

# Maine Water Environment NEWS



November 2014 • Fall

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## President's Corner: Season Finale

By Aubrey Strause, 2014 MeWEA President (Verdant Water, PLLC)



Those of you who have gotten to know me over the last ten or so years are aware that I'm a huge fan of the TV show "Parks & Rec" - so much so that I think that the character of Leslie Knope (played by Amy Poehler) is based on me. We are both optimistic, bubbly women in the public works field. We both like waffles and beer (not together, although I'd try it). We both struggle with leadership skills. We both work hard to represent our organizations (try to picture the 4-inch "Binder of Doom" that I put together overnight before the "Save Your Pipes: Don't Flush Baby Wipes" project kickoff meeting to counter any attempts at backtracking from the

wipes manufacturers. I couldn't sleep anyway. I was fired up.)

And yes, we both drive others nuts with our enthusiasm. A scene that encapsulates this on "Parks and Rec" is when Leslie and her husband Ben are fighting:

Ben: "You're so passionate, sometimes I feel like when we're arguing I'm arguing with the sun!"

Leslie: "What? That is crazy! I AM SUPER CHILL ALL THE TIME."

Times New Roman font doesn't do justice to Leslie's manic tone - suffice it to say that when my family watched it, my husband shot soda out his nose and could barely catch his breath from laughing. "That's **totally** you!"

Yes, I know I'm intense. As my year as MeWEA President wraps up (just as the final season of "Parks and Rec" is about to air, no less. Coincidence?) I think that intensity paid off for the association. While I didn't cross everything off my "to do" list this year, I think we did a lot of good work. We implemented the first public/private public outreach campaign on the issue of wipes (see my separate article on Page 10), and while it hasn't had the conclusion I wanted, I'm proud of it.

MeWEA was strongly represented at the Urban Runoff 5K and Green Neighbor Family Fest, the Portland GreenFest, career fairs, and the "Paddle after Hours" events on the Androscoggin River, and we supported the Maine Children's Water Festival. We received over 500 entries to the Clean Water Week poster contest in 2014. We're working with several community colleges to help them develop training programs in water and wastewater. We'll have an article in the Maine Sunrise Guide this year, reaching thousands of residents who never thought twice about wastewater. Our social media presence is growing. We are well-

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## 2014 Officers

### President

Aubrey Strause  
Verdant Water, PLLC

### First Vice President

Tom Connolly  
Yarmouth, Maine

### Second Vice President

Scott Firmin  
Portland Water District

### Immediate Past President

Travis Peaslee  
Lewiston, ME

### Secretary/Treasurer

Al Jellison  
Bangor, ME (retired)

### NEWEA State Director

Peter Goodwin  
Woodard & Curran, Inc.

\*For a complete Board Listing, please visit the MeWEA website at:

[www.mewea.org](http://www.mewea.org)

## Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:

**November 21** Maine Municipal Association

**December 19** Maine Municipal Association



# Kittery Realizes Energy Savings with Pellet Boilers

By Deborah McDermott

Two wood pellet boilers installed last fall at Kittery's wastewater treatment facility already saved over \$5,000 in fuel costs last winter and are just one of the steps the facility is considering in a drive to become energy self-sufficient.

George Kathios, superintendent of wastewater services explained that the pellet boilers are replacing a 20 year old oil furnace that had become very inefficient and six propane heaters as well. "it's about time we stopped talking about becoming independent from fossil fuels and start taking action to accomplish that goal." Kathios said.

When he started researching a replacement for the oil furnace, the Town Council was clear: there had to be a payback within 10 years. That precluded more costly alternatives, such as geothermal heating. Kathios investigated natural gas as an option, but the gas line does not serve that portion of Kittery.

The 191,000 BTU boilers cost the Town \$88,000 including installation. The contractor, E C Robbins Construction of Eliot, was looking to add the installation of pellet systems to its business, and gave the Town a break, coming in \$68,000 less



Kittery's pellet boiler

than the next highest bidder. "that they wanted to get in on the ground floor was certainly lucky for us", commented Kathios. "We get our pellets from a local Maine source – Maine Energy in Bethel", he said "and that was important to us as well." "Even if we had been able to use natural gas, we'd be sending business to Canada and I leaned toward

the pellet option partly because we are keeping the money in Maine and helping the Maine economy."

The pellets currently cost \$239 per ton and Kittery has a three year contract at that price. With heating oil around \$4 per gallon the boilers should pay for themselves in seven years.

The new boilers are just the first step in a long range energy efficiency plan at the Dennett Road plant. A next step in the works is to enter into a "power purchase agreement" with New England Energy Solutions in Dexter and Revolution Energy in Dover, NH. Under this agreement, New England Energy solutions makes energy efficiency upgrades and owns equipment that reduces power use and the municipality pays a set monthly amount for power.

