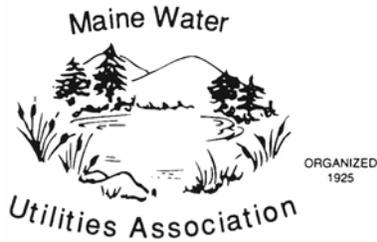


MAINE



WATER

NEWS

January 2007

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

Number 131

The Socialite Operator

Brian Tarbuck, 2006 President

There may be no more underappreciated job than that of the people who work in wastewater operations. I used to think we had it bad on the water side, but people actually do get worked up from time to time if you tell them there is E. coli in their tap water. On the wastewater side, people just don't really care a hoot about where everything goes when they push on that little silver handle so long as it goes "somewhere" and goes there without too much effort or expense on their behalf.

Around the holidays, there are many parties. Small talk invariably turns to, "So, what do you do?" We are in a profession that no one really seems to care or know much about, until we make a mistake. I mean, you want to kill a conversation at a party, tell them you are a "drinking water operator". People usually say, "Oh.", as you smile expectantly for their intrigued questions that never come. One thing our wastewater buddies have going for them is the "P-U" factor. That's good for some laughs anywhere. Everybody has a funny wastewater story. What do we have? Water jokes? Funny water stories? "Hey, remember that time you drank water, and it had ICE in it!? That was a killer..." Yeah, they're not good. Police, now they have good stories. Accountants were just below water operators for centuries until the whole Enron thing and now they even have people listening to them at parties. "Tell me about that GASB thirty something, it's fascinating..."

People at parties will ask, "Why does city water taste like chlorine?" "Because we put chlorine in it." They usually look down at their drink and walk away. Other people tell me that their well water tastes better than our water. So I ask them when they last tested it and they say "1976". It never makes it to the discussion about how our goal in life is not great tasting water, it's water that meets the standards, 24 / 7 / 365.

So far as I can tell, here's when people really care about drinking water.

One, your rates go up. Suddenly, your utility becomes the very embodiment of government waste. The only possible reason for higher rates is not that you have fixed costs that rise outside of your control. The costs of energy and health insurance mustn't affect water utilities. No, it must be that you're a nincompoop. Number 2 is "off colored water". People who stood up in public meetings saying that the water hadn't killed them yet (which apart from being overly dramatic is profoundly obvious) now claim that the water has killed "Speedy", their 17 year old housecat. Number 3, there isn't any water at all. The boys from the local VFD head out to extinguish the conflagrant horse barn only to find a frozen hydrant barrel. You silently curse your shrewd cost-saving measures of hiring nearsighted octogenarians to flush your system and tell your wife to get packed as you're moving south to say, Uruguay. Tonight. And 4 is "too much water". Main breaks that wash out driveways or busted meters that fill basements are sure ways to make your telephone ring and learn words that you would only otherwise have heard in your kids' rap songs.

Nobody cares about the high level of service we provide because it's invisible. Imagine if you could hang your pipes on poles like cable and electricity. Your 100 year old pipes would look nasty, and people would demand that you repair them, not demand that you don't. Imagine that water that didn't meet the standards would instantly taste like turpentine. Folks in the country with bacteria and arsenic would be itching for your water. But that isn't going to happen, so we need a backup plan for the party conversations.

My advice? Be honest and proud of what you do, but learn some good lawyer jokes just in case. For example, "What's black and brown and looks good on a lawyer? A Rottweiler". "What's the difference between a dead lawyer in the road, and a dead dog? There are skid marks in front of the dog." I'm here all week, try the veal.

I hope you had great holidays with friends and family and are looking forward to the annual trade show in February. Have a fun and safe 2007.

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Maine Water Utilities Association
Jeffrey L. McNelly, Editor
P.O. Box P
Waldoboro, Maine 04572-0917
(207) 832-2263
(207) 832-2265 FAX
e-mail: jmcnelly@mwua.org
website: www.mwua.org

Material of interest to the water supply profession will be considered for publication. Copy deadline is the 15th day of month preceding publication.

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Alexander Elected President

William G. Alexander, Jr., Operations Manager of the Brunswick and Topsham Water District, was elected President of the MWUA Board of Directors at the January Board meeting.

Bill has been a Director since 2003 and has served as Treasurer and First Vice President.

Alexander has been employed at the district for a total of 23 years. He worked for Maine Rural Water Association for 3 years where he served as Technical Field Trainer and Circuit Rider. Bill holds a Class IV Water Supply System license.

