

# One Man's Trash Is Another Woman's Treasure



**Sandy Crippen, CEO  
Potomac Recycling**

Leave it to a woman to turn a man's world upside down. That's what Sandy Crippen is doing in the male dominated world of the trash business. A little lady amongst the big boys of the waste industry, Sandy Crippen is taking in trash and turning it into treasure. If turning garbage to gold sounds like magic, it is not.

"If only it were that easy", Sandy jokes, "there are no good witches in this business, but we have good people and good ideas and God willing, a great future". Not magic or luck, it takes good business sense. And Sandy knows turning trash into treasure takes a lot of treasure - like the \$2,000,000 investment she made in new equipment alone last year.

## Recycling the Key

The golden-fleece behind the new direction in Sandy's company is recycling. The old waste industry just dumped trash into landfills and forgot about it. In hindsight, this was a terrible "waste" of recoverable resources.

The construction industry in Northern Virginia generates a tremendous amount of "discarded resources", mostly wood, cardboard, metal and masonry. Sandy's goal is to recover up to 80% of these materials from the "waste stream" and transform them into marketable products, such as mulch, bio-fuel, topsoil and road aggregate. So far, Sandy's approach to trash is proving economically and environmentally sustainable.

"I love the idea of taking the rejects and redeeming something useful and profitable from them - and making the environment cleaner in the process. It's a beautiful win-win-win situation", is the summation of Sandy's business philosophy. My husband used to say, "Take a minus and make it into a plus"

Widowed earlier this year, Sandy, a retired third-grade school teacher, calculated the "minus" of her recent loss, picking up the reins of the company and vowing to make it a "plus". Today she employs a total of 90 people in three related

companies - Alexandria Transfer Station, NOVA Waste Trucking and Potomac Landfill in Dumfries. She is ranked the 83rd largest operator in the nation.

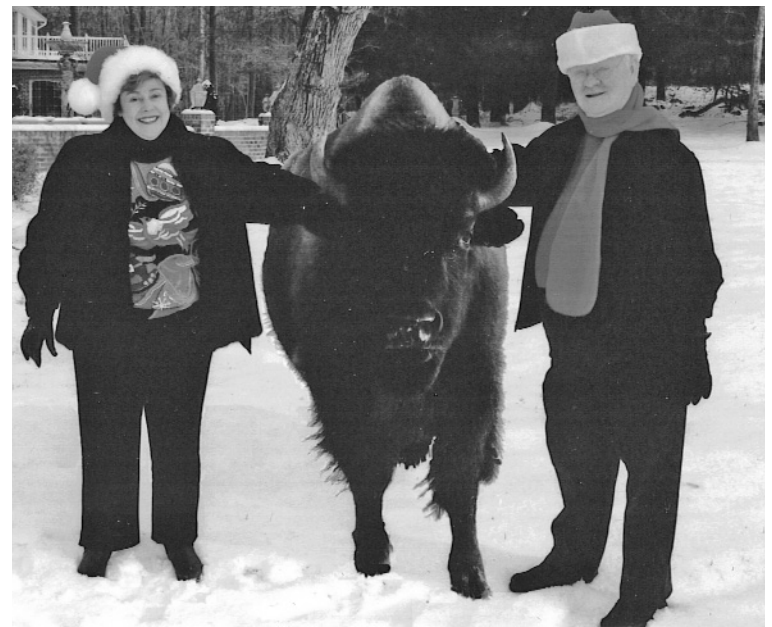
## Taking the Dump out of Dumfries

With solid recycling experience under her belt and with a specialized staff of engineers, Sandy is now contemplating her boldest project yet, sure to gain national acclaim: Taking the Dump out of Dumfries!

Working closely with the Town of Dumfries, the Virginia DEQ and the EPA, Sandy is proposing to "mine" and recycle the contents of the 100 acre Potomac Landfill (a Construction and Demolition, C&D landfill) and return it to its' natural state. In four years the land will be available for productive redevelopment on Dumfries' gateway to the I-95 corridor. Possibly this will set a trend in other locations where urban landfills stand in the way of more valuable development.

"Making this world a better place carries it's own reward", Sandy

says of her dream to reverse the last 20 years of dumping in Dumfries. Putting her money where her mouth is, "I have committed the entire resources of my company to make this happen". Clearly she thinks that being a good neighbor to the Town is a good gamble, "I hope that we can build a legacy together that we will all treasure".



**Sandy and Jack with their "pet" buffalo.**

## Reclaiming other Treasures

In addition to Sandy Crippen's penchant for finding value in the material castoffs of society, Sandy has a parallel life in helping the most helpless of human throwaways, abandoned and abused children. For 17 years Sandy has worked to provide forgotten children with love and a new chance at life through the non-profit organization ChildHelpUSA of which she is a Member and donor.

Born in the Valley of Virginia into a family of 12 children, she is thankful for the humble but loving home provided by her policeman father and hard-working mother. Ever

since, her avocation has been to provide a loving environment to those less fortunate. Sandy and her late husband Jack, enjoyed special times hosting ChildHelp field visits to their exotic animal collection at the "Pet-a-Pet Farm" which he established in Reston.

With her gracious demeanor and a hint of sweet southern in her

voice, she has acquired the affectionate nickname "Miss Virginia" from business colleagues and friends alike. Sandy Crippen is truly a gentle "Woman in Charge" whom Virginians are proud to call their own.

## Publishers Note:

***My friendship with Sandy's and her family over the last 20 years is one I've always cherished. I am very proud to present her in this issue as the "Women In Charge". She truly is a remarkable business woman, a caring and loyal friend, and a compassionate activist for her community.***

**Shirley Mayhugh**



**Sandy receiving an award from ChildHelpUSA Founders, Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Feddersen.**