Among the projects being investigated are the following:

- Solar heating panels on the south side of facility structures for building space heating

- Photovoltaic arrays on the top of the administration building or a nearby berm
- High efficiency motors and variable frequency drives
- High efficiency backup generators

In addition Kathios is looking into placing a turbine in the plant outfall to generate power from the effluent discharged into the Piscataqua River. The current average daily flow is about 5 mgd. In the past the wastewater treatment plant has received grants totaling \$100,000 from Efficiency Maine, and Amber Harrison, the town's shoreland resource officer plans to apply for another grant to help fund the turbine project. 🌊

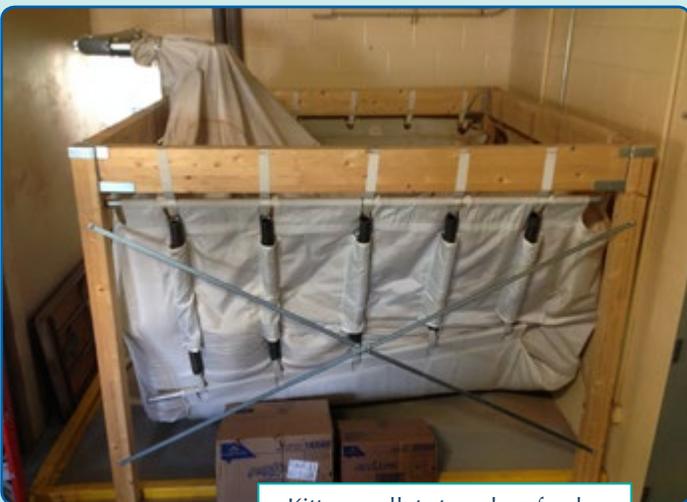
## President's Message cont'd

respected by elected state and federal representatives. I only had a few Leslie-esque burnouts, and I learned that sometimes I just have to give up and let things go.

MeWEA does lots of great stuff, and a lot of people make that stuff happen. The problem is we need more people to sustain the progress we've made and to support our membership on the issues that are coming. In 2015, MeWEA will be tackling ocean acidification (see my *other* article, on Page 7), natural gas line separation, climate change, stormwater, and whatever else the full legislative session throws at us, in addition to keeping up our other projects (this newsletter, two full conferences, and the February joint show with Maine Water Utilities Association-- to name a few).

Season finales are bittersweet when you're leaving the cast as "producer". **Bitter** in that you're stepping back, letting go, and handing off something you've invested so much time in to other people. **Sweet** in that you can be proud of what you've done and can now take some time off. Next season will be different, for sure, with new starring roles and a brand new script. **Are you interested in joining the 2015 cast?** Contact any member of the MeWEA Executive Board, or me, to learn more- no auditions needed.

Thanks for a great year. Cheers! 🌊



Kittery pellet stove bag feeder

# ON MY SOAPBOX: How About a Little Civility?

By Mac Richardson, Editor

*Note: The opinions, positions, and views expressed in any "On My Soapbox" feature are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions, positions or views of the Maine Water Environment Association.*

As a Civil Engineer, I have always felt that it is important to be, well, civil. The more time I spend on planet earth, the more I can't help but wonder why everyone is not civil most of the time. My dictionary tells me that the term civil, as it pertains to behavior, comes from the notion of dwelling in a community, or the notion of being a citizen or civilian. The forth definition simply says "polite; urbane." There is a paragraph that tries to explain the nuance of meaning between civil and its synonyms that states "civil implies merely a refraining from rudeness".

And thus the question comes to me: isn't in our interest, all of us, to be civil? I think we get more done when we cooperate where we can and agree to disagree without being disagreeable when we must. I want to be clear that I am not just talking about politics and the people that we – for whatever reason – elect to public office. When we are driving down rural

roads and city streets, when we are working with those above or below us on the organizational chart, do we treat them as we wish to be treated? How about during one of those less than warm and fuzzy exchanges between you and your kids or your spouse?

A lack of rudeness should not be confused with a lack of ambition, or the lack of blue language with a lack of conviction. In point of fact, a clear statement of whatever problems confront us, coupled with a civil and wide ranging discussion of potential solutions is a formula for success that can be built upon to yield more success. When two or more people work together in a spirit of cooperation and leave vindictiveness behind, the result is to increase the worth of both. Maybe if we can model civil behavior in our homes and workplaces, the spirit will spread to places like Augusta and Washington, DC! And if it does not, we'll still be winners in our own right. 🌐

## JOB VACANCY POSTING – Environmental Specialist III

Below is a Job Vacancy Posting for Environmental Specialist III – Bangor. Please post on all bulletin boards.

### Printable Forms

<http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=631267&an=1> (PDF)

<http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=631267&an=2> (DOC)

All NRSC Department job postings can be viewed here: <http://www.maine.gov/nrsc/jobs/index.shtml>



## Mark Your Calendars! 2015 Events

**Feb. 3-4** Maine Water Utilities Association & Maine Water Environment Association Joint Conference–Holiday Inn By The Bay, Portland

**Feb. 26** Legislative Breakfast–Senator Inn, Augusta

**Mar. 27** Ski Day–Sunday River, Newry

**Apr. 17** MεWEA Spring Conference–Hilton Garden Inn, Auburn

**June. 1-6** Maine Clean Water Week

**Sept. 16-18** MεWEA Fall Convention–Sunday River, Newry

# MEWEA Honors Water Quality Professionals

By Aubrey Strause, 2014 MEWEA President (Verdant Water, PLLC)

The following Press Release was issued by MEWEA, and submitted to media across the state.

