

Two huge firms dominate the industry, and independents have vanished. But J. P. Mascaro & Sons thrives.

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They're 'proud to be trashmen'

Brothers succeed by keeping it in the family

By Jane E. Robertson
Times Herald Staff

With Earth Day just over a week away and Keep America Beautiful Month in full swing, one Montgomery County company is doing its part in waste-disposal and recycling efforts.

At a time when publicly owned corporate giants are absorbing their privately owned competition, Harleysville-based J.P. Mascaro & Sons is thriving.

What started out as a one-man/one-truck fleet operation collecting scrap metal and other odds and ends in 1933 has grown into a 700-employee company with 300 trucks that is pulling in "in excess" of \$100 million a year.

J.P. Mascaro & Sons is ranked ninth among the nation's top-10 largest waste-disposal companies (the top two are Waste Management and Browning-Ferris Industries). The company is equally owned by the five Mascaro brothers — Pasquale "Pat," Joseph Jr., Michael, Francesco and Louis — who are continuing the business their father started.

As the nation's largest privately owned trash-removal service, it serves more than 1.5 mil-



Bill Landis Photos/The Times Herald

A sea of colorful co-mingled recyclables lies waiting to be sorted at J.P. Mascaro & Sons' Great Valley Recycling facility in Bridgeport.

lion people in about 60 municipalities throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

In this area, Norristown and Trappe boroughs and Lower Providence Township contract with J.P. Mascaro and Sons. Bridgeport also uses the Mascaro-owned Great Valley Recycling facility on the fringe of the

borough off Route 202, although its municipal trucks collect the recycling.

And more than 7,000 residential customers have subscriptions, a service the company first offered about nine months ago.

Company president Pat Mascaro says the secret to their

success is simple.

"My father gave us a lot of values — that's the ingredient for our success," Mascaro said. "He taught us that there are a lot of things bigger than dollar bills.

"And keeping it all in the family is the added ingredient that makes this work and dif-

ferentiates us from the others.

"We answer to our customers — not investors. I think he would be pleased."

The company has grown to 16 facilities (including three landfills and three material recovery — recycling — plants), which

Mascaro

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provide collection, processing, recycling, transportation and disposal services for residential and commercial clients.

Joseph P. Mascaro Sr., who died in 1981, began the now multi-million-dollar business as a 16-year-old in Trooper. In 1963, his contract with the General Electric Co. in Upper Merion Township was the beginning of the company's future placement among the top-10 in trash hauling.

In the early 1970s the sons started working in their father's business by driving trucks.

"The most unique thing about this growth is that they keep reinvesting in the company and stay with the areas they know best," said Eric Pavlak, director of com-

munications for J.P. Mascaro & Sons.

"They buy more equipment and facilities and take on bigger projects."

J.P. Mascaro & Sons bought Great Valley Recycling three years ago after it had gone into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Now profitable again, the waste-disposal and recycling site saw 12,613 tons of trash, 658 tons of paper and 4600 tons of co-mingled recyclables last year.

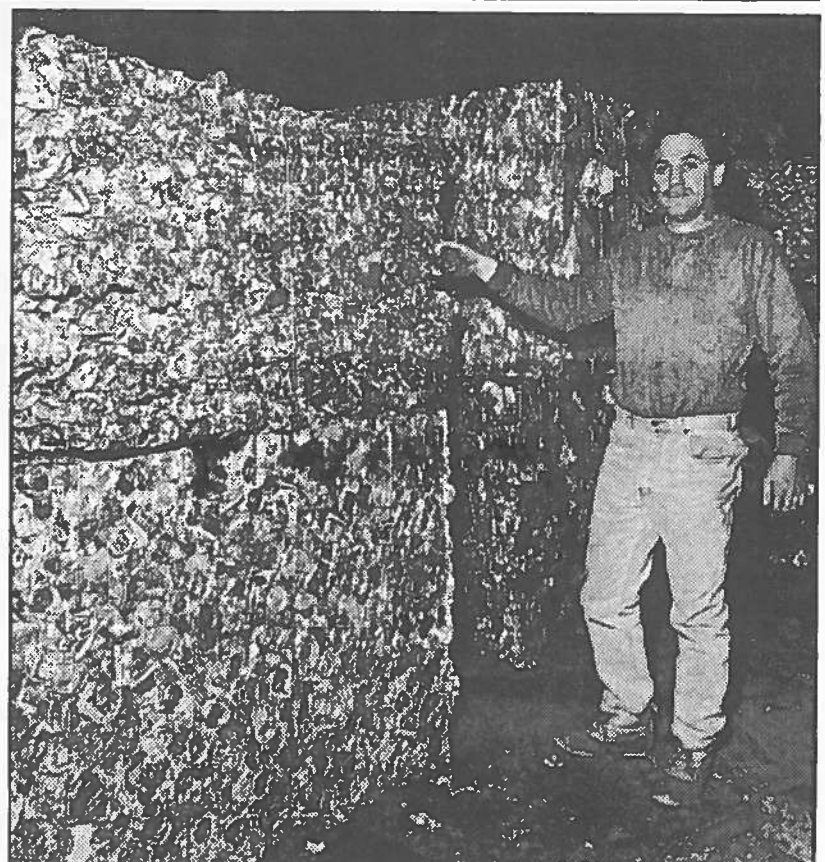
In February J.P. Mascaro & Sons won a 25-year, \$325-million sludge management contract with Nassau County, N.Y. The final-

product from this facility is used in soil enhancement and land reclamation projects.

The company, however, does not accept hazardous materials and, Pat Mascaro said, it never will.

"We just aren't interested," he said. "We're specialists in what we do; why be mediocre in something else? You know, not everyone is cut out for this. It's a tough, difficult and grueling business.

"We are proud of our past and our credentials. We service federal, state and large industrial entities. We're proud to be 'trashmen,' so they say."



Bill Landis/The Times Herald

Mike Mascaro, one of five Mascaro brothers who are continuing the family-owned business their father started in 1933, stands next to bales of aluminum cans ready to be shipped to purchasers.

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