

Spring 2012

In Memoriam

## Honoring Bill G. Evans

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of former Board Member Bill G. Evans, a 41-year veteran of the Fairfax Water Board of Directors. Mr. Evans passed away on Tuesday, November 22, 2011.



Mr. Evans, center, receives the Fowler Award joined by his wife Helen, daughter Sharon Thomas, members of the county's Board of Supervisors, and members of the Fairfax Water Board of Directors and Executive Staff.

Mr. Evans was appointed to the Fairfax Water Board of Directors on July 7, 1970, as the Mount Vernon district representative. He served on every committee of the Board and as vice chair for ten years. In 2009, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors named him the recipient of Fairfax County's Fowler Award for distinguished service in contributing to quality of life in the community.

He served his country as a lieutenant colonel in the US Army and, after retiring from the military, held the position of vice president in the DC office of Towers-Perrins, an international management consulting firm.

Mr. Evans' distinguished, unflinching, ardent, and faithful service to the citizens of Fairfax County and the customers of Fairfax Water will be greatly missed. We extend our thoughts and prayers to the Evans family.

*(We regret that due to our newsletter publication schedule, we were not able to provide this tribute to Mr. Evans in a more timely way.)*

### Annual Flushing Program

## Spring Cleaning

Spring cleaning at Fairfax Water is probably a little different than at your house. Each spring, we flush all of our water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time.

This program has several benefits. First, it allows us to test all our hydrants to ensure they are working properly and to determine if they need maintenance or painting.

Second, during the spring flushing program, free chlorine is added during the treatment process instead of chloramines. Free chlorine is better suited to removing residue that may have collected in the pipes. You'll find more information about chlorine on our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org/current/free\\_chlorine.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/current/free_chlorine.htm).

Removing the residue ensures that when the water arrives in your home, it is the same high quality as when it left the treatment

plant. This spring flushing will not affect your water service.

You may notice more of a chlorine taste and odor in your drinking water during the spring flushing program. This is not harmful. Keeping an open container of drinking water in your refrigerator will allow the chlorine to dissipate. Be sure to change the water in your refrigerated container weekly.

If you have an aquarium or pond, always test the water you add to your aquatic environment to be sure it is free of chlorine before adding fish or other animals.

If you have questions about this program or the work being conducted in your area, call 703-698-5800, TTY 711, during business hours and after-hours, call 703-698-5613, TTY 711. 



### In This Issue

#### Page 1

- ◆ Honoring Bill G. Evans
- ◆ Spring Cleaning

#### Page 2

- ◆ Is That Legal?
- ◆ Magic on Our Planet

#### Page 3

- ◆ Glad You Asked!
- ◆ Springtime FYIs

#### Page 4

- ◆ Kids' Corner
- ◆ Mark Your Calendar

Permit process for hydrant use

## Is That Legal?

As the warm weather approaches, we will hear from customers who are concerned about private companies that appear to be using water from our fire hydrants. In most cases, this is not a problem. The Fire Hydrant Use Permit process allows customers to use the hydrants as a water source to conduct their business. Hydrants are used by a variety of companies, such as lawn, landscaping, hydro-seeding, construction, paving, and amusement companies. The number of active permits issued varies from season to season, but can exceed 1,000 active hydrant meters at any given time.

Once a permit has been approved, the customer is required to use a Fairfax Water-issued apparatus that consists of a hydrant meter, backflow preventer, hydrant wrench, and valid hydrant permit tag.

Did you know the fire hydrants in the Washington metropolitan area are painted different colors? Fire hydrants are painted based on the water utility to which they belong. This makes it easier to determine which utility is responsible if a hydrant needs repair, replacement, or maintenance. All Fairfax Water fire hydrants are painted red with a silver top and caps.

Customers who are issued a permit are required to pay a permit fee, a rental fee for the apparatus attached to the hydrant, and the commodity charge for the water they use. The commodity charge for hydrant use is \$5.65 per 1,000 gallons

from April 15 to October 15 and \$2.30 per 1,000 gallons at all other times. Hydrant meter users are required to report their use on a monthly basis and are billed accordingly.

Fairfax Water also offers a temporary use permit to non-profit organizations who use the hydrant for less than seven days or 14,000 gallons of water. The cost of the deposit and permit fee

is reduced for the temporary permit, but the commodity charge for the water used remains the same.

The hydrant meter and permit allow Fairfax Water to control the use of fire hydrants. If you spot a hydrant being used by a company, it is easy to tell if they have the appropriate permit. A hydrant being used properly should display a current permit and have a brass attachment that allows the hydrant hose to be connected to the permitted meter, just like the above photo. The attachment must be disconnected when the hydrant is not in use.



