



Summer 2011 Newsletter | Volume 19 | No. 2



MEDICATION PG 3
Properly dispose of old meds without even leaving your home!



EARTH DAYPG 4-5
Scores of local volunteers set a litter collection record at 2011 event.



THERMOMETERS.....PG 6
Drop them off to OCRRA and keep mercury out of the waste stream.



HAZARDOUS WASTE..... PG 7
Learn how easy it is to get rid of it safely in Onondaga County.

Save the world
a little each day.



July – Brought to You by the Color Yellow

Highly-visible yellow bags help haulers collect old alkaline batteries in July

Greg Gelewski

As they say on Sesame Street, the month of July is brought to you (and your street) by the color yellow. OCRRA dedicates the month of July to the sunny hue because July is household battery collection month and residents can use OCRRA's YELLOW battery bags to properly dispose of old alkaline batteries. (Residents can still use the old orange bags if they have one hanging around, but please note that your hauler can ONLY collect ALKALINE batteries in the bags in July, regardless of the color bag used.)

You may be wondering, why all the fuss over different colored battery collection bags? The bag color change is to help highlight an important program change; rechargeables and button batteries are no longer acceptable as part of the July curbside pick-up. Federal DOT regulations prohibit haulers from transporting mixed types of batteries (in simple terms, they can't transport alkalines mixed with rechargeables or button batteries). What does this mean for you? It means the **July curbside collection is only for ALKALINE batteries, such as AA, AAA, C, D, and 9-volt.** Rechargeable batteries are NOT accepted as part of the July curbside program. (See below for year-round disposal options for rechargeables, button batteries AND alkalines.)



If you don't get a chance to take part in the July curbside collection for alkaline batteries, you can drop them off (as well as rechargeable batteries) at area Wegmans and Green Hills Market year-round. Ashley Dailey of Liverpool recycles a rechargeable battery at one of OCRRA's battery collection bins at the John Glenn Wegmans in Liverpool. Visit www.OCRRA.org for a list of other locations that will take back your batteries year-round.

The July (ALKALINE) battery collection runs the entire month of July. The yellow battery bags must be visible to your hauler, so they should rest on TOP of your CLOSED garbage bag or can. Please do NOT place your battery bag in your blue bin or inside of your garbage, as they will not be disposed of properly.

Yellow bags for household alkaline batteries may be obtained at any local Wegmans or Green Hills Service counter, the Rock Cut Road

Transfer Station or from OCRRA. Simply send a quick email to us at info@OCRRA.org; include your name and address in the body of the email and OCRRA will mail you a battery bag (while supplies last).

If you are a business looking to dispose of old batteries, please visit www.OCRRA.org/programs_battery.asp for more information.

Greg Gelewski can be reached at ggelewski@OCRRA.org

Year-Round Battery Disposal Options

Residents can drop off **all types of batteries**, except wet cells (e.g., car batteries) at: OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Transfer Station, any local Wegmans or Green Hills Market year round. Look for OCRRA's battery collection bins that allow for the disposal of separated alkaline, rechargeable and button batteries. *Note: Batteries brought to these locations do not go in yellow battery bags. There are special battery preparation instructions for the segmented collection bins.* Visit www.ocrra.org/programs_battery.asp or grab a handy flyer, found at the collection bins, for instructions on battery preparation. Each year, our community recycles more rechargeable batteries per capita than any other large community in New York State, including New York City!

Rechargeable Batteries: Keeping rechargeables out of the trash prevents heavy metals, such as cadmium, from harming the environment. As of June 8, 2011, stores that sell rechargeable batteries must accept used rechargeables from consumers. Retailers must take up to ten rechargeable batteries per day from any person regardless of whether the customer purchases replacement batteries, and accept as many rechargeable batteries as a consumer purchases from the retailer. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/72065.html for info on the law or visit www.ocrra.org/documents/Batteries_Rechargeables_101409.pdf for details on drop-off locations in Onondaga County.



