

# Maine Water Environment NEWS



May 2015 • Spring

A Publication of the Maine Water Environment Association

1-800-452-8786

## MEWEA Rules the Run Off 5K

By Paula Drouin, LAWPCA and new media chair

Our members really stepped up and we had the best turnout yet. There were about 20 people who joined our team, securing our second year as the largest non-profit team. We had a great turnout at the Urban Runoff 5k and Green Neighbor Family Fest again this year. The event raises funds for clean water education, which allows students to take part in hands-on learning about Maine's water environment. Thank you to all who participated this year, I am proud that our association was represented so well. ●



The MEWEA team with a few Saco interlopers again rocked in Portland

## 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! ●

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

## Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:

**June 19** Monthly Meeting -  
Maine Municipal Association  
- Augusta

**July 17** Monthly Meeting -  
Maine Municipal Association  
- Augusta

# Spring Conference Held in Auburn

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Editor

Your Maine Water Environment Association held our first spring conference under the banner of our new name at the Hilton Garden Inn in Auburn on April 17. Along with the creation of two new committees (see associated articles) we were pleased to host Mister and Missus Fish (aka Jeff and Deb Sandler of South Portland) at the Fairview School. As always the kids loved the entertaining and educational program that NEWEA was able to offer to us due to the cancellation of the show that was originally scheduled for the NEWEA Conference in Boston (so there was a bright side to the blizzard of 2015 after all!) Many attendees commented on the picturesque view of Great Falls through the picture windows of the hotel. Among the interesting and informative sessions were discussions of growing Kelp in Maine

waters and their possible role in nitrogen uptake, a two part math review with MEWEA's own Phyllis Rand, a discussion of the case to made for integrating storm water management with wastewater services and even drinking water supply, and a look at compliance inspections and audits from DEP staffers Jim Crowley and Clarissa Trasko. That last pair had a few surprises for the audience in terms of the secret lives of Maine DEP staff. For example, who once rode a bull in an actual rodeo? And, which DEP staffer once had a roller derby career as "Bunny Valentine?" (answers: Gregg Wood and Yvette Meunier. Ah! Those permit writers are a wild and crazy bunch!). Join us this fall when we head back to Sunday River for more fun and education with MEWEA September 16-18! 🌊



Celeste Beaudet and Katy Grondin from the Auburn School Department pose with Matt Timberlake, Peter Goodwin and Mr. and Mrs. Fish



The "Star" of the show has the kids in rapt attention

# ON MY SOAPBOX: The Operator Personality

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter 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.**


In the course of my work life, I have come to the conclusion that people working at wastewater treatment plants are some of the nicest people on the planet. I don't think I am making this up, or fabricating this notion just because I am one! Truly it has been my experience that people working in this business are routinely more helpful and forthcoming than the population at large. If this is, indeed, the case, why would it be so, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of the “operator personality”?

First, I will offer that a certain humility and willingness to serve others kind of comes with the territory when human waste is involved. There is also a measure of altruism ( unselfish concern for the welfare of others) in the idea that what we are really all about is protecting and improving the environment essential to, and enjoyed by, all humans and all creatures. Continuing along this line of thought, much of what we do involves underground assets and working out of the public eye. When all works well

everyone is happy and the treatment plant operator goes about his or her little life doing our noble, but anonymous thing. While this all has a certain charm and allure, it is becoming increasingly clear that we in the water quality realm need to be more proactive. Whether it is the occasional odor complaint, sewer main break, clogged pump station, funding struggle, or tightened effluent standard, we need to step up and speak out.

Good things are happening all around us as the articles on Brunswick's new interactive kiosk and the operator profile on Tim Haskell point out. We are also coming to recognize that keeping to ourselves operating our plant or our sewer system as a “career silo” separate and apart from storm water, solid waste, air quality, global climate change and the laws and regulations that govern each is a losing plan. Changing how we think about our jobs and how we deal with the communities we serve is not so hard, the first step is always the difficult one. Understand that you are a resource in many ways – not the least of which is as

a teacher, an advocate and a role model. If that all sounds like too much, then ask yourself: Who better to speak to issues of water quality and what it takes every day to keep our water clean? Who else is going to show school kids (and their equally uninformed parents) what real environmental commitment is? Who else can speak to the connections between clean water and healthy communities? If you are not reaching out, you are leaving yourself vulnerable to those who would paint you into a corner and maybe even accuse you of being the problem you are working every day to solve. We all know plenty more remains to be done, but it can only happen with public support – public support that you have to cultivate by getting the message of today's water treatment from well head to tap to parking lot to outfall pipe and back again out to the public.

