

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER

e-newsletter



NO JOKE: MOST DRINKING SUPPLIES FLUSH WITH "POTTY WATER"

By Neena Sajita, The Texas Tribune, texastribune.org
May 14, 2014

Poor old Wichita Falls.

The city of about 105,000 people has become the butt of late-night jokes and the subject of shocked headlines since officials decided to turn to treated sewer water to fill residents' drinking glasses.



Turns out, though, the joke is on just about everybody else. Because for the large chunk of population that lives downstream from a big city and whose water supply flows through a river, more than a few drops of the water in their glasses was probably once in someone else's toilet.

Let's start with Houston, which, as Texas State University professor Andy Sansom says, "has been drinking Dallas' crap for decades." Wastewater from Dallas and Fort Worth is deposited into the Trinity River, where it flows down into the lakes that supply Houston residents. The wastewater is so clean that it's credited with helping the Trinity River stay strong during recent years of severe drought.

San Antonio's wastewater — which flows through the city's famed Riverwalk in times of drought — is considered valuable, too. Recently, the San Antonio Water System applied for a permit to ensure complete ownership over that wastewater, which is currently deposited into the San Antonio River and is so clean that it helped bring back species some thought were gone from the area forever.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority balked at the application, saying its own customers — farmers, manufacturers and, you guessed it, South Texas city residents — rely on that wastewater. It is so important to the authority that it's taking legal action against the San Antonio Water System's permit.

No one involved in the brewing court battle over who owns San Antonio's wastewater is calling it "potty water," as the Fort Worth Star-Telegram did in a recent story about the Wichita Falls plan.

There are a few other things to be clear about regarding the multimillion-dollar project planned in Wichita Falls. Wastewater reuse in Wichita Falls has been in the works for years and would have happened with or without the drought. It was fast-tracked as the city deals

(continued on page 2)

TAWWA/WEAT MAY MEETING

Date: Thursday, August 21, 2014

Place: San Antonio Water System
Tower II, 1st Floor, Room C145
2800 US Hwy 281N

Speaker: Gretchen Reuwer
NBU

Topic: Pharmaceutical Disposal
Program

TAWWA/WEAT JUNE MEETING

Date: Thursday, September 18, 2014

Place: San Antonio Water System
Tower II, 1st Floor, Room C145
2800 US Hwy 281N

Speaker: Kira Iles
Black & Veatch

Topic: How a Cost Effective Solution to
Corrosion Became the Largest
Domestic Order of HDPE Pipe

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Kim Keefer (kkeefer@pape-dawson.com)

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Vicky Frenkel (FrenkelV@bv.com)

with reservoirs that are only 25 percent full today. In addition, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality — not known for being a particularly strict regulating agency — is currently on the defensive for delaying the city's project by asking for more testing.

Several other Texas cities — San Antonio, Austin and Fort Worth among them — have been looking at such water reuse projects for decades, and some are hoping the plans might come to fruition in the coming years. Across Texas, treated wastewater is being used for everything from watering golf courses to making silicon chips.

Yet judging by the headlines on news reports about the Wichita Falls project, the city's residents could be in for some sort of disgusting surprise.

"Brushing Teeth With Sewer Water Next Step as Texas Faces Drought," read a Bloomberg News headline. National Public Radio wrote, "Drought-Stricken Texas Town Turns To Toilets For Water." Most recently, NBC's Today Show tackled the topic, with a reporter noting, "Some residents think it's just plain gross."

Bloomberg News noted that many people are concerned about water contamination, comparing the Wichita Falls project to the example of Oregon water officials flushing 38 million gallons from a reservoir after a teenager urinated into it. "We're not drought-stricken Texas," an official there noted.

On that note, remember all the people guzzling beer and floating in the water out on Lakes Travis and Buchanan, which supply Austin's drinking water. No one is suggesting flushing those bodies of water or implying that residents of the capital city are brushing their teeth with sewer water.

When talking about the yuck factor associated with water reuse projects, people seem to be distraught over the fact that the water would go directly from a sewer treatment plant to the tap. That's the short-term plan in Wichita Falls during this extreme drought. Eventually, the city plans to blend treated sewer water with reservoir water before anyone drinks it

— not unlike what happens in other cities. And the fact is, some of the lakes and rivers that supply water here in the United States can get pretty dirty. The recent horrific spill in the Elk River from the chemical manufacturing company Freedom Industries that had 300,000 West Virginians afraid to take showers is just one example.

