

Spring 2014

THE CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SANITARY DISTRICT

Volume 18,
Number 1

PIPELINE

A newsletter about protecting public health and the environment

TREATMENT PLANT *of the* FUTURE

Becoming the Utility of the Future

While the futuristic vision of a treatment plant on the cover of this newsletter may be a bit over the top, it actually is not impossible.

Less than 75 years ago, most sewage in this region was dumped, untreated, into local creeks. Today, what had been waste has become renewable resources.



By Roger Bailey
General Manager

- Central San began recycling water in 1975, a source of clean water more important now than ever.
- Our furnaces have been transforming sludge into nutrient-rich ash for soil amendments since the 1980s, reducing potential air pollution by more than 80% if all that sludge had to be trucked to landfills.
- Using heat from the furnaces, methane from a nearby landfill, and natural gas, we've been generating 90% of our energy needs since the 1990s, saving our customers approximately \$2 million a year in electrical costs.

We have, in fact, evolved from “handlers of wastewater” to “managers of sustainable resources.”

We continue to embrace innovations in technology that will enable us to make even greater strides in process efficiency while reducing costs. Our treatment plant will become a bio-refinery that produces more reusable water, generates more energy and recovers resources such as nutrients.

These kinds of innovations always begin with four words: “What if...?” and “How much?” What will be the return on an initial investment in a new technology that could make our operations cleaner, cheaper, more efficient? So...

The Cover Illustration

The image we used for our cover story was provided by czarnyrobot. You can view more of his work at graphique3.republika.pl



FROM THE GM

- What if we could “mine” biosolids for commercially needed minerals and heavy metals?
- What if we could add another stage to the treatment process that reduced the amount of ammonia in the treated wastewater discharged into Suisun Bay?
- What if we could collaborate with local water districts and other water purveyors to ensure a renewable supply of water by expanding the use of our recycled water?
- What if we could use channels that line nearby creeks as conduits for recycled water for areas south of our plant?
- What if we could use a portion of our raw biosolids to feed a digester that would produce methane gas for commercial sale?
- What if we could install solar panels on our open space and facilities?
- What if we could recover the heat in the sewage flow as another energy source?

These kinds of ideas are very real and very important as we enter a future filled with unprecedented challenges: aging infrastructure, stricter regulations, and a finite water supply.

This ongoing evolution of Central San and our sister agencies has caused a sea change in the perception of our role as stewards of the environment. We’ve become more than the sum of our parts and can rightfully embrace a rebranding



from “wastewater agency” to “clean water agency.” This shift also underscores the fact that water and wastewater agencies are in the same business. It’s all about water: a necessity to all; a luxury to far too many. The Utility of the Future will ensure that water and wastewater agencies are true partners and collaborators. We can survive without a lot of things. Water is not one of them.

While your flying car, android servant and implantable microchip may be a bit farther down the line, the future will be shaped both by events we can and cannot predict. But by continuing to study current trends and develop long-range plans, we will truly be the Utility of the Future.



The Best in the Bay Area Are At Your Service

The men and women of our Collection System Operations Division work hard every day, often in some pretty miserable conditions, to ensure a constant, efficient flow of wastewater from your home or business to our treatment plant in Martinez. They do this by cleaning, maintaining, inspecting and repairing more than 1,500 miles of sewer pipes and 19 pumping stations that comprise our collection system.

It's a dirty job, but they love it. That's why they're so good at it. But you don't have to take our word for it. The California Water Environment Association, a not-for-profit association of more than 9,000 professionals in the wastewater industry, recognized our team as the best in the Bay Area by presenting Central San with the following San Francisco Bay Section awards:

- **Collection System of the Year**
- **Supervisor of the Year:** Dante Marchetti, Maintenance Supervisor
- **Collection System Worker of the Year:** Don Bartlett, Maintenance Crew Leader



These awards are earned "through remarkable accomplishments in compliance, safety, training, innovative practices, cost effectiveness and superior operations."

We're very proud to have these talented professionals on our team, all of whom are dedicated to providing you with exceptional customer service.

Next up: statewide competitions in April.

Congratulations to Dante, Don, and everyone in our Collection System Operations Division whose dedicated efforts resulted in these awards!