Also elected at the January Board meeting were First Vice President Gordon Johnson of the Portland Water District, Second Vice President John Storer of the Auburn Water and Sewerage District, Treasurer Daniel Wells of the Winthrop Utilities District and Secretary Brian Tarbuck of the Augusta Water & Sanitary District.

Tarbuck, whose term expired at the end of 2006, will serve one additional year as a Director on the Board in the role of Past President.

February Meeting on Near Horizon

MWUA's 81st Annual February Meeting and Trade Show will be held on Monday, February 5th and Tuesday, February 6, 2007 in Portland, Maine. Join us the evening before for the Super Bowl Sunday Meet & Greet at the Holiday Inn By the Bay.

Monday morning sessions include: Water System Master Planning, Ultraviolet Disinfection in Drinking Water Systems, Pumps & Pumping and Water Main Locating. Afternoon sessions include a Groundwater Rule update, a Trustee Session, Class 52 Pipe Alternatives and Technologies to Enhance Efficiencies.

The Tuesday Technical Sessions include: Customer Information Systems, Membrane Filtration and Hydrant Repair & Maintenance. New this year will be a Drinking Water Workshop, being held from 9:30 – 11:00 AM, facilitated by the New England Water Works Association.

As in the past, the Preview will run from 3:30 – 6:30 on Monday evening. On Tuesday PWD will provide those great donuts (and coffee) in the morning and at 11:30 the luncheon, compliments of the Associate members, will be served.

The conference brochure is available online at www.mwua.org. Register by January 26, 2007 and take advantage of the early registration discounts.

In Stream Flow and Water Level Rules Process Picks Up More Elements

As was noted in the November newsletter, it was anticipated that the DEP would submit its Chapter 587: In Stream Flow and Water Level Rules to their Board on November 16th for provisional adoption. That did indeed happen and the BEP adopted provisional rules, with amendments that were not particularly favorable to water suppliers. One amendment, of note, specifies that the intent of the water withdrawal certificate process is to “move towards achievement of water quality

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An Inquiry, which has been commenced by the Public Utilities Commission to focus on identifying and quantifying the fiscal impacts of the proposed rule on Maine water utilities and their customers, is well underway. The intent is to have this information available for legislators' consideration when Chapter 587 is presented to them for approval.

Meanwhile, Maine Water Utilities Association has submitted two pieces of related legislation. Senator Weston of Montville is sponsoring both pieces of legislation.

An Act to Ensure the Availability of Existing Drinking Water Sources of Supply would amend existing DEP statute, requiring them to balance the objectives of protecting aquatic life and other uses and the objective of allowing community public water systems to use their existing water supplies to provide water service. Essentially, this bill incorporates, into statute, the Resolve language which resulted from deliberations on LD 2070 during the previous legislation session.

Another bill, An Act to Develop a Comprehensive Water Use Plan for the State of Maine, is being advanced in concert with agricultural interests and other water users. The purpose of the bill is to estimate available surface water and groundwater supplies, estimate future needs and determine the availability of existing resources. In addition, the plan would assess the availability and costs of developing local and regional sources of water supply supplies which will be necessary to meet future demands.

Without a doubt it will be an interesting session, to say the least. The association will, once again, be advocating for reasonable In Stream Flow and Water Level Rules. The thrust of these efforts will be to minimize the uncertainties associated with the existing provisional rule. Managers who manage surface water supplies should expect to be asked by the association to contact their legislators and request that these elected representatives make every effort to ensure that the end result is a practicable rule that will allow them to continue to meet their legislative mandate of supplying water to their communities.



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standards." This is particularly troubling given the fact that the water quality standards are housed within the federal Clean Water Act framework. The full text of the provisional rule can be found on the DEP website at: www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/flow/rule/index.htm.

As discouraging as this process has been, it is important to note that a number of activities have been initiated in an effort to rectify many of the rule's inherent problems.

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MWUA Partners with MWWCA on SRF Match Legislation

On the State Revolving Fund front, the Maine Wastewater Control Association and MWUA have collaborated on two pieces of legislation which target the 20% match needed to secure both the Clean Water and Drinking Water capitalization grants.

Largely as the result of MWWCA efforts, two legislative documents have been submitted to the 123rd. Session. Representative Patrick Flood of Winthrop is sponsoring both of those bills.

An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Water Supply Facilities would provide the \$8.7 million necessary to access the Clean Water and Drinking Water federal capitalization grants for FY 07, 08 and 09.

