



# THE ENDEAVOR

A PUBLICATION OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

VOLUME X, NUMBER 3

SERVING EL CERRITO, KENSINGTON, AND RICHMOND ANNEX

FALL/WINTER 2002

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## DISTRICT MANAGER/ ENGINEER

Douglas C. Humphrey

## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT

It shall be the mission of the Stege Sanitary District to plan and operate a safe, efficient, and economical wastewater collection and transfer system for the present and future customers of the District.

## INSIDE

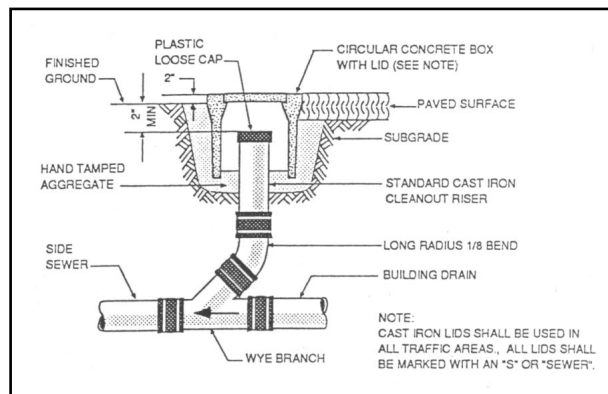
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## Backflow Prevention Device

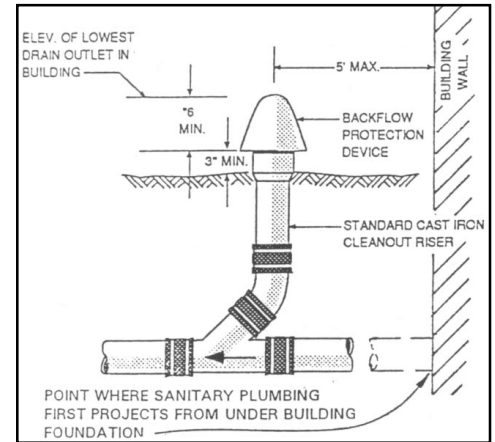
We like to think that when we flush the toilet or empty the bathtub that is the last we'll see of the wastewater that leaves our house. And generally, that is exactly what does happen. Sometimes, though, homeowners are in for a very rude and unpleasant surprise when they find wastewater backing up through drains and toilets in their house. The most common cause of this mishap is a blockage or other failure in the home's lateral — the pipe that connects domestic plumbing to the sewer main. Backflow can also occur if the lateral is not far enough above the rim of the nearest upstream sewer manhole and there is an extraordinarily high volume of water in the main, or if there is a blockage downstream that forces sewage back upstream.

Luckily, there is a way to prevent this from happening. A backflow prevention device provides an emergency escape path should wastewater back up in your lateral. If such a backup occurs, sewage will flow out of the backflow prevention device outside of your house and will not come back up the drains in your house.

A backflow prevention device is installed on your lateral. The Stege Sanitary District requires such devices on all new buildings and on existing buildings that have plumbing drain outlets 12" or less above the rim of the next upstream manhole. If you are unsure if you have a backflow prevention device on your lateral or if you want to know if you need one, contact Stege at (510) 524-4668 Monday through Friday, 7:45 A.M. to 4:45 P.M. to make an appointment for a free inspection of your system.



Type 2 backflow protection overflow device



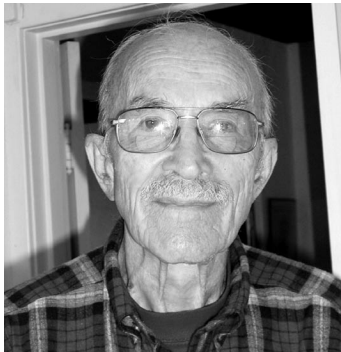
Type 1 backflow protection overflow device

Installing a backflow prevention system requires a permit, which is available at the District's office at 7500 Schmidt Lane in El Cerrito. The permit costs \$15.00. Homeowners may install the device themselves or they can use a contractor to do the work. A list of contractors who have met the District's requirements for licenses, contractor's bonds, insurance, and OSHA permits and who are pre-approved to work in the District, is posted on the Stege Web site at <http://www.stegesd.dst.ca.us/> and is available for pick up at the front desk. Since costs can vary depending on site conditions and the individual contractor, be sure to obtain at least three comparative bids and a list of references before choosing a contractor to work on your system.

# Art Schroeder — A Lifetime of Service

**E**l Cerrito resident and former District Director Art Schroeder has spent his life helping others. When you consider that life spans more than 95 years, that's a lot of helping.

At one time, Art considered entering the ministry but decided instead to pursue a career in social work, earning a B.A. from Brown University and an M.A. from New York University. He moved to El Cerrito shortly after World War II, taking a position of Training Director for the Federal Public Housing Authority, whose regional office was in San Francisco. At the time, truck farms and vineyards dotted the East Bay hills and



thers of West Contra Costa County, served on the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging and has served as a Senior Senator in the California Senior Legislature.

After Art retired from the Oakland anti-poverty program in 1974, he had even more time to devote to local issues. In 1977, Jean Siri, who had served for four years as a Stege Director, convinced Art to run for the Stege Board of Directors. She felt the District needed an infusion of new ideas and people with the energy to bring those ideas to fruition.

Art was just the man for the job. Although he had never run for public office before, Art Schroeder won easily and served the District with distinction for the next 13 years.

Under Art's leadership, Stege engaged a distinguished engineer as District Manager, developed projects to improve maintenance and rehabilitation of the District's sewer lines, corrected sewer overflows into the Bay, established an emergency preparedness program, and transferred primary sewage treatment to the EBMUD facilities in Oakland.