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Augusta, Maine – November 11, 2014 – The Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA), the nonprofit association tasked with protecting the quality of Maine’s water bodies, is pleased to release the names of water quality professionals honored at its Fall 2014 Convention, held at the Sunday River Resort in Newry, Maine.

More information on awards administered by MEWEA can be found on our website: [www.mewea.org/awards-administered-by-mewea/](http://www.mewea.org/awards-administered-by-mewea/)

**Charles Perry Award** (presented by the MEWEA Collection System Committee) **Recipient: Mark Holt** (Superintendent, Town of Jay, ME Sewer Department), for his outstanding efforts managing, operating and maintaining Jay’s collection system.

**Communications Award** (presented by the MEWEA Communications Committee) **Recipient: Matt Timberlake** (Vice President, Ted Berry Company, Inc.; Livermore, ME), for his efforts to educate many different audiences on the importance of investing in and protecting our water environment.

**David Anderson Laboratory Analyst Excellence Award** (presented by the MEWEA Laboratory Committee) **Recipient: Stacy Thompson** (Water Quality Professional, Saco Water Resource Recovery Department), for her performance, professionalism, and contributions to the water quality analysis profession.

**Pretreatment Excellence Award** (presented by the MEWEA Pretreatment Committee) **Recipient: Inland Technologies International, LLC** for its facility at the Portland International Jetport, including system design, operations and exemplary efforts in meeting permit requirements.

**Young Professional Award** (presented by the MEWEA Young Professionals Committee) **Recipient: Rob Pontau** (Assistant General Manager, Brunswick Sewer District), for furthering MEWEA’s mission of creating an active environment of learning, networking, and leadership.

**The Roger Gagne Award** (presented by the MEWEA Executive Committee) **Recipient: Phyllis Arnold Rand** (Water Quality Coordinator; Greater Augusta Utility District), in honor of her long-term service to the Association.

**Outstanding Service Awards** (presented by the MEWEA Executive Committee) **Recipients: State Senator James Boyle, State Representative Joan Welsh**, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection **Commissioner Patricia Aho**, in appreciation of their support of MEWEA’s efforts to reduce the burden of nonwoven fabrics in municipal wastewater systems, including the “Save Your Pipes: Don’t Flush Baby Wipes” public education campaign.

**President’s Service Award** (presented by 2014 MEWEA President Aubrey Strause) **Recipient: Scott Firmin** (Portland Water District,

Director of Wastewater Services), for his participation on the MEWEA Government Affairs, Personnel Advancement, and Residuals Committees, “Save Your Pipes: Don’t Flush Baby Wipes” public education campaign, and other Association activities.

**Lifetime Achievement Recognition** (presented by the MEWEA Executive Committee) **Recipient: Jerome “Frenchie” Guevremont** (Town of Rangeley, ME Wastewater Department), for his work to train and mentor other water quality professionals.

**Life Member Status Recognition** (presented by the MEWEA Executive Committee) **Recipient: Richard Darling** (Maine Department of Environmental Protection, retired), for efforts during his distinguished career to provide technical assistance to numerous facilities and professionals across the State, and share his knowledge with others through training programs.

Additional recognitions were presented by MEWEA’s partners, as follows:

Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC) Awards, presented by Leeann Hanson, JETCC Training Coordinator ([www.jetcc.org](http://www.jetcc.org)), as follows:

- **Lee Agger Award** – Recipient: **Tim LeVasseur** (Superintendent, Kennebec Sanitary Treatment District; Waterville, ME)
- **JETCC Founder’s Award** – Recipient: **Kirby Pinkham** (Senior Operator, Greater Augusta Utility District)

**Certificates of Achievement**, presented by Brian Kavanah, Director of the Division of Water Quality Management, of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (<http://www.maine.gov/dep/water/>), as follows:

- **Phyllis Arnold Rand** (Water Quality Coordinator; Greater Augusta Utility District)
- **The City of Brewer**, accepted by Ken Locke (Director of Environmental Services) and Lou Colburn (Chief Operator and Pretreatment Coordinator, Water Pollution Control Facility)

Congratulations to the recipients of all recognitions, and thank you for your hard work in protecting Maine’s water resources. After all,

**Water Quality is our Maine Concern**

[www.mewea.org](http://www.mewea.org)

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# Highlights from the MeWEA 2014 Fall Convention

By Aubrey Strause, 2014 MeWEA President (Verdant Water, PLLC)

Once again, the MeWEA Executive Board, with assistance from Joan Kiszely and friends at Maine Municipal Association, put together quite an event for our Fall Convention. We were back at Sunday River this year after a few years at Sugarloaf, with some major changes to our usual layout at that facility. This year, we overhauled how we highlight our vendors, giving them an entire ballroom and the chance to sponsor a chondula ride to the top of North Peak. The Young Professionals sponsored a Raffle contest so successful that we could have tripled the number of participants if the show were longer.