\$3.6 million would cover three years of 5 – 1 match for the federal wastewater system funds and \$5.1 million would cover three years of 5 - 1 match for the federal drinking water system funds.

The other piece of legislation, An Act to Ensure State Budget Funding for Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Water Supply Facilities, would include the matches for the 2008 – 09 biennium in the budgets of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Environmental Protection. This measure, if enacted, would result in \$3.4 million and \$2.4 million being included in the DHHS and DEP budgets, respectively. Given the prospective nature of this action, the 2007 match would still be unfunded - if this legislation were to be the only available match vehicle.

On February 13th MWWCA, MWUA and the New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA) will host a legislative breakfast to explain these bills to legislators and to solicit their support.

Journal to Sport New Format

The Journal of the Maine Water Utilities Association has long served as the historical record of the association. Proceedings of bimonthly meetings, advertising, technical articles of interest to the profession, the minutes of the Board of Director meetings and other features have filled the pages.

Over the past several years there has been a shift from the “typical” bimonthly meeting presentation, based on prepared text - or at least notes – to presentations which rely on Power Point. As a result, the time it takes to reproduce these presentations in the Journal, either by manipulating the Power Point file or transcribing the presentation (or a combination of both), is significant.

While it is not uncommon for members to review old Journals to retrieve pertinent technical data to facilitate improved decision making, since the advent of electronic media this has become less and less prevalent.

After much deliberation by staff, the Board and the Public Awareness Committee, which included an evaluation of alternatives, a decision was made to publish the Journal annually, commencing in 2007.

The Journal will still serve as the historical record of the association and will include summaries of the

bimonthly meetings, pertinent highlights from the previous year such as industry award recipients, significant managerial changes, tributes to members who have passed on, a report of the previous legislative session, the Board minutes and other articles. Technical articles and other subjects of lasting interest will be solicited – and are welcomed - to be considered for publication.

A new section will be an Associate Members' Corner. This will include company profiles and corporate news such as promotions, retirements or company growth. Associate Members are encouraged to submit copy highlighting new products or services, or other appropriate materials.

The Maine Water Utilities Association is a membership organization which focuses on the needs of the members. As always, members are encouraged to express their views relative to this new format. The basic concept is unchanged – the Journal will continue to serve as a historical record, a means of conveying technical information and a venue for Associate members to advertise their products. In addition, with the advent of the Associate Members' Corner, there will be an enhanced opportunity for those members to showcase new products and technologies.

Personnel Changes the Order of the Day

There have been a number of personnel changes within the profession over the past several weeks.

Norm Cyr and Paul Hackett, Superintendents of the Brunswick and Topsham Water District and the Mechanic Falls Water Department, respectively, recently retired. The association wishes them all the best in this new chapter of their lives.

Congratulations are extended to new Superintendents Stephen French, of the Mechanic Falls Water Department and Alan Frasier of the Brunswick and Topsham Water District.

Other new system managers include Mike Riley at the Brewer Water Department and Steven Millard at the Mars Hill & Blaine Water District. Mike formerly was employed by Woodard & Curran in their Bangor office. Millard previously worked as a waste water operator at McCain Foods in Easton.

Congratulations are extended to Judy Kelley, President of Aqua Maine, Inc. in Rockport. Judy has been elected as Chair of the Maine Public Drinking Water Commission.

New Energy Websites Launched

Efficiency Maine and the Maine State Energy Program have launched their new websites. There are new

interactive tools. There is an “energy” calendar where some of the MPUC Energy Division’s energy partners will be able to post events and trainings concerning energy efficiency, fuel neutral items and related topics. Check it out at: www.energymaine.com/calendar.php.

The Maine State Energy Program’s Small Business Low Interest Loan Application is available at: www.maine.gov/msep/incentives_loan_information.htm.

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Judge Nominated to PUC Commission, New Administrative Director Appointed

Vendean Vafiades, a Maine District Court judge, was recently appointed to the Maine Public Utilities Commission by Governor Baldacci. If confirmed, Vafiades will fill the remainder of Commissioner Diamond's term, which expires March 31, 2007.

Vafiades, who resides in Augusta, formerly worked for law firms in Maine, has held administrative and executive positions in state government, has served as Chief Deputy Attorney General and council for the University of Maine System (Augusta) and has worked as a lobbyist.

It is expected that her nomination will go to the Legislature's Utilities and Energy Committee for confirmation early in January.

Also at the PUC, Karen Geraghty has been appointed Administrative Director. She succeeds Patrick Damon, who died in Afghanistan in June.

