



Oro Loma Sanitary District
2655 Grant Avenue
San Lorenzo, CA 94580

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Spotlight on Excellence: Ronnie McClure

Life has been exciting for Ronnie McClure lately. Just last year, he got married. Shortly after that, he and his wife, Hanna, found out they were expecting a baby boy. (Baby Ellis is due to make his debut on May 16.) Then, on February 11, 2008, Ronnie started work at Oro Loma.



Now, compared with life-changing events like getting married and having a baby, starting a new job might not seem like much, but Ronnie thinks it's pretty important. Although he holds a federal airframe and power plant license that allows him to work on aircraft, and although he has worked as a United Airlines mechanic, Ronnie finds he most enjoys working in the area of wastewater treatment. He already holds a WWTP Operator II license, and before coming to Oro Loma, Ronnie worked at the Union Sanitary District as a Plant Operator III Trainee for nine months. At Oro Loma, Ronnie is working as an Operator I and is learning how the plant works. Right now, he is running the belt press, an operation that produces valuable biosolids from the sludge left over from the wastewater treatment process.

Ronnie was born and spent his early years outside the US. This experience showed him how important clean, safe water is, and how vital wastewater treatment is in the process of protecting public health and the environment. Ronnie is excited about the prospect of learning more about that process and about putting his mechanical training to use in plant maintenance. He is already studying for his WWTP Operator III license, and he says he intends to stay with Oro Loma until he retires.

Ronnie and his wife Hanna live in San Leandro.

Safe Disposal of Medications

Trace amounts of antibiotics, anti-depressants, birth control pills, seizure medication, cancer treatments, pain killers, tranquilizers and cholesterol-lowering compounds have been detected in water in all parts of the world. The long-term effect of these chemicals is unknown. Some scientists believe pharmaceuticals do not pose problems to humans, since they occur at low concentrations in water. Others advise that since the long-term effects are unknown, we should exercise caution. They are concerned that many of these drugs have the potential of interfering with hormone production, or may result in disease-causing bacteria becoming drug-resistant.

Pharmaceutical industries, hospitals and other medical facilities are obvious sources, but households also contribute a significant share. The EPA warns that sewage treatment systems are not specifically engineered to remove pharmaceuticals, and these drugs can pass intact into waterways, lakes and even aquifers when people dispose of unused medicines by flushing them down the toilet. Further, discarded pharmaceuticals often end up at dumps and landfills, posing a threat to underlying groundwater. Veterinary drugs also play a role. Pets are now treated for a wide range of ailments—sometimes with the same drugs as humans.

You can help keep these potentially dangerous chemicals out of our water by safely disposing of unwanted medicines at one of three Alameda County household hazardous waste sites. Directions to these sites—in Oakland, Hayward, and Livermore—and hours of operation are available at www.stopwaste.org, or by calling (800) 606-6606. Old, expired, or unneeded prescription and non-prescription medications are accepted. Controlled substances are not accepted. For information on how to dispose of controlled substances, email HHW@acgov.org.

Pills may be poured into a zip-locked plastic bag or left in their original container. Be sure to remove your name and identifying information from all medicine labels. Please bring proof of Alameda County residency when you visit the household hazardous waste sites.