Lynn Hughes and Carly Cisternino from the Tech Garden proudly display their Blue Ribbon Recycler certification. To close the recycling loop, the Tech Garden purchases several products made of recycled content including cups, paper towels and tissue, in addition to their office copy paper.

Go Green – Become Blue...

Apply for certification and join the local companies that became Blue Ribbon Recyclers this quarter!

- Conestoga-Rovers & Associates
- Diane Brandli Interior Designer
- Divine Renewable Energy
- Feher Rubbish Removal Inc.
- Legrand / Pass & Seymour
- SUNY Upstate Medical University
- Sustainable Office Solutions
- Syracuse Center of Excellence
- The Tech Garden

www.blueribbonrecycler.com

has been completely revamped – take advantage of the easy navigation and simple application process.

Food Scraps Weighing You Down?

Colleges, restaurants and other institutions looking to reduce their trash turn to OCRRA's economical food waste composting program for help.

Food waste is any food, raw or cooked, that is discarded. Food waste may account for up to 70% of the total weight of your trash.

Composting your food waste reduces your trash, which reduces what you pay to dispose of trash through your hauler.

It costs less to dispose of food waste through OCRRA's Compost Program than it does to dispose of it as trash (about half as much).

Dropping off food waste at OCRRA's Amboy Compost Site costs \$35 per ton. Dropping that same material off to OCRRA as trash costs \$74 per ton. **Choosing food waste composting over trashing can save businesses up to \$39 per ton.**

Syracuse University diverted over 137 tons of food waste from their waste stream in 2010 by composting their dining hall food waste; this saved them over \$4,500 in disposal fees.

OCRRA's trained staff is happy to be your business' *free* food waste consultant. We can help you reduce your trash and make a top-quality compost out of your food waste. Contact OCRRA Recycling Specialist Dave Nettle, today, for details on how to get started. (dnettle@ocrra.org or 453-2866, ext. 209.)

At this time, OCRRA only accepts food waste from facilities that produce large amounts of food waste. Residential food waste collection or drop off is not available. Looking to compost smaller volumes of food waste? Visit www.OCRRA.org for information on backyard or vermicomposting.



Compost Site Hours



SEASON DURATION:

April 1 through November 30

JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE

Tuesday - Saturday
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

AMBOY COMPOST SITE

Monday – Saturday
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Southside Charter Academy Charts Course of Recycling Excellence

Allison Stuart

What does the Southside Charter Academy do that warrants winning OCRRA's prestigious Vonnell Mastri Recycling Excellence Award and sets them apart from other schools? With initiative and dedication from head custodian Steve Streeter, kids, staff, and administration the school now recycles so much cardboard and paper that they doubled their recycling pick-ups and recycled 4-5 tons of paper this school year.

Streeter says, "The teachers used to take recyclables with them and put them in their bins at home. About three years ago, they wanted to start a recycling program, and they urged me to get it going school-wide. With the sup-

port and participation from the staff and Principal Mevec, the recycling program has really taken off. School-wide teamwork is the key to our success. If we didn't have teamwork, it wouldn't work. Hopefully, we can set an example for other schools."

Some specific examples that SSCA sets for other schools:

- **Blue Bins abound** on campus so students and staff can readily recycle their paper, including old homework, artwork, memos and mail. Staff stockpiles scrap paper and uses it to make copies for their classes. This reduces the need to purchase large volumes of copy paper.
- The **school actively communicates the recycling**

message through poster display, OCRRA presentations and monthly emails to staff.

- They **dedicate October as "Recycling Month"** and conduct a recycling poster contest. Teachers make a special effort to incorporate recycling into the existing curriculum in October.
- The school **proudly displays their OCRRA Recycling Pledge** for all who enter the school to see; on a daily basis, this reminds staff and students of their commitment to recycling.