Need a Guest Speaker?

Would your group like to hear about Central San and our water pollution prevention efforts? Call (925) 335-7702 and leave a message about your event. We'll do our best to provide a speaker free of charge.

Treatment Plant Tours

We offer free tours for groups of five or more people, grade 6 and up, who would like to see how Central San's award-winning treatment plant makes wastewater safe for the environment. Call Kit Ohlman at (925) 229-7329 for more information.

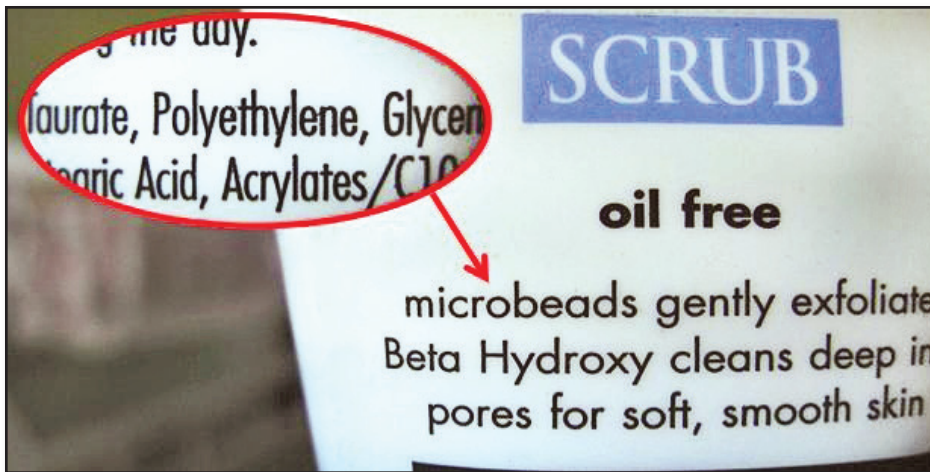
Plastic Microbeads: In Your Beauty Products, In the Bay

Plastic microbeads used in hundreds of personal care products are ending up in Suisun Bay.

Microbeads vary in size but are typically about as big as the period at the end of this sentence. They are commonly used in beauty products, facial scrubs and toothpastes. When people use these products, the beads are washed down the drain and – because they are too small to be filtered out during wastewater treatment processes – end up in the Bay.

These tiny plastic beads do not fully biodegrade. As they drift through the water, they become coated with pollutants. Because they look like tiny fish eggs, they are consumed by fish and other aquatic life.

To help prevent more of this plastic from polluting the Bay, avoid using personal care products with any of these ingredients: Polyethylene, Polypropylene, Polythene, Polymethyl methacrylate, or Nylon.



Choose products that use natural ingredients instead, such as ground cocoa shells, jojoba beads, or oat kernel flour.

Thanks to growing consumer awareness and concern, more manufacturers are pledging to switch from plastics to natural ingredients. Let's hope it happens soon.

Our Transparency is Easy to See

You should know what we're up to. As a public agency, we conduct the public's business, serve your needs and spend your money. You have the right to know how we do that, and we do our best to keep you informed. Our public meetings, financial reporting processes, website, newsletters, and interactions with our customers are some of the ways we ensure such "transparency."

Recently, our commitment to keeping you in the loop was commended by the Special District Leadership Foundation which awarded Central San its District Transparency Certificate of Excellence "for outstanding efforts to promote

transparency and good governance."

When presenting the award, Stan Caldwell, President of the California Special District Association, said, "The entire Central San staff is to be commended for their contributions that empower the public with information and facilitate engagement and oversight."

Receiving such formal recognition is gratifying, but it's more important to us to know what YOU think. If you have any comments or questions about obtaining information from or about Central San, please contact us at (925) 228-9500.

Protect Water Quality: DO NOT Flush Your Drugs!

