

**From:** Marty Curry <[recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 3, 2022 9:57 AM

**To:** Michael Kuchta <[administrator@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:administrator@townoflapointewi.gov)>

**Cc:** Micaela Montagne <[clerk@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:clerk@townoflapointewi.gov)>; Ben Schram <[foreman@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:foreman@townoflapointewi.gov)>; Joe Abhold <[recyclingassistant@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:recyclingassistant@townoflapointewi.gov)>

**Subject:** Letters from MRFY Jan 22

## Letters from MRFY.

January 3, 2022

Happy New Year!

I hope you all had happy and healthy holiday season. We have rounded the horn on 2021 and look to the New Year here at the MRF with the singular burning question: "How do we improve on what we have done in 2021??"

This past year has provided answers to questions regarding this department including "How do we recalibrate our efforts to not be a financial liability for the town?" and "What can we do to streamline our effort to better serve the community?" During the MRF survey, there was agreement among some "experts" that the LaPointe Material Recovery Facility should go to a single stream format to reduce labor cost, and (hopefully) break even in the span of a couple budget cycles. This was wrong. ***In the past 9 months***, we have proven that single stream recycling is "kicking the can down the road" for someone else to deal with our environmental responsibilities. We can effectively process and market our recycled materials and make a profit. We will continue to see if these market trends continue and plan accordingly. ***I hope you are as excited as I am at our final financial numbers for 2021!***

The first quarter of 2022 will include:

1. Our yearly DNR MRF Self Certification where we will have total numbers of materials recycled and processed.
2. I am working to establish a manual for Standard Operating Procedures here at the MRF. This manual will outline what we are learning as the safest, most effective, and efficient method of operating in a typical day here at the MRF.
3. We will be touring local MRFs in the region to see how "others are doing it" as recommended by DNR Waste Management Specialist Robert Germer.
4. We will be touring Northland Colleges composting facility to see local initiatives for composting and how we can incorporate these ideas into our efforts.
5. We will be meeting with our IT head Will Lulham on January 3<sup>rd</sup> to research and procure our new office equipment as well as work toward getting our new POS system.
6. We will continue to prepare for the upcoming busy season as well as our daily operations and continued grant research.
7. I am doing to research on the ISRI (Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries) Convention in March. I am planning on coordinating my time off so that I can attend.
8. I would like to begin discussions for the upcoming Island Closet season including lease renewal, signage issues, and other related items. We have numerous people who have been inquiring as to when the closet will open again!!

The MRF Staff is excited to continue our march to excellence in the coming year!! Have a MRF-tastic Day!

**Martin Curry**  
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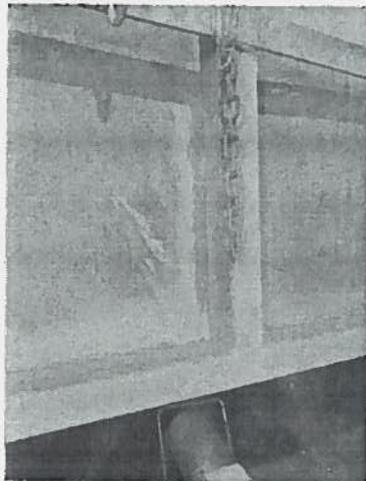
(5)TB, Michael, Barb, Micaela,  
Ben, Public

## Letters from MRFY

February 1, 2022

Here we are at the zenith of our winter phase. The MRF rotation of daily duties ebbs and flows depending on how far below zero the windchill is. A typical day here is: Go outside, bale, assist with customers recycling, smash the dem con box...aaand run back inside to warm up, down a hot cup of coffee or tea and head back out. Repeat.

The slower time has allowed for some housekeeping items to be checked off the list including addressing our aging compactor boxes. Although they look very orange and vibrant on the outside, they have needed some attention. This past week, I took a hand scrapper and a wire wheel and identified the seriously rusty portions. After the initial grinding, Joe picked up some self-etching primer and I gave a coat of primer on the bad spots. Eventually they will head down to the Town shop where they can get a spot weld to fix the holes. This will work until we hit the warmer weather when we can give them a good power wash and a secondary coat of primer before we repaint them with a hard enamel metal paint. This will ensure that our boxes last another 3-5 years. This will have to be done to both compactor boxes.



**BEFORE**

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All Eyes are on the Ice Road: As soon as we can get a firm date for the ice road opening, I will be scheduling our tours of the MRFs recommended by Bob Germer, Wisconsin DNR Waste and Materials Management Specialist as well as our tour of the Northland Composting facility.

Moving forward with a Standard Operating Procedure manual for the MRF to use in training and safety. My Goal is to standardize our training and safety measures but make the process efficient and informative. Will continue to update on progress.

As Always, Have a MRF-tastic Day!

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**From:** Marty Curry <[recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 2, 2022 1:47 PM

**To:** Michael Kuchta <[administrator@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:administrator@townoflapointewi.gov)>

**Cc:** Micaela Montagne <[clerk@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:clerk@townoflapointewi.gov)>; Ben Schram <[foreman@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:foreman@townoflapointewi.gov)>; Joe Abhold <[recyclingassistant@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:recyclingassistant@townoflapointewi.gov)>

**Subject:** Letters from MRFY March 22

Letters From MRFY- March 2, 2022

“Why are recycle bins optimistic?” — Because they’re full of CANS!!

MRF Operations are keeping pace during the slow season. Baling continues and we are still producing cardboard and aluminum bales. Future outlooks for aluminum has shifted drastically due to the Ukrainian conflict. Given that Russia supplies about 6% of the global aluminum supply, the market trend is moving up. From January – March Aluminum has gone from a median price of .35/lb to .65 lb. WE will continue to keep an eye on the trends as we head into the summer and plan our sales accordingly to maximize income. Joe attended the WIRMC- Wisconsin Integrated Resource Management Conference in Green Bay and made some significant contacts that will continue to improve our efficiency and sales. Please see his report for further details. This is another example of why training and outreach are so beneficial for staying up to date on industry trends. Thank you!!

