



# THE FLOW N' GO

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## *A SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE FLOW N' GO* **WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE**

IF IT SEEMS LIKE WATER IS EVERYWHERE, THAT'S BECAUSE IT IS. ABOUT 71% OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE IS WATER-COVERED. BUT LESS THAN 1% OF THAT WATER CAN BE USED BY PEOPLE. THAT'S WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE USE THIS VALUABLE RESOURCE WISELY. THIS ISSUE OF *THE FLOW N' GO* IS DEDICATED TO WATER: WATER QUALITY, WATER WASTE AND WATER PRESERVATION.

### **MWRA'S WATER SUPPLY CONTAINS NO LEAD**

Flint, Michigan has been in the news recently for an increase of lead levels in their drinking water. Could that happen here in Marblehead? Not likely, and here's why:

Marblehead gets its water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. *MWRA's water does not contain lead.*

MWRA's (and Marblehead's) pipes are made from concrete, iron or steel and do not add lead to the water. Marblehead has no lead service lines.

It is possible for lead to enter your water by coming in contact with lead-bearing materials such as interior pipes, leaded solder and some brass fixtures. Some of these may be present in your *household* plumbing.

If you are concerned that your water may have picked up lead from your plumbing fixtures, simply run the cold water for several minutes before using it.

MWRA and Marblehead tests frequently for lead. For more information on lead and Water Quality Test Results, visit [www.mwra.com/watertesting/watertests.htm](http://www.mwra.com/watertesting/watertests.htm).

To read more about "*What's Happening in Flint's Water System and How is MWRA Different,*" (a report issued by the MWRA), visit our website at [www.marblehead.org/water](http://www.marblehead.org/water).

### **MARBLEHEAD HAS GREAT TASTING WATER**

This is a bold statement to make. But it's true.

At a 2014 national drinking water professional's conference held in Boston, with 14,000 attendees, MWRA's water took both first and second place in the taste test.

Great tasting water doesn't just fall from the sky. As noted in the article to the left, the MWRA is constantly testing its water for everything from lead to bacteria to dozens of other substances. And testing is done on the local level as well.

Marblehead also takes its water delivery system seriously. Lines are flushed annually (usually in May) and local pipelines are cleaned, re-lined and replaced according to a long-range maintenance plan. The most recent example of this was on Commercial Street where the water pipes were cleaned and re-lined this past summer.

And, the Commission tests back-flow devices at various public, commercial and industrial buildings in town to make sure that contaminants can't be drawn back into the water system.

All of this testing, maintenance and constant system modernization by the MWRA assures that Marblehead has the safest and best tasting water available.

### **TIP OF THE QUARTER**

#### **Use Your Washing Machine Wisely**

The average washing machine uses 23 gallons of water per load, whether its full or not.

It takes about twice as much water and energy to wash two small loads as it does to wash one full load.

To further improve efficiency, only use the 'Large Load' setting on your machine for bedding, towels or bulky outerwear.

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## THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR A HIGHER-THAN-USUAL WATER BILL

You have just received your water and sewer bill and notice that the amount you owe is higher than your previous bill. You promptly call the Water and Sewer Commission and declare that the person reading your meter had transposed the numbers.

The days when the meter reader had to go into your basement and visually read the meter and write the numbers in a book are long gone. The meters are now read electronically and the readings are downloaded into a computer.

“Well, my meter is old and must not be recording the usage correctly,” you retort.

Water meters are a lot like

people—as they age, they slow down. Our, and the meter’s, inner workings just aren’t as quick and slick as they once were.

Then our staff will ask you questions to narrow down the reason for higher usage. Did you have extra visitors during that time? Did you do a lot of outside watering? Do you have a leaking toilet?

You answer “No.” “No.” And “No, the toilets don’t leak. I would have seen and heard it if they did.”

Believe it or not, a toilet can have a leak that is undetectable.

A leak 1/16th of an inch in

diameter will consume 9,850 cubic feet (74,000 gallons) of water per three-month period at 60 pounds/square inch of water pressure. Marblehead’s pressure is generally higher.

(Take a look at the guide above. And this is *larger* than actual size for clarity.)

We then suggest that you test your toilets for a leak by coloring the water in the tank and letting it sit for a while. If any of the color seeps into the bowl, you have a leak.

The video link in Kids’

Waste per quarter at 60 psi water pressure			
Diameter of stream	Gallons	Cubic Feet	Cubic Meters
 1/4"	1,181,500	158,000	4,475
 3/16"	666,000	89,031	2,521
 1/8"	296,000	39,400	1,115
 1/16"	74,000	9,850	280

 A continuous leak from a hole this size would, over a three month period, waste water in the amounts shown above.

Corner, below, will show you how this is done.

(You can use food coloring as shown in the video or dye tablets that are available for free at our office.)

Nine-out-of-ten times, a toilet is the culprit of high water bills.

If the dye test does not reveal a leak then you are encouraged to contact your plumber to have him or her evaluate your plumbing.

### ‘WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR WATER I DIDN’T USE?’

When a customer discovers that their high water use was the result of a broken pipe or outdoor sprinkler head or a leaky toilet, they often assume that they don’t have to pay for the lost water because they didn’t “use” it.

All water coming into Marblehead, whether used or lost, is metered by the MWRA and must be paid for. The Water and Sewer Commission purchases the water in advance from the MWRA and therefore must receive payment for all water used by a customer.

Not charging an individual customer for their excessive water use becomes an issue of fairness as well. Someone has to pay for the water consumed. If the customer responsible isn’t charged for the water, then the cost of that water must be shared by all of the Town’s rate payers. This would be accomplished by increasing the rates.

Do you, with a residence in Old Town, really want to share the cost of the water lost when an underground sprinkler pipe breaks in a yard in Clifton? Or visa-versa?

We think not. That just wouldn’t be fair.

### IT’S THE GREEN VS. THE GREEN

It’s the annual matchup of green grass versus green cash!

Having a lush green lawn looks nice but it comes at a cost. The average sprinkler sprays 566 gallons per day. So skipping just one session a week saves over 2,000 gallons of water per month.

Keep your irrigation system running efficiently. Install shut-off devices, repair or adjust sprinkler heads and check for leaks.

Remember: *inspect, connect, direct and select*. What is this? Read “Flowers are Blooming; Irrigation Leaks are Looming” in the April -June, 2015 issue of the newsletter at [marblehead.org/water](http://marblehead.org/water).

#### Kids’ Corner

### A Water-saving Lesson for the Entire Family

This quarter’s Kids’ Corner isn’t just for kids. It’s a lesson for the entire family.

Take the on-line “Water Challenge” to discover basic things that you can do to save water and reduce your quarterly water bill.

Included are dye-testing toilets (as suggested above), adjusting

sprinkler heads, replacing your showerhead and many more ideas.

Even though this video was made for residents of Arizona, the water conservation suggestions are universal.

Go to <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/home-water-challenge/> and do your part to conserve this valuable resource.