

# BCPUD PIPELINE



Spring 2021

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## Lose Single-Use, Choose ReUseful!

Nowadays, there are a whole lot of items – such as plastic bottles, utensils and wrap – that are designed to be used once and then thrown “away.” That may feel convenient, but there is a long-term cost. Many items cannot be recycled easily and those that can be recycled don’t always make it into the recycling cart. The result: litter, plastic pollution and wasted resources.

But there are useful, reusable solutions that look and feel better and are often healthier to use than plastic alternatives. Let Zero Waste Marin’s ReUseful campaign inspire you! Learn some easy ways to cut down on throw-away plastic at <https://zerowastemarin.org/reuseful>.



**Water or Sewer  
emergency? Please  
contact our office at  
415-868-1224**

## Chief Operator Bill Pierce is Retiring!

Nearly every resident in town probably knows Bill Pierce, the BCPUD’s long-serving Chief Operator, who is set to retire on July 2, 2021 after nearly 37 years with the district. All of us have watched Bill in action for years, expertly supervising water and wastewater projects, calmly responding to disasters, methodically training new shift operators, carefully explaining the challenges of managing our limited water supply to BCPUD directors and the public alike during monthly Board meetings, and so much more. Bill is known for his approachability, his welcoming and easy-going nature and his encyclopedic knowledge of the district’s infrastructure (as well as for his favored bright orange sweatshirt, which distinctively sets him apart from other BCPUD personnel). In this article, we seek to tell you some information about Bill that you may not know. Please join all of us at the BCPUD in thanking him for his decades of public service and for dedicating his career to ensuring that Bolinas has a safe and secure water system, as well as a reliable (and chemical-free!) sewer system.



Bill was born in Brockton, Massachusetts, but lived for most of his younger childhood in Virginia, in a small town outside of Richmond, with his mother, Grace, father, William, and siblings Richard (“Ricky”) and Elizabeth (“Liz”). His family returned to Massachusetts when Bill was 12, settling in Sturbridge, where Bill lived until 1977. (Editorial comment: regrettably, these teenage years in Massachusetts resulted in Bill becoming a life-long Patriots, Red Sox and Celtics fan.) In Sturbridge, he met Tiffany Coleman — daughter of Bolinas resident Mary Coleman Barror — and the two eventually left Sturbridge together, heading first to Florida and then to California. When they arrived in Bolinas to visit Tiffany’s family, Bill says he felt like he fit in right away. After a brief detour to live in Colorado for a few months, Bill says they missed California and came back to Bolinas and he “never left”, living in a variety of different rental homes on the Mesa during his initial years in town. Bill and Tiffany had a son together, Raury in 1980. Tiffany subsequently struck out on her own and moved to southern California. Bill and Raury then were looking for a new place to live and someone told him there might be a place at Gospel Flats Farm. Bill went to the farm, found Don Murch working in the fields and inquired about a space to rent; Don told him that he could have space in the downstairs portion of the farm house and “that was the beginning of a friendship of a lifetime”.

In January 1985, Bill began working at the BCPUD on a part-time basis while at the same time running a landscaping business. At the time, Phil Buchanan was in the process of taking over as General Manager and Robbie Robinson, the former General Manager, was transitioning to performing weekend bookkeeping for the district. Bill soon became a full-time employee and Raury attended pre-school at the Bolinas Children’s Center, right next door. When Raury became a kindergartener at the Bolinas-Stinson Union School district, Bill met his future wife, Yvonne, who was working as a teacher’s aide in the classroom. An initial

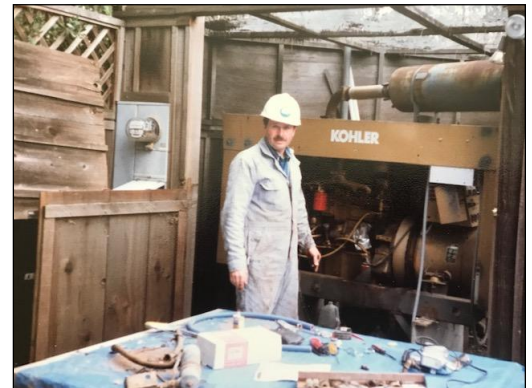


friendship “became a love affair”, Bill says, and he and Yvonne eventually blended their two families together (Yvonne’s family included two sons, Craig and Eric), sealing the deal with a wedding in their back yard in 1989, with former ordained minister and long-time Bolinas resident Tom D’Onofrio officiating and a “helluva” reception following at Gospel Flat Farms.

When asked about his notable memories of working for the BCPUD, Bill says the immediate recollections that come to mind all relate to disasters, such as the water outage of 1998. He therefore prefers to focus on positive topics such as the “Fantastic Five”, as he calls them, Belle Wood, the district’s Administrative Assistant, and the four shift operators now on staff:

Stew Oakander (the BCPUD’s incoming Chief Operator), Andrew Spalding, Blake Miller and Evan Kahn. Another favorite topic for Bill is “our amazing community”, which he describes as a huge family. Bill says that although the people serving on the BCPUD’s Board of Directors have changed over the decades, the core values of Board oversight remain the same and the town has been fortunate to have had the visionary stewardship and dedication of so many community members willing to donate their time to serve on the Board. When pressed to think about how things have changed during his tenure as Chief Operator, Bill recalls that the district’s “fleet” of vehicles consisted of one pick-up truck from the 1970’s, a 1960-era back hoe and a 1958 dump truck, and the compressor was a World War II surplus piece of equipment. Slowly, the BCPUD transitioned to the modern era and Bill gives tremendous credit to Phil Buchanan for his leadership; Phil instituted computerization at the office, writing his own programs to meet the district’s needs, Bill notes, and oversaw the design and construction of a new, state-of-the-art membrane filtration water treatment plant in 1995. Bill says the new plant was an “enormous change” for the district and, for the operators, “it was like getting a new job”. The new plant enabled the district to come into compliance with its water supply permit (after many years in violation) and continues to provide high quality drinking water to the community of Bolinas to this day.

When asked what he and Yvonne plan to do post-retirement, Bill laughs and says, “whatever we want!” To the extent they have specific plans, those plans are to travel and spend time with their adult children and their eight grandchildren: Jessica, Megan, Ethan, Kaleigh, Leila, Emily, Lucas and William. Travel destinations include Hawaii (where Raury lives), Spain (where Yvonne’s father grew up), Australia (where one of Yvonne’s brothers lives), Brazil (the home country of Craig’s wife Eliana), and Indiana (where Eric and his wife, Krissy, live). Bill says he and Yvonne love to do things together and are a real team. They intend to continue their teamwork in their lovely garden, where Bill meticulously tends to his fruit trees and plants (with Yvonne’s help), and Yvonne raises chickens and smokes salmon (with Bill’s help) brought to them from their extensive network of fishermen friends in town (Editorial comment: we should all be so lucky as to taste Yvonne’s smoked salmon; it is divine!).



A final word from the General Manager: Bill Pierce is a profoundly loyal and caring human being who has been at my side (and served as a bedrock for everyone else on the staff) throughout innumerable challenges at the district. I am honored to call him a friend as well as a cherished colleague. He is absolutely authentic, incredibly hard-working, refreshingly fun-loving, and unabashedly a family man. He is a fantastic story-teller, an amazing gardener and a great cook. He has devoted decades of his life to running our water and sewer systems, as well as to navigating natural disasters and other emergencies, and he has done so with the utmost professionalism and integrity. He is the true bellwether of the district and we will miss him here more than we can say.