



IWA PIPELINE



SUMMER 1996

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CYBERWATER



It's hard to pick up a magazine or newspaper or listen to a newscast these days without hearing about the multitude of ways in which computers are rapidly becoming a part of our everyday lives. The "information highway," or Internet, is expanding at a phenomenal rate. At IWA, we've been following these matters closely and taking advantage of new technology whenever it helps us to do our jobs better.

In the past, producing water was a "low tech" business, often simply consisting of drilling a well and pumping the water to consumers. Today, things are very different, and we believe very much better. As the public has demanded a safer and more reliable water supply, our job has become more complex. And of course, nobody wants to pay any more than necessary for this improved water supply. So our challenge is how to do more without charging any more.

As is the case in many industries in the 1990's, the water utility industry is turning to computerization to help meet these challenges. At IWA, we have tried to remain in the forefront of this trend,

because we believe that by optimizing our use of computers, we can improve the quality of our product and our customer service while keeping our costs as low as possible.

At IWA, we have four different, but inter-related computer systems: (1) our mainframe, (2) our Personal Computer (PC) network, (3) our SCADA system, and (4) our RO Plant control system. Each serves a different role in our operations.

Our **mainframe** system employs an IBM AS/400 computer. We use this system for our core business functions, such as billing, accounting and payroll. If you call us and ask a question about your account, we find the answer by using the information stored in our mainframe system. We access the data in this system from our PCs, which brings us to the second system, our PC network.

Our 14 **PCs** are interconnected via a network. This makes for considerable efficiencies, eliminating a lot of paperwork, sharing printers and giving everyone access to all the data and information on all the PCs. We use the PCs for word processing, data analysis and a myriad of specialized tasks, such as writing this newsletter and electronically inputting our 4,300 meter readings every month into our billing system. The PC system also makes it possible for employees with home computers to access data from home and trouble-shoot problems during non-work hours.

Our **SCADA** system, which stands for **S**upervisory **C**ontrol **A**nd **D**ata **A**cquisition, enables us to monitor water pressures, tank levels and flow rates at key points all over both Islands. Signals are brought back to our offices via phone lines and are analyzed and stored for future reference in this

system. In this way, we can often tell when we have a problem before someone calls about the water running down the street from a water main break.

The final system is the one that **controls operations** in our Reverse Osmosis (RO) Plant. This system opens/closes valves and starts/stops pumps at the correct times during start-up and shut-down operations. It sounds alarms when operating parameters such as flow rates and pressures are not within normal ranges, so that our operators can take corrective action before a problem develops. The system also monitors and automatically adjusts critical quality parameters such as Chlorine level and pH.

So, it is easy to see that computers are already very important to us at IWA. But we have even bigger plans for the future, to enable us to become even more efficient and to provide a still higher level of service. We are currently working on changes that will enable our four systems to better share information with each other. The differences between the systems is a challenge being encountered by all computer users ... not just IWA. The solution may involve the Internet, and may even eventually allow our computer-literate members to easily and directly obtain information on their accounts and other IWA-related matters by using their home PCs. So, stay tuned and drink lots of our "Cyberwater" while you surf the "Net."

In the next issue of the *Pipeline*, we'll discuss how we also use other new technology, such as new RO membranes, to improve our operations.

GUILT-FREE SOD

In addition to helping our members correct problems with their irrigation systems, **Project Water Works** (that's Dee!) now has an *Organic Lawn Care Saves Water* packet and video for those who want to **Just Say No!** to harmful lawn chemicals and to get on the road towards "guilt-free sod!"

The packet describes alternative, environmentally-safe products for all the pest and disease problems associated with maintaining your sod ... and it also tells you where to buy these products. Emphasis is placed on the use of organic fertilizers containing beneficial aerobic organisms to combat fungus and disease and to build the soil's moisture-holding capacity.

Since most of the harmful chemicals used on our Islands are applied to sodded areas, **you** can make a major contribution towards protection of our surface water quality and at the same time save on your irrigation costs by maintaining your sod organically.

For a copy of *Organic Lawn Care Saves Water*, please call Dee at the Native Plant Nursery at 472-1932.

GOODBYE AND HELLO



Lori

Cindy

In April, we said Goodbye to long-time employee Cindy Whaley and Hello to new employee Lori Thompson.

Cindy joined IWA in June 1987. In her role as Executive Assistant and Secretary to the Board of Directors, she has been instrumental in keeping everything running smoothly at IWA for the last nine years. Cindy has been responsible for a wide variety of tasks, ranging from inputting into our billing system over 4,000 member payments each month, to organizing the Annual Meeting activities each year, to issuing this newsletter four times a year. After extensive training, she even managed to read the General Manager's handwriting, a testament to her tenacious nature! Cindy and her husband, Al, have decided to move back to their northern home, in the land of snow and cold, in northwestern Pennsylvania. Everyone at IWA wishes Cindy all the best in her new life.

