

The Story of the Sewage Leak in the line on Eagle Harbor May 30 - June 2, 2009

(As read at the City Council meeting of June 3, 2009 by Bainbridge Island resident Sue Anderson)

Saturday, May 30: Sometime before noon, Bobbi Ann Leahy and Shannon, Jessie Hey's daughter and granddaughter, arrived at Jessie's house, 1163 Irene Place. NE, next door to us, at 1181 Irene.

Shannon went down to the bulkhead in front of Jessie's house and saw water bubbling up 6-7" high from the beach about 10' off the end of our boatramp, and told her mom. Jean Hey, another of Jessie's daughters, called 911. One of our local policemen went to the treatment plant and one of the transfer stations to try to find someone. They got hold of Chuck. He came alone within hours of the call. He returned 2 other times with 2 other people. We met him when he came between 6:30 & 7:00 pm. Lance Newkirk also came that evening as well as Bob Earl. I believe Bill Knobloch came by as well.

Sunday, May 31

Lance had a crew of at least five here who brought a back hoe down the beach from Wing Point by 6:10 am and dug a hole around the pipe. A restraining collar was put around the pipe, which lessened the flow and stopped the flow of solid matter. They brought a 5' length of pipe as well. And, they marked the hole with caution tape and stakes. Lance said he did not have the correct size part to repair the leak. It had to come from Gorst. Lance told me he had been up until midnight planning and up at 4 am to coordinate.

Sunday evening around 6, a camera man and a reporter from KIRO 7 News arrived, followed shortly by a crew from KOMO 4. Lance Newkirk arrived soon after. Councilmembers Bill Knobloch and Kim Brackett came by having noticed the back hoe on the beach from the ferry. There was no debris in the water Sun. evening.

The news of the leak was aired as lead stories on KOMO 4 and KIRO 7 11 pm broadcasts.

Monday, June 1

At 7:45 am, a KING news reporter and cameraman rang our doorbell to look at the spill. The tide covered the spill by then. By 9 am, KOMO was back again with another reporter as well as Channel 13. Lance arrived again to give interviews. One of the station's helicopters flew over taking pictures as well. Lance returned several times to check on things.

Tuesday, June 2

At 4:10 am, the KOMO large mobile live production news unit pulled into our driveway. Around 5:30, KING's van pulled in. By 6:30, we had KIRO, Channel 13 and BITV, as well as print media, all lined up on the bulkhead broadcasting.

Lance and his crew of at least 6 arrived by 4:30 am. Lance had coordinated six trucks at three transfer stations, police for traffic control, as well as notifications to various city departments.

The crew worked efficiently and swiftly had the proper part in place by 7:30 am.

They had prepared an alternative to the new sleeve in case it did not work.

Lance had taken the time to plan carefully and from his experience, knew to prepare alternatives because as he said, "Mr. Murphy shows up".

We cannot say enough about the professionalism, graciousness, courtesy, and calm demonstrated by every Public Works employee. They even raked out the back hoe tread marks on the beach and in our parking strip, as well as picked up every little bit of debris from the beach they could see. Also the calm, polite and factual manner with which Lance Newkirk handled the media and represented Bainbridge Island was most exemplary.

There were at least 35 people, community members and public service employees involved with solving this problem.

As Jessie stated, "It did get reported. It did get fixed. We got the help that was needed. We got ahold of the right people. That's the best part! "

Jean Hey, Bobbi Ann Leahy, Jessie Hey, and John and Sue Anderson