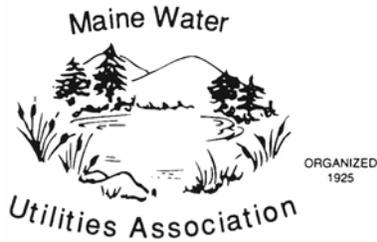


# MAINE



# WATER

# NEWS

July 2007

*A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association*

Number 134

## **Lobster Networking**

*William G. Alexander, Jr., President*

Summer has finally arrived in Maine. The spring rains have given way to the arrival of the people from away, hot humid weather, and a hectic construction season only to find ourselves half way through the year already. It may be hard to believe, but there only three remaining bimonthly meetings left on the calendar. The fourth of the six annual bimonthly meetings consist of a day of golf on August 8<sup>th</sup> followed by the clambake on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

The golf tournament will place take at Toddy Brook Golf Course in North Yarmouth. Be sure to sign up early as the available slots fill quickly!

Beautiful Thomas Point Beach has served as the location for the August bimonthly meeting for many years. This meeting is the second largest bimonthly meeting that the Maine Water Utilities Association holds each year. The attendance routinely exceeds 400 people and is only second in attendance to the meeting in Portland. The day usual starts out damp but quickly clears as this event moves into full swing ending with a delicious lobster or steak dinner along the shore of the New Meadows River.

While this event may sound like it is just an opportunity to get out of the office for the day, I cannot over emphasize the excellent opportunity this meeting provides for networking, renewing old friendships and making new ones. For the cost of a meal and travel, one can have access to a large cross section of water and wastewater utility professionals from around New England.

These attendees consist of, owners, trustees, managers, and operators, of water and wastewater utilities alike. The list does not stop there, Vendors and regulators attend as well. The vendors that attend this meeting graciously contribute in many ways, which further enhances this event and is greatly appreciated. The

vendors represent many of the suppliers in our industry. Where else can you go, while enjoying the salt air and sunshine of Maine, and be able to speak with over 400 people in a relaxed, spacious, and open environment?

This event is another opportunity to fulfill one of the association's goals, which is to build relationships to further the mission and vision of the Maine Water Utilities Association. The first half of this year through its dedicated staff and the many member volunteers of the association and other partner organizations, the association has provided training and outreach and successfully worked on legislative bills.

At the risk of repeating myself, in the last two newsletters I addressed the graying of our industry and the development of a WARN program for the State of Maine. As one of those individuals who is graying, I cannot over emphasize the importance of getting the fresh faced individuals involved.

I have participated in this event for many years; not only as an employee of the Brunswick and Topsham Water District but as a young man in his teens who was serving up lobsters to many of the water professionals who have made this association and industry what it is today. While this was not the only driving force that made me interested in the water industry, it certainly whet my appetite enough to seek employment in this field upon graduation from school. The opportunity to speak with these people and those conversations that I had still guide me to this day. This might apply to other professionals as well.

Send the professionals to the meeting at Thomas Point Beach. Many members of the association's committees will be present both days. It is an excellent opportunity in an informal environment to speak with not only the chairs, but committee members as well. It is another great opportunity to have your questions answered. Do you want to put a face to the voice that you

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Jeffrey L. McNelly, Editor  
P.O. Box P  
Waldoboro, Maine 04572-0917  
(207) 832-2263  
(207) 832-2265 FAX  
e-mail: [jmcnelly@mwua.org](mailto:jmcnelly@mwua.org)  
website: [www.mwua.org](http://www.mwua.org)

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

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(continued from page 1 )

speak to once in awhile? Come to Thomas Point Beach, we will point you in the right direction.

We all will be looking forward to seeing on the golf course or at Thomas Point Beach!

### **Maine Legislature Wraps it up – For Now**

Just one day after their statutory adjournment date of June 20, the Maine Legislature adjourned. There is discussion of a Special Session, in September, in an effort to continue to address the Dirigo question and tax reform.

