**Recycling**

**Child says to his mother: "My class planted a tree in a recycled bottle. The planet is saved!" *(Glasbergen cartoon, as it appeared in Catholic Digest, February, 2010)***

**"French toast" was invented to use up stale bread. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Many U.S. cities, towns, and counties are now incinerating up to half of their recycled plastic and paper because China, which used to buy 40 percent of U.S. recyclables, no longer accepts most of them. As a result, the cost of disposing of recyclables is soaring. *(The Guardian, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 8, 2019)***

**Recycling chaos as China bans imports: "Every day, nearly 4,000 shipping containers full of recyclables leave U.S. ports bound for China," said Jason Margolis in PRI.org. For decades, China has taken America's old plastic, metal, paper, and textiles and used the recycled goods to propel its manufacturing boom. But as of January 1st, the country, which is adopting tough new environmental standards, is turning those containers away, under a ban on "24 types of solid waste, including various plastics and unsorted papers." It has also imposed strict rules on the amount of trash and contaminants, "like the remnants of a greasy pizza box," or non-recyclables like plastic bags, that can be included in recycling bales. U.S. recycling firms are scrambling to respond. In Westborough, Mass., one firm already has 200 tractor-trailer loads of recycled paper bales stacked in a parking lot. "We don't know what to do with it," says owner Ben Harvey. "We can't keep it forever." *(The Week magazine, January 12, 2018)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Starbucks is launching a program to donate all of its leftover meals to local food banks. Starbucks' partners will pick up unsold prepared meals at the end of each day from the company's 7,600 U.S. locations, with the goal of donating up to 5 million meals in the program's first year. *(Fortune.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 1, 2016)***

**Apple said it recovered 2,204 pounds of gold -- worth $40 million -- from recycled iPhones, iPads, and Macs through its e-waste recovery program last year. Of the 90 million pounds of total e-waste that the company collected, including steel, silver, copper, and glass. 61 million pounds of material were reusable. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 29, 2016)***

**Grandma: “Kids, I've got an idea! We'll make your Halloween costumes this year! I've saved some old tablecloths, tin cans, bread ties, egg cartons, and paper towel tubes.” Child: “So, we'll be going as recycling bins?” *(Steve Breen, in Grand Avenue comic strip)***

**Is recycling largely an illusion? Recycling may make people feel "the warm glow" of virtue, said John Tierney, but it's largely a waste of time and money. After two decades of strenuous efforts to get Americans to recycle, prices for recyclable materials have plummeted, and it's generally more expensive for communities "to recycle household waste than to send it to a landfill." Ah, but we're saving the environment! you say. Not really. Studies show that recycling cardboard, paper, and aluminum cans does make environmental sense, but sorting and recycling glass, food scraps, and all of kinds of plastic achieves little or no net environmental gain. When all the impacts are added up, shipping garbage to modern incinerators equipped with effective air scrubbers or to well-insulated landfills causes no more environmental damage than collecting, sorting shipping, and processing recyclables. Many rural communities welcome landfills as a source of revenue, and all the trash generated by Americans for the next 1,000 years would fit in 0.1 percent of available land. These facts are heresy to green activists, who've turned recycling into a "religious ritual" and are pushing for 100 percent of waste to be recycled. But it's a ritual of increasingly dubious value. *(The Week magazine, October 16, 2015)***

**There is no future in rock 'n' roll, only recycled past. *(Mick Jagger)***

**The dollar's denim problem: America's love of skinny jeans once threatened the integrity of the U.S. money supply, said Ylan Q. Mui in WashingtonPost.com. Since the late 1800s, U.S. currency has been printed on a unique cotton-blend paper, and for decades the sole supplier of that paper, Boston-based Crane & Company, relied on recycled denim scraps from the garment industry to meet almost a third of its cotton needs. But that secure source was undermined in the 1990s, when the fashion world began blending spandex with denim to create stretchier, "curve-hugging" jeans. "Even a single fiber of spandex can ruin a batch of currency paper" by weakening the cotton, and by the early 2000s it was in "almost every pair of jeans." The company had to start buying cotton directly from the source in order to avoid giving a new meaning to the term "elastic money supply." *(The Week magazine, December 27, 2013)***

**When a man eats his words, that's recycling. *(Frank A. Clark, Register & Tribune Syndicate)***

**Make this an ecological New Year -- recycle those resolutions. *(St. Louis Bugle)***

**Notice at the bottom of publicity releases from West Virginia University: "This is Recycled Paper. May you sit under the tree it helped to save." *(James Dent, in Charleston, West Virginia, Gazette)***

**One teenage girl to another: "I discarded Patrick three weeks ago, but I'm thinking of recycling him." *(Cathy Joachim, Cartoons-of-the-Month)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****