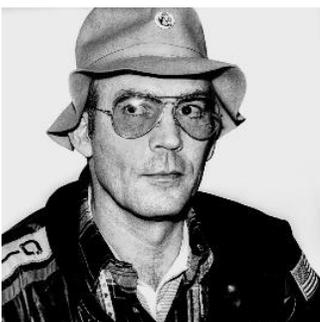
ON February 19, I submitted our yearly DNR Annual MRF Self Certification (see attached). In 2021 we processed 138.3 tons of recycled materials compared to 134.5 tons of material in 2020, *an increase of 3.8 tons*. These numbers does not include the total tonnage of material salvaged since its excluded our auto and metal salvage operations. SPEAKING OF...***We are pleased to announce a very generous \$5000 donation from the Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve that has been earmarked for Auto Removal from the Island. We will be advertising in the coming months that we will continue to accept vehicles that are slated for REMOVAL from the island! Thank you MIWP!!***

We have put in some time moving snow. Although there are hints of spring, we are continuing to prepare for “the next one”. Culverts and waterways here at the MRF are cleared and ready for the eventual thaw and runoff.

The Island Closet lease has been approved and discussions are ongoing with Closet staff to ensure a smooth transition into the sophomore season of “upcycling and recycling” island treasures. I am doing my research on the ISRI (Institute of Scrap Recycling Industry) Conference in LAS VEGAS and am excited to soak up all things Recycling while enjoying the usual conference luncheon

(with chicken in a cream sauce and most likely a three-bean medley) in the city that never sleeps...no wait that’s New York. #trashandrecyclinginlasvegas. Look for my report in April.

We are full of CANS here at the MRF!! We are looking toward another season of friendly customer service, maximizing profit margins and enhancing our educational outreach for the local community BECAUSE... WE CAN!!!



<b>Materials Processed On-site</b>		<b>Tons Shipped to End Markets</b>
<b>Glass</b>		
• Beneficial Reuse as aggregate replacement exempt from LHE		56.00 tons
<b>Total Tons Glass Materials</b>		<b>56.00 tons</b>
<b>Metal</b>		
• Aluminum containers		11.34 tons
• Steel & bi-metal containers		8.57 tons
<b>Total Tons Metal Materials</b>		<b>19.91 tons</b>
<b>Plastic</b>		
• Foam PS packaging or containers		0.10 tons
• Plastic containers #1 - all mixed		4.70 tons
• Plastic containers #2 - all mixed		2.54 tons
<b>Total Tons Plastic Materials</b>		<b>7.34 tons</b>
<b>Paper</b>		
• Corrugated cardboard		32.91 tons
• Residential mixed paper		8.96 tons
• Magazines		4.25 tons
• Paper - all mixed, except cardboard		8.96 tons
<b>Total Tons Paper Materials</b>		<b>55.08 tons</b>
<b>Total tons shipped to end markets from MRF</b>		<b>138.33 tons</b>

**List facilities where glass is used as aggregate replacement that is exempt from requiring an LHE:**

Town of LaPointe Material Recovery Facility.

**C. Material Sent Off-site for Processing**

- Did your facility send Wisconsin recyclables off-site for further processing during the previous calendar year?

**D. Materials Sent for Disposal**

How many tons of material (residuals, contaminants and other discards from recycling operations) did your facility send to a landfill or incinerator for disposal during the previous calendar year? 0.00 tons

**E. Recyclables Received and Processing Summary**

<b>Total Recyclables Received:</b>	<b>129.27 tons</b>
<b>Total Recyclables Processed Leaving the MRF:</b>	<b>138.33 tons</b>
Total processed recyclables shipped:	138.33 tons
Total recyclables shipped off-site for processing:	0.00 tons
	<b>107 %</b>

AS always, Have a MRF-tastic Day and Thank you for your continued support!

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MRF, Ben, Public

### \*\*\*Letters from MRFy- The Las Vegas Edition\*\*\*

Its the opening night of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industry (ISRI) 2022 convention here in Las Vegas and Im sitting on a small couch about to enter the main exhibition hall. In it, are monoliths of steel and wire that are the tools of an industry that executives and layman alike are using to refine a circular marketplace of the recycling economy. Im 1400 miles away from our small island in Lake Superior Wisconsin and the environment here is as foreign to me as some of the very nice suits that the vendors are wearing. It was the beginning of a conference that I was sure would be a repetitive discourse on plastic frustrations, the hope for the continuation of the COVID surge in prices and demand as well as sharing stories of "dumping a barrel of stale beer cans into a hopper to bale" and the ensuing frustration at people not knowing the difference between an aluminum can and a green bean can.

I was wrong. It was so much more erudite and it made me more a recycling junkie than I could ever imagine. And as usual there is always more to the story.

A little over a week ago I boarded an Amtrak in Milwaukee to make the trek out here to see how our little MRF fits into the larger recycling industry. The rails that transport much of the steel, plastic and cardboard were now transporting families, students and solo travelers across the United States. I sat across the aisle from an Amish community from Kalamazoo who were making a pilgrimage to the Grand Canyon; excited to get to the bottom of the great chasm. As we passed through northern Chicago, I commented that I thought that there would be more snow. A very nice Amish man named Johnathan laughed and replied "Seriously!? Snow? Do you have snow where you're from?" "Yeah. Two and a half feet of snow and still about three feet of ice on the big lake!"

"Big lake? How big is that?"

"Oh about 11 quadrillion gallons of water."

He turned in his seat toward me and I could see an interested shift in his posture as well as the posture several other members of his community; some of them leaning forward in their seats in a nonchalant way to listen.

"Where are you from?" he asked, his bonnet clad wife staring intently at me from behind wire rim spectacles.

Over the next three hours, I told him about our small island community complete with ferries, windsleds, ice roads, pigs, chickens and tourists. We traded stories. Talked local farming, soil quality (or lack thereof), pandemics, and water.

"Well the upside of pandemic, people really got into growing food, canning, We couldnt find canning jars. Apparently people were future planning and worrying about their next meals" I said, taking a small sip from my Amtrak coffee beverage (disclaimer-the validity of whether this was actually coffee was highly disputed among Amtrak travelers and will require further research)

"Its about time." he replied with a smile and slight chuckle, "We've been doing that for a while now. Its important work" his beard shining in late evening Iowa light. His wife laughed softly and Im pretty sure I heard mild laughter from the others; indicative of consensus among the Amish community. A few seats back there was a frantic discussion going on in a mish mash of german/dutch and english. I can only imagine the topic but I picked out the word "Superior" and "Madeline". Thats enough.