Please do not flush expired or unwanted medications down the toilet. They often contain chemicals that cannot be completely removed by our treatment process and could pollute the Bay. Protect your family, your community, and the environment by bringing them to a free drop-off site for safe disposal:

- **Alamo Sheriff's Substation**
150 Alamo Plaza, Suite C,
Alamo
- **City of Clayton Police Dept.**
6000 Heritage Trail, Clayton
- **City of Concord Police Dept.**
1350 Galindo St., Concord
- **Contra Costa Medical Center Sheriff's Substation**
(check with deputy on duty)
2500 Alhambra Ave., Martinez
- **Town of Danville Police Dept.**
510 La Gonda Way, Danville
- **Lafayette Police Dept. NEW!**
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite
130, Lafayette
- **City of Martinez Police Dept.**
525 Henrietta St., Martinez
- **Town of Moraga Police Dept.**
329 Rheem Blvd., Moraga
- **City of Orinda Police Dept.**
22 Orinda Way, Orinda
- **City of Pleasant Hill Police Dept.**
330 Civic Dr., Pleasant Hill
- **City of San Ramon Police Dept.**
2401 Crow Canyon Rd.,
San Ramon
- **Sheriff's Field Operations Building**
1980 Muir Rd., Martinez
- **Walnut Creek City Hall**
1666 North Main St.,
Walnut Creek

To ensure privacy, transfer prescribed pills to a sealable plastic bag before depositing. To prevent spills, leave liquids in original bottles (cross out personal information) and seal within a plastic bag.

Do not put sharps or anything other than medications in the bin!
For more information, visit www.centrialsan.org or call 1-800-646-1431.

**Bring your
unwanted and expired
vitamins, too!**

Pyrethroids: Let's Keep Them Out of the Bay

Using pesticides around your home might be contributing to water pollution in beautiful Suisun Bay, even if your home isn't located near the Bay. That's because the water from rain, irrigation, and sprinklers can wash pesticides, fertilizers, and other pollutants from lawns and gardens into storm drains, which funnel the water to creeks and the Bay.

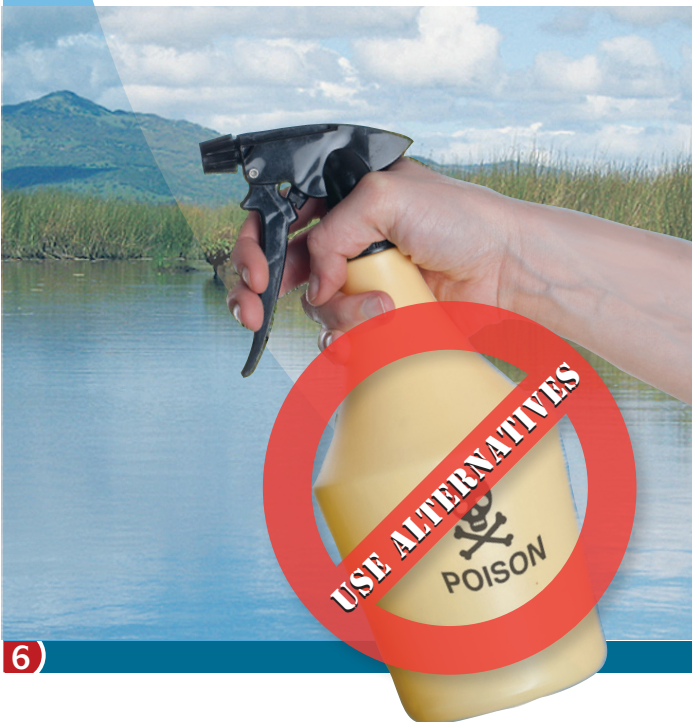
We are particularly concerned about pesticides made with **pyrethroids**, synthetic versions of pyrethrin, a natural insecticide found in certain species of chrysanthemum. But the chemically altered synthetic pyrethroids are more harmful to the environment. They do not break down in sunlight as quickly as natural pyrethrin, and are toxic to aquatic life, even at low concentrations.

Pyrethroids are widely used in products for lawn and garden care; pet care (flea shampoos, treatments and collars); controlling flies, ants and spiders around and inside buildings; head lice and scabies treatments; mosquito abatement; and termite control.

Check labels carefully and avoid using pesticides containing pyrethroids (most can be identified with the suffix, **-thrin**; e.g., permethrin, bifenthrin, deltamethrin). Also, do not use pesticides outdoors when rain is forecast, and do not overwater lawns or gardens.