We had several hands on sessions, knowing that our members always ask for this, and drew on resources from across the state and New England. Keynote speakers included the Honorable

Jonathan LaBonte, Mayor of Auburn during lunch on Thursday and Maine DEP Commissioner Patricia Aho on Friday. Thanks for bearing with us as we fixed the audio! Food was, as always, a big hit.

MeWEA, JETCC, and Maine DEP honored water quality professionals for their service- see separate article on Page 4. There were so many honorees, in fact, that we had to break up this event into three presentations.

Conventions happen because of the work of a lot of people, including the Personnel Advancement Committee, the Convention Committee, and the Executive Committee. Thanks to everyone for pitching in to make the 2014 Convention a huge success. 🌊



Just one of the 27 technical sessions MeWEA offered at the Convention, each with approved training credits. (Hey- pay attention! This isn't a selfie!)



I don't remember what I'm doing here, but I'm pretty sure Tim LeVasseur (recognized with JETCC's Lee Agger Award) started it.



Graduates of the 2014 JETCC Management Candidate School. Congrats to you all, and kudos for wearing the same shirt that day. What a weird coincidence.



How do you keep a roomful of hyper kids engaged about water quality? Dress up like starfish, sea turtles, and make them put crazy stuff on their heads, like Mr. and Mrs. Fish do ([www.mrandmrsfish.com](http://www.mrandmrsfish.com)). We were thrilled to have Jeff and Deb Sandler back after too long an absence.



Paula Drouin (LAWPCA) and Dustin Price (South Berwick) practicing stamping Raffle Prize entry forms. This contest, sponsored by the Young Professionals Committee (<http://www.mewe.org/young-professionals-committee/>) was incredibly successful and popular. Congrats to everyone who took home a prize.



Joan Kiszely, heart and soul of the Fall Convention, taking a rare and well-deserved break.



The Ballroom hosting vendors was packed. Never before have we had to bounce people from the Vendor area at the end of the night. Thanks to all vendors who had a booth!



Lunch on Friday, with Maine DEP Commissioner Patricia Aho and others as speakers, on top of North Peak. The view alone was worth the price of the lunch ticket! #NoSnowYet

# Thulen Hangs up His Sludge Judge!

By Leonard Blanchette, Brunswick Sewer District



Mr. Gregory H. Thulen will be retiring on December 11, 2014 after 40 years of service to the Brunswick Sewer District. Greg held the position of Treatment Operations

Supervisor. He began on May 29, 1974 as an Operator at the Treatment Plant. On October 11, 1983 he was promoted to his current position as supervisor. Greg worked diligently at overseeing the operations and maintenance of the treatment facility. He is a strong believer in preventive and predictive maintenance. In one

study, a consultant reported that we “over maintained” the treatment plant. This was a ‘title’ Greg was proud to hold.

“I am not saying Greg is set in his ways, or that he plans things real carefully, but I can tell you that Greg has had a peanut butter sandwich and a pepsi for break everyday as long as I have been here, but when he’s feeling a bit wild he might switch it out for an iced tea” said assistant superintendent Rob Ponto. “I believe he has the first year or so of his retirement planed out in detail.”

The District will be holding an Open House from 2 to 4 PM on Tuesday, December 9, 2014 at the District offices for those wishing to say a fond farewell and wish him well. All are welcome.

# MEWEA E-Mail Database

All current members of MEWEA should receive periodic e-mails, which may include the most recent newsletter, conference and training announcements, or regulatory updates. If you haven’t received any e-mails from the organization recently, you may wish to update your information in the distribution list by sending your current e-mail address to Joan Kiszely at [jkiszely@memun.org](mailto:jkiszely@memun.org). Don’t miss out on the exciting networking and educational opportunities MEWEA provides!



# Operator Profile: Philip J. Tucker, Collections System Foreman Sanford Sewerage District

By Matt Timberlake, Ted Berry Co.

Philip is Collections System Foreman and is responsible for the entire Sanford collection system. That includes the development and implementation of a preventive maintenance program for the pump stations as well as all of the pipes and manholes. In addition, his responsibilities include maintenance of heavy equipment, trucks, and small gas powered equipment. Phil has a 3 man crew to help him get the work done.

After getting out of the army, Philip started his career as a laborer with the Bar Harbor Wastewater Facility. While there, he moved his way up to lead operator and obtained a grade 4 Wastewater license, a grade 4 NEWEA (voluntary) Collections System Operator Certificate and a NEWEA Grade 1 Lab Analyst Certificate. After leaving Bar Harbor, Philip went to work at Waste Management for 5 years as a lead operator in their Leachate Treatment Facility where he received a Grade 2 Lab Analyst Certificate. Philip has been with the SSD since August 26th of this year.

The Sanford SD collections system is made up of 73 miles of 6” to 42” pipe of varying material and includes 16 pump

stations. Most of the pump stations are Smith and Loveless, but a few of the smaller stations are submersible pumps in a wet well. The 2 biggest pump stations are triplex stations with Flo-Serve pumps. Although the District’s collection system is not currently served by a SCADA system, the District is in the process of installing Mission controllers (which is a web based SCADA system) on two of the stations.

