



Earth Angels

WORDS ERICA BONIFACE

RECYCLING YOUR EMPTY PEANUT BUTTER JAR IS HELPFUL, BUT WHEN YOU GO to do your spring cleaning, there are other household recyclables that may not stand out. Such as your old bike gear. Or how about the rusty dining table passed down from dear Aunt Esther that's collecting dust in your basement? And old...cooking oil??

All those and more are items that can be recycled into works of art and useful everyday gear, thanks to six clever companies right in your own backyard.

GREEN GURU GEAR

Save the planet and look cool while you're doing it. Now we're getting somewhere. Green Guru Gear takes in recycled bike tubes, climbing ropes, banners, wetsuits and PETE recycled plastic bottles and in return makes some really sweet products ranging from backpacks to wallets and even waterproof laptop sleeves.

The backpacks are made from recycled bike tubes; the wallets are made from recycled bike inner tubes and PETE fabrics; and the laptop sleeves are made from recycled wetsuits.

All of their products are for sale at greengurugear.com and take it from us: They make stellar gifts for that environmentally-fashionable-outdoor-loving junkie in your life. Because if you live in Boulder, chances are you know a couple of those.



RECLAIMED STYLE

About 10 different local artists make up this unique consignment store, but instead of using a blank canvas to create their art, the artists at Reclaimed Style use furniture pieces they find along the road, in dumpsters or by what is given to them.

"Reclaimed Style is furniture plus art. All of the stuff in the store is reclaimed, repurposed and re-imagined," says Vonda Neely, store co-owner. "One of the other owners, Kenny Johnson, uses old barn wood or beetle kill from the mountains and creates works of art with blue stain for tables and bookcases, or by doing custom orders."

The store runs the gamut with prices. They have affordable pieces for college students who want to jazz up their living spaces or more sophisticated pieces for a more upscale living space. All in all, if you want to show off a one-of-a-kind piece of furniture, this is a good place to start.

Visit refurnitureart.com for additional information, including upholstery classes offered in the store.

ECO-CYCLE

Okay, we can't write about recycling without mentioning Eco-Cycle. That'd be like meeting Channing Tatum and not asking him to take his shirt off. Eco-Cycle is the ultimate recycling hub where they take in those hard-to-recycle materials you have laying around, such as plastic bags or electronics.

"Eco-Cycle operates the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) where we take a whole list of unusual items from residents and businesses. We will also provide collections for businesses for all the items we'll accept—and we market those materials locally, right here in Boulder, to some very unique businesses," says Marti Matsch, Communications Director for Eco-Cycle. "For instance, the yoga mats we accept are sold to Bolder Path and used as padding for accessories like computer bags and other things like that."

For more about Eco-Cycle, visit ecocycle.org where you'll learn everything there is to know about recycling in Boulder County.

WASTE KNOT WOODWORKS

When it comes to wood, these guys are the experts. At Waste Knot Woodworks they handcraft every piece of furniture by using salvaged and reclaimed wood. Products for sale range from benches to tables, stools, cabinets, mirrors and more.

Waste Knot is all about giving their customers exactly what they want by taking custom orders. They'll use their reclaimed wood and your design to create a piece of furniture exactly to your liking.

Bonus: Not only do they give back to the environment by using reclaimed timber, they also donate a portion of their sales to the Boulder Humane Society to help homeless pets.

Make a difference for the environment (and your master bedroom) by shopping online at wasteknotwoodworks.com.

