

It's Kind of Spring!

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

Did you miss me? Yes it's been a while since the last issue, but I've finally have the time to write. As I write, I hear bees, chainsaws and lawn mowers – a sure sign of spring here on the Island.

In this issue we will be talking about water conservation and the upcoming process for the water service billing. Make sure to save the date for the Water Committee presentation. More details to follow.

Remember to find meter boxes before you start to mow the lawns to avoid doing damage.

Water Conservation and Water Service Billing

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

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As you know, members will soon be billed for their actual water usage as collected from monthly meter readings. There are quite a number of ideas for water conservation on the internet and I will include a few of those later on in this issue.

Historically on the Island there has not been a specific need to conserve water. It's been "we have wells, why do we need to conserve?" This is a good question. I know, even myself, I would wait until I had my car on the island to give it a wash.

Why do we need to talk about water conservation? Similar to your local water utility, we need to pay for the replacement, operation and maintaining our new water distribution system. The membership has been paying the loan payment for the installation, operation and maintenance. Soon we will be also be paying for our actual water usage. On Saturday, 11 April 2015, the Water Committee will be presenting how we will be approaching the billing process, what will be included in the billing and what you need to know about the billing.

Is This Still Happening?

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

Unfortunately, yes it is. I'm not sure why this is happening. If you know why the lids are being left open, please let me know. (HMCWater@herronisland.org)



It happens once or twice a week. It's not always on the same lot or on the same end of the island. While I haven't seen any specific damage to the meters or the meter boxes, this concerns me.

Once again, if you know why this is happening, please let me know so that we can get this resolved.

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SAVE THE DATE!



Saturday, April 11, 2015

Membership Meeting to Present
"The New Water Billing Process"

Place: Community Center

Time: 1:30 PM

This meeting will provide a chance for everyone to learn about the new tiered water billing program and an opportunity to ask questions.

Please join us. The B.O.O.S.T.E.R.S will be providing light refreshments.

The Flapper

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

I feel there should be some evil laughter after saying the title of this section but I'm not sure why.

As some of you that have been on The Leak List know, I've often asked you to check the flapper in your toilet to make sure it's not leaking. The flapper is notorious for very slow, almost imperceptible leakage. This can happen for a number of reasons. For example:

- When you leave and you empty all of your appliances and fixtures. This will leave the flapper dry where it could shrink or change shape. Then the next time you fill the toilet, the flapper leaks.
- Chemistry – if you leave a cleaner in your toilet tank, this cleaner could be slowly eating away at the seal and will cause a leak.

You're looking at me funny. Oh. What is a flapper? Gotcha. The flapper is the soft rubber piece that is usually connected by a chain to the toilet handle.



The flapper is usually located at the bottom of the toilet tank and prevents the tank from releasing the water in the tank until you flush.



How can you tell if your flapper is leaking? This is a great question that has a multitude of answers. Here are two that I find usually telling as to whether or not the flapper is leaking.

The "turn off the valve and wait" method. Usually, there is an isolation valve under the tank of the toilet. You take the lid off the tank and check where the water level is normally. Most toilets will already have a line, a mark in the porcelain casting or a line of grunge established over time. If there is no line, take a felt tip pen and just above the water, draw a line.



Next, turn off the isolation valve usually located under the toilet tank in the water supply line. Now for the hard part – you'll need to wait about an hour, maybe longer depending on how slow the leak might be. When you come back, the water level should be just where you marked it. If it's not, then you know you have a leak.

Another method is the "color the water" method. With some food coloring, add a few drops to the toilet tank. Then once again the hard part of waiting an hour. If there is any color in the toilet bowl, even just a little, you have a leak. I find that the colors of blue, red and green seem to work the best for contrast in white toilets. If your toilet isn't white – try the valve method.

Water Conservation References

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Water Distribution Manager

There are a lot of water conservation ideas on the internet. Here are just a few that I have found helpful.

Here is a reference page to a load of other tips on water conservation.

<http://www.thewaterpage.com/water-conservation.htm>

This is a page on water saving tips.

<http://wateruseitwisely.com/>

And a reference from National Geographic.

<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/water-conservation-tips/>

From the Environmental Protection Agency.

<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>

A list of links from About.com.

http://index.about.com/index?am=broad&q=water+conservation+tips&an=msn_s&askid=7f7a94fe-41e5-4ad2-96f4-955f9afb23ea-0-ab_msb&dqj=&qsrc=999&ad=semD&o=22881&l=sem

Here is another link from the Environmental Protection Agency with a more kid friendly direction. I like the experiments portion of the site.

<http://water.epa.gov/learn/kids/waterkids/kids.cfm>

This one is from Earth Easy and has tips for the home.

http://eartheasy.com/live_water_saving.htm

At least 100 tips.