Next school year, SSCA also has plans to start an after-school Environmental Awareness Group with guest speakers that will discuss various topics; launch a website; and begin compost-



Students from Ms. Saldo's 4th grade class accept certificates of recycling excellence and an Earth flag, on behalf of their school. *Front, left to right:* Jaiden Dale, Tiera Miller, Justine Bell, Israel McKenzie. *Back:* Head Custodian, Steve Streeter; OCRRA Recycling Director, Andrew Radin; and Ms. Saldo.

ing to aid their new garden.

Great job SSCA! Keep up the good work, and thank you for doing your part to help *save the world a little each day.*

The annual Mastri award is given in honor of Dr. Vonnell

Mastri, a former educator at Onondaga Community College and a City of Syracuse appointee to the OCRRA board of directors at the time of her death.

Allison Stuart can be reached at astuart@OCRRA.org



Recycling Rhoda

Let's Talk Trash...and Recycling too!

Dear Recycling Rhoda,
I heard about a big prescription drug take back program after it happened. I always miss these things; when is the next one?

Pharma Phoebe

Dear Phoebe,

Why is it we always read about something after it happens?!? I know you feel like you were a day late and a dollar short, but no worries Phoebs, OCRRA has you covered. Or, should I say, OCRRA has those pesky prescription drugs covered.

The first thing I gotta tell you is, DON'T FLUSH 'EM! While wastewater treatment systems are really advanced, they can't manage everything. By in large, they do not treat drugs at all. In fact, drugs harm the bacteria that treats sewage; flushing them actually upsets the waste water treatment process. When drugs get into the environment this way

they can hurt aquatic life, damage the eco-system and they are tough on humans too. Mother Nature is undefended when drugs are flushed.

Here's the rule: **Unwanted prescriptions go in the trash.** Take them out of their container (if they're in a vial that's a #5 plastic - recycle it). Make sure you mix those leftover pills, creams or liquids in with something really yucky, like coffee grounds or kitty litter. That way no one's gonna want to touch them, not ne'er-do-wells looking for a high, nor Fido as he explores the confines of your garbage can when you aren't looking.

I know what you're thinking. Why do companies offer prescription drug take back programs if OCRRA says we can simply toss old prescriptions in the trash? Why should I drive my car anywhere to dispose of old meds, when I can simply

throw them in my trash? Well, Phoebe, here's why: you live in a very special place. A place where instead of being buried in a landfill, all your trash is converted into renewable energy (electricity) at a Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility. The thing about WTE facilities is they incinerate trash at extremely high temperatures (with lots of filters and elaborate emissions systems on the back end to protect the environment). Many communities do not have WTE facilities and they send all their trash to a landfill. There are concerns that the drugs can leach out of landfills and harm the environment, so communities and corporations that operate in this type of system devised medication take back programs. To be safely disposed of, all the drugs collected at take back programs are, yup, you guessed it, incinerated at plants just like the one here.

So, as you can see, there is no reason to attend a prescription drug take back program in Onondaga County (even though national companies sponsor them here). Save yourself some time and some gas. Your trash and those prescription drugs are going to a Waste-to-Energy facility already! Take it from me, it is simple; just mix those meds with some-

thing especially nasty and put them in your trash. The WTE Facility will take care of the rest. It is so easy! Oh, and, never flush old meds.

Remember to recycle that pill bottle Phoebe; I know you almost forgot.

Medicinally yours,

Rhoda



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OCRRA

100 Elwood Davis Road
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KRISTEN LAWTON
Public Information Officer

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(including this newsletter) are partially financed by the
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A Little Spring Cleaning Goes a Long Way

Sarah Stewart

Onondaga County residents banded together for the annual Earth Day Litter Clean-Up on April 29th and 30th to tackle trash. This year was a smashing success – over 8,900 volunteers picked up more than 164,500 pounds of trash! That is enough to fill almost seven school buses with litter! Groups large and small went out in droves to collect the plastic bags and bottles, food containers, and other general litter that plagues our landscape. Some groups were surprised with their findings: some found money (in different currencies, no less: dollars and Euros), reptile terrariums, and even a bag of Doritos from 1982!

