



# IWA PIPELINE



FALL 1996

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## IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!



More or less as the old children's story goes, "The winds may huff and the winds may puff, but they'll never blow our house down" ... at least we're trying our best to be sure that's the case at IWA!

As this newsletter is being written, the 1996 hurricane season is well underway and looks like it may not be as severe as last year's record season. Like everyone else, we at IWA are keeping our fingers crossed. But we're not stopping there. Every year we improve our hurricane preparedness and this year we've made even more improvements. We take our responsibility to provide our members with a safe and reliable water supply very seriously.

First, a brief review of our plans in case "The Big One" heads our way. We don't plan to leave any employees on the Islands. They need to be with their families, protecting them and their possessions during the storm so that they can get back to help us at IWA as soon as possible after the storm subsides. The Reverse Osmosis treatment plant will be shut-down and the distribution system will be set-up to minimize the potential loss of water already in our storage tanks. Only 4 million gallons (out of 15 million) will be at risk. The tanks are always kept as full as possible during hurricane

season.

We have plans to move all our vehicles and equipment indoors at as high an elevation as possible. We have made provisions for sleeping accommodations and food for our personnel for around a week. We keep all our chemicals and fuels inventories near the full level during hurricane season, since deliveries may be difficult for some time after a storm. We also keep our repair-parts inventories full, ordering replacements as soon as we use anything.

Over the last year or so, we've made improvements in our facilities to help us better protect our equipment and your water supply. As anyone who lives or works on the Islands knows, a major vulnerability on the Islands is our electrical supply. Short-term failures are common, particularly during the summer storm period. After a major storm, a more prolonged outage is quite probable. Therefore, we've added two new electrical generators. One is a small propane-powered unit serving critical functions in our office and maintenance buildings. The other is a large diesel-powered unit serving the entire Reverse Osmosis treatment plant and pumping facilities.

We've also purchased storm shutters for all our facilities. If you've visited us recently, you've probably noticed the clear shutters on our new office building. We get a lot of questions regarding these shutters from people who are more familiar with the older-style aluminum panels. We really like the clear ones because they let in the light and don't make us feel like we're working in a cave. That's important to us, since we plan to leave these shutters up for the season. If you'd like some information on this type of shutters, just give our Staff Engineer, Shelly Storves, a call on 472-2113 (extension 130).

We're also working on additional ways to be

even better prepared in the future. We're coordinating our efforts with the City of Sanibel so that we can take advantage of their efforts in this area as well. After a major storm, we plan to station one or more employees off-island, along with City employees, to help us coordinate procurement of the goods and services necessary to repair any damage to our facilities. We are also working with Lee County to possibly upgrade our communications systems, which will be vital during repair and recovery efforts.

So overall, we're better prepared than ever, and we're working to become even better prepared. But damage to our facilities will still be inevitable if "The Big One" heads our way. If that unfortunate occurrence ever becomes a reality, you can rest assured that everyone at IWA will be doing their best to restore your water supply as quickly as possible.

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### THANKS!

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We want to thank those members who responded to our plea in the last issue of this newsletter to use our automatic bill paying option. Over 50 more members (the total is now over 500!) decided to help us simplify our book keeping by using this option, whereby your water bill is automatically debited directly from your bank account. This saves you time, effort and postage. And it saves us the cost of recording your payments 12 times a year. We appreciate your help. It's things like this which help us keep your water rates as low as possible. Anyone else interested in this program can call our offices at 472-1502 for more information.

Distribution Department members, Ron Leavitt, Mike Miller and Pat Rowe would also like to thank the unknown member(s) who supplied free refreshments to them while they were repairing a line break on Island Inn Road in early July. It's a hard and hot job, and unexpected kindnesses like this are really appreciated.

Finally, we'd like to thank the osprey for the mullet he (or she) dropped on the windshield of one of our trucks the other day. The driver of the truck, Tom Cali, was on his way to lunch at the time. And since Tom has never been one to refuse a free lunch, he got out of the truck and checked-out his unexpected good luck. But he found that the fish was just a little too stiff for his liking. Furthermore, in the future, Tom said he would prefer fresh snook!

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### HELPFUL HINTS

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IWA employees are always suggesting helpful hints, based on problems they and our members have encountered. We've been compiling a list and decided to present a few of them here for your information and use.

1. If your water pressure seems to be lower than normal, particularly only in some locations in your house, check the small screens in your faucets, washer inlet, etc. They may need to be cleaned.
2. If you seem to be using more water than normal, and you suspect a leak, first shut-off all water usage in the house and outside. Then check your water meter, which is usually located near the street, to see if the little red triangle is turning (call us and we'll help, if you want). If it is turning, you have a leak somewhere and need to fix it yourself or call a plumber.
3. Speaking of leaks, one of the most difficult to find is located outside in your irrigation system. The water meter check described above will not locate this type of leak. Since the system usually runs only at night, frequently no one sees broken sprinkler heads. It's a good idea to turn your system on occasionally during the day to check and be sure everything is intact. Sprinkler leaks can waste LARGE amounts of water, costing you hundreds of dollars.
4. If you're replacing your water heater, be sure to buy one with a magnesium anode, not aluminum. The anode protects your heater from corrosion, and the aluminum ones are incompatible with our water (and that of many other Florida water systems). The aluminum rapidly disappears, leaving behind a white material that can plug various plumbing fixtures and leaving your heater unprotected and subject to rapid corrosion and leaks. We recently have encountered several instances of this problem on the islands.
5. Is your irrigated landscape a year old? By now, paying those high water bills may also be getting old! The good news is that your established landscape needs much less water today than it did a year ago, particularly the trees and shrubs. Consider turning-off the irrigation system serving mulched beds with these plants. Overspray and rainfall should be enough. If you

want to do even more, how about changing a area of irrigated sod into a mulched bed. Then next year, turn that area off also.