Since the May issue of Maine Water News went to press, a number of bills affecting water utilities have been dealt with. The Journal of the Maine Water Utilities Association will have a complete summary of all legislation considered, impacting the profession. A quick synopsis of the past two months follows.

The work session for LD 1685 Resolve to Develop a Comprehensive Water Use Plan for Maine, was postponed on at least two occasions while the Natural Resources Committee allowed various stakeholders time to arrive at a compromise on LD 1743, An Act to Create the Freshwater Resource Board. Ultimately, LD 1685 was killed and the two issues were combined under LD 1743 with a new title: An Act Concerning the Sustainable Use of and Planning for Water Resources.

LD 1754 An Act to incorporate the Greater Augusta Utility District was voted ought to pass as amended. This bill combines the Augusta Water District, Augusta Sanitary District and the Hallowell Sewer Distribution Collection System as one utility.

Several bills that would have affected the Portland Water District and the town of Standish were also heard by the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislature.

LD 629, Resolve, to Create the Sebago Lake Village State Park, would have required the Department of Conservation to purchase the boat ramp on Sebago Lake in the Town of Standish and 3 acres of Portland Water District property around the boat ramp, paying fair market value for the boat ramp, and the Tree Growth Tax Law value for the PWD property. Further, the bill directed the Department to improve the boat landing and provide 100 parking spots for cars and boat trailers. The bill was voted out of committee as Ought Not to Pass.

LD 940, Resolve, to Protect the Future of the Sebago Lake Water Supply, would have set conditions on where any relocated boat ramp could be constructed. That bill died.

LD 1205, An Act to Amend the Laws Preventing the Pollution of Portland's Water Supply, was enacted. It updated the fines for "bathing" within two miles of the intakes from not more than \$20 to \$500 for a first offense, \$1,000 for a second offense and \$2,500 for each subsequent offense. The prohibition against "bathing" was modified to state that "a person may not have bodily contact with the waters of Sebago Lake within 2 miles of the intakes."

LD 1888 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Drinking Water Program Regarding Public Water Supply Protection was amended and enacted. It establishes public water system primary protection areas as protected natural resources under the Natural

Resources Protection Act. Activities conducted in those areas will be subject to defined environmental performance standards. The public water system and the Drinking Water Program must be notified of those activities. In addition, the DEP Commissioner may delegate review authority to the DWP or to a community public water system. The DEP retains authority to issue or deny the permit, as well as enforcement authority.

### **Lab Class Set for Augusta**

A Hands-On Water and Wastewater Lab Analysis will be held on August 28th at the Augusta Water and Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Facility. The class will provide water and wastewater operators with hands-on training for two common analyses performed in water and wastewater labs.

Attendees will learn the basic regulatory requirements of each lab and proper performance of analyses, from proper collection through to result. The cost to attend is \$35. 3.0 TCHs will be issued for the training. Registration forms are available online at [mwua.org/calendar.htm](http://mwua.org/calendar.htm) or by calling MWUA at 832-2263.

### **URINETOWN Comes to Biddeford**

The award winning URINETOWN musical, sponsored by Blow Bros. Waste Industries and directed by Barbara Buck flushes into Biddeford. Shows will be held on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM with a special Sunday matinee July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 PM. Tickets are available at \$20. A special rate of \$15 is available for Seniors and Students.

“What happens when a town suffering from a water shortage has to actually pay the mean ‘big water’ man for the right to use the public facility? The show takes place in a fictional town, or does it? An amazing piece of musical theater that not only pokes fun at itself, but makes hay on all the musical theater genres you’ve come to...um...love? Winner of 3 Tony Awards in 2002 including best book and best score.” ~ *City Theater, Biddeford, Maine.*

To reserve tickets contact the City Theater Box Office at (207) 282-0849. The Theater is located at 205 Main Street, Biddeford, Maine.

