



UP THE CREEK

March 1, 2010

Over the past 20 years during which this newsletter has been forced upon our customers, many of whom would doubtless prefer to simply use their water and pay their bill like normal people, i.e. without being distracted by weird screeds stuffed in their bill, a pattern has developed. That is, we find that certain themes come around in certain months. For example, February often is concerned with the groundhog, April is concerned with the fool, July with the flag, etc.

This is not due to any meticulous organizing effort, but rather to a combination of advancing age and more rapidly advancing laziness. Babies and old people both love routine. We derive comfort and security from it. And we hate to make our old brain hurt thinking up new stuff to write about. So, when it's time to write the March newsletter, your lazy old Up The Creek author looks through previous March newsletters, and handily plagiarizes his own previous work without emerging into full consciousness.

So the March newsletter would, in normal times, be a rehash of dubious advice on how to deal with the murky consequences of our industrious operators going around flushing pipelines, which they habitually do in March. In addition, the March newsletter would normally ask you not to hastily shoot, maim, or set the dog on suspicious characters you find creeping around your property, as they might be our industrious operators looking for your water meter. March, you see, normally begins the new Season of Reading Meters.

In normal times, that's what you would be reading here. This year things don't seem to be quite normal. We note that the official schedule for spring and for meter reading is three weeks away, yet the water meters are cozily hibernating, along with their winter crop of black widow spiders, beneath up to four feet of snow. Temperature on the morning of this writing is five degrees. More snow is forecast for tomorrow. And the day after. We find ourselves in an unaccustomed situation. We won't say it's unprecedented – a word that is somewhat over-enthusiastically applied to something we can't remember happening recently – but it's not your typical springtime in the Banana Belt for sure.

An unaccustomed situation is just one more darn thing to make the aged brain hurt. Fortunately, our industrious operators are younger and not yet afflicted with sensitized brains, so we convened an Up The Creek strategy meeting to get their opinion of how to handle March. “Cancel it,” they recommended immediately and in unison. When asked to elaborate, they pointed out that the estimated time required to find and dig out some 900 water meters would be approximately 45 days, unless the manager assisted them, in which case the estimate is 60 days, and by then it is probable that most of the snow would be melted, making the whole exercise a waste of time that would be better spent by just making up meter readings, like they do anyway. It sounded perfectly logical.

Be it therefore resolved that March is canceled. Take no note of our usual March activities that you took no note of anyway. As to when those usual March activities will resume - well, at this point it looks very much like March will occur in April.

A positive consequence of this old-timey winter we have experienced is that nobody is doubting our water supply for the coming year, at least not yet. There is, of course, always the chance for dust storms of unprecedented unaccustomed severity which could eat up even the decent snowpack we have thus far accumulated. Thinking about that makes my brain hurt.