OCRRRA wants to thank the businesses, community groups, schools, boy and girl scout troops, and churches that make this clean-up possible. Together, we have removed over 2 million pounds of litter from our streets, parks, and waterways since the early 1990s. Special thanks to those groups who have been participating for many years, including (but not limited to): the Kirkville Methodist Church, OCWA, Lockheed Martin, Southern Hills Garden Club, and the German American Society. Keep up the great work! Sarah Stewart can be reached at [sstewart@OCRRRA.org](mailto:ssstewart@OCRRRA.org)



Want to see MORE Earth Day pictures?

Find “OCRRRA.org” on Facebook
and vote for your favorites!
“Like” us today to start saving the environment.



F-M Girl Scout Troop 526



Junior Bass Masters



Grant Middle School, Ms. Spagnola's 6th Grade Class

“We have a responsibility to look after our planet. It is our only home.”
— The Dalai Lama



Tender Hearts Family Childcare



Webster Elementary - 1st Grade



Cub Scout Pack 71 • Bear Den 3 • Baldwinsville



PLAST Ukrainian Scout Group



Camillus Police Department



Amboy Bell Isle Church



Syracuse New Times



Hug A Bunch Childcare



Lockheed Martin

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle *AND Recover*

Waste-to-Energy and Recycling Programs Make OCRRA's Integrated Waste System Tops

Amy Miller

Chances are you know what the “3Rs” are; chances are also good that you try your best to follow that ideology before tossing stuff into the garbage. The “3Rs” (reduce, reuse, recycle) are fairly common household lingo. Not surprisingly, the “3Rs” are also at the top of the resource or waste management hierarchy supported by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States

The Onondaga County Waste-to-Energy Facility generates enough electricity to power about 30,000 households

Environmental Protection Agency. However, many people are not as familiar with the fact that this hierarchy has a 4th “R”, which stands for “recover” or the recovery of energy at facilities like the Onondaga County Waste-to-Energy Facility.

The last level in the hierarchy (and least preferred)

is burying materials in a landfill, and rightfully so. As a nation, we spend lots of resources to mine for coal and drill for oil and natural gas; why would we want to bury a resource like trash that could be used safely as a source of fuel to generate electricity or steam for heating?

The waste management hierarchy, supported by our state and the nation, considers the environmental impacts of each level and prioritizes them accordingly. It also provides a good measuring stick for evaluating OCRRA's system. As indicated in the figure to the right, you can see that OCRRA's system is very consistent with the hierarchy. On the other hand, the national average doesn't do nearly as good a job with its low recycling rate and heavy reliance on landfilling. In fact, the national numbers are upside down.

It may seem like boasting for me to say OCRRA's system is one of the best in the country, but it truly is. OCRRA's many awards

