



**The “Coach”**

Greetings Flooring Success Systems Member,

I developed the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* system to give Platinum members a powerful tool to stay in constant contact with their past clients with **fun, informative, welcome, value-added communication**. Using this system, you will be able to “touch” contacts on your list every single week with virtually no cost.

**WARNING:** The *e-Neighborhood Advisor* does not replace mailing the printed *Neighborhood Advisor* each month to your list. It’s a *supplement* to the printed newsletter. I’m a big believer in using email as part of an overall marketing mix, along with direct mail and other marketing. However, if you rely strictly on email, your results will suffer. So I’ll say it again: the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* is a supplement to, not a replacement for, the printed *Neighborhood Advisor*. Ignore this advice at your own peril.

Having said that, just between the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* and the printed *Neighborhood Advisor*, you’ll touch the contacts on your list 64 times per year! There are a LOT of benefits in doing this, including:

* You’ll make more money
* You’ll get more referrals
* Total “top of mind awareness”
* Differentiates you from all the other floor dealers
* Positions you as a Trusted Advisor
* Helps lock your clients in an “iron cage” away from competitors

The e-Neighborhood Advisor is designed to help you profit from many segments of your list:

* Past clients
* Referrals
* Prospects
* Delayed leads
* Joint Venture partners

Everyone who comes through your business should be subscribed to the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* as well as the printed *Neighborhood Advisor*. Many of the prospects that leave without buying *will* buy from you in three to twenty-four months…*if* you stay in front of them.

**Audio Tutorial**

To learn how to maximize profits with the e-Neighborhood Advisor, as well as get tips on setting it up to run on auto-pilot, listen to the “E-Neighborhood Advisor” coaching calls on the Platinum members-only site.

**Instructions**

1. **Email manager.** If you don’t currently have a system for managing bulk email, you need to get one. A couple of free/inexpensive options are Constant Contact and Mail Chimp. I’ve used Constant Contact, it works well, and I’m familiar with its functions.
	1. To make email marketing easier, your email manager should be able to send out bulk emails on dates you specify ahead of time. For example, you should be able to create four e-Neighborhood Advisor emails for December. Then specify which date each email will get sent. Constant Contact does this.
2. **Copy and paste the tips into the blank email editor.**
	1. You’ll notice that the e-Neighborhood Advisor email messages are formatted so they are only about 1/3-page width, and they are broken up into 1-3 sentence paragraphs. This is done on purpose so the emails are easier to read. If someone opens your email and sees big blocks of text, they are less likely to read it.
	2. Always use Ariel font or another sans serif font. Sans serif fonts are easier to read on computer, and marketing tests have shown that marketing messages get better response when using this kind of font.
3. **Import the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* graphic.**
	1. Use this as the email header
	2. An easy way to do this is to create an e-Neighborhood Advisor template in your email manager. Paste the graphic into the template and save it. Now you can just copy this template each time you create a new e-Neighborhood Advisor message.
4. **Subject line.** The subject line is the “ad for the email.” These function as attention-grabbing headlines, just like you’d have in a good direct response sales letter. These should make the contact curious, so they open the email. We’ve included subject lines with each installment.
5. **The P.S.** The Postscript contains a different U.S.P. each week. Feel free to change these as the situation warrants.
	1. Use testimonials in your P.S. Include photos and a link to an audio of the testimonial.
6. **Special offers.**
	1. You can put in a special offer for the P.S. instead of the message we’ve provided. Keep in mind that the e-Neighborhood Advisor is using the “infotainment” strategy. It should be a mix of 80% fun, informative, valuable information, with 10%-20% about your services. If you make it into 100% sales pitch, your contacts will get bored and simply delete the messages. That’s why the special offer is in the “P.S.” Keep the special offers about the same length as the P.S. we’ve provided.
	2. Option: Refer them to your printed Neighborhood Advisor when making an offer. For example, “P.S. Don’t forget that until November 15th you get every fourth room of flooring FREE! See the insert in the November Neighborhood Advisor for details.”
7. **Sending it out.** The easiest way to do this to take 30 minutes and load up an entire month’s worth of e-Neighborhood Advisor messages into your email manager and schedule them to go out automatically. Do this once per month.
8. **Managing your subscriber list.** There are lots of ways to do this, so I’ll outline how I did it when I used Constant Contact (before I switched to specialized software for managing my marketing campaigns).
	1. Create an “E-Neighborhood Advisor” subscriber list in your email manager.
	2. Import all the contacts that you want to get the e-Neighborhood Advisor.
		1. Past clients
		2. Referrals
		3. Prospects
		4. Delayed leads
		5. Joint Venture partners
	3. Work directly in this list whenever you add or delete subscribers.
	4. Again, there are other ways to manage your list, but this is the simplest without getting into using specialized software.
9. **SPAM compliance.** There are two parts to SPAM compliance:
10. **Permission.** Whenever you send out bulk email messages, you have to have permission from everyone on your list to email them. If someone gives you their email address, this constitutes permission. (i.e. when you get their email address during the Design Audit, or if someone opts in to get the Consumer’s Guide via your website, or if someone signs up for a contest and gives you their email address, etc. These all constitute permission.)
11. **Opt out method**. You must provide a method for them to opt out. The nice thing about Constant Contact is it manages opt outs for you. It includes an opt-out link at the bottom of every message you send. It also manages the opt outs in the database. For example, let’s say a person with the email address Grumpy@Grump.com opts out. Constant Contact tags this email address as having opted out and blocks emails from ever being sent to it. Even if you don’t delete this contact, or if you accidentally upload it again, Constant Contact recognizes this address and blocks emails from being sent to this address. Bottom line: the SPAM management happens automatically so you don’t have to mess with it.