Philip’s biggest challenge right now is system maintenance and trying to move the District from “reactive” maintenance to “preventive” maintenance. His goal is to have every foot of this system inspected by the fall of 2019. “Due to the lack of maintenance in the past we deal with a lot of “plugged” sewers and wipes are a serious problem for us as they are for everyone.”

Philip didn’t actually choose a career in Wastewater. When he got out of the military, he was floundering a bit and worked in carpentry for a short time. Then a position came open at Bar Harbor Wastewater and he applied for the simple reason that it was more money (\$9.00/hr). It didn’t take him long to realize that this was the career he wanted.

“The simple answer to why I stayed is this: I enjoy the outdoors year round and this is the best way I know that I can protect the environment that we all enjoy. One of the things I always tell young operators just coming into the field is ‘at the end of the day your job is to protect the environment’.”

So if you flushed in Sanford, Maine today, make sure to thank Philip and his crew.

**This is your newsletter – if you have news you would like to pass along or an opinion to express that would be of interest to the membership of MWWCA we are always interested in receiving material and will make every effort to incorporate your submissions.**

# Why Should I Care About Ocean Acidification?

By Aubrey Strause, 2014 MeWEA President (Verdant Water, PLLC)

During the 2013-2014 Maine legislative session, one of the bills MeWEA followed was LD 1602, "A Resolve, Establishing the Commission To Study the Effects of Coastal and Ocean Acidification and Its Existing and Potential Effects on Species That Are Commercially Harvested and Grown along the Maine Coast". This bill surprised us, and it may not sound like it has any bearing on MeWEA members, but as it turns out, it's good we've been vigilant, because it does!

In a nutshell (or clamshell?), ocean acidification refers to the observation that the average pH of ocean waters, globally, is decreasing. One of the implications of this change in water chemistry is that marine organisms that form carbonate shells (such as mollusks, lobsters, crabs, etc...) are less able to do so with even a tiny decrease in pH. Their shells are thinner and form more slowly, resulting in decreased survival of juveniles and potentially impacting Maine's famous and economically vital shellfish industries.

Ocean acidification is *primarily* a global issue: it occurs as the ocean absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, creating carbonic acid. The more CO<sub>2</sub>, the more acidic the ocean. The warmer the atmosphere, the faster the reaction happens.

However, ocean acidification also has a *local* contribution: near-shore (coastal) acidification can happen faster when discharges of nitrogen cause eutrophication and reduce oxygen.

The Commission formed as a result of LD 1602 ([www.maine.gov/legis/opla/ocean-acidification.htm](http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/ocean-acidification.htm)) has been meeting since August, patterning its work on a similar process in Washington state. MeWEA petitioned for a seat on this Commission, but was not successful.

The Commission's *initial* recommendations, released on October 10, were focused heavily on significantly reducing local sources of nitrogen - wastewater treatment facilities and stormwater - rather than addressing the deposition of atmospheric nitrogen or the complicated global question "How can we reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> we put into the atmosphere?" Maine is very different from Washington State, however, in that we receive much more nitrogen deposition (from power plants to our west) than Washington state does, so

Washington's recommendation of establishing stringent nitrogen discharge limits for point sources shouldn't apply without consideration of the supporting science. The Maine Commission has sorted through a huge amount of published, peer-reviewed data, and has not definitively correlated acidic coastal waters and mud specifically to nutrients from coastal discharges.

I'm pleased to say that, after sitting in on the day-long November 10 meeting of the Commission, the final recommendations look like they'll be based on good science. There will be some challenges, for sure, but also some opportunities for us to educate people on how stormwater can contribute nutrients to surface water, and about the cost of treating wastewater.

I'm excited that several members of the Commission will be joining me for a tour of their local wastewater treatment facil-

ity (provided by Leonard Blanchette at the Brunswick Sewer District) on November 18.

After talking with Commission members at the November 10 meeting, I am optimistic that MeWEA will be appointed to have a role on the ongoing work of the Commission after December 2014, when it presents its final report to the Maine legislature.

This is one of the few association activities that I will continue to work on after my term as President is up at the end of December. I'll continue to maintain the MeWEA website on this topic, [www.mewe.org/government-affairs-committee/ocean-acidification/](http://www.mewe.org/government-affairs-committee/ocean-acidification/), to keep membership informed. Please contact me with questions or if you're interested in volunteering to support us on this topic- we'll need volunteers from around the state, but specifically along the length of the coast. ●

## Judy Bruenjes Takes the Reins at DEP Technical Assistance

Judy Bruenjes, P.E. has joined the Maine DEP staff in the Compliance and Technical Assistance unit. Judy has taken the position formerly held by Dick Darling, who retired after 22 years of service with Maine DEP. She will be providing technical assistance, serving as the coordinator for the EPA DMR QA program, and will serve as the DEP's point of contact for the Operator Certification program.

