

WEST NECK

Newsletter #16

Board Members

Ann Dunbar, Andreas Hommert,
Michael Luppino, Lori
Beard Raymond, Lisa Shaw



WATER DISTRICT

July 2011

General Questions

Judy Meringer and Barbara Bloom
at 749-0291

Emergencies

John Hallman, Plant Operator
749-0195

Summer 2011 Newsletter

SHELTER ISLAND AQUIFER

On Monday, June 13 the Water Advisory Board of Shelter Island met to review the readings in the various test wells on the Island. The readings were not as low as in 2010 but not as high as the Board would have liked to see. While many on Shelter Island felt we had more than enough snow over the winter to make a significant contribution to the reserves, there was not a significant impact. And the recent rains, which seemed at times to be nearly torrential, will not find their way into the aquifer for a number of years. The rains saved a good amount of water which would have gone to gardens but there are many factors that weigh adversely in terms of the aquifer. These include evaporation and run-off. District Manager John Hallman says we are in pretty good shape for now, but a hot, dry summer, which we may yet have, will mean we have to continue prudent conservation.

CONSERVATION REVISITED

There was a summer not too long ago in which we had a long period without rain followed by a spell that seemed like 40 days and 40 nights of it. It was similar to this summer except we don't know yet what lies ahead. But the Newsletter came out in between these two periods so when customers read our reminders about conserving water, one sent us letter saying, essentially, we had to be kidding. We responded by opining that a true conservative is conservative regardless of any temporary conditions. We would say the same today. So the WNWD Board urges all its customers to be true conservatives and to practice conservation of this resource. It is a renewable one but it is not always reliably renewable.

One piece of advice that prevails in all discussions is to turn off the tap when brushing your teeth. Have one hand with the brush and the other on the tap. If you don't think that saves an appreciable amount of water, put a basin in the sink and let it run while you brush next time. Then multiply that by at least twice a day so you can gauge how much water, and money, you could save in a quarter.

WNWD's rule about only using a hand-held hose to water limits the use for plants but it also means that you are using the water to water what you want to water, not an area in between or beyond the plant(s.) And the time of watering is important, too. A lot of water will evaporate mid-day and will be, essentially, wasted, so water early or late. Containers should be watered early in the day so the moisture keeps the plants through the afternoon heat. But also keep an eye on the weather forecast and don't water when rain will do the job. This is all common sense advice, and don't you feel it's such a waste when you see a sprinkler going, sometimes when it's raining!



MAINS REPLACEMENT PROJECT

As readers know, the WNWD Board has been trying for a number of years to obtain grant money to complete the replacement of its old and decaying water main distribution lines. Certainly Federal money has always been difficult to attract but the current fiscal climate makes it downright impossible. For example, Appropriations Grants have been eliminated for at least two years. What to do? There is simply no money to undertake the complete project (an estimated two-thirds of the system) and WNWD still owes enough from its original bonds that greater debt is not an option. That debt will be paid off in 2021 but with every passing year the old mains become more and more fragile so the Board has been discussing options. The one which appears the most feasible is replacing smaller sections using money from the Capital Reserve Fund to do as much as is possible but over time. The Board is looking at budgets for that approach and will be discussing it with the various agencies which will need to approve it. More will be known by press time for the Winter Newsletter.

The Board wishes everyone a safe and cool summer and if we don't have your e-mail contact information, don't forget to call Barbara Bloom and give it to her.