



Currents



Tasting Water

News and Developments for Customers of the Macon Water Authority

Mount de Sales Academy initiates campus-wide bottled water ban

Students are advocates for Best Tasting Drinking Water

Who would have thought that when the Macon Water Authority (MWA) was awarded the "Best Tasting Drinking Water in North America" in 2009 by the American Water Works Association, it would start a consumer movement among local students five years later?

But that was one of the reasons behind Mount de Sales Academy starting classes this fall term with no bottled water in the campus vending machines. Through a student-inspired initiative at the school, the "Ban the Bottle" movement has begun.

The connection between the MWA and Mount de Sales dates back a few years ago when high school students – under the direction of Paul Midkiff, Upper School Guidance Counselor and Instructor – began participating in Adopt-A-Stream training, as

well as in Macon's annual river cleanup – Ocmulgee Alive!

In addition, the Environmental Club at Mount de Sales began researching the effects of bottled water on the environment. Their findings on the materials found in plastic water bottles and the impact of this solid waste in landfills were troubling, says Midkiff. That, coupled with comparisons between the costs of bottled water versus tap water, sparked the idea to "Ban the Bottle" at Mount de Sales.

“Maybe other schools will take up this challenge to ban bottled water.”

Paul Midkiff, Mount de Sales

An enlightened group of 11 students put together a presentation this past March for Academy President David Held. The students then presented their ideas to the entire student body, who also offered support and a collective endorsement of the campaign.

As a result, President Held agreed to remove bottled water from the vending machines at the school beginning this academic year, while appropriating \$5,000 to install new or retrofitted water fountains with "refilling stations" across campus. The school also has reusable water bottles – with school logo and colors, of course – for the students to purchase at cost.

To equip all of the water fountains on the Mount de Sales campus with refilling stations, however, the students are planning fundraisers to collect the additional revenues needed. A community 5K road race is in the works for next spring.

"I think they (the Mount de Sales students) may be on to something," adds Midkiff. "Who knows?"



Students from the Environmental Club at Mount de Sales Academy presented the details of their "Ban the Bottle" campaign to the MWA Finance Committee and Board of Directors. Those making the presentation included (left to right): Upper School Counselor Paul Midkiff and students Michelle Le, Caroline Pearson, Lauren Kunselman, Hannah Christian, Elizabeth Pearson, and Chambers English.

Maybe other schools will take up this challenge to ban bottled water?"

The cost of 750 gallons (approximately 1 unit or CCF) of MWA tap water for Macon-Bibb County residents is just less than \$10. By comparison, the cost of 750 gallons of bottled water (using the vending machine price of \$1.00 for a 16.9 ounce bottle of water) is approximately \$5,680.

"We are always trying to impress upon our customers the value of our tap water, especially when comparing the retail cost of our drinking water with bottled water," says Tony Rojas, MWA Executive Director and President. "We applaud the students at Mount de Sales who are championing that same message, while also stressing the importance of being environmental stewards and advocates for sustainable resources."



Paul Midkiff, Upper School Counselor at Mount de Sales Academy, demonstrates one of the new refilling stations on campus that provides a tap water alternative to bottled water, which has been banned at the school.

Sign up for E-billing

Did you know the Macon Water Authority now offers its customers the convenience and efficiency of E-bill service? You can have your monthly water and sewer bill sent to you electronically by way of an email attachment.

By taking advantage of our E-bill service, you also can help the Macon Water Authority save money by eliminating your mailed paper bill.

Signing up for E-bill service is quick and easy.

All you need is your account number, and you can sign up online through the MWA website

(www.maconwater.org). Go to the "Check Your Account (Online Bill Inquiry)" page of the "Customer Care" section of the website navigation. There also is a "Check Your Balance and E-Billing" direct link in the top right corner of the website's home page.

When signing up for E-bill service, MWA customers should make sure their email address and customer contact information are accurate. For further assistance, contact MWA Customer Care at 478-464-5600.



MWA Employee Spotlight: Mr. Earl Carter

"Mr. Carter," as everyone calls him, is an integral part of the Macon Water Authority team. As dispatcher, Mr. Carter works after-hours assisting customers with emergency calls and guiding MWA crews through late-night responses to issues out in the field. His colleagues describe him as genuine and patient, noting how much he is appreciated.

Earl Carter was born and raised in Valdosta, Georgia on a 500-acre farm that's still in his family today. He graduated from Fort Valley State University in 1958, the same year he married his wife Ella. Mr. Carter served as a medical technician in the U.S. Army prior to returning to his alma mater to teach agriculture.

Mr. Carter also taught in the Bibb County Public School System for 10 years at both Ballard Hudson High School and Junior High, where his students included men he would later work with at the MWA. After more than a

decade in the classroom, Mr. Carter worked for the Economic Opportunity Council, where he was instrumental in expanding Head Start into a year-round program.

In 1989, Mr. Carter joined the Macon Water Authority, where he started off as a laboratory analyst at the Rocky Creek Water Reclamation Facility. From there, he moved to the Customer Care Department at Authority headquarters, serving customers at the drive thru, the front cashier desk, and the call center. He finally landed in a more permanent position when he tried his hand as dispatcher. Thus, when the Authority extended its Customer Care hours to allow for field service teams to make calls past 5:00 p.m., Mr. Carter was happy to adjust his hours to accommodate those needs of customers.