Judy received a B.S. in Engineering from the University of Michigan and M.S. in Civil Engineering from Northeastern University and is a Maine licensed Professional Engineer. Previously she provided wastewater training and consulting services to operators and analysis of municipal and industrial systems, predomi-



Judy at the 2014 Fall Convention.



How about this for a training venue!

nantly in the Southeast. She has also worked in private industry with storm water treatment and environmental consulting, as well as with the Mass DEP's Division of Water Pollution Control.

Judy is looking forward to working with operators and analysts to provide skills for improved process control, as well as asset management, wet weather plans, and lab QA/QC.

Judy will be available for wastewater treatment and laboratory technical assistance to MEPDES license holders. Please feel free to give Judy a call at 287-7806, or drop her an email at [judy.k.bruenjes@maine.gov](mailto:judy.k.bruenjes@maine.gov) and let her know what you need. **Editor's note:**

Go ahead! Give Judy a call. We might as well get something of value out of all those MEPDES permit fees! ●

# PUC Inquiry Raises Questions Concerning Gas Main Installations

By “Jeff McNelly (Maine Water Utilities Association) and Tim Haskell (York Sewer District)

On October 20th the Maine Public Utilities Commission, in Docket No. 2014-00315, issued an Inquiry into Underground Facilities Separation Requirements.

This followed an October 14 Bangor Daily News article in which it was reported that the Commission had proposed to fine Summit Natural Gas of Maine \$150,000 for drilling through 25 sewer lines in Augusta, Gardiner, Yarmouth and Cumberland. The article also reported that the commission is requiring verification - on a pipeline-by-pipeline basis - that other sewer lines have not been damaged, before the gas lines are activated.

Almost from the start of natural gas expansion projects in Maine, MWUA and M&WEA utility members have expressed concern over the pace of gas infrastructure build out. Water and sewer utilities have been negatively impacted in a significant way by some of the natural gas projects.

In the most impacted municipalities, location permits have increased almost ten fold from previous years. Even larger systems are reporting that they can't keep up with current staffing.

Concerning Dig Safe, the three day marking requirement is, in essence, an impossible task to meet. Early on at least, the Dig Safe process was used for design processes. That is not, and should not, be allowed. System operators have reported instances where the gas company states: “we are running our mains down this street – mark your structures so we can try to avoid them”.

Fortunately, issues such as these seem to be occurring on a less frequent basis. Improved communication has resulted in the avoidance of many conflicts. However, improved communication is not a silver bullet. We still hear of situations where coordination meetings appear to be successful and productive, yet natural gas utility subcontractors operate as though they are not aware of what was discussed in the coordination meetings.

Some subcontractors are being paid by the foot or by the job. It is therefore in their interest to install mains or services as quickly and inexpensively as possible;

this has created problems in some instances. Damaged infrastructure can be a result.

Yet, at the same time, there are instances of effective working relationships between utilities. Comments filed in the docket by the Brunswick Sewer District indicate that their relationship with Maine Natural Gas has been a win - win situation. MNG plans are provided well in advance of construction. The district is given the opportunity to comment and propose changes. Prior to installation, MNG video inspects lines. BSD sums up their experience by saying: “Good communication with a local company is the key to success.”

The PUC inquiry asked for comments on a number of issues. The MWUA has provided comments and a number of drinking water and clean water systems are commenting as well. The essence of MWUA and other water utility comments are presented below.

Engineering plans should be submitted to the Commission at least 30 days prior to construction or installation of any new transmission or distribution pipeline facilities, as is spelled out in statute.

The plans should be stamped by a professional engineer. The plans should include an attestation that (1) the design complies with separation and other construction standards, (2) any field deviations from the submitted design must be agreed to through consultation with the owners of other underground facilities or, if agreement is not possible, via a final determination rendered by the applicable licensing authority, and (3) as built plans be filed with the commission within a reasonable time following completion of construction.

The inquiry asked if the Commission should recommend legislative action. Many have responded that comprehensive construction standards need to be in statute, for good reason. Municipalities are the licensing authority for those public ways under their authority. Unfortunately, the nature and extent of oversight being provided by municipalities varies greatly and in some situations is virtually nonexistent.

At a recent MWUA Board meeting, the Directors made it very clear that the protections we need should be statewide and they should be in law. M&WEA Govern-

ment Affairs Co-chair Tim Haskell has been following these issues and has commented before that legislation would be needed to afford the protection necessary.

We recommended a 6-foot minimum horizontal clearance and a 2-foot minimum vertical clearance be maintained between gas mains and other underground structures. We recommended that where gas mains must cross other facilities, the angle of crossing be as close as 90 degrees as possible. Concerning tracer wire, we recommended that it be of an adequate gauge and that documentation be provided confirming that the tracer wire has been successfully tested post-installation for continuity.

The other recommendation we offered was that all owners of underground facilities be notified when current is applied to steel gas mains. That recommendation was the result of learning that it is standard practice to apply voltage to steel gas transmission mains in order to provide corrosion protection for the pipe.

