

Subject: RE: Residential Garbage, Recycling & Yard Trimmings Collection Calendar

Date: Mon, 25 Apr 2005 13:15:01 -0700

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "Jean Reeve" <njreeve@shaw.ca>, "DNVCouncil" <DNVCOUNCIL@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>

CC: "Gavin Joyce" <Gavin_Joyce@dnv.org>, "Allen Lynch -Recycling Program" <allen_lynch@dnv.org>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Dear Jean and Fred Reeve:

You are not the only one who has raised a concern about this, albeit not too many have. At least you have taken the trouble to tell us about it. In the name of making government operations less costly and more innovative, sometimes government services are made more complicated, more costly and more bureaucratic. When it gets more complicated it takes more people. This particular issue you have raised is run in the name of three municipalities and lends itself even more to questionable initiatives.

This may have been the case here.

However, there is a more serious aspect to waste management in the GVRD, albeit it is only indirectly connected with the issue you have raised. I am familiar with waste management in some detail since following a tour of waste management installations throughout Europe, I attended an International Waste Conference in Berlin more than 20 years ago and can speak with some authority. I wrote a paper at the time. As an interesting side remark, I still chuckle, though with some sadness, that when the GVRD Chair of the day returned with me from this same tour, he exclaimed to the press that, the only difference between waste management in Europe and in Canada as he saw it, was that in Europe, they use different colour garbage bags. That was the level of his understanding. I don't think we have learned much since and it is little wonder therefore that we are at least 50 years behind in this area and are still paying through our noses.

The central issue of effective waste management is that it cannot function efficiently unless it is backed by government legislation compelling manufacturers to accept at least a certain percentage of recyclable material in the production of new products. This message was drilled into us at the conference. This, it was stated, is regardless of the particular culture or economic circumstance in your own country. When it comes to waste management this is a universal truth it was stated.

But we are not doing this in the case in the Lower Mainland with the result that consumers, instead of being reimbursed for the maximum value of the recyclable packaging and other material when putting it into the Blue Box receive little if anything in return. Certainly not as much as they would if such a legislation and thus a guaranteed market would exist. What is more, the consumer has to pay for having it hauled away on top of it. In jurisdictions where the manufacturer carries this responsibility it is he who insures the supply of the material and does so at his expense. In one sense, instead of getting reimbursed, consumers in the Lower Mainland have to pay twice for the same product - once as part of buying the new product and the second time when giving it back through the Blue Box.

The consumer is also paying for the costly bureaucracy that goes with this inefficient system dictated by government at the behest of corporate interests. On top of that, the taxpayer is also paying for the glossy brochures telling everybody what a wonderful job we are doing. It is like bragging that we are pursuing primary treatment (in some instances) of our effluents, pesticides and all, before dumping them into the ocean, streams and rivers, (a most shameful act of environmental barbarism) when the rest of the developed world has long

been on the Tertiary and even the 4th and final stage of effluent treatment.

This does not mean that the industrial users of recyclable material (at their pleasure) are not paying something and sometimes for the value of the recyclable material delivered to their door, but, in the absence of compelling them, this is at best a hit and miss proposition. It is inefficient, it is costly and quite frankly primitive. It can only happen in a society which essentially is either ignorant or does not care or a combination of both. It has been pointed out, including by myself, at every possible opportunity but nobody has ever paid any attention. The press itself, albeit being aware, has never explained it to the public either. Apparently it does not sell papers.

I am mentioning this since you stated that you have followed "community issues with keen interest" - I thought you may wish to know. Personally, I have made many attempts both on District Council and at the GVRD level to address this and other relevant issues but it has always fallen on deaf ears. I have even tried to have GVRD positions elected. This resulted in a longer yawn even than the news of my cats insomnia. Indeed, for raising this and other even more serious matters, I have been kept off any and all GVRD committees more or less. When I meet people on the street, I am frequently greeted with such words as "are you still causing trouble? With this kind of mentality it is difficult to help a community to be more than mediocre at best. Indeed, I am reminded of a famous quote "One cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear".

Bureaucracies, with the help of their elected friends, are very jealous of their wasteful existence and will make sure that nothing will upset the status quo.


The only solution is public awareness and action, but our people, I don't think, are ready for this. For one thing, it would be totally UnCanadian and most definitely unbecoming, especially in the District of North Vancouver. It might even be subversive. I rest my case, but I am sure you are getting the drift. Thank you again for your interest.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

> From: Jean Reeve [<mailto:njreeve@shaw.ca>]
> Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2005 8:55 PM
> To: DNVCouncil; James Ridge
> Cc: Gavin Joyce; Allen Lynch -Recycling Program; fonvca@fonvca.org
> Subject: Residential Garbage, Recycling & Yard Trimmings
> Collection Calendar
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> Dear Mayor and District Council Members
> I have always taken a keen interest in Community issues but
> never before have I felt the need to complain on something until I
> received the above mentioned.
> The format that has been used is too busy and full of
> unnecessary content. I do not wish to see Advertisers and chit chat
> cluttering up factual information that as a homeowner I need to know.
> I have a picture of the Mayor with a message and I can only think that
> the decision to use this format was for Political gain and not for the
> convenience of taxpayers. Of course an argument will be made that this
> publication did not cost us anything but to me and many others you
> have wasted our time and provided us with memorable frustration. Also
> I note that the Union has a strong presence!
> The previous calendar was simple to follow and the additional
> necessary information was included on the reverse. It was kept for
> ready reference whereas this will be consigned to the garbage after a

> struggle to find the relevant pick up dates With the outrageous rate
> of tax that you levy I'm sure that you can find a way to send us the
> previous style of necessary information.
> As to the advertisers I will boycott them and will let them know
> in due course as to why. Mayor and Council will also fall into this
> category especially at voting time. As a voter this will be one of my
> issues as it has lead me to ask how many other decisions like this has
> been made!
> Jean and Fred Reeve
> North Vancouver
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