His companion and support through this extraordinary life of service was his beloved wife Norma, who died earlier this year. To honor Norma's memory, Art did what he always does — he helped others. This time, his generosity took the form of a scholarship established at El Cerrito High School for a worthy student who needed financial help to go to college. The first scholarship was awarded this June. Art also funded the establishment of a counseling center at the high school and had a memorial tree planted in Norma's name at an East Bay Regional Park.

Art's son and two grandsons follow in their forbearer's footsteps — all have established distinguished careers as physicians.

Although he had never run for public office before, Art Schroeder won easily and served the District with distinction for the next 13 years.

there were fewer than 260,000 people in all of Contra Costa County.

Art has devoted not only his professional career but also his personal life to public service. Some of the many civic affairs he has participated in include: working on library and park bond campaigns in the 1960s; serving on the El Cerrito Planning Commission; being co-chair of the El Cerrito Bicentennial Committee; serving several terms as chair of the El Cerrito Historical Society; and serving on several El Cerrito Citizen Task Forces. The fate of seniors in the community has been of particular concern to Art. He has worked to create the Hazel Shirley Manor senior housing, served as the first chairperson of the El Cerrito Committee on Aging, co-founded the Gray Pan-

## Happy Holidays

The Board of Directors, management, and staff of the Stege Sanitary District wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season. We look forward to serving you with another year of community commitment in 2003.



### CORRECTIONS

The summer 2002 issue of the Stege Sanitary District newsletter stated the District was established in 1923. The correct date is 1913. Also in that issue, the sentence that read, "These easements, therefore, may show up in a title search..." should have read, "These easements, therefore, may *not* show up in a title search." We apologize for any confusion.

## SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

### Service with a Smile at the Front Desk

**D**o you need a sewer permit? Do you have a question you need to explain in person? Are you a contractor looking to purchase the District's specifications and ordinances manual? Do you think you might have a sewer easement on your property but want to make sure? Do you hate the Internet and just want to talk to a real person about a backflow prevention device?

Step up to the Stege Sanitary District front desk at 7500 Schmidt Lane in El Cerrito.

Here, in addition to help with the above, you will find a copy of the District's general guidelines, a list of pre-approved contractors, back

issues of the District newsletter and other useful flyers and brochures. Mostly, though, you will find people eager



*Connie Sylte staffs the District front desk.*

The front desk is staffed from  
7:45 AM-4:45 PM, Monday through Friday.

to help you through any plumbing question or concern you might have.

The front desk is staffed from 7:45 AM-4:45 PM, Monday through Friday. Connie Sylte, the District's Administrative Assistant, who has worked with the District since 1993, is probably the first welcoming face you will see when you enter. Or, you may find Lynda Thornton or Liz Garland waiting to assist you. Whomever it is who helps you, you can be sure of getting friendly, knowledgeable answers to your questions.

## Long Range Planning

**T**he Stege Board of Directors will conduct its annual long-range planning workshop early next spring. The workshop will be an intensive, all-day session that will be held on a Saturday. In addition to the Directors and the District Manager, a professional meeting facilitator, who is not affiliated with the District, will be in attendance.

The purpose of the workshop is to identify issues that may have an impact on the long-term interests of the District and to draft a plan to meet these developments. New local, state, and federal regulations, as well as rapidly advancing technology in wastewater delivery, all require the District to regularly review its present ordinances and methods of operation. Based on the objectives identified in the workshop, the Manager will develop an action plan that is designed to effectively implement the District's long-range goals. The plan will then be presented to the full Board of Directors for their final approval.

Issues covered in previous workshops have included the implementation of the District's comprehensive sewer rehabilitation program, compliance with new and anticipated environmental regulations, and the development of an integrated "Code of Regulations" that will consolidate the District's regulations and ordinances into a single document that will be easier for the staff and the public to use.

The Board is committed to providing continued excellent and efficient service to its customers and believes that progressive, strategic planning is an essential component in this effort.





**STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT**  
 7500 Schmidt Lane P.O. Box 537  
 El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537 (510) 524-4667

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## Ninetieth Anniversary

The Stege Sanitary District was formed in 1913 — four years earlier than even the City of El Cerrito — making it one of the oldest special sanitary

districts in California. On May 26, 2003, the District will celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of this event.

Look for details of the upcoming festivities in the next newsletter.



## How to Contact Stege

By phone: (510) 524-4667

By mail: Stege Sanitary District  
 7500 Schmidt Lane, PO Box 537  
 El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537

By email: [Staff@StegeSD.dst.ca.us](mailto:Staff@StegeSD.dst.ca.us)

Web site: [www.stegesd.dst.ca.us](http://www.stegesd.dst.ca.us)

## Meeting Calendar

The Board of Directors of the Stege Sanitary District regularly meets on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at the District office at 7500 Schmidt Lane in El Cerrito. The public is invited to attend.

## Got a plumbing problem? Call us first.

**T**he causes of most sewer clogs and backups can be found in the **home plumbing system** or in the **lateral** that connects the domestic sewer line to the District main. Years of grease or debris buildup may have clogged your line or roots might have infiltrated your system.

Settling may have caused a clay pipe to crack.

On the other hand, the problem might lie with the District’s main sewer line.

Property owners are responsible for maintenance and repair of the entire length of their lateral, up to and including the lateral’s “Y” connection to the sewer main. The District is responsible for the condition of sewer mains.

If you are having problems with sewer backup, call Stege first, any time, day or night, at (510) 524-4667. The service is free and could save you a lot of money. If the problem is with the main, the District will repair it. If the problem is with your system, we’ll let you know that, too.