<http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/>

Or if you are looking for a handbook on water conservation.

<http://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Water-Use-Conservation-Landscapes/dp/1931579091>

The Two Stage Flush

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1
Water Distribution Manager

I have seen many myths, rumors and misinformation about how to flush less water. Sure, you can use a brick in the tank, but that will slowly deteriorate and the iron content could color the bowl. Can you put a bottle in the tank to displace the water in the tank? Sure. But how do you know how much water you displace and how much is needed for a flush?

So after many months of searching, I think I've located a good solution. This is what I have installed (\$35).



This is not an advertisement; this is just an example of what I have used. And thus far, after 6 months, they seem to be working well.

First, turn the water to the toilet off and check to see what you have in the toilet tank. For me, I needed to replace the toilet filler as well, because of a disintegrating gasket and a faulty shut off valve.



Next, you'll need to remove all of the existing equipment that needs to be replaced and check the integrity of the seals at the bottom of the tank. If you didn't have any leaks from the bottom of the tank, chances are, the seals are good and just need a wipe down with a clean cloth.



Now comes the fun part – dare I say like Christmas – opening and checking the new parts packaging. OK, that's probably just me. Follow the instructions and the installation should look similar to what is shown below.



In the two stage flush (that replaces the flapper) there is a blue float that can be adjusted up or down for the desired amount of water to flush. Adjust up for less water, down for more water. The float should be adjusted so that stage one just clears the bowl. This is the minimum amount of water needed to flush the bowl. Stage two is used when you may need more water (a full flush) to clear the bowl. A convenient way to remember – Stage 1 for Number 1, Stage 2 for Number 2.



Mow This!

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Water Distribution Manager

Due to all of the rain and now the sun, we've got a lot of grass growing at the Island. Remember that metal mower blades don't work well near plastic or metal meter boxes. Make sure you locate your meter box first, before you start mowing. If you need a small blue flag marker, let me know – I have a few to give out if needed. (HMCWater@herronisland.org)

We recommend that you stay at least one lawn mower width – 24 inches or more – away from the meter boxes when mowing the grass. Use plastic string trimmers when you get up close to the meter box to help prevent damage to the box and antenna in the lid.



The Leak List

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Now that we are getting closer to being billed for water service, I'm hearing a lot more rumors and misinformation about the leak list.

The Leak List – referred to as "The Exception Report from the Meter Reading" – is how we can tell there is some issue with the water service between the meter and the end of the water service on the lot.

How do you get on the Leak List: there is just one way to get on the leak list. The water meter has registered at least one gallon of water flow each hour for a continuous 24 hours.

We will start notifying individuals on the Leak List as a "heads-up" prior to the start of water service billing that we have noted an issue on the lot.

To Make a Report

Information to Have At Hand

If you want to report something, have this information ready to go:

Your Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

On Island Address: _____

And a brief description of the problem or issue. This will go a long way in getting a speedy response. Report forms are available in the HMC Office or the website.

An Emergency

Don't panic and don't wait. If there is an emergency on a lot - turn the water service off at the meter and call Charles Smith, WDM or Sean Burns at NWS.

If there is an emergency with the water main or meter – call Charles (206) 707-4645 or Sean (360) 917-4649 and let them know what is happening.

A Non-Emergency Repair or Service

Send me an email (HMCWater@herronisland.org) with the above information on who, where and what and I'll get there as quickly as I can. You can also fill out the Water Service Request Form and drop it off at the HMC Office. The office will notify the Water Distribution Manager when there is a request in the office.



CONTACT INFORMATION

HMC Water Department

Charles Smith (WDM): (206) 707-4645

HMCWater@herronisland.org

Northwest Water Systems

Sean Burns: (360) 917-4649

sean@nwwatersystems.com

Toll Free: 1 (888) 881-0958

HMC Office (253) 884-9350

Claudia Ellsworth, Island Manager

hmcmanager@herronisland.org

Carolyn Snyder, Office Manager

Office@herronisland.org

Call Before You Dig

As it is Spring, that also means that people are getting ready to build new homes, trailer platforms and other such items. If this means that you'll need to establish a new water connection – please let me know.

Examples would be if you want to install a new yard hydrant so that you have a place to wash off your boat or equipment. Or maybe you're getting that green thumb going and need a new spigot for a garden.

If you're going to be digging within 2 feet of the meter box, please let me know. Oh, hey, you're still going to be the one digging, but I can be helpful in letting you know where things are and how things were connected to existing services during the water system replacement project.

Utility Notification Center

811 or 1-800-424-5555

www.callbeforeyoudig.org

HMC Water Department

Charles Smith (WDM): (206) 707-4645

HMCWater@herronisland.org



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**