Please bring unwanted pesticides to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for safe disposal. **Never pour them down the drain!**

For tips on less-toxic pest control and gardening methods, visit our website, www.centrialsan.org, and click on "Healthy Garden Guide" in the lower left of the homepage.



Rooting Out the #1 Cause of Sewer Clogs

Tree roots are the leading cause of sewer clogs, overflows, and pipe damage in central Contra Costa County – and the entire nation. Roots are particularly aggressive in looking for sewer water during a drought because it is often the only water in the ground. They not only cause sewage to back up into homes, businesses, or the street, they destroy sewer pipes.

How Roots Cause Damage

Microscopic cracks or openings in pipe joints enable hair-thin roots to burrow their way in, then thrive on the moisture and nutrients inside the pipe. It doesn't take long for fast-growing roots to spread out and begin snagging materials like grease, condoms, "flushable" wipes, diapers, and other items that go down toilets and drains. Eventually the pipe will become completely blocked, and can even break apart as the roots and blockage continue to grow. The wastewater will back up inside the pipe and overflow through the nearest outlet "upstream" of the blockage – a manhole, an Overflow Protection Device, or a house drain.

How to Prevent Root Problems on Your Property

- 1 Determine where your sewer pipes are on your property. Companies that do this can be found by searching the Internet or phone book for "Pipe & Leak Locating Services."
- 2 Avoid planting trees or shrubs above or near the sewer pipes, or install root barriers when planting.
- 3 Maintain your house side sewer and lateral (the point of connection to the public sewer main). These are the property owner's responsibility. Schedule regular cleanings of your sewer pipes by a professional plumbing service at least every other year.
- 4 If you have continuing root problems, consider removing the offending tree or shrub. We recommend that you consult with an arborist and hire a licensed professional tree removal service.
- 5 Ensure an Overflow Protection Device is installed on your sewer pipe's cleanout (see article on page 9).



Tree roots account for 73% of all sewer clogs and overflows in our District.

Consumer Reports' Tip on Paper Towels

Our thanks to Consumer Reports® magazine for including the following tip in its January 2014 review of paper towels:

"Did You Know? Paper towels are ideal for cleaning up your pet's puddles, but don't toss the paper in the toilet. Flushing away that smelly mess is quick and neat, but paper towels take much longer to disintegrate than toilet paper and can cause the toilet to back up."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

Remember, flush only human waste and toilet paper!



Statewide Program Makes Paint Recycling Easier

Have you ever purchased a can of paint in a color that looked great on the card in the store but not so great on the wall in your home? Or bought more paint than you ended up using? If so, you're not alone. Californians generate millions of gallons of leftover paint each year.

Most unwanted paint can be reused or recycled. The rest needs to be disposed of properly. It's illegal to put it in the trash or pour it down a drain because it poses risks to the environment.

We've always accepted paint at our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in Martinez. As a matter of fact, oil-based and latex paints make up nearly 60% of what we receive at the facility. We give away much of it for free through our Reuse Room, and ship off the rest (what can't be used) for recycling or proper disposal.

While it costs residential customers nothing to bring us their unwanted paint, doing so can be inconvenient. And managing all the paint we receive at the facility is expensive for us.

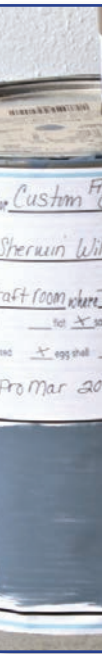
The California Architectural Paint Stewardship Program is solving both problems.

This program, which was implemented in late 2012, requires paint manufacturers to help people make wiser choices when buying paint, and also make paint recycling more convenient by setting up drop-off sites (typically retailers that sell paint) where consumers can take their leftover paint. There are several such sites in our service area (check www.paintcare.org/california for locations near you).

PaintCare, the nonprofit organization established to implement the Paint Stewardship Program, makes sure the paint gets properly recycled or disposed of. Most importantly, it provides information to consumers about buying the right amount of paint for a project, using up remaining paint, and keeping paint out of the trash or drain.

