

Spring Report

Richard Anthony
June 2005

As I look forward to the July 10-13, 2005 California Resource Recovery Association Annual conference at the downtown Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel (www.crra.com), I think about some of the things I have learned while attending Recycling and Zero Waste conferences this spring in Beijing, China; New York City; Coventry, England; Waterville, Vermont; and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Beijing event actually happened in January and really was the planning committee for the program for the R05 (www.R05.org) conference in Beijing September 25, 2005 . We asked the co sponsors, the Chinese Academy of Science, to let us add a couple zero waste workshops to the technical program. The closed circle concept is popular in China .

Last year at the Community Recycling Network (CRN) conference in London , I spoke about zero waste, this year I attended because my company is helping a local NGO plan and build a reuse park. Sometimes you make great friends at these events. What motivates Suffolk CONNECT is the opportunity to do Good. As expressed at the CRN conference by the keynote speakers from the Friends of the Earth and the Member of the European Parliament, "... global warming and climate change are real threats.... sustainability means ending incineration and landfillworking for zero waste. "

At PACE University in lower Manhattan , New York City, the Grassroots Recycling Network held their second zero waste action work shop. Peter Montague of RACHELs' Environmental and Health News and spokes person for the precautionary principle and environmental impacts called for "... producer responsibility and product redesign...zero waste as the goal. Our sponsors Hugo Neu (a metals recycler) Aveda (a cosmetic manufacturer) and Ecocycle (a recycling company) supported the workshop as a means to develop community leadership in initiating zero waste programs.

The New England Resource Recovery Association (NERRA) held their event in the New Hampshire Mountains . The fact that most of the incinerators that were built in the 1980ies are up for new contracts and the Yankee spirit of self reliance, filled the zero waste communities' workshop with transfer station and citizens advisory committee representatives. To them zero waste is savings. I also learned that mountain biking in the rain can be quite thrilling

The Nova Scotia event combined happiness with sustainability, wellness, education and governance. This conference on gross national happiness was held in Bhutan last year. Key Bhutan government officials and a large delegation attended this event at St Francis Xavier University near Halifax Nova Scotia . Bhutan has declared happiness a national objective. Among other things,

environmental quality has been declared by the government linked to happiness. I spoke in a pre conference workshop on zero waste and spoke and moderated a sustainability workshop on resource management in the new millennium with talks about sustainable city planning and building in India , living off the grid in Canada , and rural solar education in India . The work shop participants concluded that limits were important.

Bringing it home at the San Diego Citizens advisory committee where we are working to getting organics out of the landfill, I suggested that a zero waste system for organics that composts and uses the material for making agricultural soil amendments may be the best way to creating the most happiness in San Diego County on this issue. The committee seemed to like the idea.

See you at CRRA in July.

Rick Anthony
6/05