A recent New York Times investigation showed that public water supplies nationwide contain everything from arsenic to radium at higher-than-safe levels. In the Rio Grande, which supplies millions of South Texans and farmers with drinking and irrigation water, raw sewage is dumped in the river from Mexico every day — and water treatment plants either deal with it or they don't, as was demonstrated in a small town near Laredo last fall when residents were forced to boil their water for three weeks after getting sick from taking showers.

In fact, an exhaustive National Academy of Sciences study of wastewater reuse concluded that when it comes to potential pathogens that may be in the water, "the risk from potable reuse does not appear to be any higher, and may be orders of magni-

“On The Tonight Show recently, host Jimmy Fallon made a joke that a lot of environmental advocates, water engineers and city planners across the state have said they think asks a good question.”

tude lower, than currently experienced in at least some current (and approved) drinking water treatment systems.”

No wonder so many cities — not just in Texas — are considering direct water reuse as a water supply strategy to quench their thirst.

On The Tonight Show recently, host Jimmy Fallon made a joke that a lot of environmental advocates, water engineers and city planners across the state have said they think asks a good question.

“A town in Texas just announced a controversial plan to recycle toilet water and use it for drinking water. Dog said, ‘How are you only thinking of this now?’” ●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this we are in the midst of another hot, dry summer in South Texas. As the temperatures have risen, there has not been appreciable rain in San Antonio for nearly a month. As a result, the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) is projecting that the Bexar Index Well J-17 will drop below a 10-day average of 630 feet msl. This will trigger EAA to implement Stage IV restrictions, meaning the required withdrawal reduction from the San Antonio Pool will be 40%, rather than the 35% reduction of Stage III. To help put the aquifer level into perspective, one year ago the J-17 well reading was 636.5 feet msl. The well reading today (August 11th) is 628.9 feet msl.

Of course this means that conservation is as critical as ever. As water professionals, most of us are aware of the need to conserve by installing high-efficiency fixtures such as low-flow toilets, showerheads, and faucet aerators. Even more can be done to conserve water by installing water-wise landscaping, making sure you are only irrigating your lawn, not the hardscape, and by limiting the amount of irrigation water you apply to your turf grass.

I would also like to note that planning for the 2014 Scholarship Dinner is well underway.

In fact, we have secured the date of Thursday, November 20, 2014 for the dinner at the Old San Francisco Steakhouse and SAWS President and CEO Robert Puentes has agreed to be our keynote speaker. I am looking forward to another successful event this year!

Regarding successful events, the recent 2014 Summer Seminar was well attended and provided attendees with a day of interesting and educational speakers in current water and wastewater topics. Held on Friday, July 25th, the event has become a valuable day of learning, networking and fund-raising for those in the San Antonio area and beyond.

Another more current event includes the second Young Professionals Tour of the Toyota Plant on Friday, August 15th.

In the coming year, I hope you will let me know if there is anything I can do to help serve the membership of our organizations and grow upon the past successes of our sections. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Cale Underberg
President San Antonio WEAT Section*

SPEAKER FOR AUGUST MEETING:

Gretchen Reuwer- New Braunfels Utilities

Gretchen Reuwer has been serving as Communications Manager of New Braunfels Utilities since October 1998. In that role, she serves as the information liaison between NBU and its employees as well as the community and news media. She also coordinates marketing efforts and community service events through NBU SAFEhaven programs. Prior to joining NBU, she had a 15-year career as the managing editor of two San Antonio-based magazines. She recently became a New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce Bluecoat, is a graduate of Leadership New Braunfels, and is a member of the Youth Leadership New Braunfels Steering Committee. She is also a member and past chair of the Texas Public Power Association Marketing & Customer Service Committee. She holds an Associate's Degree in General Studies from

Blinn Junior College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Journalism from Texas A&M University.

SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Kira Iles (Black & Veatch)

Kira Iles is a project engineer at Black & Veatch. She has experience with multiple types of projects, such as program management for a high profile water resources project, improvements to both water and wastewater treatment plants, and existing pump station studies. Ms. Iles has been involved in various stages of projects including study, design, construction, and commissioning. She has served as the South Texas Chapter TAWWA/WEAT YP Chair and is currently on the YP committee for the Capital Area Chapter. ●



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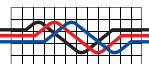
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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR JUNE/JULY SPEAKERS AND SPONSORS:

Thank you to Karen Bishop with San Antonio River Authority for speaking about Freese and Nichols at the June meeting held on June 19, 2014. And thanks to GarzaBury for sponsoring!