There is no fee for dropping off old paint for recycling. But when you buy paint, retailers collect a "recovery fee" ranging from 35 cents to \$1.60, depending on the size of container. The fees pay for the recycling or disposal of paint collected at drop-off sites. The fee is not a

Story continues next page ▶



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

4797 Imhoff Place, Martinez, CA 94553-4392

HOURS

Residents: Monday – Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
(Reuse Room closes at 3:30 p.m.)

Businesses: Monday – Saturday, *by appointment only*

Holiday Closures: May 26; July 4; Sept. 1; Nov. 11, 27, 28; Dec. 24-Jan. 1.

1-800-646-1431



Eligible Communities

Alamo, Blackhawk, Clayton, Concord, Clyde, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek and unincorporated Central County areas.

- From Hwy. 4 take the Solano Way exit.
- From I-680 take Hwy. 4 East to Solano Way exit.



► **Story continued from page 8**

deposit; you do not receive it back when you drop off paint for recycling.

Note: If you have more than 300 gallons of architectural paint to be recycled or disposed of, PaintCare may even pick it up from you for free!

Our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility is saving thousands of dollars each month now that PaintCare is covering the costs of recycling much of the paint we receive.

For more information (including a handy paint-buying calculator and other painting tips), and a list of paint drop-off locations, please visit www.paintcare.org/california or call PaintCare at (855) 724-6809.

We Cannot Accept Your Drugs

This is just a reminder that our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility does not accept medications of any kind. We appreciate that you know better than to flush them, but please do not bring them to our facility. Take them to one of the free drop-off locations listed on page 6, instead.

For more information on what we can – and cannot – accept at the facility, please visit our website: www.centalsan.org/hhw.

Do You Have an Overflow Protection Device?

OVERFLOW PROTECTION DEVICES

Each year in the U.S., thousands of families experience a sewer problem that results in raw sewage overflowing from their toilet or shower drain.

Here's something you can do to help prevent that: make sure an Overflow Protection Device is installed on the private side-sewer (lateral) that connects your home's plumbing to the public sewer main.

With such a device installed, sewage backing up in the pipe from the direction of the street will be released into the yard rather than through drains in your home. ***(It will not help if the pipe is clogged between your drain and the device, so be sure to avoid the mistakes described on Page 11!)***

Overflow Protection Devices are available at plumbing supply stores. We recommend they be installed by a licensed plumber.

For more information, please call our Permit Counter staff at (925) 229-7371.



Public Hearing to be Held on Sewer Rates

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Board of Directors will soon hold a public hearing to consider whether to implement, lower, or cancel a scheduled July 1 increase of \$34 to your annual Sewer Service Charge, which they approved last year.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, April 17, at 7 p.m. in the District Board Room, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez.

For more information, please call (925) 335-7702 or email us at rates@centralsan.org.



Infrastructure Improvements

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District regularly maintains, repairs or replaces sewer lines and other elements of our 1,500-mile wastewater collection system to decrease the likelihood of failures and to ensure continuous, trouble-free service for our customers. We appreciate your support and realize that our projects cause short-term inconveniences, but they will provide long-term benefits for you and your neighbors.

Here's a brief summary of our major ongoing construction projects:

Orinda

The **North Orinda Sewer Renovations Project, Phase 5**, is renovating sewers in the Camino Sobrante and La Cuesta Road areas of North Orinda. Expected completion: January 2015.

Walnut Creek

The **Walnut Creek Sewer Renovation Project, Phase 10**, is renovating sewers in the Walnut Boulevard and Summit Road areas. Expected completion: January 2015.

For more info...

For more information about these or other construction projects, please contact Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter at (925) 229-7200 or ccarp@centralsan.org.

More info:

Detailed project maps are posted on our website, www.centralsan.org (check the "Construction Zone" in the lower right of the home page).

Attention Landlords and Property Managers

Would you like to provide your tenants with tips on how to avoid clogging sinks and toilets? We have just the thing: a list of "Tips for Trouble-Free Plumbing" they can keep handy in the kitchen and bathroom. Download it from our website and share it with your tenants: www.centralsan.org/publications

Translating This Newsletter

Many of the customers we serve in Central Contra Costa County speak a language other than English. While it would be cost-prohibitive for us to translate this newsletter into different languages, there is a free online tool you can use to do this. Here's how:

1. Go to our website, www.centralsan.org, and click on "Pipeline Newsletter" (bottom center of homepage).
2. Save to your computer the PDF file of the newsletter you wish to translate.
3. Go to the Google Translation website: translate.google.com
4. Select the desired language.
5. Click on "choose file" and select the PDF file you just saved to your computer.
6. Click the "Translate" button.

