



## Commissioners' Corner



Peter Sanchez

Can you tell me what the following items have in common (it's a long list so bear with me)? Match Box cars, pens, glasses, rings, bracelets, watches, false teeth, tooth brushes, tooth paste tubes, dental floss, hemorrhoid cream tubes, combs, hair brushes, hair pins, human hair, underwear, tee-shirts, bras, cigarette butts, cigarette packs, coins, paper money, tampons, tampon applicators, sanitary pads, diapers (baby and adult), baby wipes, condoms, condom wrappers, pharmaceuticals, pill bottles, fast food restaurant toys, candy wrappers, gum and gum wrappers.

The answer to the question is that none of them belongs in a sewer, yet I have seen everything on that list (and many other items) in the sewer system during my career in wastewater operations. There are several reasons why these items don't belong in a sewer. The biggest reason is that they are inorganic items and do not respond to a treatment process designed for human and other organic waste.

Sewer lines are designed primarily to flow by gravity. Lines zigzag back and forth depending on the topography so that gravity can do the work. Eventually, the lines reach the bottom of a hill, where the sewage ends up in the wet-well (holding tank) of a sewage pump station. When there is enough sewage in the wet-well, a pump will turn on to send it over the hill, where gravity takes over again. Most waste pumps are designed to pass smaller items without much problem. Eventually, a combination of these items build up on the impellers, decreasing the efficiency of the pump (i.e. takes more time to pump a given amount of sewage, which adds up electrical cost and wear and tear on the pump). Ultimately, the pump may clog completely. In either case the pump has to be removed to clear the obstruction, costing crew-hours, and adding to garbage that Lakehaven has to dispose of. Sometimes these items can end up clogging a pipe and causing a sewage overflow that has to be cleaned up.

Any of the items that do make their way through the pump stations eventually make it to the bar screen (see Commissioner England's remarks in the Sept/Oct 2016 newsletter) located at the entry point of the treatment plant. These items are caught on the bar screen, where automatic rakes remove them for transport to a landfill. Some pieces manage to get through the screen and into the plant, potentially causing problems with more pumps.

Continued ...

## Lakehaven Links

### Our Mission

The Lakehaven Water and Sewer District is committed to the continued delivery of safe, reliable and high quality drinking water and environmentally responsible sewer service to our customers.

### Board of Commissioners

- Len Englund, President
- Tim McClain, Vice President
- Don Miller, Secretary
- Peter Sanchez
- Ron Nowicki

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at 6:00 p.m the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at the Lakehaven Center at 31531 1st Ave South, Federal Way.

### Contact Us

Federal Way: 253-941-1516  
 Tacoma: 253-927-2922  
 After Hours Emergencies:  
 253-941-1516

Business Hours:  
 Monday – Friday  
 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

[www.lakehaven.org](http://www.lakehaven.org)



## Commissioners Corner, cont.

These items wind up taking up space in the digester, costing more money for disposal. Pharmaceuticals can have detrimental impacts on fish and shellfish, which may end up on your dinner plate. All of these inorganic items cause problems for the sewers and treatment plant, which translates into dollars that have to be spent to remove them.

So how do these items end up in the sewer? Some people use the toilet as a trash receptacle, instead of disposing of things properly in the trash can. Some items dropped accidentally in the toilet are flushed rather than retrieved. Children are fascinated when things “magically” disappear down the toilet. Please do not use the toilet as a trash can, it costs you money in the long term in the sewer rates you are charged to keep the system running properly. You can also keep the toilet seat lid closed at all times and teach your children not to flush things that don’t belong in the toilet.

I mentioned earlier that the treatment process is designed for human waste. This brings me to the “three P’s”, the things that a wastewater treatment plant is designed for and the only things that should go in a toilet: pee, poop, and (toilet) paper.

Please remember the three P’s and don’t forget that a toilet is not a trash can.

## A Message from Customer Service:

The District maintains a Customer Service Department to manage the billing and collection of monthly water and sewer rates on over 35,000 water and sewer accounts. This occurs over two-month cycles (six times a year), which means that we send in excess of 200,000 bills annually.

The Customer Service staff, shown in the picture below, want you to know that they are more than happy to answer your billing questions and provide whatever help they can to assist you with the payment of your water and sewer bills. In order to provide the maximum assistance possible, they have the following suggestions and information to help make the process more understandable and efficient:

- The District will take payments on a credit card over a secure web portal or by a secure direct bank debit. Information on these payment methods can be found on our website at [www.lakehaven.org](http://www.lakehaven.org) or by calling Customer Service at 253-941-1516.
- If you have a delinquency that you are unable to pay, contact Customer Service as soon as possible and let them know your circumstances. Do not wait until you have a door hanger or incur a shut-off, as the cost of these can significantly increase the amount you owe and will not be waived. Where appropriate, a payment plan can be arranged to prevent service disconnection.
- If you make a payment plan, it must be followed through to final payment. If a problem arises, let Customer Service know. Customers not following payment plans will not be permitted to make payment plans in lieu of service suspension on future delinquencies.
- Because charges follow the property, if the delinquency is on a rental property, any payment plan is subject to prior approval of the property owner.
- We shut water off where a delinquency is greater than \$60. If your water is shut off, you will need to pay the full amount to have your service restored.
- Remember that we are doing our best to help you while trying to enforce the rules evenly. Any courtesies you can extend to our Customer Service staff will be greatly appreciated.

Please help us to help you minimize any difficulties in paying your water and sewer bills!



## Annual Water Quality Report

Starting July 1, 2017 you will be able to view the Lakehaven Water and Sewer District Annual Water Quality Report on-line at [www.lakehaven.org/CCR](http://www.lakehaven.org/CCR).

This report contains important information about the source and quality of your drinking water during 2016.

Please call 253-946-5442 if you would like a paper report mailed to your home.