**Our plastic-clogged planet: The world is filling up with plastic. In the first comprehensive assessment of global plastic production, researchers have calculated that humans have created an astonishing 9 billion tons of the synthetic polymer since 1950 -- and 7 billion tons of it have been thrown away. Of the discarded plastic, just 9 percent has been recycled and 12 percent incinerated; the remaining 79 percent is either clogging up landfills, littering landscapes, or floating in the ocean. The problem is only getting worse: Half of all global plastic production has taken place in the past 13 years. The researchers estimate that by 2050, there will be more than 13 billion tons of discarded plastic worldwide. "The danger is permanent global contamination with plastics," lead author Roland Gayer of the University of California, Santa Barbara, tells The Washington Post. "It's just going to be everywhere in the soil, in the ocean, in the sediment of the ocean floor." Even the beaches of Hawaii now have plastic bits mixed in with the sand. A team of oceanographers recently discovered off the coast of Chile a plastic garbage patch bigger than the state of Texas, similar to the vortex of floating plastic debris in the North Pacific. Most plastic products, such as food packages, are designed to be used once and then discarded. Recycling rates remain low, especially in the U.S.: Europeans recycle 30 percent of their plastic and the Chinese 25 percent, versus just 9 percent here. *(The Week magazine, August 11, 2017)***

**One man says to another: “That’s right, these plastic recycling bins are made to last thousands of years!” *(Dave Coverly, in Speed Bump comic strip)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****

**Recycling slogan: "Don't let our waste go to waste." *(Lynn Deming, in Reader's Digest)***

**Apropos of tax time, this sticker: “Save Our Trees, Stop Printing Tax Forms.”**

***(Robert Orben, in The Wall Street Journal)***

**Plastic-Eating "Super Enzyme": Scientists in the U.K. have developed a cocktail of enzymes that can break down plastics much more quickly than current methods, a possible game-changer for recycling. Researchers have been seeking to harness the natural digestive qualities of enzymes ever since the discovery of plastic-eating bacteria at a Japanese landfill in 2016. The new "super enzyme" is combination of PETase -- an enzyme previously known to break down plastic -- and another enzyme called MHETase. When these are stitched together, the scientists found, the speed of the breakdown increased sixfold over when PETase is used alone. The process leaves behind the building blocks of plastic, which can be used over and over again. "We were actually quite surprised it worked at all, lead author John McGeehan, from the University of Portsmouth, tells CNN.com. Because fossil fuels are required to make plastic, he says, "we're looking at huge energy savings." The super enzyme is still a small mover: recycling a plastic bottle would still take days or weeks. But McGeehan and his team are exploring ways to cut the degradation time -- by softening the plastic, for example -- and to scale up their operations. *(The Week magazine, October 16, 2020)***

**Good week for: Trees, with IKEA's announcement that it will cease publication of its iconic printed catalog, which once touched 200 million customers. With most people now shopping online, IKEA's Konrad Gruss said, killing the catalog was "emotional but rational." *(The Week magazine, December 18, 2020)***

**Up your recycling game: Even if you’re good about toting your newspapers and cat food cans to the curb each week, you’re probably tossing other items that could (and should) go into those blue bins. Think foil, bubble wrap, wire hangers – when recycled, all can turn into things you might not expect, including car bumpers, carpeting, comic books, egg cartons, nails, and trash bags, according to the EPA. Other items, such as dead batteries, spent light bulbs, empty ink cartridges, and used motor oil, should be taken to dedicated collection centers (often the stores where you bought them) for recycling. If that seems like a hassle, consider the alternative: These would otherwise spend centuries in landfills. Plastic can take up to 450 years to decompose; aluminum, 200 years; and glass, a million years. *(Reader’s Digest Editors)***

**Scott Kelly has just completed 340 days in space -- crushing the previous NASA record of 215 consecutive days. During his stay at the International Space Station, Kelly witnessed 10,944 sunrises and sunsets, covered 143,846,525 miles -- or roughly the distance of a one-way trip to Mars -- and drank 193 gallons of recycled urine and sweat. *(NYTimes.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 11, 2016)***

**Recycling waste in space: As NASA prepares for a future mission to Mars, the space agency is funding research into how astronauts can recycle all their waste -- including urine, feces, and exhaled air. "If astronauts are going to make journeys that span several years, we'll need to find a way to reuse and recycle everything they bring with them," study leader Mark Blenner, from Clemson University, tells Phys.org. "Atom economy will become really important." Blenner's research focuses on hibernating engineered yeast. By feeding various strains of common yeast with nitrogen-rich urine, carbon from human breath, and algae, he and his team have produced vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, and other dietary supplements, as well as a polymer that could be transformed using a 3-D printer into plastic parts and tools. While U.S. astronauts already recycle their pee into drinking water, this more advanced form of recycling is still in its early stages. The engineered yeast currently produces only limited quantities of polymer and nutrients, and it's unclear how the fungi would fare in deep space. *(The Week magazine, September 8, 2017)***

**Worms that eat Styrofoam: Scientists may be close to finding a way to recycle polystyrene, the long-lasting plastic packaging known as Styrofoam, thanks to the larva of the darkling beetle. In a new story, says The New York Times, larva fed on only polystyrene got enough nutrition to metamorphose into their beetle phase. The worms underwent several physiological changes on the all-polystyrene diet: Their feces turned from light brown to white, and their weight rose slowly. “Polystyrene is definitely a poor diet,” says co-author Christian Rinke, from the University of Queensland in Australia. But “the worms can survive it.” When the time came for metamorphosis, 67 percent of the plastic-munching worms were successful in pupating, compared with 10 percent of those that were fed nothing at all. If scientists can pinpoint what enzyme in the worm’s digestive system enables them to break down the plastic – and they think they have several promising contenders – they could use that enzyme in recycling facilities. “It would make the whole thing more interesting economically,” Rinke said, and “create something sought-after.” *(The Week magazine, July 1, 2022)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***