For months, the associations have been attempting to pass more comprehensive gas line design and installation standards. During the last session of the Legislature we attempted to introduce a bill to do that. Unfortunately, that effort was blocked. On October 24th both associations were able to meet with Johnathan Nass, a senior aide to Governor LePage, and discussed the need for stricter gas line separation rules and that legislation might be necessary. He indicated he'd be briefing Patrick Woodcock, Director of the State's Energy Office, on this issue and indicated his understanding of the need to get better controls over installations.

Our initial concerns were based on the need for adequate separation of gas infrastructure from our buried facilities so that we can utilize trench boxes to access and repair facilities. The major issue was, essentially, one of cost. Frankly, the cost implications are of concern only to us. We have seen what can happen when inadequate separation and construction standards are not complied with. The fact that the risks are not being managed well is becoming increasingly obvious. It is now

Cont'd on page 9

# WEFTECH from the OPS Challenge View

By Matt Timberlake, Ted Berry Co.

At the 2014 WEFTEC conference in New Orleans, Louisiana I had the honor of being a judge for the national operations challenge event. Having never been involved in the event and only seeing them from outside the boundaries at previous regional events like NEWEA and at a previous WEFTEC, I had no idea just how impressive an event this really is.

I was a judge for one of the collection system stations covering the Pipe Assessment and Certification Program (PACP) segment of the test as well as helping with general setup, scoring, timing, and oversight of the rules for each team. We were responsible for division II teams and this year there were a significant number of first time teams which made the event extra fun for me as I was able to share my first event with operators from all over the US, Canada, and Argentina.

The collections system event consists of each team repairing a section of 8" PVC sewer main that has running water in it with a new section of pipe, a saddle connection, and flexible couplings as well as taking a PACP condition assessment test. The rules are very stringent and focus on safety, following directions, and the quality of the work. The scoring system rewards teams that plan well, communicate effectively, and work together as a team. We had three judges for each challenge and I was lucky to have Jeff Sober from the Texas WEA as a lead judge. Jeff has a lot of experience in the event and I also got a lot of help from all of the collection systems judging team. Laurie Perkins from Wright Pierce in New Hampshire was the coordinator for the overall collections system event, which took a ton of work leading up to and during WEFTEC.

One of the best parts of the event was seeing all the creative team names, logos, jerseys, and hard hats as well as the unique way each team goes about their challenge. Some of the notable team names were the Brown Trout, Motley Poo, the Sewer Rats, and my favorite FORCE MAINE. Being from Maine, I was unable to be a judge for our own team, as is the rule for all judges.



Some of the judges and staff needed to pull off OPS Challenge at WEFTECH



Matt Timberlake either scoring the event or trying to score the answers.

I had the opportunity to spend an hour or two over the weekend leading up to the event with some of the Force Main team members and it was obvious how passionate the team is and how truly valuable this event is to everyone involved personally and professionally. The Maine team has learned things they never would have learned in their daily jobs that make them better operators and allow them to see, network, and learn from their peers locally, regionally through NEWEA events, and nationally at WEFTEC. They are genuinely appreciative of the support received from

the managers and utilities that they work for as well as MEWEA and NEWEA.

In short, for me, I probably learned as much as anyone at the event and met some awesome people that I hope to stay in touch with throughout my career. I will have my hand up first next year when they ask for volunteers. If you have never been, or have never heard about the event, take a minute and look it up. Oh yeah, and the little team from Maine won first place in division II for process control!!

## PUC Inquiry cont'd

evident that safety needs to be a primary concern as well.

Hopefully, the time is right for change. The PUC inquiry is an opportunity to advocate for improvements and we will take advantage of that. It is likely that we will be submitting legislation during the soon-to-commence 127th Maine Legislature.

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# Update on the “Save Your Pipes” Campaign

By Aubrey Strause, 2014 MēWEA President (Verdant Water, PLLC)

This year, MēWEA worked with the Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry (INDA; the wipes manufacturer’s trade association) to develop the first public/private public education campaign on the topic of baby wipes: “Save Your Pipes: Don’t Flush Baby Wipes”. As I wrap up my year as President, I wanted to give you an update on how the campaign concluded.

Results of the campaign itself were mixed. We compared both the public’s understanding (measured by detailed market research) and the observed number of baby wipes (measured by picking through sewage), pre-and post-campaign. Despite the huge investment of time and financial resources, and the awards we received for the campaign, in truth, we only saw temporary, limited improvement. This reinforced MēWEA’s position that the message “Do Not Flush” needs to stay in front of consumers as improved labeling.

Communication after the campaign ended is even more frustrating. MēWEA and INDA originally agreed that a toolkit would be created so we could make the files available to other utilities across the country, and that INDA would share results with its members to improve their packaging. However, since we wrapped up the campaign April, no toolkit has been produced and INDA has re-focused its efforts on national and international projects about wipes. INDA is not interested in talking about putting a prominent “Do Not Flush” message on baby wipe packages. The [SaveYourPipes.org](http://SaveYourPipes.org) website is registered to INDA and will

expire sometime in December; we don’t know if this will be transferred to our partners at NACWA, or not. MēWEA is due to submit a report to the Maine legislature when it convenes in December, and it’s still to-be-determined what that report will say or recommend. I presented on the campaign at WEFTEC in New Orleans this year, but little excitement seems to have been generated.