People arrived. People Left. Our little Amtrak car was one of many that people wandered through in various states of travel. Some carried small children or had their young brood in tow, eyes wide with wonder and fear at the strangers they passed on the way to their seats. People carried large suit cases that were hastily stowed in the over head compartment. The train rocked. The train rolled. The steady beat of the wheels on the tracks passed itself off as a metronome that was hypnotic and monotonous. Time passing. Daylight slowly faded into the night and brown barren fields gave way to the passing

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and distant lights of nameless towns and freeways loaded with night time transit; truckers on to the next stop. This was the Economy of America at work. The observation car that was packed during the daytime with gawking adults and screaming kids, was now filled with muted conversation and individuals watching movies and playing games on handheld devices. Even the Amish community packed the tables and benches and played cards well into the evening, with occasional outbursts of laughter and disbelief at the end of each hand. Eventually the night life of the world calmed down and at about 9:00pm Central Time, the local sport of train travelers kicked into high gear.

Snoring is very popular nighttime activity in most corners of the world. Yoga is also a very popular past-time. On trains (and buses) the combination of the two can best be described as SNORGA. It is a sport that is reviled among the locals and leads to frequent and often uncomfortable altercations. Only the most stalwart, dedicated and nimble of public transit denizens compete. The rules of the game are simple; place yourself in the most god awful awkward and painfully contorted position and try to sleep for a period of an hour or more with out pissing your neighbor off. There were several games of this being played on our little Amtrak car and with varying degrees of success. Someone had a rough round on the front of our car with the phrase "COME OoooN MAaaN!!" being uttered very loudly several times in the thick of the night before the Snorga contestant gave up and wandered into the observation car to try his luck there. My own seat companion gave the contestant ahead of me a mild seat kick in the midst of competition which prompted an abrupt silence followed by mildly shifting. Soon competition resumed which led to a more than common stalemate and the ever popular ear plugs made of dining car napkins. It is truly a spectacle.

Johnathan and his community disembarked in Flagstaff. We shook hands and he sent me well wishes. "Good luck in all you do" he said matter of factly.

"You too. I hope get to the bottom of it all." I replied, referring to his wish to get to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. "Remember, getting down is half the journey. Take lots of water. Be Well."

He smiled and trudged down the aisle with his belongings.

"It was nice talking" his wife added quickly, following close behind her bonnet fixed firmly on her greyed head of hair. Very nice folks and a nice moment that was short lived. I gazed out the window They were all congregated on the platform under the yellowed lights of the evening, hats pulled down low, numerous canvas bags piled in a central location with a flurry of hand geastures and conversations. I smiled. I watched as we slowly pull out of the station and soon they were another memory lost in the darkness. My journey continued.

I arrived in Kingman Arizona at 2:00 am approximately 1.5 hours behind schedule due to rail traffic and a small maintenance stop. The night was still except for the distant highway sounds. The streets were empty of foot traffic, save for the flurry of activity at the train station. In the parking lot, a lone bus waited in the bottom of the ramp and a tired and mildly gruff driver stood outside. He was not pleased. I loaded up my bags into the back, he scanned my ticket and gave silent furrowed brows of frustration, muttering something about wanting to be home and trains are unreliable. It took another 15 minutes of waiting for various passengers to extract their luggage from the train and transfer it to the bus; each minute more painful than the last. I was tired. I tried to snorga on the train and failed, instead relying on spotty wifi service to get me through the news and a couple episodes of Ancient Aliens. I asked the driver (we will call him Bill) how long it would be to Vegas and he said it would take 2 hours: although he did say had done it before in 90 minutes. This was "the warning" that I missed. This was the red flag. The was the utterance that portends chaos.

For those of you who haven't experienced a cab ride in NYC. It is fraught with white knuckling, stomach churning and the need to grab on to either the seat ahead you, the passenger next to you or the O.S.H. (ask me about this) located above each door. As we left Kingman Arizona in our "gently used"

hospitality service van, complete with dancing hula girl on the dash, I longed for the calm of NYC cabs.

It should be noted that a man behind schedule is a man possessed with the need to make up for lost time and we were getting it in spades. The stretch between Kingman and Vegas was posted at 70 mph, which for a standard car, low to the ground and a well rested driver, would be a brisk commute. In a high riding bus with aging tires and a pin hole in the muffler, it was nothing short of life affirming. We passed semis and cars alike, bouncing from one lane to the next in a fiery display of momentum, strategy and a driving acumen that would have made AJ Foyt proud. I jammed both my knees up against the seat ahead of me, reminiscent of riding the school bus in the dark when I was 12 years old back in Montcalm County. The seat belt was nothing more than an afterthought and its metal buckle bit tightly into my navel. During the first 30 minutes I sat eyes fixed on the road ahead, ready to scream at some traffic oversight that the driver missed; a stray antelope, a broken down car on the side of the road or maybe some busted guard rail that was the last line of defense between the road and a long plunge into oblivion. The next 20 minutes, I kept recalling the headlines of various bus disasters that I ran across my news feed.

“Greyhound Crashes Killing 20.”

“Casino tour bus ends in fiery crash- killing 10”

“Sleepless Driver at fault for Bus Crash in Connecticut”

I even pictured my own demise in the headlines “MRF Supervisor gets trashed in Vegas crash”-MRF Supervisor Martin A. Curry from LaPointe Wisconsin met the Great Recycler in the sky on his way to Las Vegas as the late bus he was traveling in missed a turn and plunged 190 feet off the road and came to rest in a canyon in what highway transportation officials have labelled a “new distance record.” He left behind three beautiful children, many friends, three dogs, chickens, and pigs. He will be missed by some.”

I took many deep breaths and it was only 60 minutes into this terror, that I was resigned to accept my fate, whatever it may be; with even the faintest hope that I might actually make it.

And somehow, somewhere along the way, I fell asleep.