### **PUC Explains Assessment Increase**

*Lucretia Smith, Maine Public Utilities Commission*

The annual Maine Public Utilities Commission assessment invoices were sent out on June 8, 2007 with a due date of July 11. The PUC assesses all utilities operating in Maine for its operating costs. This year the total assessment increased from \$5,505,000 to \$7,647,411.

The PUC budget is subject to approval by the legislature. In recent years, the PUC budget had increased over the \$5,505,000 but it was possible to avoid an increase in the assessment by using cash reserves to operate. Last year, the reserve was used up and the PUC now has to assess its full operating costs. LD 267, An Act to Ensure Proper Funding of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC Bill), revised Title 35-A, to allow the annual assessment to match the Commission’s budgetary needs. The Commission’s budget must be reviewed by both the Utilities and Energy Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

Under the terms of Title 35-A, subsection 116, the assessment is allocated to the utilities operating in Maine in two steps. First, the PUC determines what percentage of its costs is applicable to each industry (Electric, Natural Gas, Telecommunications, Water, and Ferry Service) by reviewing time and other cost records. Next, the total amount for each industry is allocated among utilities in that industry based upon each utility’s 2006 gross revenues as reported in the annual PUC reports.

For Maine water utilities, the increase was approximately 80.9% even though the budget increased by only 38.9%. One reason for this increase is that the time spent by the Commission on water utilities increased from 4.5% for the 2006 assessment or \$249,377 in total to 5.9% for the 2007 assessment. Applying that 5.9% to the \$5,505,000 assessment, results in a total assessment of \$324,734 or an increase of 30%. Applying the 5.9% to the 2007 total assessment of \$7,647,411 results in a total of \$451,111 being assessed to water utilities or an 80.9% increase in the assessment.

That amount is then assessed to all the water utilities based upon 2006 gross revenues. The gross revenues from water utilities for 2006 were \$110,130,702 resulting in an assessment rate of \$0.0040639. This rate is then applied to the individual utilities’ gross revenues to determine each utility’s assessment due.



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### Retirements

After thirty-five years of service to the State of Maine, Clough Toppan, Director of the Division of Environmental Health, retired. A retirement party was held on July 13th at the Augusta Elks Lodge.

Following twenty-three years of operating the public water system in Oakland, Gay Greenleaf retired from the Oakland Division of Aqua Maine, Inc. at the end of May. Greenleaf was recently honored at a retirement get together at Charrier's in Skowhegan.



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### In Memory - Earle Tarr, Jr.

Earle A. Tarr, Jr. passed away on May 2, 2007. Earle was the third superintendent of the Auburn Water and Sewerage District. He also served as Assistant Superintendent from 1958 to 1966. He was a graduate of the University of Maine with a B.S. in civil engineering.

Earle was an active supporter of the Maine Water Utilities Association, serving as President in 1979. He was instrumental in the development of the water operator

license program. Earle was a visionary in the protection of the environment and was actively involved in numerous protection efforts within the Lake Auburn watershed. He was also instrumental, working closely with his counterpart in Lewiston, in organizing the Lewiston Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority, providing wastewater treatment to the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn.

Earle retired in 1986 to Melbourne Beach, Florida. He and his wife Regina moved to Green Valley Arizona in 2001.

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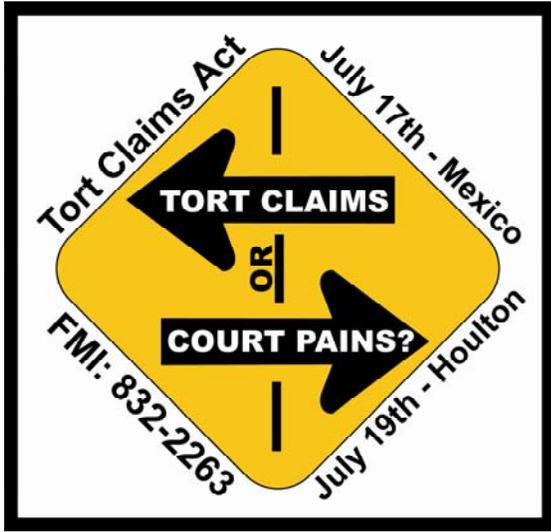
### Water System Operators Take Note

