



ALAN STYLES

Recycling

Reduce, reuse, recycle, rejoice!

If you've taken steps to reduce your waste during the holidays by adopting some of the practices we suggested last month, good for you! The next steps in greening your holidays come during and after your celebrations, giving reasons to rejoice well into the New Year.

During celebrations, consider what we can keep out of the landfill by recycling and reusing:

- Wrapping, including boxes, wrapping paper, tissue, gift bags, ribbons and bows.

- Greeting cards can be repurposed as next year's decoration (gift tags, decorate a plain package, laminate into place mats), or as new cards by removing the back portion of the card (with the writing) to create festive post cards or thank-you notes.

- Decorations are usually stored and reused year after, but if you upgraded or just have too many, donate unwanted decorations to brighten someone else's home.

After the intensity of holidays wane, take stock in your good fortune and consider how you might share it with others. People are in need throughout the year, so your donations and charitable giving after the holidays are equally important as those you make before the holidays.

Rather than wait for a re-gifting opportunity, consider gifts and goods you could donate to those less fortunate. (Some donations are also tax deductible.)

If you received new electronics and have no need for the old, donate working electronics and recycle the obsolete. Electronics

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have reusable parts and recyclable materials, as well as some harmful materials and should be treated as hazardous waste, recycled properly.

If you and yours have replaced or outgrown clothing, coats, house wares, linens, blankets, furnishings, toys, sporting goods and other items, donate unwanted items in good condition to churches, charitable groups, or other reuse organizations.

Local food banks may not have fruitcakes at the top of their wish lists, but they may welcome packaged preserved meats, crackers and other delectable goods that well-intentioned givers would hope

weren't wasted when you clean out the cupboards to start your New Year's diet.

If reducing clutter and getting organized are among your 2010 resolutions, keep reuse and recycling in mind. Exhaust all options before choosing the trash. Your thoughtful attention to reducing waste creates a better and cleaner environment, which is a gift that everyone wants to receive.

Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority wishes you safe and happy holidays, and a very green New Year!

Alan Styles is recycling coordinator for the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority. His column appears the third Saturday of the month in Central Coast Living. Contact him at alanst@svswa.org.