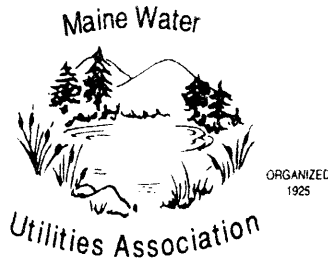


MAINE



WATER

NEWS

July 2003

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

Number 112

Mind Your Own Business!

Jeff LaCasse, President

Municipalization. I told you that you would hear that word frequently. But not here. Not today. The “M” word will be used no more in this rambling dissertation.

It is time, however, for some introspection. One of the hardest things for many people and organizations is critical self-analysis, but I’m going to suggest that every water utility manager take a step back and take a fresh view of his or her utility. Better yet, get someone else to take a look.

Producing and distributing a quality product is only a part of what we as water utility personnel do. In the real world we operate a business and we need to remember that business. People pay; people have expectations.

The first group to keep happy of course is your customers (bosses to those of you in public water utilities). You never will be able to convince all customers that they are getting their money’s worth and that your water utility is operating efficiently and effectively. This is Maine, after all. There is always a little whine in the background. However, if you can keep most of your customers on your side, life will be easier when the second group arrives.

That second group is the Outsiders, whoever they may represent. These are people who will be looking at your utility with ulterior motives.

If you don’t pay attention, you become vulnerable. Your utility may be a profit waiting to happen, a cash cow waiting to be milked. You might not feel that way but someone on the outside – perhaps armed with correct information, perhaps with only assumptions – may perceive your business that way. As we know, perception can become reality in the correct political or economic climate.

So, what does this mean? What is a water utility employee or manager supposed to do? Start by looking at yourself. Evaluate your business. Give your business a tuneup.

Business may seem to be a lot of abstract concepts, but it is not that hard to squeeze the abstract out. Much successful business practice is common sense and taking the time to allow that common sense to take effect. Experience, know-how and some luck are also necessary for success.

Most Maine water utilities have a quality product – that’s assured by dedication and regulation. Most Maine water utility personnel are good at common sense. The hard part of critical self-analysis is looking objectively at something to which you’ve been deeply dedicated. We are typically so involved in what we are producing and how we present it that very often we don’t come to the surface long enough to get a clear picture of where we are at and where we need to go.

One of the best ways to gain insight on your operations is by letting other experts look at it. This peer review process is an underused tool in the water industry, but, when I’ve seen it in action, it has had some very positive impacts. It allows you to see what others are doing, to learn what successes and failures they’ve had, to get pointers on what tweaks can be made to your own operations to add efficiency and to determine what benchmarks you should be striving to reach.

For water utilities, MWUA can help. This is definitely an area where utilities of any size can interact. If you haven’t had the opportunity to get the tools necessary for a critical self-analysis, there are people in MWUA who have those tools and are willing to share them. No strings attached. Objectively. With no ulterior motive. Believe it or not, the experience is as valuable to them as it is to you.

A good example is the finance group that has been meeting regularly to hash out the dos and don’ts of water utility financials. Being naïve, I had always assumed that there was only one way to do accounting correctly. Very wrong assumption. There is more flexibility allowed in accounting than in most of the rest of our operations. This group is using peer review and group brainstorming to the benefit of each group member.

Continued on Page 2

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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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Continued from Page 1

To get this process started for your utility, contact Jeff McNelly. He will get you connected to others interested in the peer review process so you can begin the challenge of adding some crispness to your operation. If enough utilities participate, that "M" word can reach extinction before it even reaches any dictionary.

The June Meeting

For those who have not spent a lot of time in the Dover – Foxcroft area, the June meeting was a real treat – it's a beautiful part of the state and we had a great location for the cookout on Wednesday evening. It must be said, however that this microhabitat is ideally suited for the propagation of black flies. A special thanks goes out to Walter Field for his assistance in arranging for the camps on Sebec Lake, the meeting site and the local fauna.

The meeting on Thursday was very informative as local historian Lew Stevens provided a detailed history of the area and the Dover – Foxcroft water system. Roger Crouse and Rick Knowlton then updated us on activities on the regulatory and legislative fronts, respectively.

Those presentations were followed by a roundtable discussion that addressed recent activities relative to efforts that would propose to incorporate existing water system operations into municipal operations or otherwise change the form of ownership/operation of existing water utility operations. The panelists related their experiences and offered many suggestions as to how systems could proactively address this issue.

Following a scrumptious lunch, we packed up and headed home – more informed and certainly ready to visit the region again soon.

