

COIN SHOW

*Friday May 28
through
Sunday May 30
10am-6pm*

Morocco Shrine Temple
3800 St. Johns Bluff Road S.

Gold & Silver	Currency	Free Admission
Jewelry	Stamps	Free Parking
Door Prizes	Raffle	Appraisals

The Greater Jacksonville
Coin Club
904-236-8403
gjcc.anacclubs.org

Editor's Note

Hustle & Flow

We're having a bit of a love/hate relationship with JEA right now. Our ambivalence doesn't stem from JEA's pending fuel hikes or its thieving employees. It comes from the agency's own contradictory behavior regarding excessive water users.

For the past four years, Folio Weekly has published an annual "Water Hogs" issue. This yearly reviews looks at the top 50 residential water users in JEA's service area, and then publishes that information — including customers' names, addresses and the gallons used. We profile the top 15 consumers individually, sometimes publishing a picture of the house, and seek from them whatever explanation they have for their water excess.

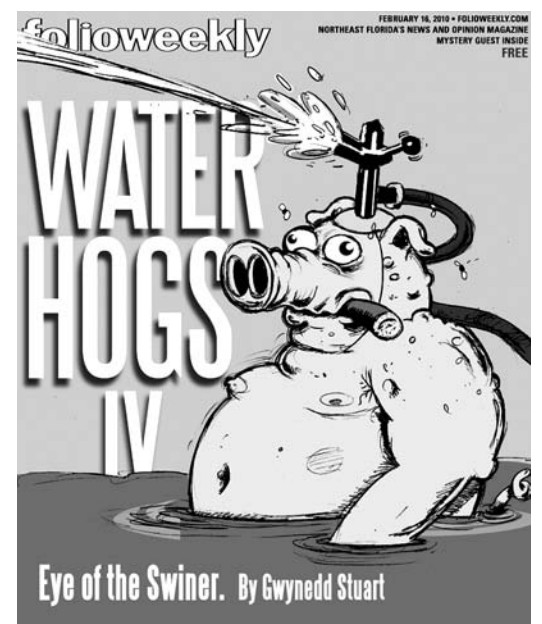
It's a tough love approach, and it's not always popular, but it appears to be having some impact. Many of the largest water users have dramatically reduced their annual water consumption. In 2007, the first year we published "Water Hogs," the No. 1 consumer used 4,491,000 gallons (compared to what JEA says is average for a household — about 72,000 gallons a year). The following year, that top number had dropped to 3,390,000 gallons. The next year, it was 2,145,000 gallons, and this year's No. 1 hog used "just" 1,723,000 gallons.

Now, we're not claiming credit for changing consumer behavior; habits are tough to alter, and frankly, there are bigger,

It's a good first step, and though it's long overdue, JEA deserves credit for seizing an opportunity to drive home its conservation message.

But the fact that JEA is piggybacking on Folio Weekly's Water Hogs issue is also somewhat annoying. Not because they're using the information we've gathered, but because they've made that information so difficult to get.

Soon after we requested water records for the 2010 Water Hogs issue, JEA notified us that the cost of obtaining those records had



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more sophisticated cudgels out there than this magazine. But we *will* claim credit for at least notifying the region's Water Hogs about their hoggish tendencies. You see, before we started publishing the issue, the top water users had no idea they were the top water users. Sure, they got large bills. But frankly, some of these folks are crazy rich, and don't blink at spending \$7,000 a year on water. Even if they did wince at the price tag, there was nothing on their bill that flagged their water use as out of the norm, or that suggested ways to bring it under control.

We've called JEA on this failure in the past, and urged them to improve their systems. Which is where the love comes in. Last week, JEA began sending out letters to Folio Weekly's Top 50 Water Hogs, noting that they'd been mentioned "in an article on high-consumption water users." The letter alerts the hogs to JEA's free service, LawnSmart, which can help homeowners cut irrigation-related water use by 20 percent. The letter also includes information on watering restrictions and refers customers to the conservation tips on JEA's website.

increased — dramatically. In past years, we've paid between \$38 and \$80 for the records; this time, JEA wanted \$632. The agency explained that they've changed their computer systems in a way that made gathering the data more difficult and time-consuming.

We objected to the cost, and JEA backed down — this time. But next year, they promise, the new fees will apply.

Which is where the hate comes in. Clearly, there is value in making these records public. The community sees it, some water hogs see it, even JEA sees it. So why attempt to shut off the spigot of information just when it's beginning to pay off?

In a perfect world, this is the kind of information that JEA would itself gather and disseminate. But if the agency is going to rely on a local weekly newsmagazine to do its grunt work, and then rely on that data for their conservation initiatives, the least they should do is keep the flow of information accessible — and affordable. □

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