Please note that this tool will only translate the text. The design, illustrations and photos will not be shown and the formatting may look a bit strange. Also, since this is a Google tool, it probably works best with Google's browser, Chrome.

Three Common Mistakes That Can Create a Plumbing Nightmare

The drains in your home lead to a plumbing system of narrow pipes (often only three inches in diameter) before connecting to the larger sewer main. Those small pipes can easily be clogged by grease, wipes, and other items.

To prevent clogs, sewage backups, and costly plumbing bills, avoid these common mistakes:

1 DUMPING YOUR GREASE DOWN THE DRAIN. Grease is one of the most common causes of sewer clogs and backups. People think it “goes away” when they wash it down the drain with hot water. But grease quickly cools and hardens inside the pipe, forming a sticky blob that grows over time and causes a clog. Instead of dumping it down the drain, pour cooled grease and cooking oil into a disposable container, store it in the freezer to harden, then put it in the trash. Bring large quantities (such as from a turkey fryer) to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for recycling into biofuels.



2 TREATING YOUR GARBAGE DISPOSAL LIKE A GARBAGE DISPOSAL. Despite the name, most garbage should NOT be put down your disposal. The powerful blades might grind up most food scraps (if you don't jam in too much at one time), but those scraps can clog the narrow pipe beyond the disposal. Put food scraps in the trash (or compost) instead.



3 TREATING YOUR TOILET LIKE A TRASH CAN. It may seem quick and easy to dispose of used wipes, paper towels, condoms, hygiene products and other items by flushing them down the toilet. But those and other items (including items labeled “flushable”) can clog your small sewer pipe even if they disappear down the toilet. Flush only human waste and toilet paper. Put everything else in the real trash can.

Avoid these mistakes to prevent sewage backups and nasty messes like this!



About CCCSD

Our mission as a Special District is to protect public health and the environment. We do this by collecting and treating wastewater, providing recycled water, and promoting pollution prevention. Our treatment plant in Martinez collects, treats, and disinfects an average of 45 million gallons of wastewater every day. Some treated wastewater is recycled (treated further) for irrigation use on golf courses and parks; the rest is released into Suisun Bay. We also operate a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility and sponsor 12 collection sites for the safe disposal of pharmaceuticals.

Where to Call...

General information	(925) 228-9500 or www.centralsan.org
Sewer overflows	(925) 933-0955 or 933-0990
Treatment Plant InfoLine (Report Odors)	(925) 335-7703
Household Hazardous Waste InfoLine	(800) 646-1431
Sewer connection permits/Permit Counter	(925) 229-7371
To report illegal discharges into sewer system	(925) 229-7288 (during business hours) (925) 229-7214 (after hours)
Source Control	(925) 229-7288
Job Hotline	(925) 229-7109 or www.centralsan.org
Student Education Programs	(925) 229-7310 or www.centralsan.org
Public InfoLine	(925) 335-7702 or www.centralsan.org

Board of Directors

David R. Williams, President

- **Michael R. McGill**, President Pro Tem
- **Paul H. Causey**, Director
- **James A. Nejedly**, Director
- **Tad J. Pilecki**, Director

Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. in the CCCSD Board Room, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez.

Roger S. Bailey, General Manager



CCCSD serves 467,500 customers within its 144-square-mile service area.

- Wastewater collection & treatment; Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) disposal for 332,600 people.
- Wastewater treatment and HHW disposal for 134,900 people in Concord and Clayton by contract.
- HHW disposal only.
- CCCSD's headquarters, treatment plant, and HHW Collection Facility are located in Martinez.

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

Written and designed by CCCSD to communicate pollution prevention messages to the people and communities we serve

Michael Scahill, Editor • **Bonnie Lowe**, Writer
Charles Waltmire, Graphic Designer

View archived issues online at www.centralsan.org

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