I awoke to the sounds of luggage being removed from the bus. Was this the scraping sounds of heaven? No. It was McCarran Airport. Miracles do happen in Vegas apparently and I was tempted to get on my knees and scream some hallelujahs but I figured it may be in bad form for a new arrival who was not in a casino. I sat up in my seat, pulling the seatbelt out that was imbedded deep in my gut and after a few brief courtesies, the bus driver agreed to drop my at my hotel instead of having to wait for the downtown transport. We meandered out of the airport labyrinth of advertisements and neon lights of tonights performances. Rich Little??? Wha? Is he still alive? I was sure that was an error. No way. The bus driver seemed much more relaxed and beamed with pride; 90 minutes. A solid performance in any race arena. I didn't tell him that he was probably responsible for my latest ulcer but seeings as how he was going the extra mile and I was still alive, I threw him a 20 and thanked him for the ride. He dropped me off at the biggest Neon “6”, I have ever seen in my life. which wasn't the exciting part. It was right next to a 24 hour Dennys and that meant only one thing...coffee and the legendary 4:15 am Las Vegas crowd that was either too broke to go home or too drunk to care. There was both.

It was too early to check into my hotel room. 12 hours too early so that meant wasting as much time as possible until my 3:00 check in. I walked into the very bright and very neon Dennys, complete with a caricature of Wayne Newton. In the corner a couple sat, hand in hand barely noticing me passing by. At the counter some guy was going off about the price of gas and how he couldn't afford to drive his cab anymore. He was wired on anger and Moons Over My Hammy. I hucked my bag into the seat across from me and plopped wearily into the seat. My waitress called me “Honey”, her cheeks covered in glitter and lips painted bright red and I immediately felt welcome. I ordered coffee and some 9 grain

pancakes...or were they 12 grain? I cant remember. Bottom line is there was a lot of grain in them and it was the first non Amtrak "heated in a microwave" dining car food I had eaten in two days and brother it...was...good. And the coffee; oh man. After "train coffee", Dennys coffee tasted like the beans were picked and roasted that morning by angels. There was no way humanly possible to sit inside a Dennys for half a day But I was going to give it a try.

The next two days were pretty uneventful. Food. Walking. Television and a lot of laying by the pool in the sweltering 80-90 degree sunshine. I will spare you (the winter residents) of Madeline Island the details only to say it was awful and you probably wouldn't have liked it very much.

The morning of the conference I got up two hours before I had to register. I spent the morning at Dennys with my usual – coffee, one of the many fine breakfast entrees complete with fake maple syrup and a side of Las Vegas hospitality. After breakfast and a couple stretches, I donned my Green Bay Packers hat and started off on my brisk ¾ mile jaunt to Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

The opulence was addictive. AS I was walking through the hotel, the ISRI presence was everywhere. "We're BACK!" was the post COVID slogan that signaled a return to normalcy for this convention. It was plastered on the walls, in stand alone kiosks, on floors, and on badges of men and women who passed me in the long marble adorned walkways. People who were strangers to me, walked into the staging area outside the convention center floor and suddenly broke into laughter, handshakes and hugs. It was a sign that everyone was wanting to kick off the rust from the pandemic and get back into fine social form; but not everyone was comfortable with new found freedoms. Masks still covered some faces and in the interest of public safety, vaccine cards and IDs were still required to attend the convention. I attended the New Member and First Time attendee orientation session. It was a great intro into the world of ISRI complete with maps, schedules, lanyards, promotional ink pens. A majority of the attendees were dressed in suits and high end business attire and only a few of us were in business casual. This was the corporate end of the equation. This would be interesting.

What can I tell you about this convention? Let me first list to you the sessions I attended and try to put the overall impact into a concise summary.

**Opening Session- Words Matter- Connecting with Your Audience:** Will Howard was great!! What is the power of a word? In this industry, there are numerous words that are misleading and have an impact on public perception. Example: SCRAP. A word that has multiple connotations of something small or insignificant that has been discarded; also a slang word for a small fight. This multi billion dollar industry is built on small bits of insignificance that have been cast aside. During the time of pandemic, there was agreement that waste industry workers, recyclers and scrap artists were ESSENTIAL in fight against COVID (see the processing and treatment of medical waste) and to prevent our recurring issues with supply chain shortages (see the processing of materials to restock food shelf packaging and materials that make up a standard ventilator; copper wire, plastics, ferrous metals etc- all recycled). Words like "dump", "garbage" and "waste" are misnomers of an outdated lifestyle. Even as we look to start our local composting operation, there is very little in our daily material consumption that cannot be recycled. There is also the messaging of recycling that needs to be refined. There is frustration among the consumers that can be best summed up by a popular bit of information "Why should I recycle when 71% of global emissions is created by 100 Fortune 500 companies??" The reality is that the recycling industry is a NECESSARY component of the decarbonization process. It is a counterbalance to extractive industry and in our efforts to promote and expand our recycling efforts we need to continuously send message of positive improvements. "Its not what you say, its what they hear" was a repeated theme and has application in many of the interactions

we experience. The language that convinces people to recycle needs to adopt the Four "P's"- Plainspoken, Plausible, Personal and Positive.

**Spotlight On Ferrous- An Industry in Transition:Two Words- Ukraine and Russia.** In this industry, we are not immune from global change. As much as we are emotionally impacted by great social change in the world, we are equally impacted economically in the world of the global commodities market. The tone of the presentation was that the Ukraine Conflict has thrown the recycling industry into chaos and with economic sanctions comes economic uncertainty. With the cancelling of NORD sStream 2, European smelters and refineries will be off line in the coming months and that causes further uncertainty. There seems to be an inkling of agreement that prices will continue to rise in the coming year. In the past 2 weeks, prices have shot up and continue to rise and this will have an impact on the auto recycling segment here at the MRF. Given last years success, we stand to increase our profit margins given that prices may hit \$300 a ton.

**Spotlight on Plastic- Recycled Content, EPR and Market Conditions:** The frustration that we experience at the MRF is not isolated. There are numerous communities that have problems with cross contamination and experience issues with the sale of plastics. This session also brought out the challenges of global markets and global frustration with a waste product that no one wants. Cargo ships of plastic are sent to third world countries who have refused port for these ships only to send the thousands of tons of plastic back the port of origin. There is a new plastic industry trend that is trying to gain traction in the form of chemical recycling/pyrolysis.. In layman terms, it is a fancy way of saying "incineration". It seems that ISRI position is that it is 100% against this and "isn't really recycling" and "creates a justification to make more plastic." I reached out to Resa Dimino who made a point of mentioning MRFs very prominently in her presentation. Our MRF as a town owned entity is a rarity in the overall scheme of things. More than 75% of MRFs are private entities with 55% of them being owned by 5 companies (including Waste Management and Republic). There are advantages and disadvantage to both the most impactful being the access to funding. I will be communicating with her on this in the future and look for "crossover funding" that could help offset costs at our organization.