**Send Out An E-Mail Version Of The Monthly Insert**

Another effective way to market to your list is to convert the *Neighborhood Advisor* insert into an email and blast it out to your list.

Platinum Member, Mike Phoenix of Orange Connecticut, took a November *Neighborhood Advisor* insert and converted it into an email campaign. He sent me the following message:

*Jim, this is an email version of this month’s Neighborhood Advisor insert. So far we have $31,365.51 in sales on ten orders. We still expect to write more sales as we have until 11/19.

We give everyone that shops our store a copy of the Neighborhood Advisor along with the insert and tell them about the promotion which helps close orders by putting a sense of urgency on it.

In a time when I have had several sales reps come in and tell me how bad business is throughout Connecticut, we are up 44% over last year.

Thanks,

Michael J Phoenix
Flooring Design Specialist
Floor Décor*

Think about this… so far Mike has made over $31k with a marketing strategy that cost him ZERO! Way to go, Mike!

Below is the email Mike sent out. This is a virtual word-for-word email version of a Neighborhood Advisor insert. He used Constant Contact for this.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

 |

 |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

 |
|

|  |
| --- |
| ***Floor Decor's*** *Thanksgiving for All* |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Floor Decor***363 Boston Post RoadOrange, Connecticut 06477203-298-4081 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Dear Michael,**Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays, but for some less fortunate families, Thanksgiving is not so great. While the rest of us are enjoying turkey, sweet potatoes, gravy, and stuffing there are many families going hungry.This holiday season, Floor Decor has teamed up with the Connecticut Food Bank for their annual **“Thanksgiving for All Food Drive.”** The good people at CFB are collecting hams and turkeys to distribute, but they need side dishes and other fixings.Now you can get a Thanksgiving Discount on Gorgeous New Floors for the Holidays **AND** Help a Family in Need at the Same Time!Your Friends at Floor Decor |

 |
| Anchor

|  |
| --- |
| ***So for every 5 canned food items you bring to Floor Decor from******11/1/11 through 11/19/11******you'll get a special appreciation discount on your flooring purchase:*** Donate 5 Cans - Purchase $ 997 in New Flooring - Get a $103 Discount. Donate 10 Cans - Purchase $1997 in New Flooring - Get a $211 Discount. Donate 15 Cans - Purchase $3997 in New Flooring - Get a $327 Discount. Donate 20 Cans - Purchase $5997 in New Flooring - Get a $451 Discount. Donate 25 Cans - Purchase $6997 in New Flooring - Get a $583 Discount.**All the food will be donated to the Connecticut Food Bank's East Haven Warehouse. We need your food donations in time for Thanksgiving, so you must bring your donation to our showroom by Saturday November 19th****to get the discount!****Don't need new floors right now? You can still help! Just bring your canned food items to Floor Decor by November 19th and we'll make sure it gets delivered to the Connecticut Food Bank.** |

 |
|

|  |
| --- |
| *Happy Thanksgiving*!  |

 |

 |
|

|  |
| --- |
|   |
|

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Any Friend of Yours Is A Friend of Mine!! Who is the next person you know who is in need of new flooring for the Holidays? You'll be doing them a really big favor by recommending a flooring professional that they can trust. Plus, I'll send you your choice of a gift certificate for two passes to the Connecticut Post 14 Cinema De Lux or a $50.00 Gift Certificate for dinner for two. |
| **Offer Expires: November 19th, 2011** |

 |

 |

 |

TIP: If you send out a promotional email like this and get good results, send it out again a few days before the deadline, but include the following message above the original email:

Subject line: Did I forget you?

