxic. "Warning" indicates a moderate hazard. "Caution" denotes a mild to moderate hazard. Seek products with the "lowest" signal word, *caution* or *warning*.
2. Buy only the amount you need! Know how much product it will take to do the job and only buy that amount. It is better to make a second trip to the store than to have to dispose of large quantities of a hazardous chemical at a special collection.
3. Follow instructions on all chemicals carefully. When you are required to mix a chemical with water, don't guess or dump. Measure the amounts as directed. Dedicate a set of measuring spoons and a measuring cup to use with household or garden chemicals. Be sure to triple-rinse (flush three times with water) your measuring spoons or cups between uses.
4. Store chemicals safely. Children and pets can be easily poisoned or injured by improperly stored chemicals. Be sure to keep all chemicals away from sources of heat, including sun shining into a garage or shed window. The same goes for rags!
5. Consider "home remedies." For

instance, cooking oil is useful to remove adhesive price tags from jars, mugs, and dishes. Vinegar, baking soda, and soap can be effective cleaning agents. For "recipes," look for books about "natural cleaning" at the library or search for "Recipes for Natural Cleaners" on the Internet.



6. When you paint, choose latex. Latex is water-based for easier cleanup. Better yet, choose latex without volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs contribute to the formation of indoor and outdoor air pollution. If you have questions about proper disposal of unneeded latex paint, call us.
7. Weed; don't spray. In addition to reducing your use of pesticides and eliminating hazardous waste, you'll also be improving your muscles and enjoying the fresh air.
8. When it is time to replace your light bulbs, choose compact fluorescents. They use less energy and last much longer, creating less waste. (Compact fluorescents do contain mercury. So they do require special disposal as hazardous waste when they burn out. Call us for details.)
9. Purchase paper products, such as toilet paper, made from recycled paper. (If you buy paper napkins or paper towels, look for recycled-content paper in those, too!)
10. Check out library and Internet resources. Learn some quick and easy steps to a healthier home.

Go back to school without breaking the bank!

Whether you're getting ready for school yourself, getting someone else ready for school, or just taking care of your own end-of-summer shopping, there are ways that you can reduce your waste, improve our environment, and save money, too.

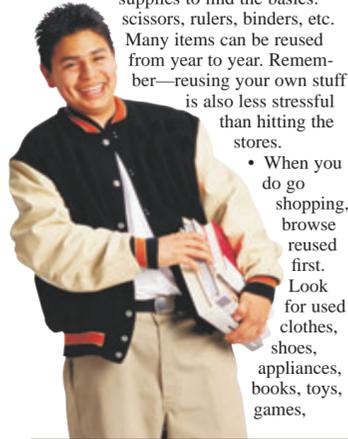
- Plan ahead and make a list. Check to see what you have on hand. After that, make a list of what you really need.
- Reuse what you already own. Check closets for forgotten tote bags, backpacks, lunch boxes, and refillable containers. Go through last year's supplies to find the basics: scissors, rulers, binders, etc. Many items can be reused from year to year. Remember—reusing your own stuff is also less stressful than hitting the stores.
- When you do go shopping, browse reused first. Look for used clothes, shoes, appliances, books, toys, games,



Billboards never got so much attention! This "urban bag for the road," by Vy & Elle, was fashioned from reclaimed billboard vinyl.

office supplies, and household goods through online services such as www.freecycle.org, at garage sales, or at resale shops.

- Buy recycled by picking up recycled-content paper, pens, pencils, scissors, rulers, file folders, binders, storage containers, and jewelry.
- Purchase refilled or remanufactured ink jet cartridges for your printers. Or, buy a refilling kit and do it yourself.
- Pick up a cool recycled accessory, such as a bag or purse made from a reused vinyl billboard. Look for hip new sustainable products at www.sustainablestyle.org.



Worth Noting

A plastic cup that will biodegrade in a food waste compost pile? Yes, some exist and more are in development. Research continues on how to make crops such as corn into biodegradable plastic and how best to compost this plastic, which is known as PLA (polylactic acid).

