

February 1, 2003

Volume 1, Issue 8

As The Toilet Turns

Personality Profile

Just hearing her name conjures up images of a person who is a whirlwind of activity. Always working, always going, always busy, she is a pillar of support within the Custodial Department. By now, you may have already figured out who we're talking about; Connie Jo Erickson.

Connie Jo has worked for the District for 12 years. She worked as a Night Custodian at Lake Wilderness Elementary School in the past and is currently the Night Lead Custodian at Glacier Park Elementary School. With regard to her work, Connie Jo says "every day has new challenges." Even before working here, Connie Jo worked as a night custodian in the Kent School District from 1973—1978. In 1978, she and her husband started a janitorial service which they still have today. Connie Jo says that "this type of work has always been my life."

At one point in Connie Jo's life, she worked road construction as a Flagger. "What fun," she says. "I flagged traffic on the 1st phase of building the West Seattle Bridge, and worked a job where we tunneled under Mercer Street. It's a different world doing that job."

Having worked in the District for a number of years, Connie Jo has seen many changes. She continues to work at backing and promoting change as well as continuing to be a part of what's already established. Her years of experience have prompted her to share these words with the rest of us. "Get involved. Volunteer to sit on our department committees. Become a positive member of our team."

As to future growth and goals, Connie Jo states: "My goal is for our department to get the respect we deserve. I believe that will happen through our training. We need to make a personal commitment to be the best we can be."

Because of Connie Jo's wonderful support and work, it seems only appropriate to thank her immensely for all she's done. Without her input and help over the years, our department wouldn't be where it is today. Thank you Connie Jo!!



They're Movin' Around

A couple of reassignments took place recently. Dave Weickum, previously the Night Lead at Shadow Lake, is now the Head Custodian at Cedar River Middle School. John Olson, aka Gator, moved from Russell Ridge to a split eight hour position. He is now working four hours at the High School and four hours at Glacier Park Elementary. Congratulations to them both!



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Special Pull-Out Page on Light-Bulbs!

What is pH?

How often have you heard the term pH? Have you ever wondered what pH is and why it's important?

The letters pH actually stand for "power of Hydrogen." The letter "p" comes from the German word for power, *potenz*. "H" obviously stands for hydrogen. What pH is is a measure of hydrogen ion concentration in a solution. The pH scale ranges from

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Tip of the Month

If your school is equipped with outside door hooks for holding the doors open, try this. Instead of hooking the hooks through the eyelet on the door from the top, try hooking the hook upside-down in the eyelet. Then, when you're done using the door, simply give the door a slight push and the hook will "fall out" of the eyelet. This prevents you from having to bend over twice every time you want to hook and then unhook the door. This will also save your back and your time in the long-run.

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0 to 14, where 0 is the high end of the acidic side and 14 is the high end of the alkaline or basic side.

In pure water at room temperature, a pH of 7 is considered neutral. Most cleaning chemicals range from around 7—11 or so in alkalinity. There are those that are more acidic, but these are not used as often. Understanding where your pH is on a solution can be very important. For example: If a carpet is cleaned with a solution that has too high of an alkalinity, the carpet color can change. Most often a yellowing or brownish effect will occur. After testing the discoloration with pH paper and determining the alkalinity, an acidic solution can be applied to bring the carpets pH back toward neutral. Usually, this is accomplished by spraying citric acid over the carpet. Often you can literally watch the carpet color change back to its' original color as the pH is neutralized.

Although pH may not be thought about or discussed extensively by most people, it is important for us as custodians to understand how it works. Without the pH factor being considered in the production and distribution of many chemicals, the ability to clean would be nil.

To understand better what pH is and how it works, many reference books and much information have been printed that explain this. You may also find helpful information on the Internet. Check out a couple of the web-sites below to learn more about pH.

1. <http://www.epa.gov/airmarkets/acidrain/ph.html>
2. <http://www.microessentiallab.com/what/whatis.html>
3. <http://antoine.frostburg.edu/chem/senese/101/acidbase/faq/what-is-pH.shtml>



Upcoming Meetings

Training Committee—February 14th @ 1:00 p.m. in the TSHS Custodial office.