Hi <first name>,

I sent out an important, time-sensitive message last week explaining how you can help a family in need this Thanksgiving AND get a big discount on your holiday flooring. Here’s the message again in case you missed it.

Mike

**Message I sent last week:**

(original email)

**This Month’s e-Neighborhood Advisor Installments**

**Begin On The Next Page**

# Week #1

# *Subject line*: When Squirrels Were One of America’s Most Popular Pets

In 1722, a pet squirrel named Mungo passed away. It was a tragedy: Mungo escaped its confines and met its fate at the teeth of a dog. Benjamin Franklin, friend of the owner, immortalized the squirrel with a tribute, according to Natalie Zarrelli in *Atlas Obscura*.

“Few squirrels were better accomplished, for he had a good education, had traveled far, and seen much of the world.” Franklin wrote, adding, “Thou art fallen by the fangs of wanton, cruel Ranger!”

Mourning a squirrel’s death wasn’t as uncommon as you might think when Franklin wrote Mungo’s eulogy; in the 18th and 19th centuries, squirrels were fixtures in American homes, especially for children. While colonial Americans kept many types of wild animals as pets, squirrels “were the most popular,” according to Katherine Grier’s Pets in America, being relatively easy to keep.

By the 1700s, a golden era of squirrel ownership was in full swing. Squirrels were sold in markets and found in the homes of wealthy urban families, and portraits of well-to-do children holding a reserved, polite upper-class squirrel attached to a gold chain leash were proudly displayed (some of which are currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art). Most pet squirrels were American Grey Squirrels, though Red Squirrels and Flying Squirrels also were around, enchanting the country with their devil-may-care attitudes and fluffy bodies.

By the 19th century, a canon of squirrel-care literature emerged for the enthusiast. In the 1851 book Domestic pets: their habits and management**,** Jane Loudon writes more about squirrels as pets than rabbits, and devotes an entire chapter to the “beautiful little creature, very agile and graceful in its movements.” Squirrels “may be taught to jump from one hand to the other to search for a hidden nut, and it soon knows its name, and the persons who feed it.” Loudin also waxes on their habits, like jumping around a room and peeping out from wooden eaves, writing that “an instance is recorded of no less than seventeen lumps of sugar being found in the cornice of a drawing-room in which a squirrel had been kept, besides innumerable nuts, pieces of biscuit.” Loudon’s advice: when your squirrel is not running around the room, provide it with a tin-lined cage that has a running wheel.

Leisure Hour Monthly, meanwhile, in 1859, advised to feed it “a fig or a date now and then,” and that you should start your squirrel-raising adventure with those procured “directly from the nest, when possible.” The unnamed author’s own pet squirrels, Dick and Peter, had the freedom of his bedroom and plenty of nuts to store away. “Let your pet squirrels crack their own nuts, my young squirrel fanciers,” the author wrote.

While many people captured their pet squirrels from the wild in the 1800s, squirrels were also sold in pet shops, a then-burgeoning industry that today constitutes a $70 billion business. One home manual from 1883, for example, explained that any squirrel could be bought from your local bird breeder. But not unlike some shops today, these pet stores could have dark side; Grier writes that shop owners “faced the possibility that they sold animals to customers who would neglect or abuse them, or that their trade in a particular species could endanger its future in the wild.”

Keeping pet squirrels has a downside for humans too, which eventually became clear: despite their owners’ best attempts at taming them, they’re still wild animals. As time wore on, squirrels were increasingly viewed as pests; by the 1910s squirrels became so despised in California that the state issued a widespread public attack on the once-adored creatures. From the 1920s through the 1970s many states slowly adopted wildlife conservation and exotic pet laws, which prohibited keeping squirrels at home. Today, experts and enthusiasts alike warn that squirrels don’t always make ideal pets, mainly because of their finicky diet, space requirements, and scratchy claws.

None of this, of course, will deter the most determined squirrel owner. Fans of Bob Ross might remember his pet squirrel named Peapod, and some squirrel owners are rekindling the obsession by making their pets Instagram-famous. Still, wild squirrels surely agree—it’s probably best we’re now mostly leaving them to the forest.

