

# IWA PIPELINE



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3651 Sanibel-Captiva Road, Sanibel, FL 33957 • <http://www.islandwater.com>  
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## IWA NEEDS YOU!!



It's election time at IWA again, and next year three seats on our Board of Directors will be up for election. The seats are currently held by David H. Demaree, William W. Fenniman and Timothy A. Gardner. Dave, the Board President, is completing his third and final two-year term of service. He has served on the Board since 2001. Bill, the Board Vice President/Treasurer and Tim, the Board Vice President, are eligible for re-election to their second terms of service.

IWA is governed by a five member Board of Directors who serve without pay. Directors must be year-round residents of Sanibel or Captiva, so that they can attend all Board meetings, and must be IWA Members or an official representative of a condominium or other IWA Corporate Member. Directors serve for a two-year term, and may be re-elected for a total of no more than three consecutive terms. Meetings are normally held on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Directors are elected by the Membership at IWA's Annual Meeting to be held in April. Anyone who would like to run for one of the open seats should contact our Board Recording Secretary, Beau Stanley, at (239) 472-2113 (extension 114) or by e-mail at

[beau@islandwater.com](mailto:beau@islandwater.com) by **no later than December 31, 2006.** A background check will be run on all Board candidates, due to security concerns in our post-911 world.

## WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

At IWA, we pride ourselves on providing the best possible service to our Members, at the lowest possible cost. We've been fairly successful at this. We have not increased our water rates since 1992, despite inflation of nearly 47% over that period. In fact, we decreased our rates by 10% in 1994! We have accomplished this long period of stable rates in many different ways, but basically, we have been pretty careful how we spend IWA's money ... and we don't waste anything that can be of use.

As an example of our thriftiness, we don't even waste the used postage stamps on the envelopes our Members use to send us their monthly payments. Board Vice President Tim Gardner has been picking up our many bags of used envelopes from us for years and taking them to the Alliance Woman's Stamp Ministry, located in Shell Point Retirement Community in Fort Myers.

There the stamps are removed from the envelopes, sorted and sold to stamp distributors and collectors. The income generated from these sales goes to support the preparation, publishing and distribution of a new Spanish-language curriculum for Sunday Schools in Latin America. More than 50 lesson series have been published and are being used in churches of 40 different denominations and missions in 15 Latin American countries. In 2005, a total of \$27,000 was realized from the sale of the used stamps. We don't know how much our stamps contributed to that total, but however much it was, it was obviously a whole lot better than just throwing the envelopes out in our trash and then paying to have them taken away.

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## PERSONNEL CHANGES AT IWA

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Patty Herrick decided to leave IWA in September to pursue other interests, including volunteer activities. Patty had over 5 years of service as our Purchasing Coordinator, responsible for placing all of our purchase orders and paying our bills. She was also the Recording Secretary for the IWA Board of Directors. Everyone at IWA wishes Patty all the best in her new endeavors.

Steve Dover decided to move over from the RO Plant, where he was an A-licensed operator, to replace Patty. Steve has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Michigan State University, so he is perfectly suited for handling all the many financial matters involved in being our Purchasing Coordinator.

Mike Minervini has joined IWA as an Operator Trainee to replace Steve at the RO Plant. Mike lives in Fort Myers, where he enjoys softball, baseball and martial arts. He says he likes working at IWA because it is not just a job ... it's a career. Welcome to IWA, Mike!

Finally, Bill Epranian, who left IWA late last year, has rejoined us as a Distribution Technician. Bill has the dubious distinction of having the longest commute of any IWA employee, from St. James City on Pine Island. By road, his commute is over 47 miles one way. He hopes to shorten that commute (by about 45 miles!) by using his boat to get to work, when weather permits. Welcome back to IWA, Bill!