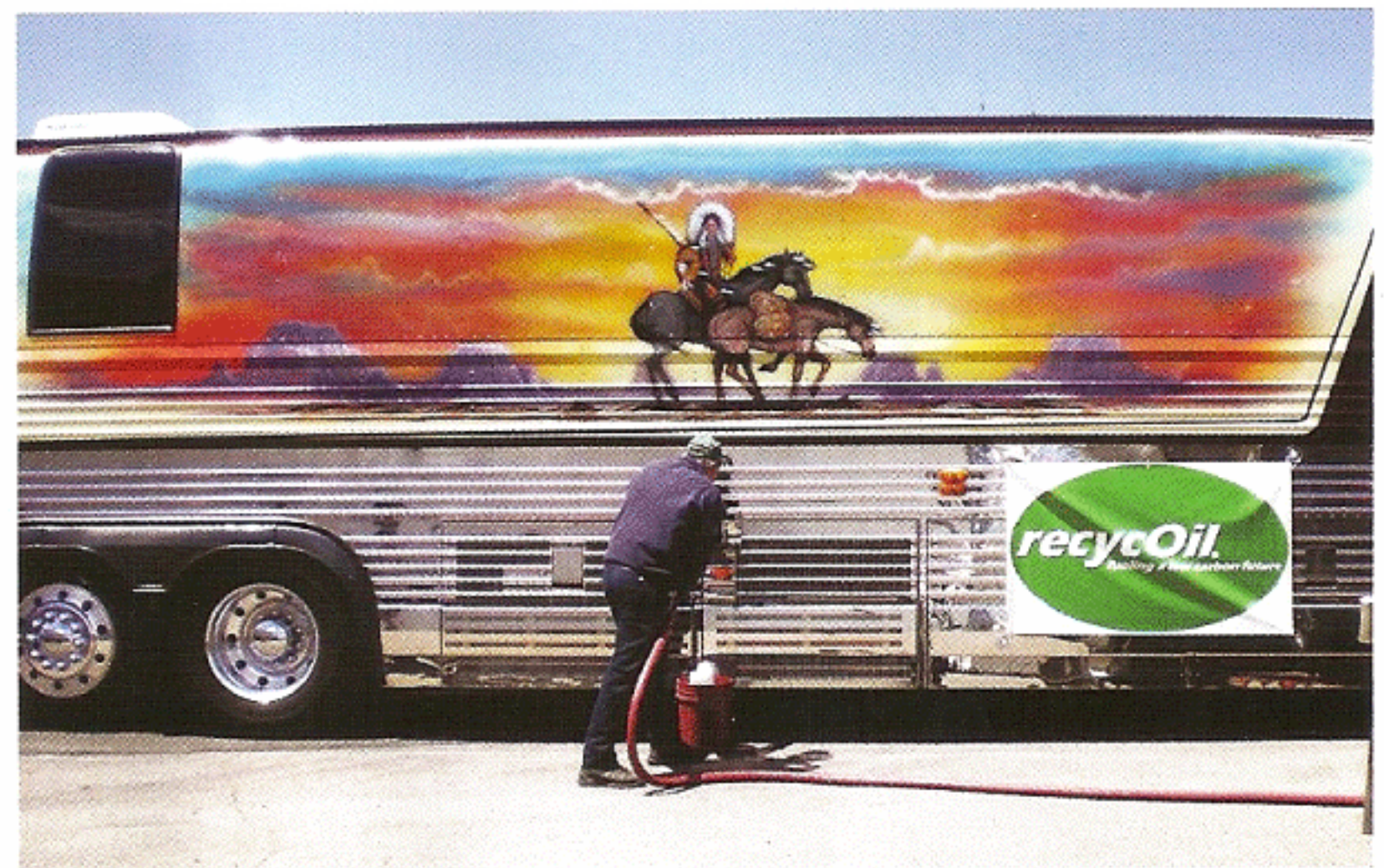
MY NEW IT GUYS

The tech gurus at My New IT Guys know computers. They live and breathe troubleshooting your computer woes. Yes, they'll save you from throwing your PC out the window in a Control-Alt-Delete fit of rage, but they also offer a computer recycling program for when you're ready to upgrade.

They take in computers that you've deemed useless and give them new life by refurbishing them. From there, they make our community a little more technological by providing those in need with newly refurbished computers.

Not only will your old computer be turned into a helpful piece of equipment for someone else, but you're helping the environment along the way. If computers aren't properly recycled, they can release hazardous wastes that damage the earth and poison our soil and water supply.

Visit mynewitguys.com/recycle to learn more about the Boulder Computer Recycling program.



RECYCOIL

Before dumping your used cooking oil, you might want to consider the pros of taking it off your plate (no pun intended). RecycOil works with 1,600 restaurants and commercial kitchens in the Rocky Mountain region by repurposing 100 percent of their old cooking oil into domestically-produced biodiesel.

"The cooking oil is filtered and de-watered and then sold to commercial biodiesel manufacturers such as Blue Sun, High Plains Bioenergy and Renewable Energy Group. The separated water and food waste is composted at commercial compost facilities," says Aaron Perry, recycOil CEO.

Even Willie Nelson is getting in on the cooking oil-to biofuel action; his Country Throwdown tour bus fleet was powered by old cooking oil during a recent stop at Red Rocks.

Get the greasy details at recycOil.com where you can also learn about recycOil's sister company, SOURCE Local Foods. Not only will you be recycling cooking oil (and come on, what were you going to do with it anyway?), but you'll also be helping more people eat locally grown food.