***Your Flooring Consultant for Life,***

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S. Advertising in the newspaper, yellow pages, radio, etc., is expensive, so rather than pay for that, I’d rather reward you!**

**For every person you refer who becomes a client, I will send you and a friend to the Movies-8 Cinema AND I’ll spring for the popcorn and soda!**

**Of course rewards are nice, but the real reason you refer a friend or loved one to Jimbo’s is because you trust us. When you send your Aunt or Grandmother or co-worker to Jimbo’s, you are trusting us to provide them with outstanding service, and to…well… to treat them like royalty!**

 **My team and I take that trust very seriously. And I promise that if you refer someone to Jimbo’s, we will do everything in our power to make sure you look like a hero for referring us!**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

530-790-3338

**Week #2**

# *Subject line:* The Real Reason the Sound of Your Own Voice Makes You Cringe

Most of us have shuddered on hearing the sound of our own voice. In fact, not liking the sound of your own voice is so common that there’s a term for it: voice confrontation.

But why is voice confrontation so frequent, while barely a thought is given to the voices of others? Philip Jaekl in *The Guardian* has the answer.

A common explanation often found in popular media is that because we normally hear our own voice while talking, we receive both sound transferred to our ears externally by air conduction and sound transferred internally through our bones. This bone conduction of sound delivers rich low frequencies that are not included in air-conducted vocal sound. So when you hear your recorded voice without these frequencies, it sounds higher – and different. Basically, the reasoning is that because our recorded voice does not sound how we expect it to, we don’t like it.

Dr Silke Paulmann, a psychologist at the University of Essex, says, “I would speculate that the fact that we sound more high-pitched than what we think we should leads us to cringe as it doesn’t meet our internal expectations; our voice plays a massive role in forming our identity and I guess no one likes to realize that you’re not really who you think you are.”

Yet some studies have shown that this might only be a partial explanation.

For example, a 2013 study asked participants to rate the attractiveness of different recorded voice samples. When their own voice was secretly mixed in with these samples, participants gave significantly higher ratings to their voice when they did not recognize it as their own.

What’s more, a complete explanation can be found in a series of early studies published years before the plenitude of reports offering the sound frequency and expectancy explanation.

Through their experiments, the late psychologists Phil Holzemann and Clyde Rousey concluded in 1966 that voice confrontation arises not only from a difference in expected frequency, but also a striking revelation that occurs upon the realization of all that your voice conveys. Not only does it sound different than you expect; through what are called “extra-linguistic cues,” it reveals aspects of your personality that you can only fully perceive upon hearing it from a recording. These include aspects such as your anxiety level, indecision, sadness, anger, and so on.

Their following study showed that bilinguals who learned a second language after the age of 16 showed more discomfort when hearing their recorded voices in their first language – a fact not easily explained by a lack of bone-conducted sound frequencies.

The complexity of vocal coordination is enormous and we simply don’t have complete, conscious, “online” control. Indeed, the vocal larynx contains the highest ratio of nerve to muscle fibers in the human body. Moreover, when hearing a recording, we have none of the control of our speaking that we usually do; it’s as though our voices are running wild.

Marc Pell, a neuroscientist at McGill University, specializes in the communication of emotion. He stands by the Holzemann and Rousey studies, saying: “when we hear our isolated voice which is disembodied from the rest of our behavior, we may go through the automatic process of evaluating our own voice in the way we routinely do with other people’s voices … I think we then compare our own impressions of the voice to how other people must evaluate us socially, leading many people to be upset or dissatisfied with the way they sound because the impressions formed do not fit with social traits they wish to project.”

So, even though we may be surprised by what we actually sound like, it is the extralinguistic content of what our voices may reveal that could be more disconcerting. Yet it is unlikely that others are similarly surprised by a high-pitched aspect of your voice, and moreover others probably aren’t making the same evaluations about your voice that you might. We tend not to be critical of other people’s voices, so the chances are you’re the only person thinking about your own.

# *Your Flooring Consultant for Life,*

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S.** **All of our products come with a lifetime installation warranty! Buying flooring is not like buying any other piece of interior décor, such as a sofa or a lamp.**

**Why? Because unlike other products, flooring is installed or “manufactured” in your home. This makes the installation critical. I offer a lifetime installation warranty. You NEVER have to worry about something going wrong with the installation. If it does, I’ll fix it FREE! And I’ll do it quickly.**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

530-790-3338

**Week #3**

# *Subject line:* What’s it Like Working in a Ghost Kitchen?

## Your burger or tacos or pizza could be cooked anywhere by anyone — which is what makes the ghost kitchen concept so lucrative and appealing to owners and investors, says Eater magazine’s Terrence Doyle.

