

**Lederer, Steven**

**From:** Christy Abreu [Christy@uvds.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 01, 2008 10:11 AM  
**To:** Lederer, Steven  
**Cc:** Garden, Amy  
**Subject:** Emailing: St. Helena Star .. CommunityFeatures.htm

Napa Valley Register :: American Canyon Eagle :: St. Helena Star :: Weekly Calistogan :: DP Valley Life :: Valley Classifieds



[Jobs](#) | [Homes](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Autos](#)

Search Archives  
 [        ] [search]

[HOME](#) :: [NEWS](#) :: [SPORTS](#) :: [BUSINESS](#) :: [FEATURES](#) :: [COLUMNISTS](#) :: [OPINION](#) :: [OBITUARIES](#) :: [CIRCULATION](#)

**QUICK LINKS**

[Archives](#)  
[Culinary.net](#)  
[Recipes](#)  
[Health News](#)  
**MARKETPLACE**  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Real Estate](#)  
[Rentals](#)  
[Jobs](#)  
[Autos](#)  
[Place A Classified](#)

**SERVICES**

[Contact Us](#)  
[Work for Us!](#)  
[Subscriptions](#)

**Features > Community****Community comes together for St. Helena**

By Christy Abreu  
 SPECIAL TO THE STAR  
 Thursday, May 01, 2008

Did you know that you can walk one mile along an average highway in the United States and see about 1,457 pieces of litter? Well we found much more than that in the area I helped clean on Saturday right here in downtown St. Helena. And I was not alone, the community really came together.

St. Helenans were out bright and early at Lyman Park quickly breaking into task forces that were assigned different jobs from repainting fences and picnic tables to large debris clean up and replanting of flowers at city hall. From Girl Scouts to members of St. Helena Hospital, Kiwanis, Rotary, Chamber members and of course my team of fearless 4-Hers. We had the tough job of cleaning up Railroad Avenue parking spaces and the Safeway parking lot against the Wine Train fence. What a mess. As one parent said, "This looks like East Palo Alto." It was quite a shock to see that kind of debris in downtown St. Helena. Everyone who helped out deserves a special thank you!

In about 10 days, the county of Napa Environmental Management Department encourages you to handle your Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) on Sunday, May 11. It will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Angwin Plaza and it's free. Did you know that Americans generate 1.6 million tons of HHW each year? Over time the average home can accumulate up to 100 pounds of HHW in the basement, garage, storage closets and under the kitchen sink. Well, here is an opportunity to dispose of these toxins in an environmentally safe, legal and free way.

This program began back in 1987 when I was only a sophomore in college and was a very big deal to my dad, calling for all the entire family's involvement. That was code word for it

needed a lot of volunteers to make it successful! And that it was! It was held at city hall and Mayor Lowell Smith greeted every car that came through (nearly 300), collecting a total of 4,658 pounds of materials.

Just eight years later the event was held at Sutter Home Ranch on Zinfandel Lane, and although it was extremely successful generating 839 vehicles and 75,602 tons of material, it was a little chaotic to say the least, after a resident brought in picric acid, which prompted the involvement of the bomb squad and every other emergency response person in the entire county. In the end, the product was detonated and Bob Torres was grateful no one got hurt, and he may think twice before hosting the event again, which is perfectly understandable.

So if you happen to have any toxic materials, let's get them properly disposed so they don't find their way into our water supplies. The toxic materials can include cleaners, solvents, thinners, herbicides, pesticides, batteries of all kinds, latex and oil base paints, old gasoline, antifreeze, auto products, oven cleaners, outdated medicines and syringes, barbecue propane tanks, art supplies and more. If you have more specific questions on materials accepted you can call 963-1025 and if you miss the event on Sunday May 11, the County of Napa offers a permanent collection facility in South Napa open every Friday and Saturday from 9-4.