Education Sessions Scheduled

The Education and Operations Committee has finalized dates and locations for classes in August and September. On August 20, at four campuses of the Maine Community College (formerly the Maine Technical College), a Microsoft Office® - *Windows, Applications & File Management* – class will be held. The College has tailored this course specifically for the association. It will cover integration of Microsoft Office® products, downloading files from the internet, managing emails, storing and retrieving files and many of the other "peripheral" tasks that often provide such a challenge in the workplace. The classes will be held in South Portland, Fairfield, Ellsworth and Presque Isle.

On September 23 the New England Water Works Association will present a class on Well Rehabilitation and Maintenance at the Senator in Augusta and on September 25 NEWWA will present a Bulk Chemical Delivery workshop at the Portland Water District's Jeff Nixon Development Center. Notices for these three classes will be in the mail soon.

In addition, other training opportunities will soon be available at the Nixon Development Center, as NEWWA is planning to bring a number of sessions to this venue.

On related fronts, the recent office personnel session and operator forum were very informative. Planning is in the works for the next operator forum, which will again focus on regulatory challenges and perhaps include safety sessions and groundwater issues.

If you would like to submit ideas for a technical insert, or if you have one already written, please contact committee member Dan Bisson at (207) 829-6200. It's a great opportunity to end up in print.



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Utility Financial Officers Group Grapples With Issues

For several months the Maine Water Utility Financial Officers Group has been meeting to discuss financial issues of common interest. Recently they considered the annual Public Utilities Commission report and how the information can perhaps be used for financial performance benchmarking. They have also discussed the status of rule making for system development charges and have explored the possibility of purchasing chemicals jointly.

The group has asked the Commission to consider amending Chapter 610 of the PUC regulations to consider how water utilities should record Contribution in Aid of Construction, in light of the impact of the new accounting standards established by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Their next regular meeting is September 25th. A special meeting is being held on July 18th to discuss the Consumer Assistance Division's review of payment arrangement.

Individuals who would like to be involved in these meetings or who desire additional information should contact Tom Quirk, Portland Water District's Finance Director (quirk@pwd.org), or David Kane, PWD's Treasurer (774-5961 ext 3085 or email: kane@pwd.org).

Water Operators Board Seeking Members

As the result of legislation enacted this past session, the name of the Board of Licensure of Water Treatment Plant Operators has been changed to the Board of Licensure of Water System Operators. The licensing and renewal fee caps were also raised to \$70 and \$60, respectively. In addition, the position on the Board representing the public was changed to a member representing the Very Small Water Systems. Board member Gilles St. Pierre, representing Grade II operators, has opted to not renew for an additional term of office.

The Board is seeking candidates to fill the new VSWS slot and to also fill the position formerly held by Gil. The latter position is for a person who holds a Grade II license (either treatment, distribution or system).

Individuals who are interested in serving on the Board, or who would like to nominate someone to serve in either of these two positions, should contact Trevor Hunt at 443-2391 or Terry Trott at 287-7485.

Legislature Adjourns: Our Work Not Finished

The Maine Legislature did finally adjourn on June 14th; however it is evident that they will be called back to deal with some unfinished business. Of particular importance to the water utilities is the fact that the environmental bond issue was not resolved before adjournment. Party leadership debated various components of the bond package, including the \$1.8

million match necessary to secure the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grant.

Agreement on the package will have to occur relatively soon in order to provide enough lead-time to place the initiative on the November ballot.

The association is cautiously optimistic that leadership from both parties is receptive to including the \$1.8 million. Letters have been sent to them, thanking them for support to this point and encouraging them to include the DWSRF match in the final package.



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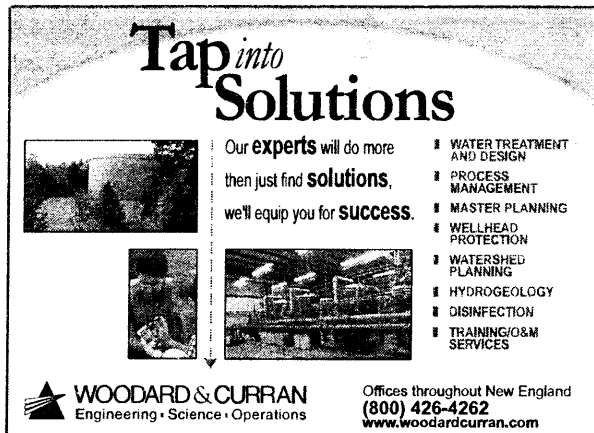
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Golf and Clambake on the Horizon

After one of the most miserable springs that many of us can ever remember, it appears that summer is in full bloom – just in time for the annual clambake and golf tournament.

The tournament committee, headed up by Bruce Berger, has done an excellent job of organizing the golfing event at a new venue this year – Spring Brook Country Club in Leeds. Golfers are reminded to get their reservations in early, as the event is limited to 120 players.