With growing frequency, the food you order from a delivery app is being prepared in a ghost kitchen — or cloud kitchen, or commissary kitchen, or whatever you want to call it — by cooks working for a restaurant that doesn’t really exist, at least not in the traditional sense. There is no storefront, no dining room, and no front-of-house staff. In some cases, the kitchen functions as a hub for a handful of other so-called virtual restaurants; in others, the food from the virtual restaurant is prepared inside the kitchen of an established brick-and-mortar but with a separate name and menu. Either way, your burger or tacos or pizza could be cooked anywhere by anyone — which is what makes the ghost kitchen concept so lucrative and appealing to owners and investors.

These kinds of digital-only restaurants existed before the pandemic broke out, but they experienced exponential growth as people across the country were confined to their homes for more than a year, unable to safely eat inside a restaurant dining room filled with strangers. Some of them are run by independent operators looking for a cheap and easy way to try something new (and for extra revenue to keep the lights on as the industry continues to struggle); many more are run by a number of large companies making big bets on delivery being the future of the restaurant industry.

Take the Local Culinary for example, a ghost kitchen company that operates more than 40 virtual restaurant brands with generic names like Chef Burger or Pizza Mania. The Local Culinary launches digital-only restaurants — many of which serve burgers, chicken, pizza, or tacos — and franchises them out to operators with physical kitchen space. Its founder, Alp Franko, says he doesn’t have enough revenue data to predict too far into the future, but some research he’s seen suggests the market might “double or triple” in the coming years, while other reports predict that ghost kitchens could transform into a $1 trillion industry over the next decade.

Another major player in the virtual dining industry is Planet Hollywood founder and CEO Robert Earl, whose Virtual Dining Concepts has launched a handful of celebrity-branded digital-only restaurants in the past year. Like Franko, Earl — who says his budding virtual restaurant empire helped sustain his hospitality business during the pandemic — is looking to capitalize on some perceived spare capacity (space, time, equipment, labor) in restaurant kitchens.

None of Virtual Dining Concepts’ celebrity brands (not even Pauly D’s Italian Subs) have exploded more than MrBeast Burger, an online-only fast-food restaurant founded in conjunction with a wildly popular YouTuber named MrBeast. The digital burger joint launched with more than 300 virtual restaurants in more than 35 states in December 2020. Now, there are nearly 1,000, and Earl says that number is set to double.

Virtual Dining Concepts isn’t Earl’s only venture with ghost kitchens. Having previously collaborated on a fast-casual chicken sandwich restaurant called Chicken Guy, the mogul and loved/loathed chef Guy Fieri recently teamed up to launch Flavortown Kitchen. Like some outposts of MrBeast Burger and Earl’s other virtual restaurants, Flavortown Kitchen operates out of a number of chains he already owns, including Bertucci’s, a wood-fired pizza chain that originated in Boston in the early 1980s and is best known for its halfway decent pizza and warm dinner rolls. Now it doubles as a mass producer of Fieri’s “donkey sauce.”

At the end of the day, the goal of these virtual restaurants (for the franchisor and the franchisee) is no different than any other business: to maximize profits and minimize overhead. Why operate one restaurant in your kitchen when you can operate four or five or 12? The space is there and the equipment is there, after all. But then again, there’s also the cooks who suddenly have to memorize and execute all those extra menus. Does their pay increase? Will ghost kitchens add more staff to accommodate the increased volume? In conversations with C-suite and management types for this reporting, these questions went unanswered and danced around, but more than one source said issues of pay are determined by individual ghost kitchen operators.

Labor in ghost kitchens, like the concept itself, is often opaque. There are certainly instances when a brick-and-mortar opts into a ghost kitchen model, increases revenues, and is then better able to retain existing kitchen staff, or hire additional kitchen staff, but there are also instances when the opposite is true. Ghost kitchens put another barrier — a smartphone screen, in this case — between diners and the people making their food, hiding from view a workforce that was already next to invisible.

