



## Tooth Talk

by Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

### Chancing Arrow for the Environment

"Make no mistake, the next generation will ask us one of two questions. Either they will ask: 'What were you thinking; why didn't you act?' Or they will ask instead: 'How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?'"

Those are the words of former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, accepting the Nobel Peace Prize he shares with the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on Dec. 10, 2007.

Gore's words are not new for the Siletz Community Health Clinic. It has been chasing arrows since long before I arrived three years ago. HIPPA didn't stop these courageous people. A shredding service was hired to allow for shredding large volumes of HIPPA-protected information. The company recycles all those tiny shreds.

Also, individuals had taken initiative to recycle. Kristi Martin-Bayya takes the clear side of printer/copy paper, cuts them to size and uses them

for notes and messages. Bev Baumgardt saves the unprinted page that sometimes comes out with the copy you requested. She takes them to Head Start, where the students use the clean white paper for their artwork.

Kristi and Bev recently joined with other concerned staff in the clinic to form a Green Team. Our purpose is to learn, share and practice eco-friendly actions.

Our mission statement is: The Green Team strives to increase the three R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – by educating others and providing a positive alternative through modeled behaviors in order to create a respectful work environment." The birth of this formal recycling effort belongs to Erin Hume and Alison Noble.

There seems much to learn – co-mingling for one. What is and what is not co-mingled?

Co-mingling includes tin, plastic, paper and cardboard. Glass and plastic bags need to be collected separately from co-mingled items and separately

from each other. Plastic with the "#6" can be recycled but not foam with the "#6" on it, according to Dahl Disposal Service. Plastic without a number is not recyclable.

Anyone reading this who lives outside of Lincoln County should check with your local recycling service. Every garbage pickup service and/or recycling center provides unique services – recycling one material and not another.

There are now two bins in the clinic staff room, one for glass and one for plastic bags – thank you Wendi Schamp. Plastic bags for recycling include all plastic bags except Ziplock-style and drawstring garbage bags.

Darcy De La Rosa and Dahl say you can recycle drawstring bags if you remove the draw string before recycling – cut it and pull it through. No Ziplock-type plastic bags. All plastic bags for recycling must be clean and dry.

Glass can be taken to a location in Siletz. The collected plastic bags will need to be driven to Dahl.

In the Dental Clinic, our plastic bags, used as barriers and changed for each patient, would be eligible for recycling if they weren't considered contaminated. We are working on reducing. We have gone to mechanically wiping with Center for Disease Control (CDC)-approved disinfectant some things we previously covered in plastic. All biologically contaminated paper, plastic and supplies are discarded following OSHA, CDC, and state regulatory guidelines.

Nearly everything in the Dental Clinic comes to us in its own packaging: paper, plastic – hard and soft, cardboard, and corrugated. We recycle all we can. Charlie Butler coordinates this aspect of recycling for the clinic in general.

Reusing isn't easy where biological contamination is concerned. A multiple-use tool must be made of material (i.e., metal, glass, plastic) that

can withstand the heat of sterilization and the wear of multiple uses.

Reducing is next and it's the most difficult for me. Why? Because it takes changing how I think and what I do every day, changing years of habits. Not unlike beginning to floss daily. Both are beneficial and require only a minute or two.

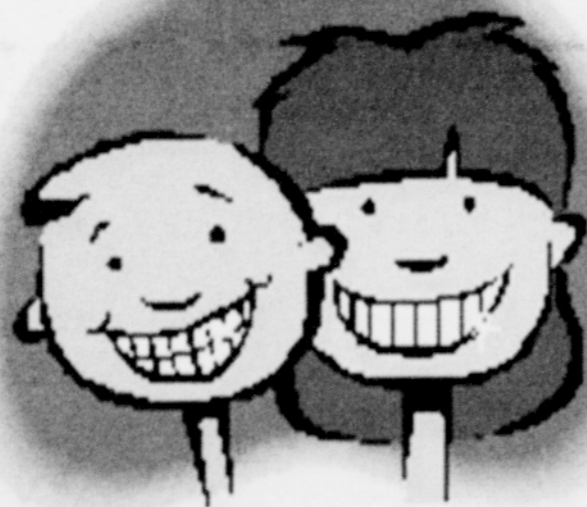
Did you know that if you changed your "default margins from 1 inch to 0.5 inch on most computers, an average office worker would save 475 sheets of paper in a year. If everyone in the United States reset the default margins to be .75 inch or less, we would save about 6,156,000 trees in just a year." (BRING's *Used News*, and [www.papercalculator.org](http://www.papercalculator.org)). BRING also suggested printing on two sides of a page.

Question: How much of the total energy used by home electronics and appliances occurs while they're not in active use? If appliances and electronics remain plugged in they continue to consume energy. These "energy vampires" consume 75 percent of the energy the units use during this inactive time.

Consider using a power strip to plug in a group of these vampires, say for those in a kitchen or living room. When you're done in one room, you can turn all off energy-draining appliances/electronics with one touch of one switch (from BRING's *Used News* and the N.Y. State Energy Authority).

"Chasing Arrows" is the name of the commonly recognized recycling logo (BRING). Chancing Arrows for the environment, what a great action image.

In a recent interview on National Public Radio's KLCC, a person from Antelope, Ore., referred to his city as a "small brown hole in earth's pants." So the Siletz Community Health Clinic and for this article the Dental Clinic is learning and working toward smaller holes in the earth's britches.



## It's EASY!

What can you do today to protect your child's teeth?

**Fluoride Treatment: Get one today!**

No Appointments are necessary for a quick, easy and effective fluoride treatment.

All ages accepted.

Siletz Community Health Clinic  
Patients of Dental Clinic

Monday—Thursday

8 a.m.—12 p.m.

&

1 p.m.—4 p.m.



Fridays

10 a.m.—12 p.m.

&

1 p.m.—4 p.m.



The wrestling room and a storage area are being walled off in the new gym in Siletz. Estimated opening date for the gym is in July. (photo by Diane Rodriguez)