The clambake will once again be held at Thomas Point Beach in Brunswick. The registration deadline for this is also August 1st. There are rumors of a dunking booth. If that comes to pass, there will be a need for dunkers as well as dunkees. Concerning that - if it comes to pass - credit cards are not accepted.



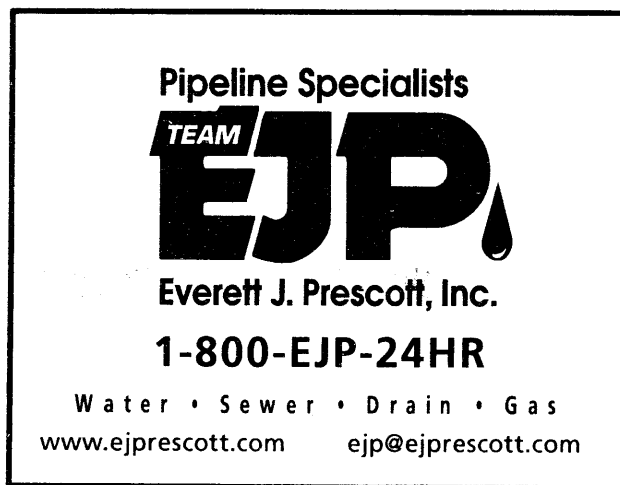
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LaCasse, McNelly Attend AWWA Fly – In

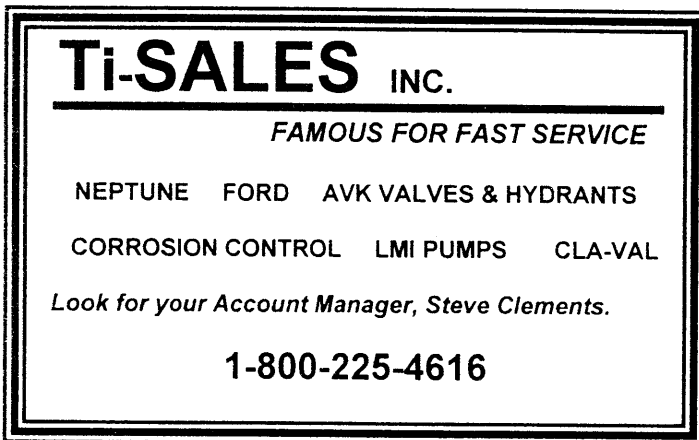
On May 1, MWUA President, Jeff LaCasse, and Executive Director, Jeff McNelly, participated in the second annual American Water Works Association Fly-In. The event was held to bring critical drinking water issues to the attention of the Congressional delegation.

LaCasse and McNelly were able to meet with Congressman Allen, Senator Collins and staff persons for Senator Snowe and Congressman Michaud.

Issues that were discussed included the need for funding for systems to complete vulnerability assessments and then develop/update emergency response plans to address the identified vulnerabilities, plus the importance of continued and expanded funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

On the water resources front, they updated the delegation on sustainable water use policy deliberations that are ongoing in Maine and stressed the importance of adopting a rational, science-based policy that works well for the state.

It was an excellent opportunity to establish a relationship with the Senators, Congressmen and staffers and to discuss the issues that have such significant implications for the state.



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Committee Seeks to Review Permitting Decisions

Over the past 20 or so years a number of water utilities have received environmental permits (primarily from the Maine DEP) for projects, ranging from new or replacement intakes, the rebuilding of dams, the modification of existing permits or the development of new sources of supply.

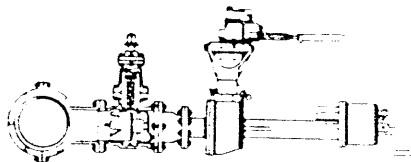
The MWUA Water Resources Committee is undertaking an analysis of the decisions that have been rendered in conjunction with these permit applications. The committee is striving to identify the salient points on which decisions and permit conditions are based, in order to determine if there is a need to address specific issues as an association strategy on sustainable water use policy is formulated.

The association is seeking copies of permits from those utilities that have been through the process recently. For the most part, permits of interest include those associated with surface water projects. However, the group would be interested in reviewing any permit, whether it is associated with surface water or groundwater. The permits could be of a state, local or federal nature.

Those who can provide copies of the permits or the permit number and date of issuance can contact the MWUA office. The assistance of those who have this information will be much appreciated.

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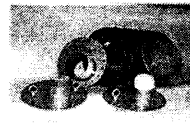
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MAINE WATER UTILITIES ASSOCIATION EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

DATE: Wednesday, August 13, 2003

PLACE: Spring Brook Country Club in Leeds, Maine

GOLF-Wednesday, August 13
CLAMBAKE-Thursday, August 14

DIRECTIONS: Springbrook Golf Club is located 16 miles west of Augusta and 8 miles east of Lewiston on Route 202 in Leeds, ME. From South of Lewiston, take I-495 North to the Auburn Exit and head East on 202 through Auburn, across the bridge into Lewiston, and then on thru Greene to Leeds. The course will be on your right and is visible from the road. From North of Augusta, take I-495 South to Augusta and take the Winthrop Exit and head West on 202 through Manchester, Winthrop, Monmouth, and on into Leeds. The course will be on your left and is visible from the road.