Not all ghost kitchen businesses are inherently exploitative or obsessed with profit over labor — indeed, some may even be responsible for saving independent restaurants that might have otherwise gone out of business during the leaner moments of the pandemic without the extra revenue. Take Stillwater in downtown Boston, for example. During a typical dinner service, chef and owner Sarah Wade and her kitchen staff can be found whipping up plates of Ritz fried chicken or crispy Faroe Island salmon skin for the groups of hungry diners that have swarmed back to the restaurant since Massachusetts lifted its restrictions on indoor dining in May. But the Stillwater menu is no longer the lone focus in the restaurant’s kitchen — Wade and crew are also busy preparing orders for the Mac Bar, a mac and cheese-focused takeout and delivery restaurant she launched in November 2020 as a way to make ends meet.

“It’s a concept I’ve been rolling around in my head for a while,” says Wade. “And this was an opportunity to trial it and see if it worked, if we got a good bite on it, and if maybe someday I wanted to do it as a brick-and-mortar. So there were a lot of reasons why I started it. But mainly, of course, it was to make money and pay rent and staff during COVID.”

Ghost kitchens may or may not be the future of the restaurant industry, but they’re definitely the present. And as the pandemic continues to surge, making diners more wary of eating indoors, they’re probably not going away anytime soon.

# *Your Flooring Consultant for Life,*

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S.** **With our ZERO REGRETS guarantee you’ll love your new floors, or we’ll replace them FREE!**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

530-790-3338

**Week #4**

# *Subject line:* That Cotton Tote is a Terrible Replacement for a Plastic Bag

If you’re trying to contribute as little as possible to the two global calamities of climate change and the swirling gyres of forever materials slowly filling our oceans, there’s a useful formula to keep in mind: Use fewer things, many times, and don’t buy new ones.

But are plastic bags better or worse than paper? And what about a cotton tote? Let’s rip this band-aid off right away: There’s no easy answer.

To understand the impact of reusable bags on the environment, one has to hold two very different things in mind. One: Plastic bags do not biodegrade and are stuffing the oceans, marine life, and our food supply with plastic bits. Two: Considering all the other environmental impacts besides litter, a cotton tote or a paper bag may be worse for the environment than a plastic one.

In a 2018 life-cycle assessment, Denmark’s ministry of environment and food agreed with previous similar studies, finding that classic plastic shopping bags have the least environmental impact. This assessment does not take marine litter into account—so as far as that gigantic problem is concerned, plastics are almost certainly the worst, since they don’t break down on a timescale meaningful to human or animal life.

But when taking into account other factors, like the impact of manufacturing on climate change, ozone depletion, water use, air pollution, and human toxicity, those classic, plastic shopping bags are actually the most benign of the current common options.

The technical name for the wispy plastic bags, like the ones you might get at the grocery store or deli, are low-density polyethylene (LDPE) bags.

Cotton bags must be reused thousands of times before they meet the environmental performance of plastic bags—and, the Denmark researchers write, organic cotton is worse than conventional cotton when it comes to overall environmental impact. Even adjusting for the benefits of organic cotton production—like less fertilizer and pesticide use (and therefore less eutrophication and water contamination caused by growing it)—conventional cotton came out on top.

With plastic bag bans soaring in popularity globally (127 countries have adopted plastic bag restrictions, and many states in the US have as well), the question of what will replace plastic bags has become more pressing. We know that single-use anything is a terrible idea, whether it is plastic or not, so replacing plastic bags with paper ones will surely have deleterious side-effects like increasing deforestation. Making a paper bag also requires more energy and water than making a plastic bag, so for other environmental considerations besides litter, paper products may be worse than plastic ones.

The simplest advice for individuals seems to be this: Whatever you have in your house now—be it a pile of cotton totes, or a jumble of plastic bags—don’t throw them out. Keep using them until they fall apart. Whatever the material, use it as a garbage bag once you can’t use it for other purposes anymore. And whatever you do, try not to buy new ones.

Plus, knowing how many resources it takes to make a piece of cotton, treat fabric items in your home like infinitely reusable resources worth their carbon-mitigating weight in gold. Find new uses for old clothes, use textiles until they wear out, and when you want something new, buy vintage.

# *Your Flooring Consultant for Life,*

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S. When you buy floors from us, you are protected by our Installer professionalism guarantee!**

**Our installers are neat, clean, well-groomed, well-spoken and professional. They are trained and certified. They are guests in your home, and they conduct themselves as such. They respect your home by using wall and corner guards, shoe covers and drop cloths.**

**You’ll receive the highest-quality installation in the business. And after they’re finished, they will leave your home as neat and clean as when they arrived!**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

530-790-3338