Sometimes doing a good job under circumstances that can be cold, smelly, hot and harsh is just not enough. Good guys (and gals) need to speak up and be heard! 


## A New – New Media Committee

By Paula Drouin, LAWPCA and New Media Chair

A few years back MEWEA started a Facebook and Twitter account to provide a steady stream of content from news articles and hot topics, to upcoming training and social events. The responsibility of managing those accounts merged with that of our website, and the New Media committee was formed to oversee MEWEA's entire internet presence. The committee's efforts moving forward will be focused on improving our ability to connect with each other, and the public, by updating and expanding MEWEA's online resources.

One addition is our new photo-sharing Flickr account, which can be accessed on the main page of the MEWEA website. Having a public collection of photos is a great way to tell our story and share our history. Feel free to browse through the photos that have been posted, and if you have photos you would like added, please send them to me jpg files can be e-mailed to [pdrouin@lawpca.org](mailto:pdrouin@lawpca.org), and if you have pictures, old or new, you can give them to me to scan at any MEWEA event or mail them to me at LAWPCA ,P.O. Box

1928, Lewiston, ME 04241-1928. If you request the photo back I will send it back to you. I extend an open invite for you to send relevant stories or news articles as well. I have several other short-term goals, one being to create a page on the website for each committee so that members can learn what the functions are, who the chairperson is, and what the current happenings are. By making our committee information more accessible, we hope to generate more state-wide connectedness and member participation.

If you have questions, comments or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me. 

# Member Profile – Tim Haskell

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Editor

Although he is relatively new to the MEWEA executive committee, having taken over the Government Affairs portfolio from Doctor Dave Anderson in the last year, Tim is no stranger to the wastewater treatment biz. Prior to his fifteen years (and counting) at the York Sewer District, Tim worked in a similar capacity for the Amesbury, Massachusetts Department of Public Works. Back then when Tim was looking for cheap housing, the southern tip of Maine filled the bill, and he and his family have lived in Maine for most of the 33 years Tim has been in the environmental protection and wastewater treatment game. Tim's ability to communicate, whether with the residents receiving service, to members of the legislature, or colleagues, has always been strength of his. As Tim puts it "Reaching out to explain what, why, and how, we do what we do is really cool!" Maybe his wife and kids have rubbed off on him after all these years – both children and his wife of 34 years, Gail are teachers. Tim has "walked the walk" – connecting with schools in York, the York Water District and the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region. One tool that Tim has found useful in discussing water quality issues with kids and the public in general is the Enviroscope model (one of which the district donated to the Mt. Agamenticus Conservation Region) The model is a representation of a typical

watershed with molded mountains and surficial features. Tim explained, "you can dust the model with cocoa powder and then spray mist over the model and see what the runoff looks like. It gives a very graphic picture for people." Looking at the future for the York sewer District, Tim notes how confined the treatment plant site is (condominiums are only 100 feet outside the fence) so running the plant without generating offensive odors is always a concern, but nutrients and the challenges of ocean acidification have to be near the top of his longer term concerns. When asked about something on the lighter side, Tim recalls how one day he slipped on a manhole ring getting his foot caught under the manhole cover. The incident was a bit painful, but not serious, the following day serious laughter erupted as he came into his office to see a leg stuck in a manhole as a friendly reminder! Summing it all up, Tim noted what a great field it is that we work in. We need all kinds of people, business, mechanics, engineers, financial people – you name it!" He said with charismatic smile. 🌊

*Editor's note: MEWEA is purchasing our own Enviroscope Model which we plan to use at several public outreach events such as career fairs, the Urban Runoff 5K Green Family Festival, Earth Day events, the children's Water Festival and Portland's Greenfest.*



Where's Tim



The enviroscope model – without cocoa –did Tim drink it?

# Ken Kerri – An Enduring Legacy

Submitted by Phyllis Rand (By permission from WEF)

Kenneth D. Kerri, Water Environment Federation (WEF; Alexandria, Va.) member since 1959 and California State University, Sacramento professor, died Dec. 15 at the age of 80. Kerri's many leadership roles, long list of achievements, and vast volunteer experience in the water sector, earned him the respect and admiration of many.