Geraghty, a long time lobbyist and political consultant, has been a Portland City Councilor since 1997, serving as Mayor in 2001.

TRADE SHOW CONTESTS

People, Places or Things Photo Contest

This contest is meant to be fun and to recognize some of those interesting, funny, amazing and odd people, places or things that public water systems deal with every day. The contest is open to anyone who works in the water or wastewater profession.

Photos, old or new – as long as it is a water system photograph and shows, people, places or things related to providing public water service – are eligible. Please – no kids playing at the beach or scenic mountain pools that are not a source of drinking water.

Three prizes will be awarded: \$100 for 1st Place, \$75 for 2nd Place and \$50 for 3rd Place.

Rigs & Gigs Contest

The Rigs & Gigs contest is open to anyone who works in the water or wastewater industry (no vendors please). Criteria for the contest consist of safety, efficiency and originality. A successful entry will be a simple mechanical device or procedure that is designed to provide a safer, simplified, efficient or more original means of performing a routine task or function in the maintenance, operation or construction of a water or wastewater system.

Three prizes will be awarded: \$100 for 1st Place, \$75 for 2nd Place and \$50 for 3rd Place.

The rules for both contests are included in the February Meeting & Trade Show conference brochure. An electronic version of the brochure is available online at www.mwua.org.

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MWUA Partners with NEWWA at MMA Trade Show

Farewell to a Friend

Max Gray Kinney, 73, died on November 5, 2006 in Searsport. He had been a Trustee of the Searsport Water District since 1990. While he served in that capacity a number of system improvements were accomplished

The district replaced an old uncovered reservoir, developed a new source of water supply, investigated alternatives to address bacterial re-growth within a reservoir and made necessary upgrades to the distribution system to rectify that problem. In addition, a new groundwater protection ordinance was adopted in the Town of Stockton Springs to protect the groundwater supplies for Sandy Point and the Searsport Water District and a new garage was constructed for the District.

Max is survived by his wife of fifty-five years, Iva, his children, his brothers and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends.

Max took his responsibility as Trustee very seriously and always gave 100% to the task at hand.



Ray Raposa, Madeleine Storer, Jeff McNelly, Bill Alexander

Maine Water Utilities Association and New England Water Works Association shared a joint booth at the Maine Municipal Association's Trade Show on October 4th & 5th, 2006. A thank you goes out to the volunteers who staffed the booth.



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Fluoride Controversy Rises up in Bangor ... And Other Places

When it happened in Bangor it was bigger news, but the question of whether water systems should be the vehicle to dispense preventative medication has been addressed in a few locations - at least.

In Bangor a local pediatrician, of 30 years, approached the Bangor City Council with his concerns about fluoridation of the public water supply. A dialogue ensued and General Manager Kathy Moriarty organized a presentation to the Bangor WD Board. The issue is being sent back to City Council to see whether there should be a referendum.

In Jackman a vote to remove fluoride from the water supply failed. In Lincoln, a vote to add fluoride to the water supply failed.

Water Districts will likely be asked to take a position on this a very emotional issue. This issue has been discussed recently at Water Resources Committee and Board meetings and several times in the past. At this time, at least, there is general agreement that the association should be neutral on the dental health issue – leaving that question to those more qualified to answer it. Instead we should focus on how we ensure that our

delivery of fluoride, when required by referendum, is done safely.

Web-Based Safety Training Available

The Maine Municipal Association Risk Management Services, in conjunction with FirstNet Learning, is offering online safety training to members of their Property and Casualty Pool and Workers Compensation Fund.

A sampling of the training includes classes in Back Injury Prevention, Electrical Safety, Ergonomics for the Office, Excavation and Trenching and Hearing Protection.

Courses range in length from 15 minutes to 2 hours. The fact that students may complete the classes at their pace allows them to fit the training into their work schedules.

The Maine Drinking Water Program and the Department of Environmental Protection have approved many of the courses for continuing education credits

This web-based training is available at: www.memun.org/RMS/LC/default.htm. For additional information call the Risk Management Services at: 1-800-590-5583.



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2007 MWUA MEETING DATES

February 5-6, 2007	Meeting & Trade Show – Portland
April 12, 2007	Conference #490 - Wiscasset
June 14, 2007	Conference #491 - Bethel
August 8, 2007	Golf Scramble Toddy Brook
August 9, 2007	Clambake - Brunswick
October 11, 2007	Conference #493 - Ellsworth
December 13, 2007	Conference #494 - Yarmouth



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