#### **General Session- Challenges and Opportunities for Recycling in a Post-COVID Trade**

**Environment:** Vikram Mansharamani was a pretty inspirational speaker. From his assessment of the global trade market to his insights on futures. Some of his lecture into what can best be described as "human logistics" were timely. There used to be an idea that "expertise" was created in academia (and the business world) by pushing a "narrow focus, expanded depth and core competence in ONE niche area." The new focus is "breadth over depth." The NEW economists and workforce will focus on a broad spectrum of topics outside of a singular focus. This really resonated with me. It mirrored by own academic history; having spent 6 years in college, accumulating 79 college credits but no degree. I have dabbled in a cross section of arts, sciences, communication, agriculture (as well as a Phd in "social" education lol) it felt relevant and timely. "A wide angle lens instead of a microscope." While this may not seem to have applications to our MRF, it is an overall change in how education and our future island workforce will be viewed. It is a reassessment of work place prerequisites and on the importance of on-the-job cross training (and we can see this in the relationship between MRF staff and roads crew.)

**Spotlight on Aluminum: How Long Can the Light Metal Perform?** Russian/Ukraine Part 2: There is so much uncertainty in the future markets but this was another very interesting discussion as I am a consummate news junkie and foreign policy dweeb. With trade sanctions against Russia (supplier of 7% of American Aluminum) and the concerns around high energy prices, there is a high probability that prices will hit an all time high late in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. There seems to be a similar trend in metals that we have seen in our local paper markets. It is cheaper and more efficient to recycle then it is to process 1<sup>st</sup> generation raw materials. With energy prices and inflationary pressures on the supply chain, recycling is king.

**MRF Innovations and Collaborative Financing Models to Strengthen Recycling Infrastructure:** Interesting material, but not applicable to the scope of our town MRF. Again highlights the uniqueness of our MRF as a public entity. Privatization leads to inefficiency and removes the human condition from the necessity of recycling. There was an over all theme that our industry is a human industry. 500,000 jobs and \$110 Billion dollar industry and yet...there is the push to remove the Human component from the industry. Instead of investing more money in wages, it is viewed as more profitable in the long term to invest in a \$350,000 optical sorters and \$500,000 mag screeners. Again there does seem to be some cross over funding sources that may serve us well in the future. This will be an ongoing research topic.

**Spotlight on Tire and Rubber: Recycling's Role in Sustainable Development:** This was interesting from the standpoint that there is SO much regulation of tires once they leave our MRF. The multiple uses of shredded rubber for roads and playgrounds continues to gain favor while the trend of burning rubber to make energy is viewed as a flawed and ridiculous idea. Most of these incinerators have no answer for the emissions and continues to avoid the obvious which is "Its not recycling if you aren't recycling". There is discussion on creating a certification process for recycled tires that have post consumer rubber content, similar to what we see in paper and plastic. What baffles many is the push back from the industry on creating a recycled rubber content standard.

**Creating a Sustainable Future: The Role of Recyclers and Our Industry:** Quite a bit of this session was a emphasis on what we know to be true. The necessity of the recycled materials market is a cornerstone at the decarbonization of the future. Everything in this session is mirrored in how we are doing business at the MRF. What is the impact on our community? How do we take responsibility for the waste we make and how do we set an example for the future generations?

**Closing General Session – Workforce Wake-up Call: How Many Must Leave Before Retention Is a True Priority?** The closing general session was geared more toward the large industrial centers of this business. In the age of COVID and the "Great Resignation" questions continue to arise regarding worker equality and how to keep seasoned employees longer.

**Summary:** There is an antiquated idea that business is a top down approach; meaning that it is upper management that determines its success. In the global recycled materials market, it is the reverse. It is the "small guys" like the LaPointe Material Recovery Facility that determine the success of the industry. We are the tributaries in a great flow that will ultimately determine the course of our success as a society. George Adams, President of S.A.Recycling said "I will never beat the small guy...we need to treat our business like a profit centers instead of a cost center." In the age of post pandemic, we are shifting our focus from a "just in time economy" to a "just in case economy" and efficiency and consolidation are the keys. It is generally accepted that supply chains are still about 2-3 years from being fixed (if at all). Leadership isn't reserved to any singular segment of the business model; it is a necessary component of daily living. We are on the right track and our failures will be cautionary tales while our successes will be road maps for others to follow. This business requires an active approach to success; "RECYCLABLES" = INPUT; "RECYCLING" =PROCESS; "RECYCLED" = RESULT.

We are MRF-tastic and will push to send a message of continuous improvement.

MAC

12(5), CLERK, ACCOUNTING, OFFICE, PUBLIC, TA

Letters from MRFy- "May the Force be with You" Edition

Well we've done it again. (BEEP BEEP)

WE have endured the one of the most amazing (Dagobah) mud seasons in recent years and moved into the time of the year where peeking daffodils and peeping (Yoda like) spring peepers are signs that winter may be over. Because of this, we at the MRF have kicked into (Tie Fighter) high gear with our seasonal housekeeping.

The Klaxon alarm horns rang low and long as the Ferry boats fired up and our seasonal island residents began the arduous process of opening cabins and spring cleaning. MRF Recycling Specialist Joe Abhold Fired up Woodstock (and made the Kessel Run) and started the hauling season with some soggy boxes of the winter trash and dem con at which point they are being hastily refilled as we wake up from the long winter sleep. We can safely say that "Joe is on the GO GO GO!"

The Island Closet was cleaned out and handed over to the St. John's Closet Crew and they continue their preparation for a new season of UPCYCLING and resurrecting old household items into a second life. We look forward to supporting the sophomore year of this partnership.

We have successfully submitted our 2021 Recycling Program Accomplishments and Actual Costs Annual Report for the responsible unit of Town of La Pointe (02014) on 04/30/2022. This is an annual report to the DNR for actual costs associated with recycling for the fiscal year 2021. We saw a dramatic decrease in hauling costs associated with banned items (oil, tires, and heavy appliances) but saw an increase in items like purchased services (ferry line costs, maintenance fees). This is largely in part to changes in MRF operational theory and the next 2022 Recycling Program Actual Cost Report will let us know if these changes were an anomaly or if they will continue. A HUGE SHOUT OUT to Jedi Master Barb Nelson for her assistance and meticulous record-keeping that made this process considerably easier than it could have been. KUDOS!!