"Ken was one of the, if not THE, godfathers of wastewater. He was always so humble," said Christine H. Radke, WEF member and Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF; Alexandria, Va.) research program director. Radke worked with Kerri on WEF's Collection Systems Committee. Kerri served as the first chairman of the committee from 1982 to 1984 and remained an active member through 2014. He never missed a committee meeting at WEFTEC, Radke said.

In 1977, Kerri received the WEF Collection Systems award. From 1997 to 2000, he served as committee chair of the WEF Awards committee, remaining a member of the committee through 2014. Kerri also received numerous other WEF awards and recognitions including honorary membership in 1984, the Gordon Maskew Fair Medal in 2000, and WEF Fellow in 2014. Kerri served as president of the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) from 1983 to 1984. In 1988, he received the Arthur Sydney Bedell Award from CWEA.

Ken's legacy with this organization, our industry, and I am sure all of us personally, will live on," said Paul Bishop, WEF member and Association of Boards of Certification (Ankeny, Iowa) CEO. "He was an extraordinary man and you could not help but be changed by his presence in your life."

Kerri received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Oregon State University (Corvallis), a master's degree in sanitary engineering from University of California, Berkeley, and a doctorate in sanitary engineering from Oregon State University.

Kerri worked throughout his life to educate others. He began by teaching civil and sanitary engineering at Sacramento State in 1959. While teaching in the Department of Civil Engineering, Kerri received a Distinguished Faculty Award from the university. In 1997, he became professor emeritus and retired.

In 1972, Kerri established the Sacramento State Office of Water programs, a national training program for operators and managers of water sector facilities.

"[Kerri] remained active with WEF and CWEA training events, both via presentations and in networking activities," said Bruce Corwin, WEF member and president of The Corwin Group Inc. (Fresno, Calif.). Corwin served on the CWEA Sacramento section board with Kerri for more than 6 years.

"His professional association mentoring included work with student groups, as he inspired new generations of wastewater professionals," Corwin said.

Kerri contributed to books that provide training for wastewater professionals. In 2005, more than one million of these operator training manuals had been sold to more than 250,000 operators, adopted as textbooks in more than 300 colleges and universities, and translated into 12 different languages, Corwin said. "His analogous series of texts for water supply systems have been critical to wastewater education."

Kerri also served as project director for operator training programs, water distribution systems, wastewater collection systems, municipal and industrial wastewater treatment and reclamation facilities, pretreatment facility inspection, and utility management. Recently he acted as senior advisor on a project to train and license water and wastewater sector operators in Jordan, a project that has been expanded throughout the Middle East, Corwin said.

As a professional consulting engineer, Kerri provided consulting services for cities, counties, special districts, states, federal governments, universities, industries, and engineering firms, Corwin said. His achievements also earned him honorary membership to the American Water Works Association (Denver) and the President's Award for Outstanding Service from the Association of Boards of Certification (Ankeny, Iowa).

Chuck Weir, WEF member and owner of Weir Technical Services (Pleasanton, Calif.), first met Kerri while working at the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB; Sacramento, Calif.) when Weir served as executive director for the State of California's Water Quality Control Institute (WQCI). "We served together on an Advisory Board for the SWRCB for Operator Certification and Training," Weir said. "He had recently begun to publish his operator training manuals. I was a trainer for the state and used his materials in the classes taught by WQCI ... He was responsible for developing training manuals on a variety of subjects in the water and wastewater sector."

Kerri's contributions to the water sector carry on through his work, the programs he started, the educational materials he contributed to, as well as the Ken Kerri Endowment Fund. Sacramento State established the fund in 2009 to honor Kerri's contributions to the university. It supports an annual grant to civil engineering faculty research.