If a hydrant is being used with the hose hooked directly to the hydrant, it indicates an illegal use of our hydrant, except of course for the Fairfax County Fire Department! There is a \$250 fee for improper use of a fire hydrant. If you have concerns about a hydrant being used without a permit, call 703-698-5800, TTY 711, or send an e-mail to [customers@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:customers@fairfaxwater.org).

The Fire Hydrant Use Permit process is administered by the Customer Service Department's Meter Shop office. The Meter Shop office is at 4400 Henninger Court in Chantilly. For more information about the hydrant permit program or to set up a permit account, call 703-289-6075, TTY 711. Fire hydrant use permit account initiation and meter pickup are available from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. 💧

Water Supply Outreach Grants

## Magic on Our Planet

The naturalist Loren Eiseley said, "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water." At Fairfax Water we feel the same way, which is why we offer grants to community groups who protect our source water and water supply. Grants are awarded for projects within our service area or watershed areas in Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, or Fauquier counties.

Local government education agencies, state government education environmental agencies, homeowners associations, civic groups, or not-for-profit organizations may apply for a Fairfax Water grant to provide funding or technical services for a variety of projects including:

💧 **Education Efforts** - Seminars, programs, or tours aimed at educating the public on water-supply issues. Topics may include, but are not limited to, hydrology, water-treatment processes, distribution, watersheds, non-point source pollution, erosion and sediment control, and water-quality monitoring.



Pohick Creek Water Monitoring Program

💧 **Source Water Protection Projects** - Stream restoration projects, non-point source pollution management projects, or other activities aimed at improving water quality.

💧 **Water Quality Monitoring Projects** - Monitoring projects including erosion, stream flow measurement, water quality constituent concentration, or biological health.

💧 **Occoquan Reservoir Shoreline Stabilization** - Individual property owners may apply for a grant to support stabilization projects aimed at restoring the shoreline along the Occoquan Reservoir.

You'll find more information, including a complete description of eligible projects and an application, at [www.fairfaxwater.org/outreach/grants.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/outreach/grants.htm). To receive an application by mail, send an e-mail to [outreach@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:outreach@fairfaxwater.org) or call 703-289-6318, TTY 711. To be eligible, be sure to return the completed application by the deadline stated on the application form. 💧

## Springtime FYIs

- On Dec. 9, 2011, the Fairfax Water Board of Directors approved changes to Fairfax Water's rates, fees, and charges. The changes will be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2012. The proposed changes to the commodity charges will increase the average household quarterly bill by \$2.88. Even with this increase, Fairfax Water's rates remain the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. To see a comparison of regional water rates, visit [www.fairfaxwater.org](http://www.fairfaxwater.org) and click on "Customer Service." More information about Fairfax Water's rates is available on our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm) or by calling 703-698-5800, TTY 711.
- The Fairfax Water 2012 Water Quality Report is coming in June! The report will be included with the inserts in the *Washington Post* on Sunday, June 3, and will be mailed to all customers who do not subscribe to the Post. So please mark your calendars for June 3. If you don't receive a copy of the report via the *Post* or in your mailbox, visit [www.fairfaxwater.org](http://www.fairfaxwater.org) to see the full report or call us at 703-289-6019, TTY 711.
- Planning your summer garden? The *Water Wise Landscaping and Watering Guide* can help you save money and protect the environment. You'll find the guide on our Web site at [www.fairfaxwater.org](http://www.fairfaxwater.org) or call 703-289-6019, TTY 711, to request a copy by mail.
- Looking for some great family fun this summer? From June 8 - 10, Celebrate Fairfax! will offer 25-acres of great festival food, carnival rides, interactive activities, live concerts, and daily fireworks. And to keep you going, Fairfax Water will be there with plenty of the best-tasting ice water ever! Find out more at [www.celebratefairfax.com/index.asp?sid=1](http://www.celebratefairfax.com/index.asp?sid=1), and be sure to stop by and see us at the Fairfax Water tent. 💧



## Sense of Wonder Contest

For this year only, the *Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder* contest has been renamed the *Sense of Water* contest in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. The contest is sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency, Generations United, the Dance Exchange, Rachel Carson Council, Inc., and the National Center for Creative Aging.

Teams of two or more that include children and adults of all ages are invited to submit a poem, essay, photo, or dance that express their love for a sea, lake, river, stream, or waterfall, and the fish and wildlife that inhabit water. The goal of the program is for each team to work across generations to share their love of water through a creative project that captures, through their eyes, ears, and senses, the wonder of water around us.

Rachel Carson was an American biologist who cared deeply about the natural world around her. She worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist and writer. She is known for her moving books about the environment, including *The Sense of Wonder* about helping children develop "a sense of wonder (about nature) so indestructible that it would last throughout life."



