

## Lost and Found

*When a woman called us asking if she had reached the USABlueBook hotline, we were intrigued. She told us that someone left a piece of equipment in her yard several days ago, and in her attempts to find the owner, she called the phone number printed on its label.*

*After explaining that the item did not belong to us, we jumped in on the investigation to find its rightful owner. We asked where she lived, and lo and behold, we found that her local utility department is a customer of ours.*

*We called the department to let them know where their missing item was, and that it was kindly put off to the side for them to pick up. They were extremely appreciative to both parties for taking the time to ensure the item's safe return.*

*Another case closed for USABlueBook.*



## News from the Field

### The Great Valve Cover-Up

By Greg Pearson

When I went to work as a water/wastewater operator for a rural California system, I had no idea what I was in for. It was obvious that the previous manager spent more time playing cards and talking fishin' with the boys than actually working. Clean-up was desperately needed on tasks that had gone undone for so long, including the implementation of a valve exercising plan.

Unfortunately for us, the valves that were most vital to our system's operation were located under 6 to 10 inches of asphalt.

Apparently, during the last 20 years, the town's roads had been overlaid numerous times—right over the valves. Mr. Manager must have been too busy telling those fishin' stories to properly mark and raise the valves to street level. It was time to start digging.

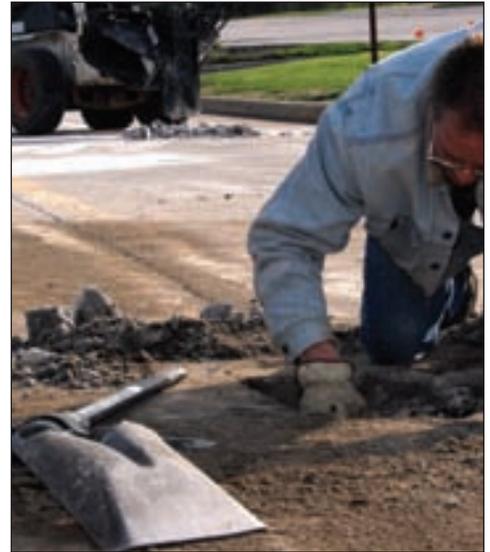
***“As late afternoon approached, and our feeling of accomplishment increased, we began to hear a truck starting and stopping every so often.”***

each valve. Our intentions were to go back and raise each valve column and lid at a later time. With roughed up hands from half-missed hits, and sweat pouring off of us, it was truly a “workin’ on the railroad” kind of day.

As late afternoon approached, and our feeling of accomplishment increased, we began to hear a truck starting and stopping every so often. We didn't think much of it until we smelled it—hot asphalt!

It turned out that a hot patch truck had been assigned to the much-needed task of filling potholes in the county, and that day just happened to be our town's turn. The driver, who was uninformed as to the nature of our task and obviously unfamiliar with water valve maintenance, had been dutifully filling every valve access hole we had labored so hard to create.

Fortunately, thanks to some quick thinking and fast action, we were able to uncover the hot loose asphalt on most of the valves before it solidified. While digging up asphalt (twice) was not an ideal situation, the mix-up inevitably turned out to be a good thing. The mishap encouraged us to communicate more effectively with the county's road department, creating a great relationship that has since benefited both parties.





## Energy Savings Plan: Lagoon Aeration

Budgets are tight, and getting tighter for most utilities. One way to help reduce energy costs may be to shut off your aerators for a couple hours a day.

Many systems rely on mechanical aeration during cold winter months, but in the summertime when algae grow, aeration may not be needed as frequently—especially in facultative lagoon systems. This is best explained by understanding the relationship between bacteria and oxygen-producing algae during a 24-hour period.

### 24 hours in the life of a lagoon

During the day when the sun is shining, algae takes in carbon dioxide from bacteria, while giving off oxygen. Oxygen production peaks between 1:00 and 3:00 pm, with levels typically reaching above 5 mg/L. When the sun goes down, bacteria go to work consuming the residual oxygen until it's depleted. By sunrise, there may be little or no oxygen left, making it feast or famine for the bacteria unless mechanical aeration is used.

### Can I reduce the use of my aerators?

Testing your system is easy. First, perform a dissolved oxygen (DO) profile of the surface of your lagoon. Pay special attention to where the influent enters, as this is where oxygen demand will be the greatest. Then, reduce the number of aerators running in the afternoon and monitor oxygen levels by conducting another DO profile. Adjust your aerator use accordingly until you maintain oxygen levels of no less than 2 to 3 mg/L.

A system that shuts off aerators during parts of the day, and leaves them running at night, can save more than 20% on electrical expenses during the summer season.