Biodegradable plastics offer two advantages. First, they are made from renewable resources, instead of non-renewable petroleum resources. Second, they are well-suited to food-contact applications where composting is a better option than recycling, such as single-use drink cups, carry-out food containers, and disposable eating utensils.

The Biodegradable Products Institute tests biobased plastics and certifies those that "have been scientifically proven to biodegrade and compost satisfactorily in municipal and commercial composting operations." The products that meet these criteria receive the Institute's approval to use the "Compostable Logo."

Seeing the "Compostable Logo" does NOT guarantee that the item will compost in your backyard bin or that it is accepted by local composting programs. Just as not all items that carry the "recyclable" logo are locally recyclable, biodegradable plastics may not be either. Always check with your hauler or composter before adding a new item!

For more information, visit the Biodegradable Products Institute website, www.bpiworld.org.



These "leading ladies" from Biocorp sported biodegradable plastic evening gowns at a Hollywood event. (Photo Courtesy of Biocorp, www.biocorpaavc.com)

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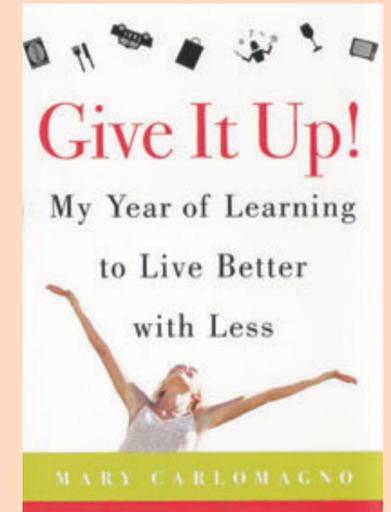
To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

Theodore Roosevelt 1858-1919

What could you live without?

When I set out to write this book, my intention was to eliminate unnecessary facets of life, in essence to determine what I could live without.

Mary Carlomagno
"Introduction," *Give It Up!*



What could you live without? After being hit on the head by boxes of shoes falling from her overfilled closet shelves, author Mary Carlomagno set out to answer this question.

Each month for a year, she gave up something that she valued—something whose sacrifice created for her "a personal and significant 'ouch' factor." Her choices were personal—coffee, reading the newspaper, television, eating out. But the lessons she learned can teach us some things about our own wants and needs.

During the summer, you may take some time off or you may have a different routine. Use some of this time to think about what you could live without. What possessions do you value and which just create clutter? Do you have habits that cost money and create waste?

While setting out to give up something every month for a year may seem daunting, try giving up one of your favorite "wants" for a week or a month. See what you learn about yourself.

Read more about it!

Remember to look for books at the library, at book swaps, at www.freecycle.org, or at used bookstores! Then share titles with friends and relatives!

Choosing Simplicity: Real People Finding Peace and Fulfillment in a Complex World by Linda Breen Pierce (Gallagher Press, 2000)

Give It Up!: My Year of Learning to Live Better with Less by Mary Carlomagno (William Morrow, 2006)

Living Simply with Children: A Voluntary Simplicity Guide for Moms, Dads, and Kids Who Want to Reclaim the Bliss of Childhood and the Joy of Parenting by Marie Sherlock (Three Rivers Press, 2003)

Simplicity Lessons: A 12-Step Guide to Living Simply by Linda Breen Pierce (Gallagher Press, 2003)

Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich by Duane Elgin (Revised Edition, Harper Paperbacks, 1998)

What Kids Really Want that Money Can't Buy: Tips for Parenting in a Commercial World by Betsy Taylor (Warner Books, 2003)

Cleaning up the Gulf Coast

Late last summer, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast with a one-two punch. In their wake, were 300,000 displaced Americans and 75 million cubic yards of waste. This debris, the equivalent of 30 years worth of waste in the Gulf Coast region, included about 350,000 flooded vehicles and at least 25 million cubic yards of green waste (tree limbs, trunks, leaves, and dead bushes).