**Maine Water Environment NEWS** is a quarterly publication of the Maine Water Environment Association. (Publication months: Feb, May, Aug, Nov) Comments on the content in this publication should be addressed to: MeWEA, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

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

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# Smart Kiosk – Interactive in Brunswick

By Leonard Blanchette, Brunswick Sewer District

In what may be a first in the country, the staff of the Brunswick Sewer District (BSD) created an interactive poster and video of the Water Treatment Cycle that incorporates smart phone technology. A 13 minute video was filmed, edited, and narrated by BSD staff. The video begins with a typical household internal plumbing system that has been animated to show potable (clean) water going in and waste water going out. The viewer is then guided on the journey waste water takes through the public sewer system on its way to, and through, the treatment plant. The video covers, through actual clips, various parts of the BSD collection system; including pipes, manholes, and pump stations. Once the flow reaches the treatment plant, the viewer is shown sequential processes the water goes through as it is treated at the District's 3.85 million-gallon-per-day basic primary treatment and trickling filter secondary treatment processes. Treated water then flows through to the outfall into the Androscoggin River.

What is more amazing than the video is the interactive poster that staff created. The poster features a QR code at each station of the video that allows anyone with a smartphone to scan the corresponding code to view a short (1 to 2 minute) video of the featured portion of the water treatment cycle.

The poster is designed so that it can be provided to area schools, mounted in public buildings, and anywhere else convenient for public viewing. A kiosk was constructed by the staff at the District's Water Street Pumping Station next to a highly used walking and biking path along the Androscoggin River. The pump station's fence was repositioned to provide space for the kiosk and two wooden benches. This provides a quiet resting spot for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists using the popular walk-



Kiosk and Benches along the popular Androscoggin walking/biking Path



Kiosk close up shows how the public can scan QR codes to view parts of wastewater treatment process and the water cycle

ing/biking path.

This project was fully supported by the District's Board of Trustees as part of an ongoing program to educate and inform District rate payers and the public at-large about the workings of the municipal sewer system and its importance to the community. A no less important benefit is how the project showcases the quality of BSD staff and the work they do each day to operate and maintain the system.

This project was the brainchild of the District's assistant general manager, Robert Pontau, Jr., P.E. and is part of our employee goals program. He managed the project giving staff the tools, equipment, software - and most important – the confidence, to plan the project, script the message, film the episodes, edit, and narrate the video. The creativity of the staff soon became apparent as this group effort became a real educational asset for the Brunswick area and the Androscoggin River.

**BRUNSWICK SEWER DISTRICT WATER TREATMENT CYCLE**

To learn more about Brunswick Sewer District and the treatment process, download a QR code reader and scan the QR codes on the outside of this cycle circle. Visit us online at [www.brunswicksewer.org](http://www.brunswicksewer.org) and [facebook.com/brunswicksewer](https://www.facebook.com/brunswicksewer)

**BRUNSWICK SEWER DISTRICT**

The Brunswick Sewer District Waste Water Treatment Plant was built in 1967 and it was the first wastewater plant located on the Androscoggin River. There are currently 19 licensed dischargers that discharge to the Androscoggin.

Brunswick started with a small sewer system in 1894. In 1894 the wastewater was removed from the town and ended up in the river untreated. The original charter of the Brunswick Sewer District was adopted in 1947. In 1991 Brunswick went from a primary treatment plant to a secondary wastewater treatment plant. Now there are 63 miles of pipe and 1100 manholes.

If you are just starting down the bike path look to your right, across Rt. 1, around the 0.75 - 1 mile markers, you will see the generic domes of the trickling filters and secondary clarifiers at the treatment plant.

Interactive Poster-The public scans a QR code to view that segment or the entire video on their smart phone. The center photo is of the waste water treatment plant.

# Eighth Annual MEWEA/NHWPCA Ski Day –Another Resounding Success!

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Editor

This year's ski day was held at Sunday River and judging by the grinning faces, it was day of good people, good times, and good trails. Nearly 60 skiers and boarders (yes we allow snow boarders and a growing cadre of telemark "free heelers" to participate). David Madsen, the event coordinator, was able to get Sunday River to give us a special Friday deal that included a ticket to one of New England's premier ski areas with a terrific lunch, après ski munchies and a beer for just \$47.00! At that price it is near impossible to go wrong! (Although, come to think of it, it is rumored that Matt Timberlake found a wrong turn and blasted into a random pile of wood chips at the end of the day.) We were pleased to welcome Ned Beecher, NEBRA director, to his first ski day. Ned had to take the award for vintage equipment with a pair of leather telemark ski boots that could have been original equipment for the 10th Mountain Division's World War II ski training. A few members brought along their spouses and/or kids. We are always happy to see the next generation enjoy the slopes as long as they give up their beer tickets to a responsible adult! Thanks to all who made the day this year, if you have not been to a ME/NH ski day, come on and see what you have been missing! 🌊



Not even this gang of rogues can ruin this view.



