Students weigh the benefits of waste reduction

by Rick Nielsen

The student members of the Solid Waste Stream Analysis Subcommittee have got a dirty job.

Tara Pike, Tanya Otero and Brian Brown are students responsible for physically digging through the trash containers of every building on campus to sort and analyze the waste in order to determine how much of the trash is trash, and how much could be reduced, recovered or saved from entering the landfill. Though not a glamorous job, it can be extremely effective in producing changes.

"The point of what they are doing is two pronged. First, they plan on making recommendations to the base committee (Waste Reduction and Resource Management) for implementing a recycling program on campus, and second, to use the study as their undergraduate thesis," said Jim Deacon, director of the Environmental Studies Program and professor of biology.

The study, which began in June, involves sorting and weighing the contents of each building's trash bins three times. It will continue throughout this semester and into the next.

Volunteers interested in helping may contact Deacon at 739-3275.

On Oct. 1, the waste containers of the Humanities building were sorted as a Channel 3 news team made a live broadcast. The results revealed that of all the contents, approximately 345 pounds of it were recyclable glass, aluminium, plastic and paper of various sorts, including *The Yellin Rebel*.

There were 401 pounds of "general" trash, of which 270 pounds were totally unrecyclable, leaving 131 pounds of needless or reducible waste. Some of that reducible waste consisted of 46 pounds of 30 assorted text books and computer manuals and 23 pounds each of paper towels, wax coated cups and other cups.

Pike emphasized the need to consider the environmental impact of using those type of cups (wax) instead of the refillable type.

"All the the studies and reports in the world won't matter," Pike said. "If students and people don't change their habits, the campus will never be an environmentally sound community."

She also considered the books found to be an unnecessary burden on the landfill and would like to reduce the amount of paper towels by switching to air blowers.

"It's just a matter of making people aware of the facts" Ortero said. I think students will help make it work, and now that the new receptacles are present it should make it a lot easier."

The receptacles Otero refers to, are the two can cluster-units placed around campus last week by the grounds crew. One can is for trash, the other for aluminum cans.

"I'm excited about getting this started." said Dennis Swartzell, grounds manager. Hopefully students will cooperate. The key here is separation."

The initial intention of the new cluster-units is to recoup some type of profit from the aluminum cans so that additional containers may be purchased to include glass, plastic and paper receptacles and to reduce the amount of material going to the landfill.

Swartzell also noted that this could ultimately lead to additional scholarships.

If any students have suggestions concerning the new cluster-units or their placement, call Grounds at 739-3182.

"All the studies and reports in the world won't matter. If students don't change their habits, the campus will never be an environmentally-sound community."
— Tara Pike

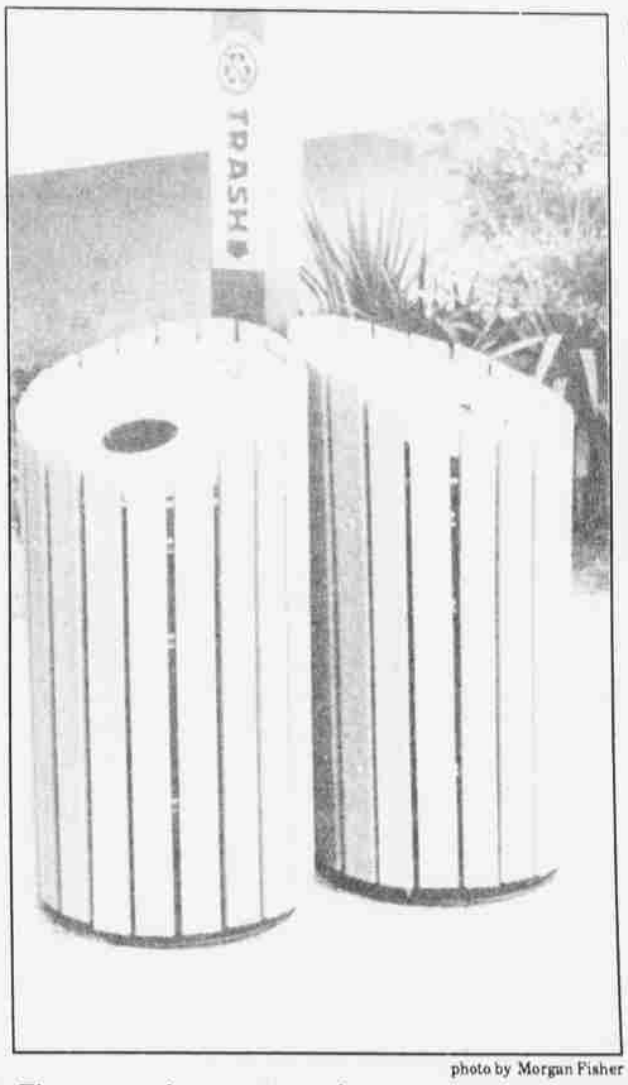

photo by Morgan Fisher

The two can cluster-units used to encourage recycling on the UNLV campus.

PH.D. M.D.
J.D. M.B.A.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE NUMBERS, YOU WON'T GET THE LETTERS.

THE RONKIN EDUCATIONAL GROUP

WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU MAKE IT.

LAS VEGAS • 454-8900

LSAT • GMAT • GRE • MCAT