

My Valley

GIVE METAL NEW LIFE

Recycling aids planet, earns cash

By Vicky Kelly

Last summer, some friends announced they were moving south for their retirement. As they began the arduous task of sorting through stuff they had accumulated over the course of 30 years, they realized they needed a dumpster. They ordered a big one, and in it went bits and pieces of old projects, broken tools, skis, furniture and all manner of detritus no longer needed. Seeing dollar signs as well as environmental good, we offered to take any metal to the scrap yard for them.

We backed our truck up to the dumpster, dove in and extracted the metal. We pulled out old antennas and wire, aluminum lawn furniture, two defunct barbecues, a roll of fencing, an old CB radio and other ancient electronic equipment (electronics had metal cases back in the day). My husband, a seasoned scrap metal recycler, had a magnet he'd acquired on a previous expedition to the scrap yard. He used it to distinguish ferrous metal from aluminum, copper and brass, and several piles soon began to take shape.

Seeing our enthusiasm, our friends brought out boxes of copper pipe, brass fireplace tools, old pots and pans and other kitchen utensils and more electronic equipment. From under the porch we



STOCKPHOTO BY GETTYIMAGES, GRAPHIC BY MATT ZAGER

pulled an old chipper, a broken lawn mower and a weed whip. The piles soon grew bigger than our truck and we devised a plan to haul it to the scrap metal yard in stages.

Having done this before, my husband decided to bring the more valuable metal first. Into the truck went the copper, brass and aluminum. The copper wire was separated from the copper pipes. The aluminum cooker was filled with the aluminum pots and pans and old antenna bits. The aluminum-framed lawn furniture was hack-sawed into pieces and finagled into the truck. Lastly, a few large ferrous metal pieces were stuffed in,

and off to the scrap yard we went.

When we pulled into the yard, my jaw dropped as I took in the operation before me. My expert husband drove the truck around the back to the giant scale for weighing the metal. It was tricky maneuvering because of the enormous piles of metal. There was a 12-foot-high pile of aluminum cabling that looked like it had been on a bridge somewhere. There was a huge rolling container of copper pipe with aluminum fins that had been part of heating systems. There were multi-story-high piles of aluminum and other metal. Men in jumpsuits and thick gloves

were sorting the metal in the jumbled piles. And forklifts were moving cubes of compressed metal to a container for trucking to another facility.

I chatted with the men as my husband piled aluminum onto the big square scale. They told me about the things they had seen come through the yard. When the weight of the aluminum was noted by one of the workers, it was moved off to the aluminum pile and the copper and brass were piled on the scale. When that was done, the copper wire was piled up. After that, the ferrous metal was weighed. When the weighing and offloading of all the metal was com-

plete, we went into the office to reconcile our business. My husband pulled out his driver's license and his record was pulled up on a computer (this ensures that had we brought stolen goods, we would be caught). A ticket was printed with the weight and value of each type of metal we'd brought, and cash was dispensed for the total.

It took three trips to haul all that metal to the scrap yard, but we walked away with \$185 and a good feeling. Useful material was recycled and not sent to the landfill or burn plant. All that metal was now off to be reused for something else. There is dignity in that.



Vicky Kelly
COURTESY PHOTO

RESOURCES

AW Scrap Processors
1980 Route 9D,
Wappingers Falls.
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday;
8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday;
closed Sunday.
Call: 845-831-1759.

Southeast Auto Recycle
1492 Route 22, Wingdale
Call: 845-832-9448;
Spanish: 845-832-9288.

Web:
www.southeastauto-recycle.com/scrapmetal
Effron Scrap Metal Recycling
167 Smith St.,
Poughkeepsie
Hours: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday;
7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday;
closed Sunday.
Call: 845-471-0820.
Web: www.effronscrap.com

ON THE WEB

A list of transfer stations that accept scrap metal locally: www.co.dutch-ess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/SolidWasteMgmt/TSRprg.htm

Vicky Kelly is the manager of the environmental monitoring program at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies and a member of the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council.