Spring cleanup, grading, backfilling, beautification projects and new signage are all a part of our spring workload. We are working with the very fine roads and facilities crew on moving the glass crusher to an outdoor location to save rotator cuffs and heavy lifting. This will streamline operations on our warehouse floor, give our commercial recycling customers more space to work, and open up more (desperately needed) dry storage space for marketable recycling materials.

We will begin planting flowers in the tires the kids have decorated and have been approached about doing another round of tire painting by our young apprentices. We will update on our progress. As always, thank you for your continued support.

May the Force Be With You.

Have a MRF-tastic Day!  
**Martin Curry**

**From:** Marty Curry <[recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 30, 2022 10:36 AM  
**To:** Micaela Montagne <[clerk@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:clerk@townoflapointewi.gov)>; Michael Kuchta <[administrator@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:administrator@townoflapointewi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ben Schram <[foreman@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:foreman@townoflapointewi.gov)>; Evan Erickson <[ericksone21@gmail.com](mailto:ericksone21@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Letters from MRFY JUUUUUUUUUUUUNE!

Letters from MRFy- JUUUUUUUUUUNNNNNNNNE!

June is upon us once again and we have gone from ZERO to “100 MPH busy” in the span of one weekend. This past month we bid ADIEU to Recycling Specialist Joe Abhold and wish him the best in his new job. Joe was instrumental in making the “MRF Miracle” happen and expanding our range for marketing recyclables and backhauling materials for the Town. He will be missed. The Job has been posted and we are looking to hire the most qualified candidate and have them in place by June 13<sup>th</sup>. Our seasonal neighbors have returned and are sharing stories of the winter months along with many gifts of cookies, pies, chips and candy. One of the early season praises has been the CANDY DISH. Upon entering the MRF offices at 412 Big Bay Road, a repurposed fruit bowl displays a cornucopia of brightly wrapped confectionaries ranging from the sublime (Peppermint Saltwater taffy) to the sinful (Dark Chocolate covered caramels). Weve seen increase in the kids (and kids at heart) who have taken an active interest in coming to the dump to recycle and specifically poking their heads into the office to say “HI” (and grab a quick piece of candy). This may be part of a larger national strategy to get people to the recycling centers.

Evan has been doing double duty and helping with baling and staffing through out the week and on Saturdays. He is also hauling boxes and as we head into the June month, we are grateful for his commitment and dedication to all things MRF.

The Island Closet in is full swing and we have rolled out part of our beautification project to support this community initiative. The used tires that the After School Program painted last year have been filled with dirt and flowers and are “sprucing up” the MRF. Keep a watch for them as you drive through!

We are in the process of transitioning to our New Square space POS system as well as using the new Computer that was approved as part of last year’s budget.

Its nice transitioning into the busy season and these next couple of weeks will see us shift into high gear. The gentle haze of fruit flies, the musty smell of rancid beer, the leakage of compactor boxes covered over with the Cherry Granules of Odor suppression will be the dominant themes here. We look forward to assisting with sorting and dumping.

As Always,

Have a MRF-tastic Day!

**Martin A. Curry**  
**Recycling Supervisor**  
**Town of LaPointe**  
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Letters from MRFY  
My Oh MY It's Already July!

*"In July is the waning of my youth, where sweated memories remind me of mirth and love; but only a moment, that quickly gave way to the changing of the leaves and my old age."-MAC*

The Summer is fast fading.

June passed us by here at the MRF in a flurry of cardboard and aluminum cans. Friendly faces have returned to tell us about the winter months as well as busting out a few old school polka moves during our Saturday Morning Polka Fest (from 8:30-Noon). Dave and I have been powering on with the weekly grind of baling and cleaning and hauling. On Saturdays, Evan joins us for a jovial round of glass crushing and smashing the dem con down while punching tickets and sharing stories.

We are pleased to announce the new arrival to the MRF team of Tchibo Curry!! Tchibo comes from Germany and makes a great espresso and has been a great motivator in the early mornings as well as the late afternoons. Stop on in and say hi to our new Team MVP!!

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, we had a visit with Matthew Jacobson-Wisconsin DNR, Joey Becker-Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Bradley Johnson-Wisconsin DNR to give an assessment of our Auto Salvage Operations. They gave an overall "EXCELLENT" review for our safety and environmental safeguards and wholeheartedly approved of the MRF continuing this "great community service". As such, we have been recommended for a Tier 2 Auto Salvage permit, which will allow us to continue to dismantle and scrap parts from automobiles and trucks. I am in the process of filling out the online permit for stormwater drainage as well as filing a NOI (Notice of Intent) for our Island auto salvage operation. I will update as I learn more.

As we head into the latter half of the year, it's always a good time to reflect on what we do here at the MRF. Some people think all we do is recycle the standard items like cardboard, glass, aluminum and tin. Some people may even think that this is a useless process that we repeat ad nauseum on a daily/weekly/monthly/yearly basis. To what end? To save the planet? I've wrestled with it from time to time and if only 1 in 10 plastic bottles gets recycled and the rest ends up in our landfills; what is the point?

When people come into the MRF we are trying to recycle a feeling. Gentle recycled reminders that half eaten bagels do NOT belong with tin and steel are cause for a laugh and a larger conversation on the merits of composting. For some people, a recycled smile goes a long way towards making the day a little brighter and manageable. We recycle warm greetings and friendships with people that we see on a daily basis; but why not? Of all the things we recycle and renew on a daily basis, our friendships are the most valuable.

Thank you for your patience with us on our journey toward greater efficiency. We greatly appreciate your support and baked goods.

As always,  
Have a MRF-tastic Day!

**Martin A. Curry**  
**Recycling Supervisor**

## Letters from MRFY

### The Dog Days of Summer and Oatmeal

August – from the Latin *augustus* for CONSECRATED or VENERABLE; mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century. “The stink was so thick at the MRF, it had to be the sultry hazy month of August”

Never underestimate the power and benefit of a good bowl of oatmeal. I like mine with raisins, maple syrup and brown sugar. As I take my first bite, I flashback to glimpses of Wilford Brimley (spokesman for Quaker Oats) with his large glasses and oversized mustache and hear his gravelly voice in the back of my mind: “You’ve made the right choice son! I’m proud of you.” It pares nice with a good vintage Ethiopian blend of coffee, the sharp and bitter aftertaste reminding me that this is not a dream; I am not in bed dreaming this. I must charge ahead and embrace the day.