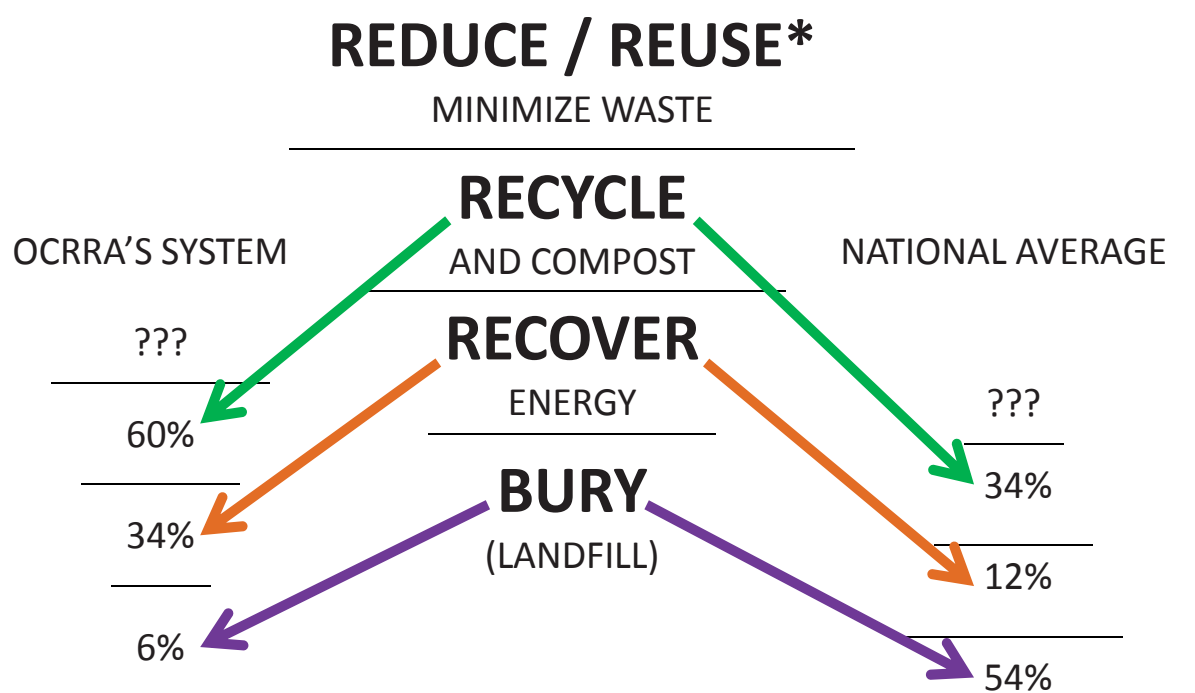
have confirmed this. Much of this success has to do with you at home following the “3Rs” – our community does a tremendous job! Another reason is that OCRRA's system uses the non-recyclable part of the trash to make electricity.

The Onondaga County Waste-to-Energy Facility generates enough electricity to power about 30,000 households – utilizing a resource that would otherwise be buried in the ground at a landfill! So let's take a minute to celebrate

the success of the OCRRA system – we hope you're as proud as we are.

Amy Miller can be reached at amiller@OCRRA.org

Resource or Waste Management Hierarchy



* Items minimized through reduction and reuse are not included in the percentages above, as they cannot be tracked (in any system).

OCRRA's system turns trash into electricity, which is one of the reasons we score much better than the national average when it comes to following the NYS DEC and US EPA endorsed waste management hierarchy.

As the Mercury Rises Higher and Higher, Help Keep Mercury Thermometers Out of the Trash

Donato Mercuri

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, mercury, like that found in thermometers and thermostats, if improperly released into the environment accumulates in fish. When humans eat the mercury tainted fish,

it builds up in our systems and can cause nervous system disorders. Makes you want to get rid of your old mercury thermometers and thermostats, no?

Well, you are in luck; OCRRA's mercury thermostat and thermometer collection is a year-round effort to keep the poten-

tially harmful substance out of our waste stream. The average mercury level in a thermometer is about 1 gram and thermostats have an estimated 4 grams.

Do your part to keep our environment clean and safe; bring your old mercury thermostats and thermometers to the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station. The station is located

at 5808 Rock Cut Road in Jamesville. It is open Tuesday-Saturday from 7:00 am until 2:30 pm.

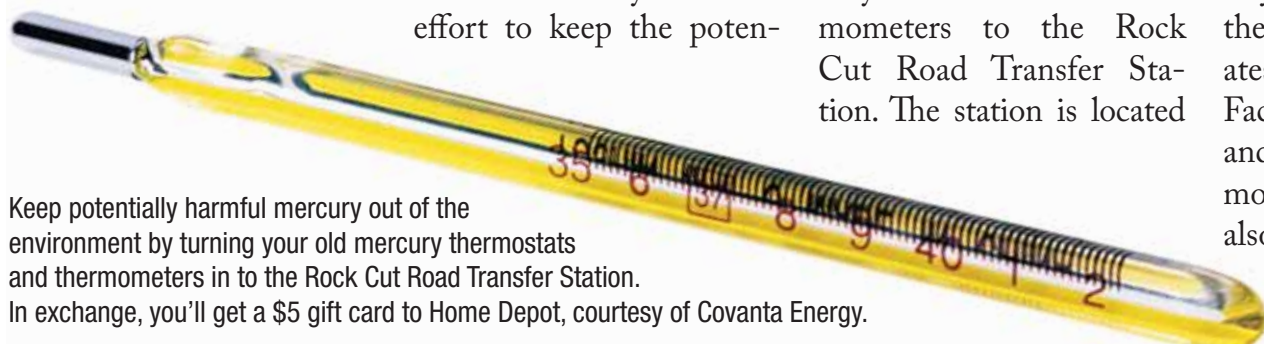
In addition to helping the environment and human health, you will receive a \$5 gift card to Home Depot. The cards are courtesy of Covanta Energy, the company that operates the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville. Oh, and if you bring in a thermometer, OCRRA will also give you a brand new