Which of these would you bet on to win the giant slalom?

## Mac's Mathematical Minutia

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Editor

Most everyone knows that if you want to report how many pounds of, say  $BOD_5$ , was discharged in a day when the flow through a treatment plant was 1.4 mgd and the effluent  $BOD_5$  concentration was 16 mg/L, one simply multiplies 1.4 times 16 times 8.34 to get 186.8 pounds. But did you ever wonder why 8.34? If you look at the units the answer becomes obvious. The following example using 1 mgd, and 1 mg/l may help:

$$1 \text{ mgd} = 1,000,000 \text{ gallons/day}$$

$$1 \text{ lb} = 0.4536 \text{ kg}$$

$$1 \text{ kg} = 1,000,000 \text{ mg}$$

$$1 \text{ gallon} = 3.785 \text{ liters}$$

Putting this altogether and cancelling units:

$$1,000,000 \text{ gallons/day} * 1 \text{ mg/L} * 3.785 \text{ liters/gallon} * 1 \text{ Lb}/0.4536 \text{ kg} * 1 \text{ kg}/1,000,000 \text{ mg} = 8.34 \text{ lb/day}$$

So, cancelling units:

$$1,000,000 \text{ gallons/day} * 1 \text{ mg/liter} * 3.785 \text{ liter/gallon} * 1 \text{ Lb}/0.4536 \text{ kg} * 1 \text{ kg}/1,000,000 \text{ mg} =$$

$$8.34 \text{ lb/day}$$

Units are important, because by showing the units (the way we measure things be it pounds, grams, cubic feet or liters) conversions to other units and expressions become clear. Thus it may be helpful to consider this conversion factor to carry the units

$$\text{Liter} - \text{pound}/ \text{milligram} - \text{million gallon}$$

That way the units can be cancelled as in the original example,

$$1.4 \text{ million gallons/day} * 16 \text{ milligrams/liter} * 8.34 \text{ liter} - \text{pound}/ \text{milligram} - \text{million gallon} =$$

$$186.8 \text{ pounds/day.}$$

# Update on National Efforts to Address Wipes

By Aubrey Strause, P.E., Verdant Water, PLLC

Over the last few years, Scott Firmin and I have been providing updates about what we're doing here in Maine to tackle the issue of wipes in the sewers, and what's happening at a national level. If you need a refresher, see the February 2011, May 2012, August 2012, February 2013, May 2013, August 2013, February 2014, May 2014, August 2014, and November 2014 newsletter issues on the MEWEA website ([www.mewea.org/newsletter](http://www.mewea.org/newsletter))!

So far, 2015 is the busiest year we've seen, on this topic.

## Let's start with some good news.

Some big name manufacturers, like Kimberly-Clark (see a brand-new Huggies package, below) and Nice-Pak (which packages wipes sold as several store brands, including Costco's Kirkland baby wipes and Wal-Mart's Parent's Choice baby wipes) have stepped up and voluntarily placed a "Do Not Flush" message permanently and more prominently on baby wipe packages. These companies should be applauded for these packaging improvements, as small as they may seem: it's taken years and years of consistent pressure to make these changes happen.

PHOTO 1



1: The "Do Not Flush" message on this baby wipe is permanently on the package, and will be seen by the consumer each time they remove a wipe.

Two technical workgroups (both stemming from the Flushability Technical Workgroup that Scott Firmin participated in last year) are developing to find solutions to these challenges:

The first workgroup is developing the Fourth Edition of the wipes manufacturers association's (INDA's) Flushability Assessment Guidelines, actively involving two representatives of wastewater associations and many representatives from INDA in that discussion. This is the first time the wastewater associations have been invited to participate in defining what "flushable" means. This group has been meeting for months, is making good progress, and has a June 2016 deadline.

A second workgroup, still being negotiated, would seek to improve compliance with putting a consistent, prominent "Do Not Flush" message on products that don't meet the definition (in the new Fourth Edition) for "flushable". There is currently

very poor compliance with disposal instructions on baby wipe, cleaning wipe, etc... packages, even from big-name companies. This workgroup is predominantly comprised of industry representatives (~ 20 people), and package labeling has been a major hurdle in past years, so it's not yet clear if this workgroup has enough support to continue- I'll be sure to update you either way. If it does move forward, I will participate on behalf of MEWEA as one of four hands-on wastewater representatives; thanks very much to the MEWEA Executive Committee for its commitment to support me!

