

# Bullets discovered in recycling

■ Ammunition not included in city program

By Jessica Savage  
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City recycling trucks unloaded a few hundred rounds of ammunition Friday morning at the city's recycling center, surprising workers who sort recycled items by hand. Bullets and casings should never be disposed of in the curbside re-

cycling program, Solid Waste Director Lawrence Mikolajczyk said. "It looked to be the negligence of someone putting it in the recyclable bin because it's metal and they thought it was recycling," Mikolajczyk said. "It could get wedged in a machine and discharged or something like that." A recycling truck collected the unspent rounds from a blue bin Thursday in Area 4, which includes neighborhoods south of South Padre Island Drive between Everhart and Airline roads. Staff sort-

ed through the recycling items Friday morning and found rifle and pistol ammunition. Bullets and their casings can be recycled, but not through the city program. Officials advise residents to drop unwanted ammunition at the Corpus Christi Police Department's training office at 4510 Corona Drive from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Bullets are not the first unusual find at the city recycling center. Since the

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TODD YATES/CALLER-TIMES FILE  
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MICHAEL WOMACK  
COLUMNIST

## When's a good time to move plants?

Spring is a natural time for people to think about removing plants, replanting and revitalizing landscapes. In the process of considering all options, the topic of moving plants often comes into the discussion. There are times that moving a plant makes sense. Other times, it is better to simply remove an out-of-place plant and purchase a replacement to incorporate into another area. If you have no attachment to the plant that needs transplanting, then purchasing a new specimen is often a better option than transplanting. Planting a new, container-grown plant will often result in a healthier, more vigorous plant due to reduced transplant shock. Sometimes transplanting makes sense. One of the most common reasons to transplant is to save a plant to which there is an emotional attachment if it was given as a gift or planted in honor of a person or event. Another reason may be to save a variety that is no longer available in nurseries. In either case, I would recommend trying to propagate with cuttings or seeds before trying to transplant. That provides a backup in the event of the transplant dying in the relocation process. If people want to move a plant to a new location, then the prime window of opportunity is quickly closing. If our mild winter pattern continues, plants may begin their spring growth in late February or early March. Transplanting has varying degrees of success based on numerous factors. You have to look at each situation and determine if transplanting is a good option, or if replacement better suits your needs. Species is the first consideration. Unfortunately, it is one of the more difficult factors to determine. Do some online research to see if other gardeners have had luck moving the plant species in question. Also, don't forget to ask local gardeners and certified nursery professionals at your favorite full-service garden center about their experiences with the plant in question. Plant size is a critical factor. A large plant is much less likely to survive transplant shock than a small perennial. Why? First of all, the root system of a large plant is severely reduced during transplanting. The roots often extend well past the branch structure, so the vast majority of roots may be cut during the transplanting process. A young plant often transplants more readily than an old, established plant. Part of that may be size, but it also may be a result of plant hormones. Plant growth hormone balances change as plants mature, and the hormones needed for new root growth or vigorous new shoots may not be as readily available.

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PHOTOS BY GEORGE TULEY/SPECIAL TO THE CALLER-TIMES  
The blessing and dedication of the Incarnate Word Academy athletic complex Friday concludes with a breaking of a finish line banner by track athletes Jackson Bright (from left), Tyler Cortes, Remy Ellison and Ethan Metz.

## BLESSED



Incarnate Word Academy eighth-graders Kennedy Quintanilla (from left), Hayley Guerra and Michael Rock sing with the student body during the playing of the national anthem at the athletic complex blessing.



Wm. Michael Mulvey, bishop of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, concludes the blessing of the Incarnate Word Academy athletic complex.

## Witness: Victim high, combative before shooting

■ Roommate heard shot, saw dumped gun

By Michelle Villarreal  
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The roommate of a Corpus Christi man who was fatally shot in 2011 described him as a sweet man, but said he used drugs about an hour before he was killed and had been argumentative. Bradley Lee Fikes, 43, is accused of fatally shooting Robert Nicholas Welch on Dec. 19, 2011.



Fikes is accused of killing his relative, Robert Nicholas Welch, on Dec. 19, 2011.

Defense attorneys showed a taped police interview between a detective and Welch's roommate, Danielle, which was taken a few days after the shooting. In the video, Danielle told the detec-

tive that Welch got home from work and was yelling about not having any ice cream in the house. She said she tried to calm him down and when she touched his chest Welch became irate. "I barely touched him on the chest, he freakin' flipped out ... and got in my face so I walked off," she said in the interview. "He went inside and I could hear him from the front porch going crazy." Sandra Eastwood, one of Bradley Fikes' attorneys, has pointed out that Welch's autopsy revealed he had methamphetamine, opiates, marijuana and al-

cohol in his system. She also mentioned that Fikes was afraid of Welch when Welch was drinking alcohol and taking drugs. In her taped interview, Danielle said Welch apologized for his behavior and blamed his attitude on the methamphetamine he had taken before coming home. Danielle told the detective that she was leaving the house to go for a walk and saw Welch and Fikes arguing. "Nick is intimidating and he was talking to Brad in his face and he was cussing at him telling him he was worthless," she said in the interview.

Danielle said she went for a walk and on her way back home she heard a gunshot, but before she could get to the house to see what happened Fikes' girlfriend, Laurie, drove by to pick her up. The two went to Fikes' brother's house to tell him what happened and then drove down a long winding road, Danielle said in the interview. Danielle said Laurie had a gun in her lap that she recognized from the day before when she saw Fikes on the porch cleaning it. Laurie was wearing a robe and had

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