mercury-free thermometer for helping to *save the world a little each day!*

OCRRA's Director of Recycling, Andrew Radin, explains, “At the time residents drop off their old mercury thermometer, we ask them to fill out a card with their name and address. A new mercury-free thermometer and the \$5 gift card will then be mailed out. This is truly a win-win situation for everyone.”

In the past eight years, through the Rock Cut

Continued on page 7



Keep potentially harmful mercury out of the environment by turning your old mercury thermostats and thermometers in to the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station. In exchange, you'll get a \$5 gift card to Home Depot, courtesy of Covanta Energy.

From the Executive Director...

As Seen on Television

Tom Rhoads

According to Nielsen, the average American watches more than four hours of TV each day. The Nielsen folks also rate the top shows by calculating how many people tune into the various shows in the lineup. While it may seem like it, this article is not another drone on how to properly recycle your old TV set (which by the way can be done for free at various locations in NY, thanks to our state's new Product Stewardship Law. Visit OCRRA.org for details...)

I watch my fair share of TV. On Monday nights, I watch "House" find the cure for a deadly illness in the last six minutes of each episode. Without fail, Dr. House always has his world-class team execute a search of the patient's home to look for poisons and toxins. "House" always gets a good Nielsen rating.

In reality, 82 people die every day from unintentional poisonings in the U.S. Toxins flushed into sewers cause serious damage to the natural envi-

ronment, as well as terrible malfunctions at treatment plants. However, protecting loved ones from death or illness and protecting our natural resources from household hazardous waste is easy.

Buy only what you need, properly use what you cannot avoid, and make and keep your reservation for an HHW event.

What is household hazardous waste, or HHW? It is usually a leftover pesticide, a lawn or garden herbicide, even a fertilizer or pool chemical. It can be some unused automotive fluid – think wheel cleaner or anti-freeze. On "House" episodes, they always find some nasty stuff under the sink or in the garage, which is where HHW likes to hide.

HHW can be useful and safe when used and disposed of properly. These products are never safe if they are poured down the

drain. On the other hand, if they are carelessly tossed into the trash, these materials can harm trash collectors, cause waste fires, or even diminish the high quality of the air emissions from the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, where your garbage is turned into clean energy.

With easy sign-up on OCRRA's website, OCRRA.org, making a HHW reservation is a snap. It is also free and the events happen several times a year. By asking residents to make a reservation, OCRRA ensures that they spend 15 minutes, or less, to drop their materials off at the Ley Creek Transfer Station. (Perhaps the term "free" is a bit of a misnomer; the HHW event is free to residents of the OCRRA system, but in reality HHW events cost about \$60 per car. That expense is paid for by OCRRA's system fee for trash disposal.)

If the average American can spend 28 hours per week glued to the television, surely we can

afford the short time it takes to put HHW in the right place. Please reduce your use of household toxics. Buy only what you need, properly use what you cannot avoid, and make and keep your reservation

for an HHW event (there is one coming up July 16). In turn, you can avoid being fodder for the reality TV show "1,000 Ways to Die." Definitely a good trade-off.

Tom Rhoads can be reached at trhoads@OCRRA.org.