What does this have to do with recycling? Nothing. I just really like oatmeal...well, hang on. Maybe there is a thread.

During a typical summer shift here at the MRF, Dave, Evan and myself put on approximately 5-7 miles walking back and forth and back and forth; from the front of the house to the back of house, emptying glass and cans, punching tickets, hauling bags out of the back of cars and trucks, as well as visiting and sharing stories with our neighbors and guests. In one calendar year that’s almost a thousand miles of huffing and puffing around our little MRF. For perspective: in one calendar year, we walk from here to Chicago and back. The mornings here are sublime. The morning sun peeks through the pines, shining down on last night’s visit by the local trash pandas; empty fish wrappers and half eaten hamburger buns strewn about. Morning crows sit on the cell phone tower, casually gazing with disgust at me for invading their morning feast. Chipmunks scurry with the last mouthful of “god knows what” and hide until the end of the day. It’s almost as if (gasp), the rest of the day depends on how we start our day. Good Days are possible because of oatmeal. (How’s that Wilford?)



July flew by in a hurry. Dave, Evan and I have powered through our days with routine and fanfare. We packaged and hauled tires. Boxes have been filling pretty quickly due to the increase in traffic on the island as our community comes to the realization that summer is fast fading. The Island Closet is a bustling cavalcade of visitors looking for the latest fashion from yesterday. I am still plowing ahead with our Tier 2 salvage permit and waiting on some guidance from the lads at the DNR on application protocol.

Dave made his first haul of cardboard to Ladysmith and the fine folks at DUNN Paper as well as handling the bulk of the baling chores on the open days; sometimes baling three bales of material in one afternoon!! He is the Balemeister Supreme!! Great job, Dave!!

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AUG 3 2022

Initial: dy

WE have also started a new pilot program. A guest dropped off an extra box of...(get ready) MILK BONE DOG BISCUITS!! We already have people treats but now we are expanding into Doggo Treats. Participants have to ask permission and then Milk Bones are dispensed to slobber and a wild feral look in their eyes. Owners are overly excited and we now have new allies and fans here at the MRF! New Motto pending approval: "Every day is a Dog Day here at the MRF!"

Beyond that, it's business as usual. We would anticipate a slight drop off in traffic in the coming weeks. I mentioned this to my daughter Inara; "Three and a half weeks until school!!" The look I got dropped the temperature in the immediate area by a few degrees.

As always: Have a MRF-tastic Day!

**Martin A. Curry**  
Recycling Supervisor

Letters from MRFY- Moving Mountains; Breaking Summer  
September 2022

The air has cooled and, if you squint just right in the breaking of the morning sun, you can see the tops of the trees losing their green. Summer is breaking. Fall is just around the corner and our children are heading back to \*gulp\*... SCHOOL!!!! We have reached that time of the year when our neighbors and friends have come to us once again and said: "This is it. This is the last one of the year!" They huck the last bag of trash in the compactor, sort the last of the recycling into the barrels and ... wait ...\*RECORD SCRATCH\* "Where's the glass barrels??"

"What?"

"Where's the glass barrels? Someone has taken all your little glass barrels!"

"We have a new system now. You just throw all the glass in the giant red carts. We have moved our glass crusher!!"

That's right, sports fans!! The menace of the glass crusher has been banished to distant lands (outside the back door actually) and with it goes the LOUD smash of broken glass, the heavy lifting of the 60-pound glass barrels (rotator cuffs at the MRF rejoice!), the particulate glass floating in the customer service area and the awkward and often back-wrenching movement of 500-pound barrels of glass from the inside of the MRF to the back dock, only to be tipped into the 310 and then off to the glass storage bunker. PHEW!

This Massively Monumental Moment in Madeline MRF'dom is brought to you by the fine folks at the Public Works!! Many many thanks to Ben, Ray, Evan, Evans (The DUO of Evans!) as well as Jeff Ralph Sr. for the fine electrical work.

Dave is in the process of making appointments for our final quarterly hauls for plastic and cardboard. The daily routine of crushing it, moving it, punching it, and smashing it continues. The mild slowdown has allowed me to start on office work, including our DNR reporting for the RUG Grant funds as well as our nomination for the MRF Recycling Excellence Awards from the Wisconsin DNR!! Still waiting on the word from the DNR and DOT on our Auto Salvage permits.

Change is around the corner. Soon the leaves will be in a full flush of color. To our seasonal neighbors, as always, thank you for your support and patience with us. Travel safe wherever the road takes you. Should the stars align, and the recycling fates allow, we will see you here next year; same times, same MRF channel!

As always, Have a MRF-tastic Day!!  
Martin A. Curry  
Recycling Supervisor

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SEP 6 2022

Initial: dg

## Letters from MRFY- October 8, 2022

### *Boxing Winter*

Its Long John Season.

The phrase long johns conjure up a variety of images; a one-legged pirate in search of treasure, custard filled elongated baked goods with chocolate glistening on the top and lastly, woolen flannels that act as a second layer during the cool season. Rumor has it that the term “long john” was inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century bare knuckles boxing champion John L Sullivan aka “The Boston Strong Boy” who entered the boxing ring wearing only his “long johns”. My grandfather wore long johns year-round; his neckline stained yellow with sweat and dirt even in the summer heat. For me; long john season is the most wonderful time of the year. I’ve often told people that I “tolerate” summer with its sweltering heat and unforgiving humidity in order to get to this time of season when frost lined grass greets our little community in the morning and whirlwinds of fallen leaves chase each other in the evening. In my neck of the woods, the small Barred Owls are in full throat, fighting along the Spruce Hill Ridge with their battle cry that is often described as “WHO COOKS FOR YOU!” ringing through the trees. All that’s missing is the soft “clip clop” of horseshoes on the pavement and a gentleman name Ichabod Crane nervously whistling and sweating.

Magic times. Magic island. Magic season.