"He knows more about our system than anyone, and he knows how to talk our guys in the



field through anything," says Kirk Nylund, Director of Customer Care and Field Service. "He goes above and beyond his responsibilities and he is irreplaceable."

"Mr. Carter has been such an inspiration to us all, but his genuine spirit is what separates him from the rest," says Stephanie Hardy-Hester, Senior Billing Technician.

SECOND FRONT

MWA employees shine at Annual Conference of Georgia Association of Water Professionals

The 2014 Annual Conference and Expo of the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) featured accolades for Macon Water Authority (MWA) employees, who also contributed to the technical program of the state's largest water industry event of the year.

During the conference's awards program, the Authority's Gary McCoy,



Gary McCoy (right), MWA Director of Water Treatment, accepts the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) Life Member Award for 30 years of service from GAWP President Judy Jones.

Director of Water Treatment, received Lifetime Membership into the GAWP. Life Members of GAWP have maintained active membership in the state professional association for at least 30 years.

McCoy was not the only MWA employee honored at the GAWP Annual Conference this year. Mark Wyzalek, Director of Laboratory/Environmental Compliance, is a class of 2014 inductee into the Georgia "5-S" chapter, joining McCoy (class of 2003), Tony Rojas (class of 2010), and Darryl Macy (class of 2011), as MWA employees who have received the invitation to join this professional society.

The Georgia "5-S" chapter is a collection of water professionals whose induction is based on personal merit. The "5-S" chapter recognizes those members who make worthwhile contributions to the Association without regard to recognition.

As for the technical program of the 2014 GAWP Annual Conference, three MWA employees were asked to lead sessions on two critical continuing education topics. Guy Boyle, Executive Vice President of Business Operations, and Will Cowart, GIS Specialist, provided insights on asset management for a standing-room-only crowd of fellow water professionals.

In addition, Heather Veal, CMOM Coordinator, was a featured speaker on Wastewater Collection Systems and how utilities can improve their scores on annual audits for the state's Collection System Gold Award. Veal, who also chairs the GAWP Collection Systems Committee, was included in this panel discussion as a result of the MWA achieving Gold Award status earlier this year for grading out at 95% or higher on the annual review of its sewer system.

Finally, during the GAWP Annual Conference, the Authority's LaToria

Porter and Kris Hattaway were recognized as 2014 Level 1 Leadership Academy Graduates. The GAWP Leadership Academy educates, trains, and prepares rising leaders to build relationships and develop skills and knowledge necessary to effect positive policy change within the Association and water/sewer industry.



Mark Wyzalek (left), MWA Director of Laboratory/Environmental Compliance, collects donations for the Scholarship Fund during the GAWP Annual Conference, where he was inducted into the "5-S" Society.



Check out our photo gallery from the 2014 Ocmulgee Alive!

The Macon Water Authority (MWA) led a partnership with fellow organizers, sponsors, and participating organizations and individuals to host yet another successful Ocmulgee Alive! On Saturday Oct. 4, an estimated 325 participants

took part in Macon's annual river cleanup, which is affiliated with the statewide Rivers Alive program. This year marked the 10th anniversary of Ocmulgee Alive!

Thanks to all of you who supported and participated in this year's Ocmulgee Alive! In addition to the Macon Water Authority, organizers included the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail and Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful.

Premier sponsors of the 2014 Ocmulgee Alive!

- ☀️ YKK USA ☀️ Graphic Packaging International
- ☀️ Coca-Cola Refreshments

Participating organizations of the 2014 Ocmulgee Alive!

- ✳️ Historic Riverside Cemetery Conservancy
- ✳️ Georgia Wilderness Society
- ✳️ Macon-Bibb County Cooperative Extension
- ✳️ Middle Georgia Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- ✳️ Mount de Sales Academy
- ✳️ Tattnell Square Academy
- ✳️ Academy for Classical Education
- ✳️ National Park Service/Ocmulgee National Monument, which held its own Creek Cleanup on Sept. 6, as a precursor to this year's Ocmulgee Alive!

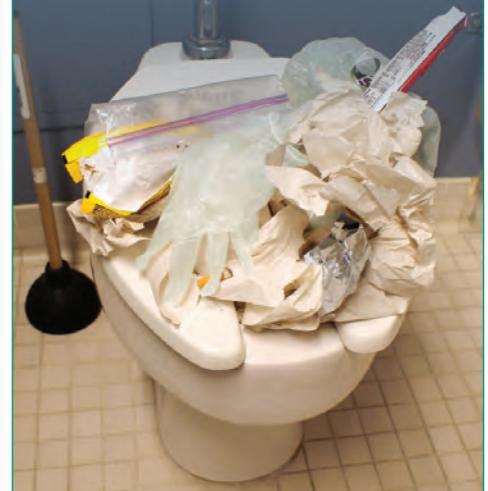
To see evidence of the enthusiasm from volunteers in their successful removal of debris from the Ocmulgee and nearby streams, log onto the MWA website at www.maconwater.org, and check out the "Photo Gallery" page within the "Public Information" navigation of the site.

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