FREDDIE FIX IT

Frederick R. Holley | Circuit Rider

As a child growing up in the 60's we didn't have all of the distractions that we find today. If we wanted to talk to someone, we dialed the rotary phone hanging on the kitchen wall. If we wanted adventure it wasn't by video game. There were no cell phones, texting, no computers. Summers were spent exploring the woods, building and defending forts, and swimming in a deep pool under a waterfall in our local gully. We didn't get driven there or ride a 4 wheeler, we walked or rode our bikes. Our parents didn't have to worry because they knew we would be home for dinner. The local place for a drink of water was the town pump, an old pitcher pump connected to a dug well. We would drink directly from a flowing stream without giving it a thought. Would I do it now? I don't think so.Where I grew up the ground water became contaminated with runoff from an unprotected salt pile. The streams are loaded with runoff from farmers fields.

My Dad was a do it yourself person. He learned it from his Dad who was the local blacksmith and inventor. From a young age I would tear things apart and put them back together, occasionally with leftover parts. My friends would bring me their bicycles whenever they were broken to tinker with and bring back to life. My bicycle was a combination of 3 or 4 junkers that I had acquired. Lawnmowers were the same. I remember my Mom giving me a new push mower for my 14th birthday. I mowed the neighborhood lawns for $1.00 per hour. Some days I would earn $4.00 for the whole day. That gave me enough money for a quart of 2 cycle oil and 6 gallons of gas for my boat with candy money to spare. I became known to my friends as Freddie Fix It.

Picture 1.

Let's jump ahead 50 years. At 64 years of age, I am still fixing things. At home, for friends and family, it never ends. I just love to work things through and figure them out. Things like this make getting up in the morning and heading out to work with water systems a true joy and passion. I recently visited a system that had a faulty wood (picture 1) fire hydrant. It wouldn't turn on and had been tagged out of service. The operating nut turned but would not turn on the hydrant. I looked at it, diagnosed the problem and in 15 minutes we had it working again. It is now usable and replacing it is no longer a priority. It can be scheduled as a non-emergency just because it is old and outdated, not because it doesn't work.

Picture 2.

Another system I work with has been experiencing main breaks in a certain part of their system. I asked to visit the wellhead. (picture 2) Looking it over I asked the operator where the air release was. I explained that after shutting off the vertical turbine pump, the water level in the piping would go back to the static level of the well. When turned back on, this air bubble would be pushed into the distribution system. Air in a water main compresses and can cause breakage. Per Val-Matic Valve and Mfg. Co. "Trapped air can have serious effects on system operation and efficiency. As air pockets collect at high points, a restriction of the flow occurs which produces unnecessary head loss and energy consumption. Sudden changes in velocity can occur from the movement of air pockets. A dislodged air pocket can cause surges or water hammer". They will be installing an air release in the near future. The area will be monitored to see if this helps.

If you have a problem or a question you can not answer, give your local circuit rider a call. If we don't have the answer, most likely in our travels, we do know someone that can answer.

See you in my travels, our goal is, "Quality on Tap". 💧💧💧