Speaker Karen Bishop - San Antonio River Authority

Thank you to Carlos Pena and John Merino with the International Boundary Water Commission for speaking about operation and maintenance of Amistad Dam at the July meeting held on July 17, 2014. MGC Industries graciously sponsored the meeting. ●



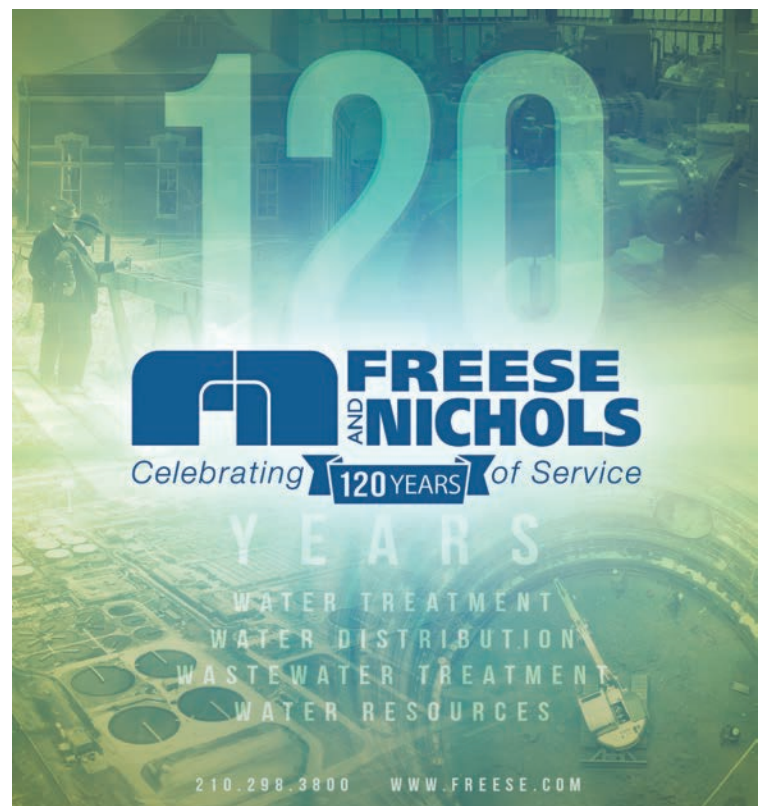
Speaker John Merino - International Boundary Water Commission



Speaker Carlos Pena - International Boundary Water Commission

OLMOS BASIN ALLIANCE

The Olmos Basin Alliance (OBA) is a newly formed advisory committee to address the problem of man-made trash in Olmos Basin Park and the surrounding areas. The OBA includes representatives from the San Antonio River Authority, City of San Antonio, Bexar County, among many others. If you're interested in finding out more about the OBA or receiving the OBA's Good Neighbors to Nature newsletter, please contact Karen Bishop at 210-302-3642, or kbishop@sara-tx.org. More information can also be found on the OBA's Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/OlmosBasinAlliance. ●



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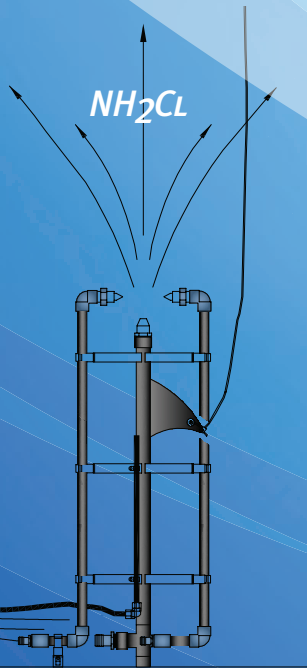


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SUMMER SEMINARS

Special thanks to all of our speakers, moderators and summer seminar sponsors! We heard on a variety of "Emerging Issues in the Water/Wastewater Industry" on July 25, 2014.

SPEAKERS:

- Robert Dabney (CCMA)
- Robert Puente (SAWS)
- Brian Perkins (HDR)
- Michael Graves and Chris Murphy (CP&Y)
- James Dwyer (CH2MHill)
- Ellen McDonald (Alan Plummer Associates)
- Steve Opsahl (USGS)
- Greg Eckhardt (SAWS)
- Sheeba Thomas (SARA) and Gill Barnet (CP&Y)
- Samir Mathur (CDM Smith)
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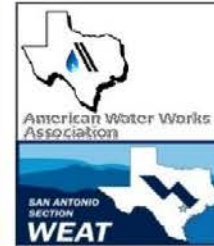
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TAWWA / WEAT SOUTH TEXAS SECTION SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING



When:

**Thursday, September 18, 2014
11:30 A.M.**

Where:

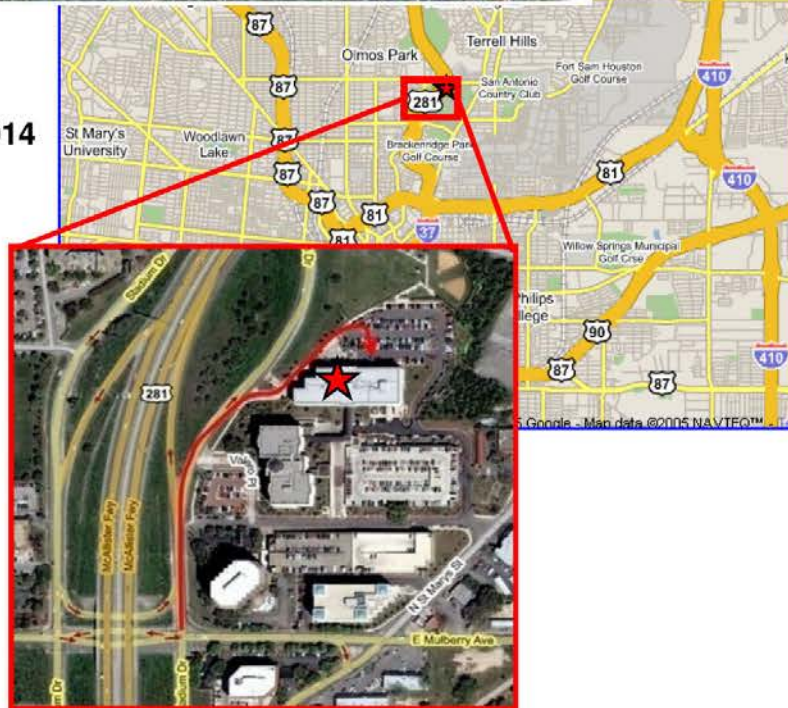
San Antonio Water System
Tower II – 1st Floor
Room C145
2800 US Hwy. 281 North
San Antonio, Texas

Speaker:

Kira Iles (Black & Veatch)

Topic:

“How a Cost Effective Solution to Corrosion Became the Largest Domestic Order of HDPE Pipe”



THIS MONTH'S MEETING IS SPONSORED IN PART BY



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Please RSVP by noon, Tuesday, September 16, 2014 to:
Secretary, San Antonio Chapter, TAWWA
The price for lunch is **\$12.00** with RSVP, **\$15.00** without RSVP



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Logic Puzzle

		First Names				Sports				Street Names			
		Melina	Riley	Sage	Sierra	baseball	bowling	football	hockey	Campus Drive	College Drive	Penates Drive	Rosewood Street
Megapixels	1.8												
	2.2												
	6.0												
	7.0												
Street Names	Campus Drive												
	College Drive												
	Penates Drive												
	Rosewood Street												
Sports	baseball												
	bowling												
	football												
	hockey												



CLUES

1. The person with the 2.2 megapixel camera lives on Rosewood Street.
2. The one who lives on Rosewood Street is not the hockey star.
3. The one who lives on Penates Drive has a camera with more megapixels than the football star.
4. The one who lives on Campus Drive has a camera with more megapixels than the baseball star.
5. The one who lives on Campus Drive is Riley.
6. Of the bowling star and the baseball star, one has the 1.8 megapixel camera and the other lives on Penates Drive.
7. The 4 people were the football star, the one who lives on College Drive, the person with the 7.0 megapixel camera, and Sierra.
8. Either the football star or the hockey star is Sage.
9. The baseball star is not Melina.

Megapixels	First Names	Sports	Street Names
1.8			
2.2			
6.0			
7.0			



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Upcoming Meetings and Events

Date	Topic/Presenter	Event Host	Location
August 18-19, 2014	CMOM Workshop	WEAT	Austin, TX
August 22, 2014	Water for People 6th Annual Golf Tournament	Water for People	Canyon Springs Golf Course San Antonio, TX
September 27-October 1, 2014	WEFTEC	WEF	New Orleans, LA
November 13, 2014	YP Fall Forum	AWWA/WEAT	SARA Boardroom, San Antonio, TX
November 20, 2014	Annual Scholarship Dinner	AWWA/WEAT	San Francisco Steakhouse, San Antonio, TX

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If there are others in your offices who are not yet TAWWA/WEAT members, but might also be interested in participating in YP events and functions, please pass this request on to them.

Thanks!

Logic Puzzle Answers

1.8	Melina	Bowling	College Drive
2.2	Sage	Football	Rosewood Street
6.0	Sierra	Baseball	Penates Drive
7.0	Riley	Hockey	Campus Drive



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