Lori Thompson has joined IWA to replace Cindy. Lori, who is from Cape Cod, comes to us with four year's experience in office management and a good knowledge of the Islands gained from working in several well-known Island eateries. Lori also brings to the job a background in the use of personal computers, which will be very important in her new job, as described in the lead article of this newsletter.

When she isn't working at IWA, Lori leads an active lifestyle, enjoying biking, rollerblading, sailing, music, painting, cooking and reading (whew!). She says she likes working at IWA because of the great work atmosphere and co-workers and the opportunity to use her existing skills and to learn new ones. We've not yet shown her a sample of the General Manager's handwriting!

HELP!!!

We are constantly looking for ways to keep our expenses, and hence our water rates, as low as possible. We've used new technology whenever it is economic to do so. We've reduced our workforce 20% through attrition over the last few years. And we've just generally been working harder and smarter. But we could use your help in one area.

IWA is a relatively small utility, and we can't economically justify the equipment necessary to automate inputting monthly payments into our billing system. Therefore, we have to manually input around 4,000 payments every month, or nearly 50,000 per year. Needless to say, this effort consumes a considerable amount of time and costs a significant amount of money. But there is an alternative that would save us most of this time and money ... it's known as our Automatic Bill Payment option.

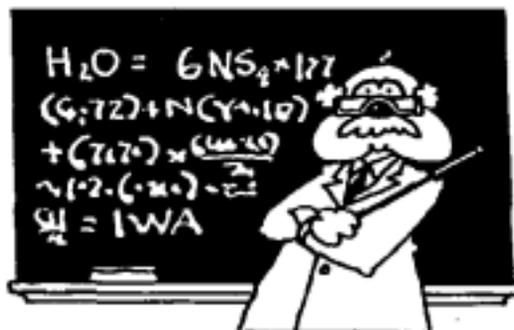
If you choose this payment option, we still send you a bill and you will have at least two weeks to review it and clear-up any problems. Then on the "Due Date" your bank will automatically transfer the correct amount from your account to ours. Not only does this save us time and money, which will help us keep your water rates as low as possible, but it also saves you time and money! You'll save the time of mailing your payment or dropping it off to us every month and the cost of twelve 32¢ stamps

and envelopes. And you'll never again have to worry about late payment fees!

If you are interested in helping us out, stop by our office and pick up an application, or just give us a call on 472-1502 and we'll mail you one. About 10% of our members are already taking advantage of this option, and we'd like to add you to the growing list.

Thanks for your help!

QUIZ



1. How much is IWA's average electricity bill each month?
A. \$42,000 B. \$31,000 C. \$25,000 D. \$18,000
2. IWA's water storage tanks are constructed of:
A. Concrete B. Steel C. Plastic D. Wood
3. What was the maximum water consumption, in gallons per minute, of all IWA members this last March/April?
A. 1,200 B. 2,500 C. 4,400 D. 7,900
4. IWA's new emergency generator is large enough to run the entire RO Plant.
A. True B. False
5. How many meters are read by IWA every month?
A. 500 B. 2,500 C. 4,300 D. 6,700

1996 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1996 IWA Annual Meeting was held on April 8th in Company offices at 3651 Sanibel-Captiva Road. Over 900 members attended this year, either in person or by proxy.

Mr. Robert J. Wigley was re-elected to a third and final term on the Board. Mr. Harley R. Derleth was also re-elected to his second term. Officers for the coming year are: Robert J. Wigley, President; Paul R. Storves and Paul E. Garvey, Vice Presidents; Timothy A. Gardner, Vice President/Secretary; Harley R. Derleth, Vice President/Treasurer.

In their presentations, President Wigley, Treasurer Derleth and General Manager Blind reported on operations and administrative matters for the past year. Overall, they said that IWA is in great shape, both financially and operationally. The costs of running the operation in 1996 are forecast to be at the same level as in 1993. This cost control has been achieved in several ways, including reducing the workforce through attrition, increasing the involvement of all employees in controlling costs and applying new technologies to increase efficiency whenever possible. General Manager Blind also noted that water production last year was 7% below that in 1994, primarily because of reduced irrigation during the very wet summer period. The resulting reduction in revenues was offset entirely by reduced

expenses resulting from increased operating efficiencies.

After the meeting, some members took the opportunity to tour Company facilities, with the most attention focused on the new emergency generator which was operating the RO Plant at the time.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. A. Our 1995 budget for electricity is just over a half million dollars.
2. A. We have five tanks with a total capacity of 15 million gallons and all are constructed of pre-stressed concrete.
3. C. Consumption reached over 4,400 gallons per minute around 5:00 a.m. on several mornings in late March and early April.
4. A. The generator can run the entire RO Plant plus three local wells. To reach full capacity, we would also need four small portable generators for the remote wells.
5. C. IWA reads 4,300 meters every month, about 80% of which are located on Sanibel, with the remainder on Captiva.

The Island Water Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 509
Sanibel, FL 33957

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