



Man with a Mission Recycles 38 Tons September/October 2009

Atwater's Mitchell Senior Elementary School began recycling in 1992 due to the efforts of then science teacher Tony Shukle. Shukle, now retired, collects recyclables such as cardboard and newspaper from eight schools in the Atwater Elementary School District. Mitchell Senior Elementary serves as the base to gather all the recyclables.

Since 1992, Tony has worked with five different recycling agencies as recyclers either went out of business or stopped offering particular services. Last year, he helped the District recycle 38 tons (76,000 pounds) of recyclables. This year he hopes to do even better. With all of that tonnage being diverted from the regular solid waste bins, Tony has saved the District money in disposal costs since the tons of recycling would otherwise go into solid waste bins.



In 7th grade in 1967, Tony was "bit by the recycling bug." Between his school and home there was an irresistible dumpster. He would find things that he could put to good use, such as tricycle tires that he put on his and his brother's hot rod, and a transistor radio that just needed batteries.

Throughout the week, Tony efficiently piles the (hopefully) already flattened cardboard boxes and the other recyclables into a 40-foot roll off container. On Saturdays he drives to the District's six other schools to collect their recyclables and brings them back to his recycling base. But, sadly, he comments, "I hope I'm not saving a tree so that someone else can waste it."

Once the container is full, American Recycling replaces the full container with a new one, weighs the recycling load, and reimburses the school district for the amount of cardboard and paper that Shukle helped collect.

Even though Tony is retired, he continues to make his recycling rounds. "I like the physical-ness of it. It's my therapy!"