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## PINE ISLAND INTERCONNECT

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In the old days, from 1966 to 1973, all the potable water on Sanibel and Captiva Islands was obtained from the Greater Pine Island Water Association (GPIWA), via a 9,500 foot long, 10 inch diameter interconnect pipe buried under the seabed of Pine Island Sound. When IWA started-up its new Electrodialysis plant in 1973, and later the Reverse Osmosis plant in 1980, the pipeline from Pine Island was decommissioned. Then in 1996, we decided that both IWA and GPIWA would benefit from reactivating the pipe between us to serve as a back-up in emergencies. Water could be sent in either direction. The line can only supply about 500,000 gallons per day, which is about 15% of our average water demand on Sanibel and Captiva. However, in an emergency, 500,000 gallons per day could make a big difference, especially if we curtailed all irrigation. Putting it into perspective, it would be the equivalent of 100 large water tankers a day! After locating and repairing a leak in the pipe in 1996, it was kept pressurized for a number of years and was actually used twice, when IWA supplied water to Pine Island during emergencies.

In recent years, neither utility has had a need for the pipe, and it again fell into disuse. In October, the line was pressurized, and again we found that we have a small, but significant leak. We are currently looking at our alternatives for repairing the pipeline and again having it as an emergency back-up for both utilities. First we have to locate the new leak(s) and repair it (them) again. That may prove to be quite a difficult and expensive task, given the pipe location under Pine Island Sound. We are looking for companies who would be willing to work with us on this project, and we will keep you informed in future editions of this Newsletter.

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## BUSH WHACKERS

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In Southwest Florida, our plants (and weeds!) grow at a rate that would amaze people who live in cooler climates. It sometimes seems like you can actually see the plants growing right before your eyes. While this rapid plant growth is one of the

things that makes our islands the attractive places that they are, it also has a tendency to quickly turn our home landscaping into an impenetrable jungle.

This very rapid plant growth also creates a number of problems for our IWA meter readers. Previously accessible meters quickly become completely overgrown and inaccessible. In addition to slowing down our meter readers in their work, some of our plants are not too "user friendly" and are either poisonous or covered in thorns and other nasty things. This makes reading overgrown meters a real safety problem. For example, we have had meter readers who have gotten serious cases of poison ivy, cuts from bougainvillea thorns, etc.

Our Service Rules and Regulations, which every IWA Member agrees to follow when he/she joins the Association, state that our water meters are to be kept "unobstructed and accessible at all times to the meter reader." We need a clear path to meters, which is at least 7 feet high and 3 feet wide, with two feet clear on all sides of the meter itself.

We would **greatly** prefer that Members keep their own meters clear of excessive vegetation, and when time permits, we notify Members who have an accessibility problem and ask them to remedy the problem themselves. However, with over 4,900 meters to read every month and our rapid plant growth, that would be a full time job for a couple of employees in the Summer months. Therefore, we sometimes resort to trimming the vegetation ourselves. Although the great majority of meters and problem vegetation are located on public right-of-ways, our trimming efforts still sometimes upset our Members. While we try to do a good job, our idea of trimming looks like butchery to some of our Members. We apologize if you are one of those Members!

So please help us, and make sure your vegetation is trimmed so that we can quickly and safely read your meter. Remember, the quicker we read your meter, the less it costs and the lower we can keep your water rates. If we trim around your meter, please try to understand that we are not professional landscapers, and we are only trying to do our jobs in a safe and efficient manner.

On a related subject, those Members who have installed backflow prevention devices on their water service lines (that above-ground U-shaped pipe near the meter) also need to keep the area around these devices clear. While we understand that the devices are not pretty, and a little vegetation hides them from view, please keep the vegetation at least two feet from the devices in all directions. We periodically test these devices for our Members

(at no cost to them), and clear access is again a necessity.

Thanks for your assistance with this "growing" problem.