**AS with the weather, the MRF is in transition.** The giant fans and summer equipment are being stashed away. The Island Closet was dismantled October 1<sup>st</sup> and we are in the process of moving back in after another wildly successful year of upcycling clothes and household items. Congratulations to Gwen and the long list of volunteers and visitors on making the MRF Experience more unique. We are in the process of “Clearing the floor”-getting rid of all our recycling so we can start the year on a fresh foot. I submitted our annual RUG Grant to the Wisconsin DNR on September 29<sup>th</sup> and as part of our application process included giving rationales for our numbers and variations. I submitted the following:

***“The inflationary impact of the current economy on both projected wages and residual cost of processing materials will have a significant impact on 2023. This coupled with the dramatic decrease in the sale of marketable recyclables due to short term and long-term recessionary fears will have an impact on our total numbers. We are also 2 years into a management change, so we are still trying to establish an accurate baseline of RUG reporting criteria based on these operational changes.”***

This job has made me an economics nerd. Can ya tell?

Dave has been pulling double duty as both Recycling Specialist and Roads Assistant with Ben and the Crew. I am super grateful for his talents and energy as he concludes his first summer and wades into his first island winter here on the Rock. Keep up the Great Work Dave!

In the coming weeks I will be working on our new solid waste contract, continuing to help with the new Budget season as well as the daily operations here and prepping for...“The S Word”...when we wade into winter in our long johns, fists raised high in our finest pugilistic stance and Box Winter for the next 4.5 months in the spirit of John L Sullivan. Cheers.

As always,

Have a MR Ftastic DAY!

**Martin A. Curry**  
**Recycling Supervisor**  
**Town of LaPointe**

[recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov](mailto:recyclingsupervisor@townoflapointewi.gov)

TB(5), CLERK, ACCOUNTING, CLERICAL, TA, PUBLIC

**Letters From MRFY - Spookiness and goodbyes**  
November 7, 2022

*"...Not yesterday I learned to know  
The love of bare November days  
Before the coming of the snow,  
But it were vain to tell her so,  
And they are better for her praise."  
Robert Frost, "From My November Guest"*

The streets are quiet and some of our MRF visitors (bears and people) are settling in for a long winter hibernation.

We are in the throes of "preparing for snow"; pallets are being put away, plow lanes are being cleaned up, the last of the bales of saleable plastic and materials are being shipped. It is the seasonal closing down of the MRF that has gone on now for some time.

The recycling market is in shambles. Materials are at their lowest point in the past 5 years and we are having to pay to get rid of plastic and paper, as well and struggling to find value in our cardboard and metals. These next few weeks will involve shifting our storage priorities and preparing for a long winter of material recovery and strategizing.

In this time of change and transition, we bid a fond farewell to Recycling Specialist Dave Cook, who has informed us that he will be leaving at the end of November. We thank him for his time spent learning the ropes, bringing his knowledge and smile to the island every day, and wish him the best in his future endeavors. Once a friend on the island, the island will always be your friend. Cheers, Mate.

On the upside of things, you may have heard we received a Recycling Excellence Award. It's an honor to represent this community and receive such recognition. We were also pleased to announce a Halloween visit by Dr. RECYCLING!!! His zany, mad-cap antics and recycling knowledge were given to the kids and parents alike in the first annual Haunted MRF!! Before candy was handed out, he imparted bits of wisdom like "Every year, 28 billion glass bottle and jars go to the landfill ... enough to fill two Empire State Buildings every three weeks for a YEAR!!" After this, candy was dispensed as well as toothbrushes (neither of which were recycled.) This is another educational outreach that we will be sharing with others MRFs in the region.

Baling continues.  
Cleaning continues.  
Research continues.

Stay warm, kiddies. The only way out of winter is THROUGH it.

Have a MRF-tastic Day!!

Martin A. Curry  
Recycling Supervisor

Letter from MRFY December 2022

**Ice Wizards and Frozen Tales**

"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold." – Aristotle  
"Aristotle never baled cardboard in -10 weather on an island in Northern Wisconsin. Togs are not recommended." - Curry

It's started. The romantic notions that the first snowfall is "so beautiful" and "winter is my favorite time of the year" and the ever popular "we will be thinking of you while we are in Florida".

It's a different kind of "hurried" approach to recycling here at the MRF. In the summer, it is hurried to move traffic along and streamline the drive-thru all the while avoiding the faint smell of bleach, yesterday's smoked fish and curdled milk. In the winter, it is hurried to prevent frostbite – very basic; very simple. Don't freeze. Stay Warm. In both instances, presorting can save a LOT of time and unnecessary discomfort.

We had a couple from Texas come up for a visit in the last week. They were amazed at the beauty of our island community, and the conversation led to the eventual "What happens when the boats shut down?" Now most of you who know me, know that I do have a penchant for exaggeration and fanciful description ... and that led me to tell of the Ice Wizards: a generational collective of old and young alike who know the ice in ways that mere mortals do not. Stories of Elder Ice Wizards who can tell you about ice conditions for the past 40 years and live by a very simple rule of thumb: when the sign says "Ice Unsafe - Road Closed", take it as law.

Some don't, and there is the inevitable call at around 2:30 a.m. to get picked up; or worse yet, the shame of seeing a vehicle nose down in the ice, another victim of bravado. Legends live on about houses that go through as well as the odd truck that went through the ice loaded with feed and bourbon. They found it several years later when the currents carried it out to Isle Royale, where it washed up on shore around Wendigo, much to the joy of hikers and boaters who had a "rip snortin" good time with some nicely chilled and aged whiskey. But alas, it was only a tall tale. It passes the time and brings a smile to some faces. People are like ice -- What's on the surface will only get you so far, but it's the depth and strength of what's underneath that endures.

MRF routine has led to reorganizing refrigerators and moving our external items to "Winter Phase," also known as Plowing Season. I have been working on consolidation of the summer's collection and we are in full preparation for the last hauls of the season. Busy work for the coming weeks will include crunching numbers for our inevitable reports in the spring to the DNR, as well as posting the Recycling Specialist position in February for a March/April hire. In other news, we did score a modest victory by negotiating a new solid waste hauling contract that will reduce our 2023 costs by 1/3. It's a good start.

As always,  
Have a MRF-Tastic Day!!

**Martin A. Curry**  
Recycling Supervisor

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DEC 5 2022

Initial: dg