Deadline for entries is June 1, 2012. To learn more about the contest and Rachel Carson, visit [www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm) or call 202-564-2188, TTY 711. 💧

## Glad You Asked!

**Q** Can you tell me what the term "backflow" means and whether it is important to me as a customer?

**A** When a faucet or garden hose comes into contact with bacteria and toxins from pools, waterbeds, fertilizer, cleansers, or other sources, there is a danger of drinking water contamination. A drop in water pressure while the fixture is open and running could draw these contaminants into the water system. This is referred to as backflow.

Since 1974, the plumbing systems installed in Fairfax County have been required to be equipped with backflow prevention devices on all threaded faucets. Fairfax Water recommends their use as a precaution against backflow contamination. These inexpensive devices called "hose connection vacuum breakers" are small, circular fittings that are easily connected to the threaded end of the faucet. If your home was built prior to 1974, you may want to add backflow prevention devices to your faucets. The devices are usually available at hardware and home improvement stores.

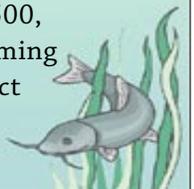


Keeping the hose or faucet from contacting other liquids provides further protection from backflow. 💧

*If you have a question, concern, or compliment, contact us at [pr@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:pr@fairfaxwater.org) or call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.*

## Save the Fish!

If you empty your swimming pool this spring, remember to be fish friendly! Draining your pool directly into a stream or storm drain may kill the fish, harm the plants and animals, or cause erosion and flooding. For information about emptying your pool safely, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/pooldischarge.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/pooldischarge.htm) or call Fairfax County's Stormwater Planning Division at 703-324-5500, TTY 711. Commercial swimming pool operators should contact the Health Department at 703-246-2300, TTY 711. 💧





**We Want to Know...**

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, please e-mail us at [pr@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:pr@fairfaxwater.org), call us at 703-698-5600, or write to the address below:

*Straight From the Tap* Editor  
Fairfax Water  
8570 Executive Park Ave.  
Fairfax, VA 22031

**Important Numbers**

**Fairfax Water Services**

Questions about water service:  
703-698-5800

After Hours/Emergencies:  
703-698-5613

To report a water main break:  
703-698-5613 or send an e-mail to [watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org).

Questions about billing:  
703-698-5800

All other Fairfax Water departments: 703-698-5600

**Fairfax County Services**

24-hour trouble-response center for sewer back-ups or sluggish flow in a sink, toilet, or tub: 703-323-1211

Sanitary sewer back-ups and line maintenance: 703-250-2003

**Dig with C.A.R.E.**

Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001 or 811

Use TTY 711 (*Virginia Relay*) for all numbers unless otherwise stated.

**KIDS' CORNER**

**HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?**

Do you know all living things need water? Next to the air we breathe, water is our most essential element of life.

- The human body is about 70 percent water. Every system in our body uses water.
- Water makes up almost 80 percent of our brain.
- Water makes up 83 percent of our blood.
- Water makes up nearly 90 percent of our lungs.
- Water transports our body wastes, lubricates our joints, keeps our body temperature stable, and helps digest the food we eat.

We can live several weeks without food but only four to seven days without water. We must drink enough water each day to replace the water we lose from normal activity. Use the chart below to figure out how much water you need to drink every day.

1. Write down your weight: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Divide your weight by 2: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Add 8 if you play sports: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Divide by 8: \_\_\_\_\_

That is how many cups of water you need to drink every day!

Source: American Water Works Association (AWWA)



The Science Guy

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**April - June**

Fairfax Water's Annual Water Main Flushing (See [www.fairfaxwater.org/current/free\\_chlorine.htm](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/current/free_chlorine.htm) for more information.)



**Sat., April 28**

Earth Day 2012

**May 6 - 12**

Drinking Water Week 2012

**Mon., May 28**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Memorial Day

**Sun., June 3**

Fairfax Water's **2012 Annual Water Quality Report** appears in *Washington Post*

**Fri., June 8 - Sun., June 10**

Visit Fairfax Water's exhibit for a free glass of ice water at the annual **Celebrate Fairfax!** festival. 703-324-3247, TTY 711, or visit [www.celebratefairfax.com](http://www.celebratefairfax.com)

**Sun., June 19**

Watershed Friendly Home, Garden, and Horse Farm Tour (See [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/gardentour.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/gardentour.htm) for information.)

**Mon., Sept. 3**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Labor Day

**Mon., Oct. 8**

Fairfax Water offices closed for Columbus Day



Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water authority serving nearly 1.7 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, and Alexandria.



**Water-Saving Tip**

If you're making a few home improvements this spring, use porous materials for walkways and patio. This will keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff. For more information and water-saving tips, visit [www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com). 💧