Highlights of Our Earthquake Inspections Meeting

Bob Schuler and Connie West presented our meeting on 12-23-02.

“How to handle earthquake inspections for the Tahoma School District”.

Bob and Connie are now **“ATC” & “FEMA”** certified by our “State of Washington” to be authorized **“Earthquake Damage Inspectors”** (and boy are they). And they may be called upon at any time to be “Washington State Inspectors” (Oh we feel safer now! NOT)

Firstly they provided handouts of “areas of concern”. This included information on the different types of inspections, being tagged for:

“GREEN”; No Restrictions, “YELLOW”; Limited Restrictions,

And “RED”; Unsafe – Do Not Enter.

They also supplied diagrams of “Structural Areas of Concern” while inspections are being performed. These diagrams included safety steps and tips that need to be included while, and mainly prior to the inspections that are being performed.

A few of the highlights included are:

- ◆ Insuring that you are prepared for 3 days of living and survival supplies. (See supplements of required supplies from registered departments, or move out of state.)
- ◆ Knowing what your “Shear” walls are. (Solid walls that don’t MOVE, IE: Walls with No doors and/or Windows, or standing next to your Spouse/Boss is a “Shear” experience in itself.)
- ◆ Falling obstacles: Overhangs, Soffits, Parapets, Ceilings, Roofing, Bricks, Lighting, Decorations, Kitchen Utensils; ETC, anything over your head can cause “Brain Trauma” and/or Death. We know a few of you have already experienced this.
- ◆ Each inspection team must include 2 persons with hard heads, I mean hats. One that is stationed outside (normally the boss) and one that does the dangerous internal inspection (normally the employee). They must be in constant communications at all times. (Radios are preferred but, finger signs are Okay if understood by both parties).
- ◆ Look out for tripping hazards; rubble; buckled flooring, electrical lines, water, chemical spills, or Bob Schuler quivering on the floor.
- ◆ Looking at areas of particular concern include; corners of buildings, soft stories, buildings on hillsides, pounding of two buildings together, cracks in walls or separation, cracking landscape around buildings, bulging slopes, uneven siding or walls, anything above or on top of the roof line. (you will only notice these differences while sober)
- ◆ There are four different types of inspections performed. And keep in mind, the taller the building is, the weaker it is. The type of a quake will determine the amount of damage. The closer to the surface the movement is, the more damage that will occur. A “P-wave” will vibrate the ground, and an “S-wave” will move the ground in a snake like movement. (We all have done both of these)

What do I do if an earthquake happens?

DO NOT run outside (Like our Boss and start screaming like a little girl); DO NOT get under a desk with legs, and DO NOT stand under door frames. Anything above you that can collapse may crush you. (Just ask around, you’ve seen the victims)

DO NOT enter a building until it has been inspected, and the proper placards are in place.

DO stand next to a shear wall. DO get under a solid desk/object. DO have an out-of-state contact for all family members to check in with. The local phone system will be down.

(Tin cans with string may still work)

Another good idea is to have a crow-bar available to pry open jammed doors and it also aids in keeping order! (No names have been changed, like who are we trying to protect anyway?)



Paid Holidays this Month

President’s Day—February 17, 2003



Special Pull-Out Page on LIGHT-BULBS!!



Illuminating the Darkness on Light-bulbs

"In 1812 British chemist Sir Humphrey Davy first demonstrated incandescence from electric current by heating platinum strips in open air using electricity. The first patent for an incandescent lamp was awarded in 1841 to British inventor Frederick de Moleyns, whose lamp used powdered charcoal heated between two platinum wires as the source of illumination...But the invention of the light bulb is more often associated with American inventor Thomas Alva Edison. He independently discovered the same device (that of using carbon filaments in evacuated glass bulbs) a year later (1879) in his work on the development of the electrical infrastructure that enabled incandescent lamps to be widely used as a lighting system." (<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761586392>)

Since the early 1800's, the light bulb has undergone many changes. We now have not only incandescent bulbs, but also fluorescent, metal halide, high-pressure sodium, tungsten halogen and so on. What makes these bulbs different? What precautions are needed when handling or replacing these bulbs?

