

# World a little cleaner now

By STEVE MacNAULL

The Okanagan Sunday

**S**usan Bradley of Kelowna had an eco-conscious Saturday. First, she traded in some burned-out, energy wasting incandescent light bulbs for long-lasting compact fluorescents at a FortisBC event at Mission Park Mall. Then she dropped off some toxic junk at the 19th annual Household Hazardous Waste Round Up at Okanagan College.

"It's mostly spray cans and paint cans — not too much, really, because I come to the roundup every year now," said Bradley.

"It feels like the right thing to do. You can't just throw this stuff in the garbage."

The Central Okanagan Regional District, which organized the roundup, expected 1,200 vehicles to come by and drop off about 50,000 litres of old pesticides, solvents, chemicals, cleaners and paints — basically anything that had an explosive, flammable or poisonous label on it.

"It's nice to see that the rain hasn't stopped people from being environmentally conscious," said waste reduction facilitator Rae Stewart.

"We're getting steady traffic and a lot of stuff is being dropped off."

To make the day a success and keep traffic moving, the 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. drop off was planned and executed with military-like precision.

People in their vehicles with eco-nasties were directed to enter only off Raymer Avenue by Kelowna Secondary School, and make their way down the long road behind the college.

Volunteers offered people in the line up Halloween candies, local apples and waste reduction pamphlets to read.

The longest wait in line was about half an hour.

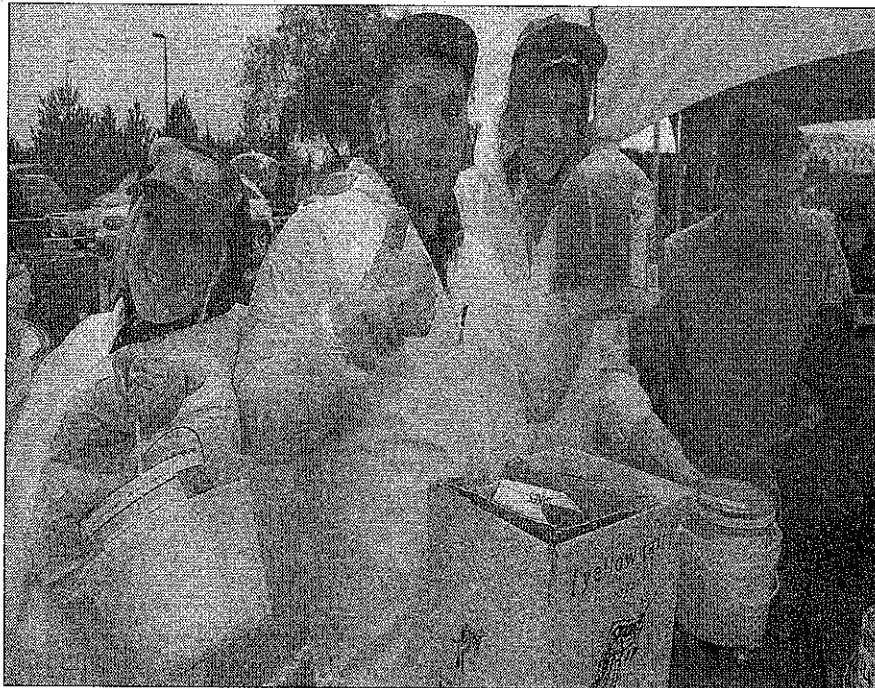
When vehicles reached the collection tents manned with an army of volunteers in white hazardous materials coveralls, people didn't even have to get out of their cars.

Volunteers scooped up the containers from popped trunks, back seats and pick up truck beds and sent people on their way via KLO Road.

Some of the volunteers were environmental science students from Rutland Secondary School.

"My whole class is here," said Tess Hetton, a 16-year-old Grade 12 student.

"I'm glad to help out because we all have to do what we can to protect the environment."



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Rutland Secondary School environmental science students, from left, Tessa Hetton, Josiah Gadsby and Yanni Papadopoulos help Winfield resident Tim Muri unload the back of his pickup truck at the 19th annual Household Hazardous Waste Round Up at Okanagan College on Saturday.

Fellow student Yanni Papadopoulos, 17, concurred.

"I like the fact that all this stuff collected today won't just end up at the dump polluting the soil, the water or the air," he said.

"It will be safely disposed of or be recycled."

This year, all the dropped-off items seemed to fall into the category of standard chemical household wastes.

In past years, there's been an octopus in formaldehyde dropped off; people wanting to get rid of rancid wine or jars of pickles and some wanting to unload old computers.

"Wrong event," said Stewart with a laugh.

"The e-waste drop-off, where people can get rid of old computers, is a separate event at a different time of the year."

Many old paints can be reprocessed into new paint, product coatings and an ingredient used in concrete.

Used battery parts can be made into irrigation lines, fertilizer or plates for new batteries.

Used oil can be reprocessed into new oil, oil fil-

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ters can be cleaned and reused, and old antifreeze can be made into new antifreeze.

Some cleaners and corrosive acids are sent to a Vancouver plant where they are neutralized and the water portion sent to a treatment facility. The sludge is solidified and sent to a safe chemical landfill in Ryley, Alta.

Other materials that can't be recycled or reused are sent to a special hazardous waste incinerator in Swan Hills, Alta., to be burned with as little impact on the environment as possible.

Now that the roundup is in its 19th year, many people are regulars, and while the vehicle count stays the same or goes up, the volume of hazardous waste collected is actually going down.

There are also two year-round depots where residents can drop off household hazardous wastes for recycling or safe disposal: Battery Doctors at 1972 Windsor Rd. in Kelowna and Boucherie Bottle Depot on Kyle Road in West Kelowna.