In regard to recycling and proper waste disposal, I cannot stress enough the use of the recycling guide found in your telephone book or go to [uvds.com](http://uvds.com) and click on phone book recycling guide.

(Christy Pestoni Abreu is a fourth-generation St. Helenan, who graduated from Justin Siena High School in 1985 and St. Mary's College in 1989. She says she has been employed with the family company since birth, and currently has the title of Public Education Director for Upper Valley Disposal and Recycling and Clover Flat Landfill. She has three children, lives in St. Helena and says she loves her job, "but not always the dynamics of a family business!" Abreu is also the environmental science instructor for the Rutherford 4-H and is a board member of the St. Helena and Calistoga Boys and Girls Club.)

 Print this story |  Email this story | Browse today's articles in this category: [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

**No comments posted.**

Subscribe to the paper today! [Click here for details.](#)

#### Log in to join the conversation

\***Member ID:** [       ]

\***Password:** [       ]

Remember login?  
(requires cookies) [   ]

[Forgot Your Password?](#)  
[Login]

**[Click here to register an account!](#)**

#### Comment guidelines

All comments will be screened and may take several hours to be posted.

- Keep comments clear, concise and focused on the topic in the story.
- Comments exceeding 300 words will not be posted.
- Refrain from personal attacks, degrading comments or remarks that do not add to a constructive dialogue.
- Comments implying suspects in crime-related stories are guilty before they have been proven so in a court of law will be deleted.
- Do not post e-mail addresses or links except for pages on [StHelenaStar.com](http://StHelenaStar.com) or government Web sites.

- Comments will not be edited - they will be approved or declined.
- Comments may be used in the print edition of the newspaper.
- If you feel a posted comment has violated our guidelines, please contact [dross@napanews.com](mailto:dross@napanews.com) or [bkennedy@napanews.com](mailto:bkennedy@napanews.com)

For further information on the comment guidelines, **click here**.

Copyright © 2008 Lee Enterprises



### Lederer, Steven

**From:** Christy Abreu [Christy@uvds.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 01, 2008 10:12 AM  
**To:** Lederer, Steven  
**Cc:** Garden, Amy  
**Subject:** Emailing: The Weekly Calistogan .. LocalNews.htm

Napa Valley Register :: American Canyon Eagle :: St. Helena Star :: Weekly Calistogan :: DP Valley Life :: Valley Classifieds



Jobs | Homes | Rentals | Autos

Search Archives  
 [     ] [search]

HOME :: NEWS :: SPORTS :: BUSINESS :: FEATURES :: COLUMNISTS :: OPINION :: OBITUARIES :: CIRCULATION

#### QUICK LINKS

- [Archives](#)
- [Food & Recipes](#)
- [Health News](#)

[News > Local](#)

#### MARKETPLACE

- [Classifieds](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Rentals](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Place A Classified](#)

#### SERVICES

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Work for Us!](#)
- [Subscriptions](#)



John Waters Jr./The Weekly Calistogan Recyclable paper that started its journey from homes in Calistoga to the recycler forms a huge multicolored pile near a machine that will bale the waste, diverted from the landfill by Upper Valley Disposal Service customers who put the so-called trash into the blue bins -- as part of the Pestoni family businesses single stream recycling program.



John Waters Jr./The Weekly Calistogan Clover Flat landfill engineer Gary Ponder and Upper Valley Disposal Services Education Program Director Christy Abreu pause beside a recycled trailer used as an office at the Clover Flat sanitary landfill.

## A new life for recyclables

From your home and back again, Pestoni family helps make it happen

By John Waters Jr.  
Editor

Thursday, May 01, 2008

It's still dark outside on a Thursday morning in Calistoga when a familiar sound awakens you from sleep's embrace.

"Screeee. Psst. Thunk, whunk and roarrrr. Screeee. Psst. Thunk, whunk and roarrrr." The sound gets quieter as the monster making its weekly rounds and creating the ruckus continues on its way, gobbling up sacrifices left in curbside altars for its exclusive consumption.