Examination dates & deadlines for applications for 2007

Sept. 8  
Oct. 23

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**Upgrade to Office 2007 / Vista? Wait it out...**  
*by Brian Tarbuck*

Like it or not, Microsoft is the standard for office applications and operating systems. In 2007, they released two significant upgrades. One is to their operating system, now called Vista. Every computer professional I've spoken with has recommended steering clear of Vista until at least the first major service pack. The idea here is to let others work out the bugs. In the meantime, Windows XP Pro is reliable and safe provided you keep it patched against the latest would-be hackers.

The other major upgrade is to the Word / Excel / Access package called Office 2007. This upgrade is vastly, vastly different from the previous versions. I'm a computer geek and it took me 5 minutes to figure out how to print a document. The big problem for people who

have grown up on Excel and Word is that the menu system we're used to is gone, replaced now by a "ribbon". In some cases the ribbon is an improvement, but since you can't turn it off and can't revert to the "old" way, it's more frustrating than fruitful. There are some very cool new features in Office 2007, but if you just want to type a letter or make a spreadsheet, stick with Office 2003. If you can't wait, be prepared to get familiar with the "help" button to find out how to do things you used to do by rote. And buy about 2.0 GB of RAM so you have the headspace to run it properly.

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## Water Resources Committee Develops Comments on DEP Pesticide Application Process

The MWUA Water Resources Committee recently reviewed and commented on a draft General Permit for the Application of Herbicides for the Control of Invasive Aquatic Plants, being put forth by the Department of Environmental Protection. The General Permit is being sought as an abbreviated process to allow for rapid response treatment for the infestation of invasive aquatic plants.

A number of questions were raised and issues were discussed in the comments.

It was stated that, if an infested water body is wholly or partly within the protective radius of a public water supply well, water utility consent should be required.

The permit proposes a targeted dosage of Fluoridone of 50 ppb, yet the EPA label specifies that applications of Fluoridone must not exceed 20 ppb within ¼ mile of potable water intakes. The MWUA comments noted that it appears that the proposed dosage would be a violation of water quality standards in that, for Class AA, A and GPA waters, the classification standards specify that those waters be suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection.

The question was also asked as to who would be liable for any unanticipated adverse impacts of an application; for example, if DEP were to apply an herbicide to a water body and a nearby public water supply well is contaminated, who would compensate the water supplier?

Based on the response to these and other comments there is a certain level of concern that the DEP either did not understand the questions or does not appreciate the thought process water suppliers typically utilize when evaluating risks.

The association intends to meet with staff in order to discuss these issues in more detail.

The response to comments did note that this General Permit will not affect current law which states that: chemical control agents may not be used on a water body that is a public water supply without the prior written consent of each public water supplier using that water body.

### The June Meeting

The Bethel Inn Resort was the site of the June 14<sup>th</sup> bimonthly meeting. The technical program consisted of Emergency River Crossing Replacements and formulating a Tabletop Emergency Exercise.

Al Hodsdon, with assistance from Bethel's Don Caitlin, provided a very informative and interesting account of all that had to be done to replace the district's

river crossing. It was indeed fortunate that this project did not rear its head in January.

Jefferson Longfellow then reviewed the situation the Kennebec Water District found themselves in last year when they had to repair one crossing and replace another one – at a time of the year when it was quite a bit cooler.

The logistics involved in dealing with these situations are amazing. In each situation the districts just did what they had to do, in a logical straightforward fashion.

Steve Cox of Aqua Maine then reviewed a Tabletop Emergency Exercise that they recently performed for their staff and the local officials they typically deal with during such an event. Interestingly – and ironically - the very next day they had an opportunity to try out what they had just learned as there was a main break in the river in Camden.