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## FRIDAY AFTERNOONS

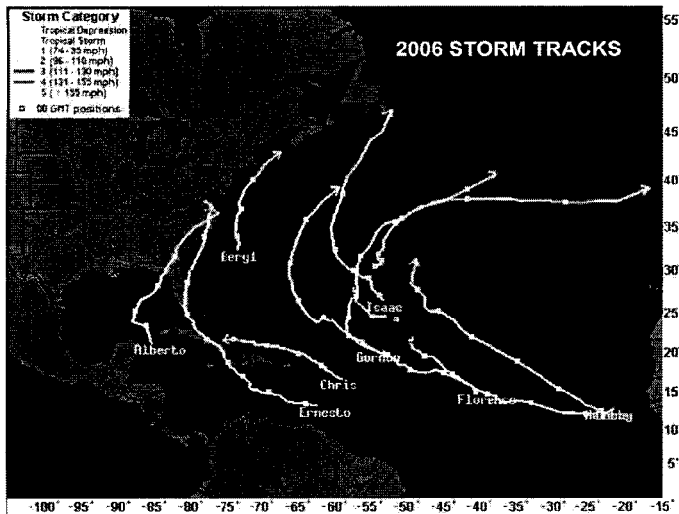
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At IWA, we have kept our underground piping system in good repair, so we fortunately don't have a lot of main breaks to repair. However, breaks do occur, and for some reason, they often seem to occur on Friday afternoons. This was the case on Friday November 10<sup>th</sup>, when we had two simultaneous main breaks on Dixie Beach Road and Kittiwake Circle. Fortunately, the one on Dixie Beach Road could be isolated by shutting valves without putting any Members out of water, and we therefore left that one until Monday morning for repairs. However, the one on Kittiwake Circle resulted in an entire neighborhood being out of water, and the repair had to be made immediately. See the above photo for an idea of what was involved.

Friday main breaks cause a number of problems, in addition to just delaying employees from beginning their weekend activities. Although we stock all the parts we normally need to repair main breaks, we can't have everything we could ever need. If we find that we need something that we don't have, getting it on the weekend is problematic. In addition, after we repair a main break, we have to get two satisfactory bacteriological tests on successive days before the main can be placed back in full service. Until the satisfactory test results are obtained, Members in the affected area have to boil their water, which is quite an inconvenience. The labs that perform these tests are not normally open on the weekends, but will open for us, if we can contact them. All in all, main breaks on Friday afternoons are not very pleasant for IWA employees or the affected Members.

# WHEW!!



As this newsletter was being written on November 18th, it appears that we really lucked-out with hurricane season this year. Only one storm, Ernesto, came close to our islands. Ernesto passed to our East on August 30th and was essentially a non-event on the islands.

This year really served as an interesting lesson regarding the accuracy of hurricane forecasting. Dr. William Gray, from Colorado State University, is one of the best known and most quoted of the hurricane forecasters. His first forecast for the 2006 hurricane season was made in December 2005. At that time, he predicted we would have 17 named storms, with 9 hurricanes and 5 intense hurricanes (Categories 3, 4 or 5). The probability of an intense hurricane making landfall on the US coastline was set at 81%.

Dr. Gray's forecast didn't change through April, 2006. In May, the forecast for named storms still remained at 17, but the number of hurricanes

and intense hurricanes had fallen to 7 and 3 respectively. By October, the forecast had fallen still further, to 11 named storms (down from 17), with 6 hurricanes (down from 9) and 2 intense hurricanes (down from 5).

The actual number of named storms as of November 18th was 9, with 5 hurricanes and 2 intense hurricanes. No intense hurricanes had made landfall on the US coastline. It would seem that this hurricane season can teach us a couple of things. First, the experts' ability to forecast hurricane activity is not always that good. Second, Mother Nature holds all the cards! In Dr. Gray's own words, "Our 2006 seasonal hurricane forecast was not successful. We anticipated a well above-average season, and the season had activity at slightly below-average levels. We did catch this downward trend beginning with our early August update. We attribute a large portion of this forecast over-prediction to a late-developing El Niño and increased mid-level dryness in the tropical Atlantic."

At IWA, we were as prepared as we could be for the active hurricane season which was predicted late last year. Thankfully, this year we were over-prepared. However, it's always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared when it comes to natural disasters like hurricanes. We always prepare for the worst and hope for the best. In 2004 (when we had to deal with hurricane Charley) and again in 2005 (when hurricane Wilma paid us a visit), we were very glad that we had prepared as well as we did!

Now it's finally time to take down our hurricane shutters, which we put up back in August as Ernesto approached. It will be really good to be able to see the world outside our office windows again!!

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