

# New Year resolutions

By BARBARA HALSALL  
You Can Impact Environmental Problems - Act Now!

1991 is fast approaching and it is time to think about New Year's resolutions. Many times people quietly resolve to make some changes or move in a new direction without ever announcing their resolve. This year how about having a family discussion with each member resolving to do something to help protect the planet Earth.

Buy less. Do you make unnecessary purchases? Buy reusable items. The "in" gift this year is a shaving brush and mug.

In November, two representatives of a teachers' group made a presentation to the Halton Board's Environmental Awareness Committee. They wanted to encourage students to donate money to environmental groups instead of giving gifts to teachers. You could support some of these groups, including



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Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, chaired the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. The commission's report was published in 1987.

"Our common future serves notice that the time has come for a marriage of economy and ecology so that governments and their people can take responsibility not just for environmental damage, but for the policies that cause damage. SOME OF THESE POLICIES THREATEN THE SURVIVAL OF THE HUMAN RACE. THEY CAN BE CHANGED BUT WE MUST ACT NOW." (emphasis added).

This has been called the "turn around" decade. Many claim that we have tenyears before our "window of opportunity" is gone. Have you made any changes in your daily habits? We have all contributed to the many problems the earth is now facing. We must all share the responsibility for working on solutions.

Start by examining your daily habits. The things we buy and even how we brush our teeth can make a difference.

Cars use a tremendous amount of resources to manufacture and create pollution problems as they are used. Could you drive less? Even if you share a drive to work once a week, that is a beginning. Try walking more. If you drive, keep your car in good repair with tires properly inflated.

P.O.W.E.R., that are fighting for our common future, either by donating time or money.

At work as that your company do a waste audit. Set up a committee to look at environmental issues. Companies who have already tried this have shown some excellent cooperation can come from employees.

Resolve to take political action in the New Year. By mid-January Halton Region will respond to a request from the Ministry of the Environment to comment on the agenda submitted by Reclamation Systems Inc. to their Environmental Assessment document on the Acton Quarry as a landfill. Our region said that the original E.A. document was inadequate. They have not said a definite "no" to the garbage proposal. Contact the Chairman, Mr. Pomeroy, 878-8113, if you want to express your concern.

Write letters to politicians at all levels. They must be urged to move faster on environmental legislation and enforcement. Write letters to provincial politicians. Ask the Minister of the Environment, Ruth Grier, Suite 100, 135 St. Clair West, Toronto M4V 1P5, to stop the Acton Quarry Landfill proposal.

The world situation is critical. Anything you can do to prevent further problems is important. You can make a difference. Together we can accomplish a great deal. Reminder: Turn on Christmas lights after 7 p.m.

## Blue boxes needing help

Provided by the University of Guelph's Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) Dr. Rob McLaughlin, dean.

The blue box needs some help. That's what University of Guelph engineering professor Lambert Otten thinks. He's just finished the first part of a two-year project at the City of Guelph's landfill site to prove municipal composting is the blue box's ideal mate.

Guelph is a recycling leader. It was one of the first cities in North America to launch a blue-box curbside program. But blue boxes can't handle everything. In Guelph, householders jam at least 200 tons of trash into green garbage bags every day.

Otten says 60 per cent of that waste is compostable. He's testing this theory in conjunction with the city, which - further to its recycling leadership position - has engaged 600 homes to take part in a pilot composting program.

In the program, householders separate their garbage into

recyclables and compostables. The latter are processed through a pilot composter at the landfill site. The composter consists of three primary reactors and three secondary reactors made of stacked precast concrete blocks open at one end for loading and unloading. Each primary reactor holds about five tons of waste.

On arrival, the compostables are deposited in a primary reactor for initial composting. Bacteria consume the compost and, in the process, give off heat, perpetuating bacterial growth. (The key is to keep the temperature at a constant 60 C.) Three weeks later, the compost is emptied into a secondary reactor for six weeks, then cleared into a window and left for four months to cure in the open.

Ultimately, the waste matures and becomes a rich, usable soil that could be put on lawns, gardens and fields.

"It's a friendly process," says Otten. "First there's waste, then there's something usable - soil."

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from all the staff at the Halton Hills Herald.

## THE HERALD DELIVERS



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