The good news is that thanks to volunteers, we’ve converted some of the graphic design files the marketing firm produced to files that YOU can customize and use! These are available on the MēWEA website at [www.mewe.org/pump-clog-resources/outreach-materials-dont-flush-baby-wipes-campaign/](http://www.mewe.org/pump-clog-resources/outreach-materials-dont-flush-baby-wipes-campaign/). If you have InDesign and are able to help convert other files, please contact me!

I can also get the high-resolution TV advertisement (the “What the Flush?” game show) files to you for use on your local cable access channel or TV station. Email me at [aubrey@verdantwater.com](mailto:aubrey@verdantwater.com) to get these- they’re too big to put on our website. In the last few weeks, cities in Wyoming, Texas, and Hawaii have put these on their cable channels, and so has the island of Martha’s Vineyard.

Many districts in Maine have already been using these materials, so despite my frustrations at a lackluster conclusion to a campaign that took a huge amount of time and energy, I am proud of the campaign and all of the people who worked on it. Many thanks to those of you who donated to the campaign, helped us sort wipes, helped spread the word, or otherwise supported MēWEA with this project! 🌊

# Think You Don’t Qualify To Be Part of the MēWEA Young Professionals? Think Again.

By Paula Drouin, Lewiston – Auburn Water Pollution control Authority

We often joke that you don’t have to be young or professional to work with our committee, but there is actually a serious point to that statement. The perception seems to be that our group is just for the younger members in the association, but that could not be further from the truth. We need a balance of new and experienced members, of all ages, to make our committee function. There are a lot of opportunities to help brainstorm, and carry out projects and events. One big change for 2015 is that Dustin Price will take over the YP Chair position, and I will be focusing more on being the Social Media/Website Coordinator. I will still be working closely with the committee because we do a lot of great things!

Here’s are some things we’ve been up to this year: Portland Greenfest (eco festival) - We staffed the MēWEA booth and spoke to the public about our Association.



Booth set up with imhof cones comparing influent waste water treated effluent and tap water.



Some of the young professionals staffing the MēWEA booth

- Urban runoff 5k race and festival - Some of us ran, some of us walked, and some of us staffed the MēWEA booth.
  - Paddle After Hours – we got together in Auburn for paddling on the Androscoggin and a gathering at Gritty’s.
  - Creating career opportunity pamphlets for use at job fairs.
  - Mentoring program, vendor raffle, and golf tournament putting contest at the fall convention
  - We had 6 meetings where we discussed and planned all of these events.
- Please contact Dustin ([dustin\\_price77@yahoo.com](mailto:dustin_price77@yahoo.com)) if you are interested in getting involved or have any questions. 🌊

**Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)  
Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC)**

Revised 9/29/14

**Climate Change Adaptation for Wastewater Treatment Facilities**

**Purpose:** Educate POTWs on tools available to predict potential cumulative damages to wastewater infrastructure from sea level rise and storm surge, and evaluate relative costs and benefits of adaptation strategies.

**Location:** Saco City Hall, 300 Main Street

**Date:** Wednesday, December 3, 2014

**Final Agenda:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
8:00 – 8:30 (30 min)	JETCC	Registration
8:30 – 9:30 (60 minutes)	Peter Slovinsky, Coastal Geologist, Maine Geological Survey	How Municipalities are Approaching Sea Level Rise and Increased Storm Surges/Availability of State Mapping Resources
9:30 – 10:45 (75 minutes)	Dr. Sam Merrill, Catalysis Adaptation Partners, LLC	Benefit-cost analysis and engineering design: what wastewater managers need to know to respond to sea level rise and storm surge.
10:45 – 11:00 (15 min)	BREAK	BREAK
11:00 – 12:00 (60 minutes)	Jon Edgerton, P.E., Wright-Pierce	Benefit-cost analysis and engineering design: what wastewater managers need to know to respond to sea level rise and storm surge. (continued)
12:00 – 12:30 (30 min)	LUNCH	LUNCH
12:30 – 1:15 (45 minutes)	Phil Pickering, Ogunquit POTW Ed Leonard, P.E., Wright-Pierce	The Municipal Experience
1:15 – 2:00 (45 minutes)	John Murphy, NEIWPC	New TR-16 standards for Climate Change Adaptation
2:00 – 2:15 (15 min)	BREAK	BREAK
2:15 – 2:30 (15 min)	Gina Snyder, EPA	Overview of EPA tools available for assessing and coordinating response to climate impacts.
2:30 – 3:30 (60 minutes)	Panel/Open discussion with attendees: All speakers; Brian Kavanah, John True – DEP; Aubrey Strause, MeWEA; Kirsten Hebert, MRWA	What is the best role for the State/DEP in advancing these types of evaluations and adaptations?

**MAINE WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION  
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# Maine Water Environment **NEWS**

## **FALL 2014 ISSUE**

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