

Tales from Tim's Recycling Bin – Tangled Up and Blue

I remember when I was a kid after we finished working on a project my dad always took the time to wind up the ropes and the extension cords into neat circles. I also remember hating waiting. We were finished, and I was a kid who wanted to be on my way. But now that I'm the dad, I realize how smart my dad was. Keeping the ropes and cords separate made it easier to get going the next day. No knots of tangled things needing to be untied.



I had that flashback after a conversation with the director of the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) where all our recycling goes to be separated into the individual components. Plastic bottles in one bale, aluminum cans in another. Cardboard bales destined for a paper box mill.

And then there is the pile of trash. A pile of things people wish could be recycled, but never is. The main things you see in the pile are plastic bags and a category of things referred to as tangles. Tangles are those things like rope and extension cords that are mistakenly thrown in the recycling cart. Things that people did not take the time to properly organize and dispose of.

Tangles got their name because as they go through the sorting facility they get tangled around the moving parts of the machinery. Nearly every sorting facility in the county must shut down the line multiple times a day so that workers can go in and cut the tangles off by hand. It's a hassle and a hazard for the workers. So put the cords and hoses and anything you're not sure is recyclable in the trash.

Until next time take the time to toss the tangles in the trash my friends.