Both workgroups involve representatives of NACWA, WEF, APWA, and INDA. You can learn more about these two collaborations from the press release at [news.wef.org/associations-collaborate-to-address-wipes-flushability](http://news.wef.org/associations-collaborate-to-address-wipes-flushability).

A third major effort- the development of a global ISO standard for flushability- is also in progress, featuring representatives of the water quality associations and wipes manufacturers on each continent. This group met the week of May 4 in London, Ontario, Canada, and has made real progress.

MEWEA and INDA are jointly sending the Final Report from our 2013-2014 "Save Your Pipes: Don't Flush Baby Wipes" Pilot Public Education Campaign to the Maine Legislature's Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources. I'll post the Final Report on our campaign page, [www.mewea.org/dont-flush-baby-wipes-pilot-education-campaign](http://www.mewea.org/dont-flush-baby-wipes-pilot-education-campaign), once it's been submitted. Don't forget, this is also where you can go to download the materials we created as part of this campaign, many of them customizable with your Town/utility name, logo, and contact information.

On May 1, California hosted a "What 2 Flush" Summit, co-sponsored by the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) and Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works (SCAP). Information and perspectives from Maine were incorporated into presentations by our west-coast partners at the Orange County Sanitation District and the Central Contra Costa Sanitation District (both in California). This is another example of how what we've learned in Maine can benefit many other organizations, and vice versa.

Finally, NEIWPC is developing another intensive workshop on wipes, thanks to positive feedback on the May 2014 workshop hosted in Chelmsford, MA (and co-sponsored by NH DES, USEPA Region 1, NEWEA, New England APWA, and many state associations). This workshop will be located in Connecticut and will likely be held in late summer or early fall.

## Now for the bad news.

In March 2015, the first baby wipe marketed as "flushable" hit store shelves (see the picture, below): a message contrary to the expensive, time-consuming "Don't Flush Baby Wipes" campaign INDA and MEWEA implemented in Maine!! The new "flushable" baby wipe also isn't dispersible, and many water quality professionals who have tested it agree that it should not be called "flushable".

Cont'd on page 9



PHOTO 2



Figure 2: This product is the first baby wipe labeled “flushable” to be sold in the United States.

Wastewater representatives agree that it is NOT dispersible.

Maine proposed legislation this year, LD 397 (“An Act Regarding the Packaging and Labeling of Disposable Cleaning and Personal Hygiene Products”). MEWEA wasn’t involved in the development of this legislation, which failed due to opposition from manufacturers, retailers, and Maine DEP, with claims from those stakeholders that a state standard or label would discriminate against interstate commerce and be hard to enforce. This mirrors the outcome of LD 781 (“An Act to Establish Flushability Stan-

dards for Consumer Products Advertised as Flushable”) in January 2012. No other states are presently considering similar legislation, although New York City’s City Council is considering a standard for products labeled “flushable” that are sold in the city. Efforts to address this on a local basis will be challenged vigorously by the industry association.

Frustratingly, many articles on this topic in major media outlets still feature operators and superintendents referring to the wipes clogging their pumps as “flushable wipes”, when in fact they’re probably baby wipes, cleaning wipes, or other wipes. This misuse of the word “flushable” confuses the issue for the public and takes education and enforcement energy away from the baby wipe (etc) products. Don’t forget that we post links to these articles on [www.mewea.org/wipes-in-the-news/](http://www.mewea.org/wipes-in-the-news/) if you want to see for yourself.

These examples demonstrate just how much work we have yet to do.


If you want to learn more about what’s happening beyond Maine, you can visit the following resources:

New England Water Environment Association’s (NEWEA’s) Position Paper on Non-Dispersibles: [www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Non-Dispersibles.pdf](http://www.newea.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Non-Dispersibles.pdf)

National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA): [www.nacwa.org/flushables/](http://www.nacwa.org/flushables/) and blog, [blog.nacwa.org/tag/wipes/](http://blog.nacwa.org/tag/wipes/)

Water Environment Federation (WEF): [news.wef.org/tackling-the-wipes-in-the-pipes-wef-wide/](http://news.wef.org/tackling-the-wipes-in-the-pipes-wef-wide/)

INDA: [www.inda.org/issues-advocacy/flushability/](http://www.inda.org/issues-advocacy/flushability/)

Stay tuned here for future updates. 

