

I am so glad we have green librarians in Solano County. They make sure we have the latest green books on the shelves. Two books that I have finished reading are "Farewell My Subaru" by Doug Fine and "Bottlemania" by Elizabeth Royte.

"Farewell My Subaru" was fun to read. Doug Fine decided to try living with a small carbon footprint. He moved to a farm in a remote area of New Mexico where he installed solar panels and a wind turbine. His new vehicle was a diesel pickup truck that he called a ROAT (Ridiculously Oversized American Truck). He converted it to biodiesel and routinely picked up used Kung Pao oil on his forays into town.

He needed a ROAT as his property was on the other side of a dry riverbed that would sometimes become a river. He became a rancher with two kids that would mature into milking goats to provide him with protein. His chickens provided eggs and fertilizer for his garden. The local coyotes and hawks also saw an opportunity for easy lunches at his Funky Butte Ranch.

His four primary goals were to use less oil, power his life by renewable energy, eat as locally as possible and survive. And that he did. Check out his website (www.farewellmysubaru.com) for his current adventures.

"Bottlemania" by Elizabeth Royte was recommended by librarian Lana Touchstone. It is a new twist on the water wars that Marc Reisner wrote about in "Cadillac Desert" in 1986.

Royte (author of Garbage Land) did her research and this writer came away with a borderline hopeless feeling about the future of our drinking water.

Her book explores how big corporations buy land and extract the water under it with few regulations or environmental impact reports. She also covers the status and safety of municipal tap water supplies.

Royte wrote that unlike municipal water systems, water bottlers have no standards for testing.

Royte concentrated on Fryeburg, Maine where Nestle extracts local water from wells and

trucks it to nearby bottling plants. One plant fills up to 6 million bottles a day, 358 days a year. These, in turn, are trucked to distribution sites for distant delivery. No longer are roads quiet and serene in this part of Maine

All the things that go into individual bottles of water: manufacturing the plastic bottle, the cardboard flat, the shrink wrap; plus transporting bulk water, bottled water, supplies; and finally, the recycling or landfilling of the remains of this one-use product makes bottled water's carbon footprint huge.

Maude Barlow (Blue Planet Run Foundation) and Sara Ehrhardt (Council of Canadians) wrote, "The water we drink is simply too precious to trust to corporate hands, and too essential to rely on market forces alone to ensure equitable access and distribution." The Grist (www.grist.org) noted that "the solution lies in declaring water as a human right and a public trust to be guarded by all levels of government."

My advice is to only buy bottled water in emergencies and carry your own tap water in your favorite reusable container.

E-waste Updates

Vallejo Garbage Service is now accepting Ewaste (5 items per visit) at 2120 Broadway on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. This is a free service for residents. Call 707 552-3110 for more information.

Benicia High School is sponsoring an E-waste Recycling event on January 31 and February 1 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This free drop-off for your old computers and unwanted electronics will take place at 1101 Military West. Microwaves will be accepted for a \$5 fee and they are also collecting warm coats and canned food.

VALCORE Recycling Board Member Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.

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