Much of this debris will be landfilled. However, the automobiles and white goods (large appliances) will be recycled in large numbers. After the first six months of cleanup, about 280,000 tons of steel had already been recycled. Meanwhile, smaller scale efforts are gathering plumbing fixtures, cypress wood, and doors, which will be reusable.

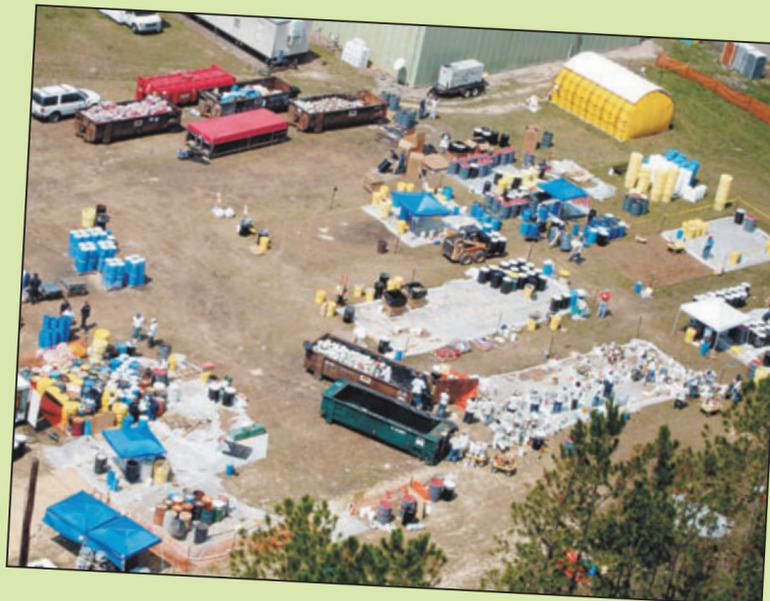
Of particular concern during cleanup is the huge quantity of hazardous waste "orphaned" by the storm, including household hazardous waste. By February, 2 million containers of hazardous waste, a total of more than 10 million pounds, had been collected. Of these, 1.9 million were small containers, many of which were flood-damaged household hazardous materials collected by crews going house to house or dropped off at collection centers by residents.

Preparing your home and family for potential disasters helps minimize waste. For details, visit www.ready.gov.



Chris Jordan photographed this "Remains of a Business, St. Bernard Parish" while working on his upcoming book, *In Katrina's Wake: Portraits of Loss from an Unnatural Disaster*. (Photo courtesy of Chris Jordan, www.chrisjordan.com)

During hurricane cleanup, this Louisiana site was set up to handle the massive quantity of household hazardous waste. Some of this material was found inside houses, garages, and sheds, but a great deal was recovered from swamps, waterways, and other outdoor areas.



Healthy Home Resources

Center for a New American Dream
www.newdream.org/clean

Debra Lynn Dadd, "The Queen of Green"
www.debraslist.com/

Earth Easy's Guide to Living at Home with the Earth
www.eartheasy.com/live_menu.htm

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Do's and Don'ts Around the Home"
www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont.html

Green Seal
www.greenseal.org

LivingHome, an online magazine
<http://library.livinghome.com/Cool-Tools/>

Project Laundry List
www.laundrylist.org

The Seventh Generation "Guide to a Toxin-Free Home"
www.seventhgeneration.com/living_green/toxin_free.php

Better Basics for the Home: Simple Solutions for Less Toxic Living
By Annie Berthold-Bond, Three Rivers Press, 1999

Naturally Clean: The Seventh Generation Guide to Safe & Healthy, Non-Toxic Cleaning
By Jeffrey Hollender, Geoff Davis, Meika Hollender, New Society Publishers, 2006