For more information or instruction, please feel free to contact Don at 503-544-0456 or [dvanveldhuizen@usabluebook.com](mailto:dvanveldhuizen@usabluebook.com), or call LoAnn Mayer at 847-377-5162.



## Tech Talk

### Summer Safety Tips

Summer months bring more than just heat. Be prepared with these summer safety tips.

**Sunburn:** Avoid sunburn by limiting sun exposure, wearing protective clothing, and using sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.

*Helpful Hint:* For sunburn relief, use a cold compress or bag of frozen vegetables. A topical hydrocortisone cream may also lessen the pain.

**Bites from Mosquitoes and Ticks:** Prevent bites by using an insect repellent containing DEET.

*Helpful Hint:* Check yourself for ticks daily. Early removal is important because ticks can transmit Lyme disease in as little as 36 hours.

**Bee Stings:** Prevent stings by wearing light-colored clothing and avoiding scented body products.

*Helpful Hint:* DO NOT pull the stinger out with tweezers because it can spread the venom even more. Instead, try scraping it away using a side-to-side motion with a credit card or fingernail.

**Heat Illness:** To avoid heat illness, stay in air-conditioned areas (if possible) and drink plenty of fluids.

*Helpful Hint:* If someone suffers from heat illness, have them lie down in a cool place and elevate their legs. Then use water, wet towels and fanning to keep them cool until emergency help arrives.

For more information on Summer Safety, visit [http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2004/304\\_summer.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2004/304_summer.html)



## Great People



## Congratulations to our Catalog 120 Trivia Contest Winners!

**Peter Juzyk**, Facility Manager of Miller Environmental in Sinking Springs, PA.

**Linda Sagaser**, Public Works Superintendent for the City of Dayville, OR.



Each of them received a gift card to Best Buy. Thanks for participating. Enjoy!



## Break Time!

### Word Morph

To play, change one letter in the beginning word (PIPE) to form a new word (ex. PILE). Repeat this process until you correctly spell the ending word (TOOL).

Challenge co-workers to see who can complete the word morph using the fewest words!

1. PIPE \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. TOOL \_\_\_\_\_

### Meet Bill, A.K.A. Captain Crapper

During the day, Bill Hensley works at Sherwood, Arkansas's Wastewater Plant. But by night he transforms into a cape-wearing, plunger-toting super hero that's saving the day from clogged toilets everywhere. Way to keep everyone at the plant entertained Bill!

Be sure to look for more of Captain Crapper's adventures in future issues of BlueBits.



*"I fear no human waste, no turd too tuff."*

—Capt. Crapper

### THE ADVENTURES OF CAPT. CRAPPER



# BlueBits

News and Bits from **USA**BlueBook

Look inside for:

- News from the Field
- Tech Talk
- Ask Don
- Break Time!

**Would you turn down an easy \$50? We didn't think so!**

Everyone could use a little extra cash these days and BlueBits wants to give it to you.

Just send your funny or interesting work story (or photo) to [stories@usabluebook.com](mailto:stories@usabluebook.com). If we print it, you'll receive a \$50 gift card from [giftcertificates.com](http://giftcertificates.com) or a \$50 USABlueBook credit.

## Lab Catalog #120 is coming!

Our 300-page Lab Catalog features a comprehensive selection of items chosen specifically for laboratory professionals.

Lab Catalog #120 contains products from our Master Catalog including lab instrumentation, chemicals and supplies. Plus, we've added dozens of new items!

Look forward to it in August. Call **800-548-1234** to reserve your copy today!



## Upcoming Trade Shows—stop by and say hi!

- Louisiana RWA, Alexandria, LA, July 12-17
- Native American Water Assn, Albuquerque, NM, July 15-17
- StormCon, Anaheim, CA, August 16-20
- Fox Valley Operator's Assn, Huntley, IL, August 20
- Kentucky RWA, Lexington, KY, August 24-26
- Utah RWA, Layton, UT, August 26
- AWT Convention & Expo, Hollywood, FL, August 26-29



- South Carolina RWA, North Charleston, SC, August 31-Sept 3
- Evergreen Rural Water Assn, Ocean Shores, WA, Sept 1-3
- NYRWA 1st Annual Equipment Expo, Rhinebeck, NY, Sept 17
- APWA Exposition, Columbus, OH, Sept 13-16
- RMSAWWA/RMWEA Conference, Albuquerque, NM, Sept 13-16
- WV RWA Conference, Snowshoe Resort, WV, Sept 13-16
- NY Watershed Conference, West Point, NY, Sept 14-15
- NY AWWA/Tift Symposium, Verona, NY, Sept 30-Oct 1
- Tri-State Seminar, Primm, NV, Sept 22-24