You reach over and read the clock on the stand next to your bed. It's 4:35 a.m.

"Right on time," you mutter, before rolling over and going back to sleep.

From there, the packaging for every item you've brought into your home for the past week or more continues its journey, heading variously to the landfill at Clover Flat or to a materials recycling facility, or MRF, on Whitehall Lane in St. Helena.

Increasingly, according to Upper Valley Disposal Education Coordinator Christy Abreu, more and more of the discards are recycled in St. Helena and points beyond, rather than buried into the ground high above the Napa Valley.

### **Clover Flat**

"We still see a lot of materials that could be recycled going into the landfill," Abreu said during a recent tour of the Pestoni family business, picking up the trash the rest of the Upper Valley community creates. "We are capturing about 60 percent of the waste in our curbside recycling program, and hope that will improve as more people continue to focus on recycling rather than just throwing everything into their brown curbside bins."

Abreu created the curbside recycling program in 1989, after she finished college.

Each week thousands of Upvalley families make the same decisions — to toss that plastic or the paper milk jug into the brown bin or the blue bin. Chuck the aluminum can or plastic water bottle and cap into the brown one or the blue one. Cardboard, too, brown or blue.

For anyone who's not sure, paper, plastic, cardboard, aluminum — even aluminum foil left over from roasting those veggies on the grill — should go into the blue bin. Think blue equals a healthy earth. The only items that can't be put into either of the bins are paints, batteries, pesticides, oils or other toxics. Those items require special handling so they don't leak into the soil or flow into the local creeks, rivers and ultimately, the San Francisco Bay.

"Currently, the Clover Flat Sanitary Landfill is about 15 or so acres in size, located in the center of a 75-acre plot," Abreu said. "That's surrounded by the remainder of a 500-acre plot, which provides a nice buffer from the surrounding Napa Valley."

The Pestonis, who came to the Upper Valley in the 1880s as farmers have been the caretakers of the Upvalley trash since the 1960s.

"Before we came along Walter Tamagni used to lease the land to the county for refuse disposal," said Marvin Pestoni, who pulled up alongside Abreu and her landfill engineer Gary Ponder as they made the rounds at the landfill. "In the early 1960s he started getting letters from the federal government regarding landfill regulations.

"We bought the land from him at that time," Pestoni said. "And that's how we got into the trash business."

Recyclable materials that make it to Clover Flat are separated from the trash as much as possible and sent the MRF in St. Helena. The rest is generally buried, but sometimes, gets consumed by Clover Flat critters.

A huge jackrabbit scurries to hide in the shade beneath a converted trailer, a makeshift bar area where annually the St. Helena Rotary Club auctions off its "Dinner at the Dump," during its Winter Ball. The view from the top of Clover Flat is stunningly beautiful.

"I've seen quite a few landfills in my career," Ponder said. "This is definitely one of the most beautiful."

No birds — not even seagulls, the ubiquitous dinner guests at landfills all over California — are present during the day.

"Every day, however, after the landfill closes for the night, a huge flock of ravens, crows, swoop down on the place," Ponder said. "There are other animals that are quite punctual about showing up, too."

Ponder said a herd of about 25-30 deer regularly turn out to feast on the Upvalley's discards. There's even a shy black bear that roams the forest, occasionally coming down to feed, and judging by the silhouette of the rabbit hiding beneath the recycled trailer, rabbits find plenty of food to enjoy.

Near the uppermost point of the so-called dump, a cross marks a grave in the shade of a couple of trees. It's not that of Jimmy Hoffa.

"That's Wimpy," said Linda Pestoni, of Calistoga. "A long time ago someone abandoned that dog at the dump and my father, Marvin, the landfill manager, befriended him and named him Wimpy because he was so scrawny. He brought him home to the family farm (on Whitehall Lane).