Household hazardous waste comes in many forms, including weed killer and pesticides. For a list of items accepted at OCRRA's July 16 drop-off event, or to make a reservation, visit www.ocrra.org/programs_hazardous.asp

Help Keep Mercury Thermometers Out of the Trash – Continued from page 6

Road Transfer Station collection, OCRRA has safely managed the recovery of 1,451 thermometers and 219 thermostats - keeping over 2,300 grams of mercury out of the trash and recycling it. That's in addition to the hundreds of mercury containing devices that residents turned in during Household Hazardous Waste drop-off events!

Bringing your mercury containing devices to OCRRA is one of the most efficient ways to keep this potentially dangerous element out of our environ-

ment and homes, which in turn keeps our families and friends safe from nervous system disorders.

Broken or cracked thermostats and thermometers are not accepted by OCRRA. If you have a broken thermometer please take precautions when cleaning it up. Do not let children or pets near the spill. Visit www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/ for details on how to safely manage a mercury spill.

Donato Mercuri can be reached at dmercuri@OCRRA.org

Honey Do List Got You Down?

Want to dispose of debris from household remodels or clean-ups? Visit OCRRA's Transfer Stations and we'll help you out.

Rock Cut Road Transfer Station

5808 Rock Cut Road, Jamesville, NY 13078
Just east of the Rock Cut Road exit on Rt. 481 North, across from the Waste-to-Energy Facility.
Hours: Tuesday - Saturday: 7 AM to 2:30 PM

Ley Creek Transfer Station

5158 Ley Creek Drive, Liverpool, NY 13088
7th North Street, east of exit 25 from Rt. 81, across the street from the Pilot Travel Center.
Hours: Second and Fourth Saturday of each month: 8 AM to Noon

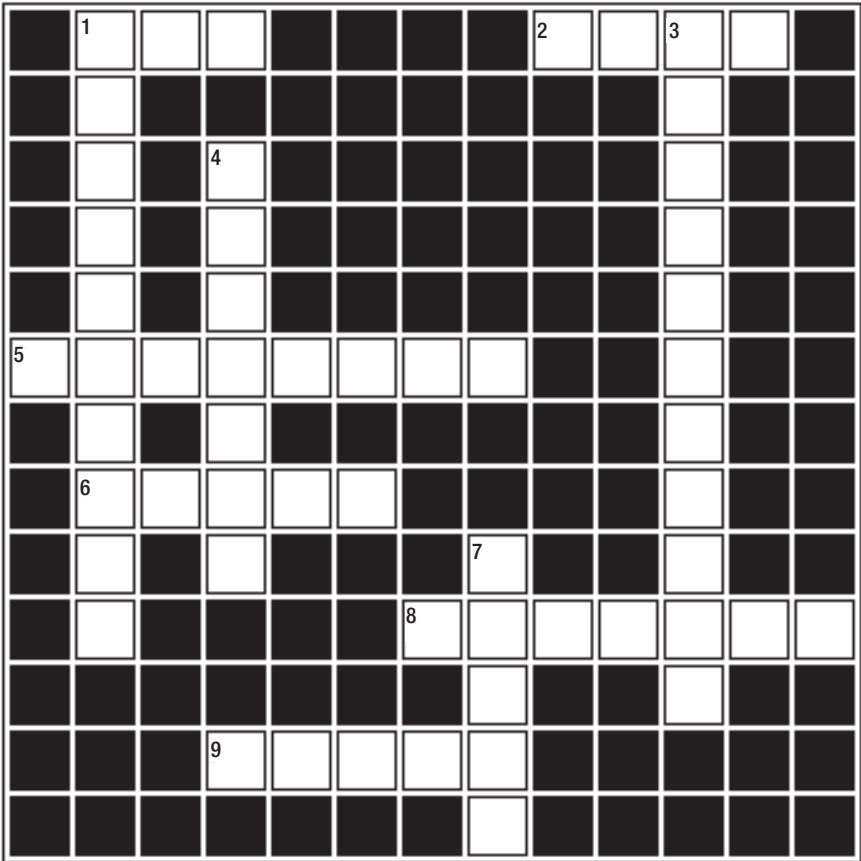
Fees:

Cars, Mini-Vans, or SUVs,\$10.00
Pick-Up Trucks, Vans, Single-Axle Trailers\$25.00
Tarps are required. All untarped vehicles are charged\$15.00

For more info on acceptable items or fees visit: www.OCRRA.org/trash_transfer.asp



Transfer Station Crossword Puzzle



Down

- 1. These things you sleep on, as well as box springs, are accepted at both transfer stations.
- 3. Name of OCRRA transfer station in Jamesville that accepts trash and recyclables - and also has an industrial paper shredding machine onsite for customer use. (\$1 for 4 minutes of shredding!) (3 Words)
- 4. Thermostats and thermometers that contain this element are accepted for free at the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station. (You'll even get a \$5 gift card to Home Depot if you bring a thermostat or thermometer in!)
- 7. These types of clippings can be left on your lawn or brought with other yard wastes (weeds, branches, leaves, etc.) to OCRRA's compost sites. (Yard waste is not accepted at the transfer stations.)



Find us on:
facebook®

OCRRA has a
NEW Facebook page!

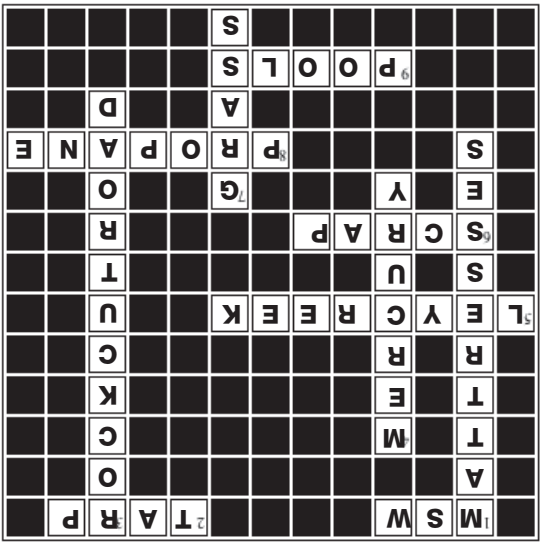
Search Facebook for **OCRRA.org**
and **like** us to start saving the environment.

Across

- 1. Abbreviation for "municipal solid waste."
- 2. Customers with trucks or open trailers that visit either OCRRA transfer station must cover their materials with one of these to avoid generating litter or a fine from the NYSDEC.
- 5. Name of OCRRA transfer station, located off 7th North Street in Liverpool, that is open to residents on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month. (2 Words)
- 6. This type of metal (think "leftover") is accepted at both transfer stations.
- 8. Twenty-pound tanks filled with this type of gas are NOT accepted at either transfer station. (Most of them can be refilled repeatedly. Search **www.OCRRA.org** for a list of locations that will accept them for recycling.)
- 9. Muriatic acid, chlorine, and other chemicals used to treat these wet, summertime havens are not accepted at the transfer stations as they can cause fires or harm employees and other customers.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE
Answer Key



Tina's Groove used with the permission of Rina Piccolo, King Features and the Cartoonist Group. All rights reserved.

Mark Your Calendar



ALKALINE BATTERY COLLECTION
ENTIRE MONTH OF JULY
Place yellow battery bag on top of your trash for your hauler to collect.

COMPOST SITES CLOSED
JULY 2-4 & SEPTEMBER 3-5
Enjoy your holiday weekends!

TRANSFER STATIONS & OCRRA OFFICE CLOSED
JULY 4 & SEPTEMBER 5
See you on Tuesday!

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF
SATURDAY, JULY 16
8 am - 2 pm at Ley Creek. Register at www.OCRRA.org

SHRED-O-RAMA
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
8 am to Noon
Alliance Bank Stadium (enter from Grant Blvd. only).