It was a marvelous venue with topics of great interest. Thanks to all who made it such a successful affair.



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## WARN – From Where I Sit *from the editor's desk*

You read about it last issue in the President's message but this WARN concept has been floating around for several months – actually longer. To be truthful, the discussions actually started about a year ago, under the topic of Pandemic Flu. Remember that – and Y2K as well? A Water and Wastewater agency Response Network would lay the foundation for cooperative efforts during times of crisis, catastrophe, natural disaster or similar events.

There were meetings earlier this year, which some people attended. I could not make those first meetings as I was dealing with a catastrophe at the State House. Actually, maybe it was just a series of unnatural disasters.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May I went to a WARN workshop in Massachusetts. I was certainly not looking forward to it as I have much better things to do in May than drive South on 495. My expectations were not high. The session, with presentations on WARN programs in Florida, Oregon and California and a discussion of what transpired in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, was eye opening. I was humbled which, more often than, is a good thing.

The water and wastewater profession do an excellent job of preparing for and responding to the inevitable. The capable response to river crossings breaks by Bethel and KWD, the response to two recent flooding events in Southern Maine and the perseverance and tenacity exhibited during the ice storm are testaments to the quality of people serving in our profession. It appears that we are prepared and good to go.

But think about this. If Katrina had come ashore here the damage would have spanned from Boston to Bar Harbor. A Pandemic Flu wave could be much more encompassing and it could hit us, individually and collectively, even before we get up and watch the morning news.

There is much being said about how a WARN program should be structured and how it should function.

What role should the state and EPA play? Where do the service providers come in? Who should be the keeper of the website and associated data management system, and how should that function be maintained? Some small systems may be concerned that this could result in the larger systems having a larger say in how they operate and, perhaps this could lead to consolidation.

I must say that I had definite ideas as to how this should all unfold and even had what I thought was a pretty attractive vision of the final product. My recent epiphany has been a little less humbling than my earlier trip down 495 – let's just say that the discussions coordinated by Bill Johnson at the Drinking Water Program, with the

encouragement of our friends at Region One, have been very helpful.

WARN is being marketed as a Utilities Helping Utilities program – a situation where utilities are champions of the cause. It is clear in my mind that this is the intelligent way to do this. The water utilities in Maine are in the best position to bring wastewater systems, public works people, county emergency management agencies and others into the process and the discussions.

Systems are being asked to participate in a WARN Steering Committee. If that call comes to you, seriously consider the request. It will require a fair amount of effort, likely not everything will go your way, but you will be glad you said yes.

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**Southern Maine Group Receives Grant**

The Southern Maine Regional Water Council recently received a \$100,000 grant from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, under the Bank’s Credit Quality Improvement Grant Program. The goal of the group for the grant is to support the goals of the Council, which are to create operational and developmental efficiencies and support between the seven districts comprising the Council.

The Council proposes to develop a single regional Master Plan which would focus on an evaluation of system hydraulics, water quality, interconnections, storage facilities, balancing water use from various sources, increasing security and managing future costs through cooperation and collective investments.

The Council consists of Kittery Water District, South Berwick Water District, York Water District, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District, Sanford Water District, Biddeford and Saco Water Company and Portland Water District.

The KEYS (Kittery, South Berwick, parts of Elliot and York) subgroup of the Southern Maine

Regional Water Council received a \$50,000 grant to assess joint billing and meter reading.

**Trott Appointed to ASDWA Steering Committee**

The US Environmental Protection recently established a Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) process to organize information relative to revision of the Total Coliform Rule.

In conjunction with this effort, the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) has formed a steering committee to better inform and provide broad perspectives to the two ASDWA representatives serving on the FACA.

Terry Trott, of the Maine Drinking Water Program, will participate as a representative on the ASDWA steering committee. The stakeholders in this process, including water supply professionals, manufacturers, health groups, environmental advocates and others will provide advice to EPA on policy and the rulemaking.

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