To help answer many of these questions, the Philips Lighting Company generously provided us with a catalog discussing various light-bulbs and answers to the questions above. The following information was taken from the 2001/2002 Philips Lighting Company Lamp Specification & Application Guide.

Due to space, we cannot herein cover every light-bulb in use. We have, however endeavored to cover those bulbs which are used most often throughout the District. This is technically a basic guide for reference.

Incandescent:

Description—Lamp in which light is produced by means of an element heated to incandescence by the passage of an electric current.

This is the most common type of light bulb. It is used in many fixtures. No special precautions need be taken.

Halogen:

Description: Gas-filled lamp containing a tungsten filament and a small proportion of halogens.

This bulb has a much higher intensity. It is used in special areas requiring brighter light. Halogen bulbs must not be touched with bare skin or come in contact with other objects. Others must be operated only in specific positions, i.e. horizontal, 45 degrees, et cetera. Most halogen bulbs must be used in specially designed enclosures because of heat and temperature. Some require special ventilation for cooling as well. Because of the high heat and temperature, breakage of these bulbs is more dangerous. Use caution. If a bulb is broken, the filament may still work. DO NOT USE! Let the bulb cool and change immediately.

Fluorescent:

Description: Discharge lamp of the low-pressure mercury type in which most of the light is emitted by a layer of fluorescent material excited by the ultraviolet radiation from the discharge.

These bulbs are very common and used extensively in District buildings. Almost all bulbs of this type are tubular and straight in construction. There are fluorescent bulbs in other shapes, but most in the District are straight. When replacing these bulbs, be careful not to drop or break them thus releasing the "powdery" chemical residue inside. Be alert to replace with bulbs of the same color. Check the voltage as some lights are 120 volts whereas others are 277 volts. Use caution when installing so that the bulb pins don't touch the metal casing and short out. Size will also be a determining factor when replacing. These bulbs must be used in fixtures equipped with a ballast. (Some fluorescent bulbs have a ballast built in, but these are usually the smaller type used in lamp fixtures and such.) Fluorescent bulbs cannot be used with dimmers unless specifically designed to do so.

High Intensity Discharge: (Includes Metal Halide, High Pressure Sodium and Mercury Vapor)

Descriptions:

1. **Metal Halide:** Discharge lamp in which the major portion of the light is produced by the radiation from a mixture of a metallic vapor and the products of the disassociation of halides.
2. **High-Pressure Sodium:** Sodium vapor lamp in which the partial pressure of the vapor

during operation is measured exponentially by a certain chemical.

3. **High-Pressure Mercury:** Mercury vapor lamp, with or without a coating of phosphor in which the partial pressure of the vapor during operation is measured exponentially by a certain chemical.

All three of these types of lamps are used in areas needing high intensity lighting. They are typically used in gymnasiums, parking lot lights, tennis courts, football fields and the like. These bulbs, like halogen, must be used with care. Avoid contact with moisture, do not scratch the outer surface. Use with appropriate ballasts. Good ventilation is also required. These bulbs can also cause serious burns because of the heat and temperature. Lamps of this type should be turned off for at least 15 minutes once a week if the lamps are used continuously. If the outer lamp shell is cracked or broken, lamps should be changed immediately. With regard to Standard Metal Halide lamps, note the following warning:

"If the outer bulb is broken or punctured, turn off at once and replace the lamp to avoid possible injury from hazardous short wave ultraviolet radiation. Do not scratch the outer bulb or subject it to pressure as this could cause the outer bulb to crack or shatter. A partial vacuum in the outer bulb may cause glass to fly if the envelope is struck."

The type of replacement bulb on many fixtures can be determined by looking at the ballast. Be sure to always change bulbs with the same kind of bulb that is found in the fixture, unless you know that the bulb is the wrong type. Remember too, that there are many different types of each bulb mentioned in this article. Our article here simply highlights the basic kinds, although there is variation within that group.

When disposing of used light bulbs, be sure to check the current District standards for so doing. DO NOT simply throw old bulbs in the dumpster. This is hazardous and often illegal.

The invention of the light bulb has been one of the great inventions of our time. By shedding a little more "light" on the subject of light bulbs, we can all benefit in their use, maintenance, care and disposal.