COMING UP

Wildlife program — Kingston Area Library, 55 Franklin St., Kingston. 4 p.m. Feb. 6. Wildlife World Program by educator Bill Robinson with live birds of prey and reptiles for school age children and families. Come and see amazing animals up close and learn how they live. Feeding behaviors will be discussed and demonstrated. Free. Call 845-331-0507, Ext. 7 for information.
Singles and Sociables Outing: Old Minnewaska Trail Snowshoe or Hike — Mohonk Preserve, 3197 Route 44/55, Gardiner. 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Feb. 8. A moderate-to-strenuous seven-mile snowshoe or hike for adults. No reservations required. Meet at the Mohonk Preserve West Trapps Trailhead. New hikers are strongly encouraged to contact leader Jill Abraham at 845-389-7756 prior to the hike for information. Hike leaders determine whether or not to allow pets. Non-members pay the \$12 hiking day-use fee.

Snowshoe walk along Mossy Glen — Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Route 44/55, New Paltz. 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feb. 8. A four-mile relatively flat hike along Peter's Kill stream looking for signs of year-round inhabitants in the form of animal tracks and bird activity. Snowshoes may be rented from the Park Preserve Office at the Peter's Kill Climbing Area for \$5 per person for this outing. Early arrival is suggested for snowshoe rental. If there is no snow, this will be offered as a hike. This outing will meet in the Awosting parking lot. Parking is \$8 per car. Pre-registration is required; call 845-255-0752.
Valentine's program featuring live doves — Hudson Highlands Nature Museum, Outdoor Discovery Center, 174 Angola Road, Cornwall. 9:30 a.m. Feb. 8. Program features live doves, a symbol of love for hundreds of years. Parents can bring a camera to take Valen-

tine's photos of their children and the doves. This program is recommended for all ages. Pre-paid registration is required. \$8 for adults or \$6 for children; or \$6 for member adults and \$4 for child members. For online registration and more information go to hnnaturemuseum.org or call 845-534-5506, Ext. 204.
WinterFest 2014 — Hudson Valley Rail Trail Depot, 101 New Paltz Road, Highland. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 8. \$3 for adults; children 6 and under free. Visit www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net or contact Lauriann Marion at 845-691-9911.
Kayak Eskimo Rolling Clinic — Student Recreation Center, The Culinary Institute of America, 1946 Campus Drive, Hyde Park. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 9. Overcome the urge to wet-exit in the event of a capsized, add to your skill set and learn to roll your kayak in a controlled setting. 845-229-0595.
Learn about bobcats — Hudson Highlands Nature Museum,

Outdoor Discovery Center, 174 Angola Road, Cornwall. 10 a.m. Feb. 9. Learn about bobcats' behaviors, biology and anatomy using bobcat skulls and pelts. Weather permitting, take a short walk to search for signs of bobcats at the Outdoor Discovery Center. For adults and children 5 and older. \$7 for adults and \$5 for children or \$5 for adult members and \$3 for child members. Visit hnnaturemuseum.org or call 845-534-5506, Ext. 204.
Mohonk Preserve Singles and Sociables Outing: Black Forest snowshoe or hike — Mohonk Preserve, 3197 Route 44/55, Gardiner. Feb. 9. A strenuous nine-mile snowshoe or hike for adults. No reservations required. New hikers are strongly advised to contact leader Gary Curasi at 845-534-2886 prior to the hike for information. Hike leaders determine whether or not to allow pets.

NOTE TO READERS

The My Valley section now appears on Thursdays in addition to the Sunday G section and online at www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/myvalley. My Valley is a forum for experts and enthusiasts to share their thoughts on the environment. If you would like to contribute to the section or have a topic idea for a future story, contact Environment Editor Dugan Radwin at dradwin@poughkeepsiejournal.com or 845-437-4841. Follow @PJEnvironment on Twitter and Facebook.

COMING SUNDAY

Organic, natural cosmetics are chic and high-quality.