TIME: Arrive at 11:30 A.M.; **TEE OFF at 12:00 NOON SHARP!**
~Buffet Dinner and Awards to follow~

FORMAT: **Scramble Format.** Please list all team members on registration form below; only one form for each team is required. Individuals are encouraged to register – the committee will make team assignments for all players not submitting a four-player roster. Final teams will be posted at registration. The order of tee off for teams will be based on receipt of registration forms. If you have any questions, please call the MWUA office at 207-832-2263. **Please note the Annual Clambake will be on Thursday, August 14 at Thomas Point Beach in Brunswick. Please use Clambake registration for meals.**

COMPETITION: **Low Team Net (2) Longest Drive**
Low Team Gross (4) Closest to the Pin
Casino Hole to Benefit the Peter Lancaster Scholarship Fund

DOOR PRIZES: **Lucky Sandbaggers drawn randomly.** Donated prize items are welcome; please note your donation on the registration form below.

CEREMONY: **Honorable passage of the Lobster Red “Master Scrambler” Jacket**

COST: **\$60.00 per person, including cart, prize fund and buffet dinner (meal cost is \$15.00 per person for those utilities requiring a breakdown)**

REGISTRATION: **Make checks payable to MWUA. Please mail check and registration form by August 1, 2003 to:**
MWUA, P.O. Box P, Waldoboro, ME 04572
Phone: 207-832-2263; Fax: 207-832-2265

The course is reserved for 120 players. Please get your registration in early!

*Jeffrey LaCasse
President*

*Jefferson Longfellow, Chair
Bruce Berger, Coordinator Golf Tournament
Program Committee*

MWUA 18th ANNUAL OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Registration Deadline: August 1, 2003

Please refer questions to Jeff or Carrie at MWUA office.

/CONTACT NAME:

CONTACT MEMBER INFORMATION:

\Team Member #1

ADDRESS

Name Company Handicap

Team Member #2

CITY ST ZIP

Name Company Handicap

Team Member #3

PHONE

Name Company Handicap

Team Member #4

E-MAIL

Name Company Handicap

Payment enclosed for _____ (# people) at \$60.00/person.

Total enclosed (\$) _____

I would like to contribute _____ as an award prize to the tournament.

Submit all prize contributions to our office by 8/6/03. Check here if you plan to bring the prize item to the tournament.

**MAINE WATER UTILITIES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CLAMBAKE**

GOLF-Wednesday, August 13 CLAMBAKE-Thursday, August 14

DATE: THURSDAY, August 14, 2003

PLACE: THOMAS POINT BEACH, BRUNSWICK, MAINE

DIRECTIONS: Leave U.S. Route 1 at Cook's Corner. Turn left at the traffic light, then immediately turn right onto the road to Thomas Point Beach.
WATCH FOR THOMAS POINT BEACH SIGNS.

TIME: 1:00 P.M. DOWNEAST CLAMBAKE (Reservations Required)
Come before lunch, meet old friends, make new ones.
The park collects an entrance fee from each person for clean up cost.
It is requested that the serving of alcoholic beverages stop for the remainder of the day when lunch is served.

GOLFERS: The golf tournament will be held on Wednesday, August 13 at the Spring Brook Country Club in Leeds, Maine. Information and registration form is on page 6 of Maine Water News.

REGISTRATION: Make checks payable to MWUA.
Please mail check and registration form by August 1 to:
MWUA, P.O. Box P, Waldoboro, ME 04572
Phone: 207-832-2263, Fax: 207-832-2265

Jeffrey LaCasse
President

Jefferson Longfellow
Chair, Program Committee

MWUA Annual Clambake Registration
August 14, 2003 at Topsham Point Beach - Brunswick

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_____ Two Lobster Dinner	@ \$35.00 per person \$ _____
_____ One Lobster Dinner	@ \$27.00 per person \$ _____
_____ Steak Dinner	@ \$27.00 per person \$ _____
_____ Chicken Dinner	@ \$22.00 per person \$ _____
_____ Hamburgers/Hotdogs/Chips	@ \$ 5.00 per person \$ _____
_____ Hamburgers/Hotdogs/Chips (16 & Under FREE)	TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Please clip and mail this registration form to MWUA, PO Box P, Waldoboro, Maine 04572
RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED AND MUST BE HONORED.
PREPAYMENT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS AUGUST 1.

MAINE WATER NEWS

A publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

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