6. Finally, one for us! When you pay your water bill, **please** include the stub from your bill with your payment. Otherwise, we have to identify your account before we can correctly credit it for your payment ... and that greatly increases the time it takes to complete this task and increases the chances of an error. Thanks!

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## PROJECT UPDATE

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Our engineering staff, Dick Derowitsch and Shelly Storves are really busy this year with a lot of projects. At last count they had **nine** underway simultaneously!

We're finishing-up restoration efforts on the new 16" pipe on Casa Ybel Road, from Tarpon Bay Road all the way to Middle Gulf Drive. This is the largest pipe in our system and should greatly improve water pressures and flows on the east end of Sanibel. We're also about to begin installation of the last few hundred feet of 12" pipe on the curve on Casa Ybel between Middle Gulf and Periwinkle Way. We had to postpone this project from last year while the City obtained the necessary right-of-way for the associated road work.

Speaking of road work, on the east end of Periwinkle we're working to abandon an old pipe before the City begins work to improve that section of road. That way, we can avoid damaging the new road surface. Similarly, on East Gulf Drive between the south end of Nerita Street and Lindgren Boulevard, we're installing a new 12" pipe along with the City project to improve drainage in the area. At the same time, we're also abandoning an old redundant pipe in the area. We're doing this work now in order to avoid having to disturb residents in this area twice.

The final pipe project involves the installation of over 10,000 feet of 4" pipe to bring cleaning fluid to our wells located along Sanibel-Captiva Road between our Reverse Osmosis Plant and Tarpon Bay Road. This project also includes a new fiber-optic well control cable to replace the old copper cable that has been severely damaged over the last 23 years by all types of underground construction work ... including some of our own!

We're also working on projects at all three of our remote pumping/storage facilities. We're abandoning the 30 year-old pumping station on Dixie Beach Boulevard and replacing it with a new facility adjacent to the tank located behind the City Park on Periwinkle. The new facility will improve the reliability of water supply to the east end of Sanibel. At the pumping station located in the Wulfert area, we're replacing some of the piping components to also improve the reliability of that facility. At our facility in South Seas Plantation on Captiva, we're adding a second (spare) pump, enclosing the facilities in a building, and converting from diesel to propane fuel, which is kinder to the environment.

Finally, we're about to begin a remodeling project on the Reverse Osmosis Plant offices. This building is 17 years old and in need of a interior facelift. We're going to be making better use of some of the space inside the building at the same time.

All these projects are in addition to those already completed this year ... like the new 1.5 million watt diesel emergency generator. We're using a combination of subcontractors and our own employees for all this work. We prefer to do as much as possible ourselves. It saves money and helps us to know our facilities better, but it usually takes us a little longer.

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## IT'S FREE!!

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IWA has always offered a service to turn-off your water service at the street and then to turn it back on at some later date. This service, which costs \$25, has been used by many members who are leaving their homes for an extended period and don't want to risk the high water bill that would result from a leak anywhere in their plumbing system during their absence ... not to mention the water damage to their homes that may result from the leak. Many members just shut-off the water by themselves at the house valve. This option is not quite as good as the shut-off at the street, since it doesn't protect against leaks in the pipe running

from the street to the house. It does however stop leaks and damage inside the house.

At their July meeting the IWA Board of Directors approved a new service for our members. Beginning immediately, IWA will allow one free turn-off and turn-on per year per meter. This service will be available during our normal work hours (7:30 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday), provided requests are made at least 72 hours in advance.

If you plan to leave the islands for an extended period, consider taking advantage of this new free service. Just give us a call at 472-1502. And don't forget to run your water for around five minutes after it is turned back on to remove the stagnant water in your pipes.

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### MEET TED BROWN

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Ted Brown joined us as a Plant Operator Trainee in May of 1995. Before joining IWA, he worked in several construction-related jobs. Ted lives in Lehigh Acres, where he enjoys his hobbies

of fishing, hunting, competition pistol shooting and car racing.

As a trainee, Ted has been busy learning the "water business". He's involved in all aspects of operating and maintaining our Reverse Osmosis treatment plant and running the laboratory tests necessary to ensure the highest quality water for our members. And in addition to all that, he's been studying hard in preparation for the tests necessary to become a licensed operator.

Ted says that he finds his job at IWA to be very interesting because he's always learning something new and that he likes working at IWA because he enjoys the people with whom he works. His motto is, "Treat others as you would like to be treated." We like that attitude!

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### IN YEARS PAST

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#### 15 Years Ago (1981)

Robert E. Hollander was hired by the Board on April 1 to serve as General Manager. Bob retired in March of 1994.

#### 30 Years Ago (1966)

Lee County Commissioners contacted IWA regarding the possible installation of a water line to serve public restrooms on the Causeway. The cost to run the line to the first island, would be over \$20,000. The Board determined that the IWA budget would not allow such an expenditure. However, Board members did vote to provide a free meter connection.

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