



IWA PIPELINE



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IWA GETS STRAIGHT "A's"



We received an unexpected letter the other day from the Lee County Public Health Unit and the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (DEP). With more than a little apprehension, we opened it, wondering what new regulation or fee they were about to apply to our operations. But we were surprised ... it was good news!

From all the water treatment plants in Lee County, both agencies nominated IWA's reverse osmosis plant to compete in a state-wide contest to identify the best-run facilities in the state. To quote the letter:

"Island Water Association's reverse osmosis plant has an outstanding record of compliance with the federal and state Safe Drinking Water Acts and meets all of the existing standards for drinking water quality, as established by the E.P.A. Your record of efficiency, effectiveness, innovative projects and cooperative efforts are

the characteristics of an operation which lead to the protection of the public health and a safe drinking water supply.

Public water systems such as yours are required to test for approximately 130-140 different possible organic and inorganic contaminants. Upon examination of the history of your test results, there are no violations for any of these contaminants.

In addition, there has been no detection of any of the compounds in the volatile organics group, the pesticides and PCB group, and the Group I and II unregulated organics group. Many of the compounds in these groups are those which the EPA lists as possible carcinogens."

Subsequently, we were notified that we had in fact received the award for excellence in our operations and maintenance. The award was presented to a couple of our operating personnel at a ceremony in Tallahassee in November.

We're very proud to receive this honor, and we hope it helps to reassure our members that we are doing our jobs and providing you with a safe water supply.

IT'S LAZY LABEL TIME AGAIN!

Enclosed with this newsletter are what we refer to as "Lazy Labels." They are for your use in mailing payments to us. Every year we send all our members a year's supply of these labels. Many of you indicate that you appreciate this small attempt to make paying your water bill a little less painful. Sounds like a good idea to us!

AN ELECTRIFYING SUBJECT

In August, the IWA Board of Directors approved a new project to install a large electrical generator at our Reverse Osmosis Plant. This project will greatly improve our ability to supply water during a prolonged power failure after a major disaster, such as a hurricane. Up until now, we could pump the water we already had in storage to our customers, using propane engine-powered pumps. This water should last 2 to 5 days. But we couldn't make any more after that was gone,

The reverse osmosis treatment process consumes a lot of electricity. Our plant was designed and built back in the late 1970s, when plants typically did not include back-up electrical generation facilities.

Because all new plants are now being designed with generators capable of running the entire plant, we decided to take a new look at the question. We found that the cost was not as prohibitive as we thought, particularly when we take advantage of a cheaper, interruptible electric rate schedule (since we can use the generator during the interruptions). We estimate that the total cost of the project will be around \$365,000, including design features to make the facilities "hurricane-proof." The generator has been sized at 1.2 megawatts ... enough to light 12,000 100-watt light bulbs.

We are sure these new facilities will seem like the best bargain of all time if we ever need them, and in the meantime we'll help pay for them with the savings on our electricity bill.

Construction activities have already begun, and the installation will be complete before next year's hurricane season.



WE'RE OUT!!

At their meeting on November 7, 1995, Sanibel City Council voted to drop out of the Lee County Regional Water Supply Authority. Councilman Robert Davison, one of the City's representatives on the Authority recommended this move based on his analysis of the costs versus the benefits of remaining a member.

In previous years, Sanibel's cost of membership had been around \$3,200 a year. Next year, the cost was to increase ten-fold to over \$32,000. Councilman Davison concluded, from studying the Authority's Master Plan, that Sanibel would realize little or no benefit from remaining a member, regardless of cost.

IWA commends Council for their action. It is consistent with IWA's position on the matter. We continue to believe that our water supply and treatment plant should serve us for the foreseeable future, as long as new artificial restraints are not imposed by one of our many regulatory agencies.

The Authority will continue to operate with only two members, Lee County and Fort Myers. Sanibel will be able to rejoin in the future, if some unforeseen need arises.

OH NO! THE BIG RED "D"!!

From time to time, we get calls from members who are very concerned that their water bill arrived with a "BIG RED 'D'" sticker in the lower left-hand corner. They are concerned that we are trying to give them (and the mailman) a subliminal message that they are **D**elinquent in paying their bill, or guilty of some other equally as **D**astardly a **D**eed.

If this should happen to you, rest assured that is not the case. If you ever overlook paying your water bill, you will notice the previous balance indicated by the code "BL" (printed in normal black ink). Actually, the sticker is required by the Post Office to help them in sorting the mail. If your bill happens to be on top of a stack of 500 pieces of mail, all with the same zip code, the sticker is required. You should be so lucky the next time you buy a lottery ticket!

MEET DON DUBRASKY



Don Dubrasky joined IWA this past January as our Electrical Technician, replacing Rickie Courson, who left us after 12 years to go into business for himself. Don arrived just as we were nearing the busiest period during the construction of our new office building ... and we were doing all the electrical work ourselves. So we really got our money's worth out of Don, right from day one!

Don is originally from New York, but we try not to hold that against him (most of us are from somewhere other than Florida). Prior to joining IWA, Don had 23 years experience as an electrician, much of it on Sanibel and Captiva, where he worked for Wooster TV and Appliance. So many of our members may already know Don from work he has done on their homes.