## Mark Your Calendars! 2015 Events

- June. 1-6** Maine Clean Water Week
- Aug. 6** Paddle After Hours – Great Falls, Auburn
- Sept. 12** Portland Greenfest
- Sept. 16-18** MEWEA Fall Convention–Sunday River, Newry

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 MEWEA we are always interested in receiving material and will make every effort to incorporate your submissions.

# 2015 North Country Convention

By Dan Bicknell, Freeport Sewer District and MEWEA Membership Committee Chair

In August, I will have completed my 20<sup>th</sup> year in the wastewater field. Currently I work for, and I am the Superintendent of, the Freeport Sewer District, on the coast. I have been to Western Maine for classes and seminars. In Southern Maine, I attended safety classes and technical sessions at facilities. I attended management candidate classes in Portland. In Central Maine, I attended filament identification classes. The only conventions that I ever attended were the ones that were fairly close to me. That ended this spring when I had the opportunity to attend the North Country Convention, in Presque Isle, Maine, on April 1 and 2.

I arrived at the Presque Isle Inn and Convention Center the night before the event started. I liked the long drive from Freeport. When I got there, I overheard some operators asking each other if they noticed how many deer were eating on the sunny side of hills and knolls along the highway. I noticed that too...because the shady side still had six feet of snow on them!

I heard that the Pub menu was pretty good so that was my first stop. Several early birds were already there. Some folks were still setting up booths in the function room while others were networking and swapping stories.

The next morning I went down to the function room for Day 1. The room was buzzing with vendors and operators checking in. Everyone seemed to be happy to see one another. The vendors all had shiny new equipment and operators gathered to check out the materials and presentations.

The welcome and opening remarks began a full day having twelve technical sessions. Too bad it's only possible to attend four! I went to "Instrumentation and SCADA" with Don Kennedy of NEIWPC, and "Wastewater Certification Update" with Maine DEP's Judy Bruenjes in the morning. The lunch break included a keynote speaker, Maine DEP Commissioner Patricia Aho. The hot meal was substantial and smorgasbord style. I sat with folks from the area who worked with apartment complex water systems and engineers who grew up together but had not been reunited since high school. It was fun to be included in all the conversations.

I was worried I ate too much knowing I had to sit through two afternoon sessions. "ORP and Wastewater Treatment Part 1", might not sound like a session that would keep you awake after lunch, with a full belly, but ...yes it did! Michael Gerardi, Wastewater Microbiologist, is a fascinating speaker. We do not have a chance to learn from him very often. I was fortunate to sit in on Part 1, and- after a ten minute break- Part 2, the last session of the day. We were honored to have Michael speak for us. Next time you have the chance, take in one of his sessions- I think you will enjoy it.

I was still full from lunch and was headed out for a walk when the next thing I knew, a small group of colleagues invited me to join them at an Irish-style restaurant just down the street. I did laugh to think of an Irish pub was in Presque Isle. Our waitress had a French accent. We ate well and swapped stories and laughs. Having dinner with folks that I have never sat down before, but have so much in common with, is pretty special.

The second day of the convention, I hurried down stairs to the exhibit area. E.J. Prescott sponsored a huge breakfast ... once again I ate too much. I took my coffee and had to choose from fifteen different topic sessions this day. I chose "Piping Failures in Chemical Feed Systems" with Joe Duming and "Bio Augmentation", again by Michael Gerardi, for my morning sessions. I think I will be calling Joe for help with out piping system when I need to re-plumb my hypochlorite tanks. His session addressed a problem that I have observed for years...in time, glued joints leak when hypo passes through them... always!

I used to think that adding bugs to your system was a waste of money. We joke and call them "bugs in a bag." I thought it was a scam or something. I learned at the North Country Convention that it can work- really work!- if you know what you are doing and add the correct augmentation at the correct time. Michael Gerardi offered several examples of how it can work and why it doesn't when you don't do it right. I guess I need a more open mind.


The lunch break was a buffet style. We had more than enough to choose from.

The Keynote speakers included 2015 MEWEA President Tom Connolly and Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) 2015 President Alan Hitchcock. Jeff McNelly from MWUA gave us a legislative update.