Janet Platin is the proprietor of The Buttery, a Clean Ocean Business — When people want a special treat, they go to The Buttery where you can taste the quality in every bite. The extent of The Buttery's success goes beyond its food. Soups and sandwiches go out the door in paper packaging and salads are served in simple and attractive paper-box containers. Last year, the business used over 50,000 forks and spoons, so now, to lessen waste, Buttery employees ask customers if they want cutlery instead of assuming so. At the same time, The Buttery switched to wheat-based cutlery made by EarthWare. According to Janet Platin, "Plastic cutlery costs 1 cent each while the wheat-based costs 4 cents each. Figuring in the cost to the environment, we made the decision that it was worth the extra expense. We don't want to use petroleum when we can use corn, wheat, cane, or rice products. Coffee drinkers are offered wooden stir-sticks. Our customers should feel special when they walk out the door with a 'to go' item. The environmental food packaging industry is evolving and when new products such as GreenWare and Stalk Market (sugarcane based) become available, we want to make the change to bring them into our business."



We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

We are also available to speak to clubs or organizations about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling and composting.

**City of Santa Cruz
Public Works Department
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www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/**

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**PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER
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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS**

Shredded Paper — Are you creative?

More and more people are using paper shredders to protect their information and identities. The outcome is a big pile of shredded paper. **Shredded paper is not recyclable in the City of Santa Cruz.** Because the pieces of paper are so small and light—they are either blown around and land on the floor or equipment, or go through the whole sort line to end up as trash. But that doesn't mean you can't put your shredded paper to good use!

Shredded paper may be composted in your compost or worm bin (call 420-LESS for compost bin information). Since paper is made from wood, it adds carbon to your bin just as leaves do. If you don't have a compost bin, then the City suggests that you place your shredded paper in a sealed bag and **place the bag in your brown trash cart.** That way the

paper does not fly around to become a litter issue. **Do not place shredded paper in your blue recycling cart.**

There are many uses for shredded paper. For example, you can use it for cushioning when you ship something in the mail (instead of Styrofoam peanuts). Or you can use shredded paper in your gift bags to protect a present. If you have colored shredded paper, it can look festive!

Are you creative? Do you have some uses for shredded paper? We want to know! Send your ideas to:

"One Person's Trash..."
City of Santa Cruz
Public Works Department
809 Center Street, Room 201
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Polystyrene Facts

- The manufacture of block polystyrene exposes workers to styrene. Health consequences are: irritation of the skin, eyes, and upper respiratory track, as well as gastrointestinal effects. Chronic exposure results in depression, headaches, fatigue, and weakness.
- Styrene is classified as a possible human carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the International Agency for Research on Cancer.
- A 1986 Environmental Protection Agency report named polystyrene manufacturing the "fifth largest creator of hazardous waste."
- Toxic chemicals in Styrofoam leach into the

food they hold (especially when heated in a microwave). Styrene threatens human health and the reproductive system.

- Styrofoam is made with petroleum, a non-renewable, heavily polluting resource.
- The manufacture of polystyrene foam releases hydrocarbons into the air to form ground-level ozone, which is one of the components of "smog."
- Polystyrene foam often ends up as litter. This material is notorious for breaking up into pieces that choke animals and clog their digestive systems.
- Many cities and counties have outlawed polystyrene foam.

Be Ready!

Emergency & Natural Disaster Preparedness

The City of Santa Cruz enjoys many natural advantages due its coastal location. However, with the abundant recreational opportunities and gorgeous vistas comes the possibility of ocean- and earthquake-related natural disasters. City officials consider storms, earthquakes, tsunamis, and fires among the major events that could occur in Santa Cruz. Our City has carefully developed emergency plans to handle such situations, but there are many ways that City residents can prepare themselves and their families.

City staff has compiled some useful tips for general disaster preparedness and response. This list is not exhaustive; we encourage you explore additional resources to obtain more information.

Preparation — What to Do and What to Have in Your Home

- Have supplies for at least 5 to 7 days. Prepare an emergency kit of food, water, and other supplies, including a flashlight, portable battery-operated radio, batteries, medicines (especially if a family member takes prescription medications), first aid kit, money, blankets, and clothing. Keep

- one gallon of water per person per day.
- Know the safe and danger spots in your home, plan evacuation routes, and conduct practice drills with your family.
- Keep your car fueled.
- Learn first aid and CPR.
- Learn how to turn off gas, water, and electricity and how to check chimneys, roofs, walls, and your foundation for stability.
- Install smoke alarms and test monthly. Replace batteries at least once a year.
- Establish a reunion strategy.

