

For Eco-Tip May 6, 2018

Media Reuse, Recycling, and Disposal: From Tapes to DVDs

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Now that streaming services are easier to use, are you considering dumping your music and movie collection? Cassettes and VCR tapes are still accepted for donation at most local thrift stores, and you can sell or trade DVDs, CDs, and vinyl records at many local record stores.

Fortunately, before the streaming revolution, an infrastructure for used music media was fueled by the audiophiles who swear recorded music sounds best from a vinyl record or at least have a nostalgic fondness for the format. No such sentimentality seems likely to make DVDs or CDs into collector's items, so now is a good time to Google "used CDs and DVDs" and find a local store willing to buy your media.

A few tips when selling: Match media with covers, do not include scratched items, and call first to set a time for your arrival. Some stores have only one buyer and accept items only when that staff person is available.

I brought 265 DVDs and CDs to the largest used record store in Ventura County, and they bought 160 of them for \$95.30. I brought the remaining 105 to two smaller stores, but neither wanted any.

Damaged or unwanted DVDs and CDs can usually be recycled with electronic waste at drop-off events, but the market for low grade plastic is currently so bad, recyclers lose money processing these. "We process to keep out of the landfill but (the items) offer no value," according to Fulton Connor, President of PC Recycle, based in Newbury Park.

As for audio cassettes and VCR tapes, it is important to keep these out of recycling bins. Although the plastic case can be recyclable with other low-grade plastic in times of strong markets, the tape can unwind at sorting centers and wrap around conveyors or other equipment.

Dave Janssen's School of Music in Simi Valley is still accepting cassette tapes for a creative sound wall and backdrop at 1109 E. Los Angeles Ave -- noon to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; noon to 8 p.m. Friday; and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Other "cassette tape crafts" can be found on web sites such as Etsy.