"When Wimpy died, my father decided to return him to the place that, for a time, had been

his home," she said. "He buried him at the top of the hill where he can overlook his old home in peace."

### **Back on Whitehall Lane**

The trash that finds its way into the facility on Whitehall Lane goes through a series of steps before being sent to recyclers all over the state.

The MRF is built on the same land where the Pestoni family had raised chickens and pigs mostly — for market and their own family. Just a few steps away from the large, state-of-the-art recycling facility is the family home. Outside, to the rear of the property, is a weathered gray, wooden structure — the former pig farm.

Inside, except for the birds — sparrows mostly — singing happily, the place is completely still. Piles of paper of all kinds sit dormant, waiting to be compacted into bales the size of an SUV. An elaborate series of conveyor belts and chutes and compactors are just sitting, lounging. Not one of the 14 or so employees can be seen.

"It's lunch time," Pestoni said.

"If they were here working the noise would be deafening and we would have to yell to be heard," Abreu said.

Surprisingly, the odor is not as offensive as the imagination expects. There is a hint of sourness, generally the result of thousands of milk bottles with remains of milk left in them. If customers would rinse them before crushing them and tossing them into the blue curbside bins, even that smell would be diminished, Abreu said.

The cousins — their dads, Bob and Marvin, are brothers — walk around pointing out the various operations where plastics are separated, then crushed into bales. The different colored plastics are separated. Colored plastic can be made into dark plastic products — you can add color to recycled clear and white plastic, but not to the colored plastic, Abreu explains. The same goes for glass, which is also separated according to color.

Once each year, the disposal site accepts the black plastic tubing of vineyard drip irrigation systems for its recycling program.

Sometimes, computers and other electrical discards find their way into the brown bins or the recyclable commercial bins of Upper Valley Disposal's single stream recycling program — a definite "no-no," the cousins say. When that happens the items are separated and stored with similar electronic discards that ultimately will be headed to Fresno for recycling.

The south side of the plant is where all the company trucks are thoroughly cleaned each Friday, according to the company's operating permit. There is also the green waste area where vineyard and winery discards are left to decompose as part of Upper Valley Disposal's



composting program, which yields several different kinds of compost available for sale to the public.

Further south is the Rutherford Grove vineyard, purchased by the family so their trucks could gain alternative access to the facility, according to Abreu. One family member, however, couldn't resist.

"He said if we bought the land he'd like to try his hand at winemaking," she said.

Abreu and Pestoni emphasized, as they had throughout the tour, that their family has been Upvalley for more than 100 years — and to them, that's what makes the family business so special.

"We grew up here," Abreu said. "I think that's why what we do matters so much — we know what we have here, and how special it is, and we want to protect that for everyone."

 Print this story |  Email this story | Browse today's articles in this category: | Next

**No comments posted.**

Subscribe to the paper today! [Click here for details.](#)

**Log in to join the conversation**

\***Member ID:** [      ]

\***Password:** [      ]

Remember login?  
(requires cookies) [ ]

[Forgot Your Password?](#)  
[Login]

**[Click here to register an account!](#)**

**Comment guidelines**

All comments will be screened and may take several hours to be posted.

- Keep comments clear, concise and focused on the topic in the story.
- Comments exceeding 300 words will not be posted.
- Refrain from personal attacks, degrading comments or remarks that do not add to a constructive dialogue.
- Comments implying suspects in crime-related stories are guilty before they have been proven so in a court of law will be deleted.
- Do not post e-mail addresses or links except for pages on WeeklyCalistogan.com or government Web sites.
- Comments will not be edited - they will be approved or declined.
- Comments may be used in the print edition of the newspaper.
- If you feel a posted comment has violated our guidelines, please contact [dross@napanews.com](mailto:dross@napanews.com) or [bkennedy@napanews.com](mailto:bkennedy@napanews.com)

For further information on the comment guidelines, [click here.](#)

Copyright © 2008 Lee Enterprises