At IWA, Don is responsible for maintenance of all our electrical and electronic equipment, including the multitude of computers that we use to help us run our plant. He also is involved in the electrical end of design and construction for many of our new projects, such as the new generator mentioned earlier in this newsletter. Don can frequently be found in the electrical shop intently studying some complex piece of control logic on the computer screen.

Don has two sons, Don Jr. and Robert. He and his fiancée, Julie Stein, reside in Fort Myers, where he enjoys his hobbies of golf, racquetball and reading. Don says his secret to success is "to never say never." We'll remember that the next time we're looking for someone to change a burned-out light bulb.

WHERE'S THAT PESKY VALVE?

We get a lot of calls that begin with something like, "Help!! There's water running out of my ceiling /down my driveway/etc." When we respond to this type of call, it can take a while during non-business hours, since all of our technicians live quite a way from the Islands. When we get there, we frequently find that the problem is with the member's house plumbing and not with our facilities. Therefore, there's not much we can do, except help the member to close the house shut-off valve.

However, we are often amazed at how many of our members are not aware of the location of this critical valve. Knowing where it is and shutting it yourself in the case of a serious leak can save a lot of damage and aggravation, not to mention repair costs. We also recommend shutting it when you leave your home for any significant length of time. But be sure your irrigation system is still operable and that your hot water tank is unplugged if you close the valve. (As a reminder, you also need to check the same things if you have IWA shut off your water during an extended absence.)

The valve is normally located just before the point where the water line enters the house. On ground level houses, it is usually about a foot above ground along the side or back of the house ... often behind a shrub or other landscaping. On piling homes, it's frequently located against a piling on the street side of the house. Remember, turn it clockwise to close.

If you don't know where your shut-off valve is, try to locate it in these areas. If you still can't find it, you can ask your plumber, or if you see one of our technicians reading your meter, he'll be happy to help as well.

By the way, another question we are frequently asked is, "Why don't I have any water in my house?" This question is most often asked by returning winter residents. Frequently the answer is, "You need to open (by turning counter-clockwise) your house shut-off valve that you closed last Spring."

We're always glad to help, but if you learn to use this valve yourself, you can avoid some unnecessary aggravation.

IT REALLY WAS THE "TRIAL OF THE CENTURY!"

The day the verdict was finally announced in the OJ Simpson trial, a lot of us at IWA took our lunch break so that we could hear the conclusion of this matter. As we were watching the tense moment on our lunchroom TV, someone noticed another fact that was almost as fascinating as the verdict itself.

Just below the TV set, was a computer monitor which constantly tells us water pressures and flows at various points around the Islands so that we can monitor our system for problems. The monitor also displays the total water usage of all our members. Fifteen minutes before the verdict was announced, the total water usage was running around 1,100 gallons per minute (gpm), as it had for the previous couple of hours.

As the moment of the verdict approached, the usage fell, bottoming-out at only 550 gpm as the verdict was being read. No one could ever recall a total usage that low. Ten minutes later it was back up to around 1,100 gpm. Now we know how to conserve water the next time we have a serious drought, although it seems like there must be an easier way!

IWA WANTS YOU ...

It's election time again at IWA, and this year, two seats on our Board of Directors will be up for election. The seats held by long-time directors R.J. (Bob) Wigley and H.R. (Lee) Derleth, will be up for election.

Directors must be year-round residents of Sanibel or Captiva and be IWA members or an official representative of a condominium association or other corporate IWA member.

IWA is governed by a five-member Board of Directors whose members serve without pay. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Directors are elected by the membership at IWA's Annual Meeting held in April.

Anyone who would like more information should call our Executive Assistant, Cindy Whaley, at 472-2113, extension 125.

IT'S MONSOON TIME!!

To say that 1995 has been a wet year is an understatement. Our rain gauge at the RO Plant indicates that through September we received 77" of rain, with 50" occurring after July 1. And we know it was actually even more, since the gauge overflowed a couple of times before we had time to read it. This compares to 1994, when we received only 30" through September.

You may be interested to know how this heavy rainfall affects your water supply. Well first of all, it has no direct effect on the quality of the water in our wells, since it entered the ground millions of years ago in northern Florida near the Suwannee River. However, the rain did have a beneficial effect on the amount of water we used, since most people reduced their lawn irrigation. Through September, we have pumped 6% less water than last year. This is good for water conservation, but bad for our revenues at IWA. Since we are a non-profit corporation, we can't just reduce our profit level, and that's why we keep some money in reserves. We don't claim to be able to predict the weather!

Another interesting effect of the rain is that it causes us to experience a significantly increased number of water main breaks. Basically, when the ground gets totally soaked, it settles and breaks our pipes. At one point right after the end of a 17-inch "shower," we had three main breaks simultaneously. Nearly everyone at IWA was involved, either repairing the leaks or directing traffic around the repair sites. And just think about digging 5-foot deep holes in sand with a foot of water *on top*. It was not a pleasant task, and the personnel involved are to be commended for their hard work and long hours.