After lunch, I sat in on "Why O&M Manuals and SOP's" with Scott Firmin from the Portland Water District. I learned that keeping an updated SOP and O&M library is not only required by our Maine DEP, but also really makes sense for when we pass the baton to the next generation of wastewater workers. For an example, Scott showed us how another operator, Stacy Thompson from Saco, Maine, has provided SOP's and O&M manuals for her facility.

The last session of the day was called, "Hands-on Microscope Analysis" with Pete Sherwood of Kennebec Sanitary Treatment District and June Mooney from Greater Augusta Utility District. Pete and June are both operators that I have called on to help me with process questions and situations. I am impressed that they went to The County to share with our friends from the north what they have learned during their careers. Kudos!

This was the first time I attended the North Country Convention, and I came away with a very good feeling. Our operators in the North are proud and accomplished. I saw, and participated in, a standing ovation for a retiring operator at lunch time. Everybody there, but me, knew who he was. I *should* know him. The respect by so many for him was heartfelt. I talked to Presque Isle's Gilles St. Pierre. I always talk to Gil, everyone knows Gil. He travels south to attend many MEWEA events and training sessions. I saw Roger Gagnon from Bangor: it has been a while, Roger and I attended the wastewater class that Tony Gordon taught. Robert Dunbar from Madawaska shared with me his experience with non-flushable wipes. He documented the rise of number of plugged pumps over the years. He has to deal with these issues the same as we do in southern Maine.

Maine is a big, beautiful State. If you get a chance to go to the next North Country Convention (in 2017) you should go- I will introduce you to some folks that I met! 

# MEWEA's New Stormwater Committee

By Aubrey Strause, P.E., Verdant Water, PLLC

At the MEWEA Spring Conference on Friday, April 17 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Auburn, the association's membership voted to approve changing the Bylaws to include two permanent new committees. One of these is the Stormwater Committee, which had been functioning as an Ad-Hoc Committee.

The Stormwater Committee's function shall be:

"To advance understanding of how the implementation of stormwater infrastructure best management practices and policies contribute to the protection and restoration of water resources; to promote efficient and effective water resources protection strategies by integrating key common interest areas for stormwater and wastewater infrastructure management."

Many thanks to Fred Dillon (South Portland Water Resource Protection Department), Zach Henderson (Woodard & Curran), and Robyn Saunders (Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District) for their work to get this committee up and running.

The group's next steps are to hone in on what the committee should focus on, identify communication or knowledge gaps around the state, and educate existing MEWEA members and other associations about the resources that the Committee can provide. The Committee will sponsor at least one session at the MEWEA 2015 Fall Convention.

You can learn more about the duties of the Stormwater Committee- and contact Fred, Zach, or me if you're interested in getting involved!- by visiting our page on the MEWEA website, [www.mewe.org/stormwater-committee](http://www.mewe.org/stormwater-committee)

Heroes come in many forms, shapes and sizes, but as the old saying goes, "you know the worth of water when the well is dry". The paragraph below was recently printed in the Lewiston Sun Journal, and while it is now fashionable to remember and celebrate world war two heroes (as we should), taking care of our hidden infrastructure becomes a pressing issue and a case of heroism when it fails. In a small way each of us are heroes in what we do – day in and day out!

## LOOKING BACK

### 100 years ago, 1915

One of the most inspiring incidents in Auburn happened in front of the residence of Dr. B. G. W. Cushman on Goff street. In some way the sewer became clogged and the street was flooded with water. As there were no city workmen in sight the doctor donned his rain coat and rubbers and undertook the job of cleaning up things generally. With pick and spade, with hoe and crowbar he worked away

like a Trojan until he discovered the proper outlet into the sewer and prevented further annoyance and damage. He was as wet as a drowning man, but manfully he stuck to his task and completed the job. The other men in that vicinity carefully watched the Herculean labors of the doctor from their cozy homes and are now loud in their praise of his fidelity to duty.

### 50 years ago, 1965

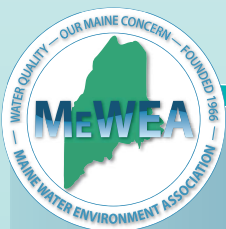
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# Maine Water Environment **NEWS**

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*please circulate and share with your colleagues*



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