What to Do During an Event

Earthquake

- If indoors, stay there; get under a desk or table, or stand in a corner.
- If outdoors, get into an open area, away from trees, buildings, walls, and power lines.
- If driving, pull over, avoiding overpasses and power lines.

Storm/Flood

- Do not try to cross a flooded stream where water is above your knees.
- Do not try to drive over a flooded road. If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground.
- Tune in to local radio or television stations for emergency information.
- Avoid unnecessary trips or telephone calls (make emergency trips/calls only).

Fire

- **Call 9-1-1.**
- If safe to do so, leave the building immediately via the planned escape route.
- Check doors for heat before opening. If hot, seek an alternate route.
- If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit, stay in the room with the door closed; try to signal out a window with a bright cloth.

Tsunami

- Heed all warnings and seek higher ground immediately.
- Do not visit the beach until declared safe.



"Good-to-Go"

(Continued from Page 1)

are not recyclable, they are reusable. Many businesses receive, buy, and use peanuts. If you receive packing peanuts, help the environment **by reusing them yourself**, or drop them off at a business that can reuse them (see below). This reduces the amount of new peanuts that are generated. You can also ask for cellulose or cornstarch peanuts. Better yet, use wadded newspaper for your packing material.

Please cut out and use one of the "I Care, I Reuse Peanuts!" messages (front page). That way you can help get the message out about peanuts and not feel guilty about using them!

If you receive packing peanuts, please don't throw them away. Keep them clean and dry, and place them in a plastic bag. Save them to use again or take them to one of these local businesses for reuse:

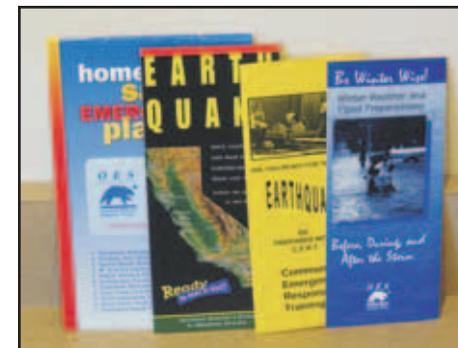
- United Parcel Store, 343 Soquel Avenue, (Soquel & Ocean) — 426-4422
- United Parcel, 849 Almar Avenue (by the Safeway Shopping center on Mission) — 426-5762

CALL the Peanut Hotline! To find out about other locations accepting peanuts, or if you are a business that can use them, call the Peanut Hotline at 1-800-828-2214.

You Can Make a Difference!

City of Santa Cruz residents and businesses are encouraged to avoid foam food packaging and packing material when a paper product will serve just as well. Encourage your favorite business to use products that are recyclable, biodegradable, or returnable. As a consumer, you can help by just saying "NO" to Styrofoam. If you are interested in finding out about alternatives to polystyrene, please visit www.dinegreen.com.

For more facts about polystyrene, read our "Polystyrene Facts" at left.



What to Do After an Event

- Check others for injuries and provide first aid.
- Check for gas and water leaks, broken electrical wiring, or sewage lines.
- Check your building for cracks and damage (roof, chimney, and foundation).
- Tune in to the radio or television for instructions and news reports.
- Do not use your vehicle unless absolutely necessary.
- Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Be prepared for aftershocks (in case of an earthquake event).
- If you evacuate, leave a message at your home telling others where you can be found.

Other Resources

This information is only an overview. We recommend that you explore these resources:

- Red Cross: www.redcross.org
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
- California Office of Emergency Services: www.oes.ca.gov
- The County of Santa Cruz is developing emergency plans for health epidemics. These plans will be available as soon as possible. County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency: www.santacruz.health.org
- **For information, contact the Santa Cruz Fire Department at:**

(831) 420-5280