MWWCA Spring Conference- Thanks!!

By Aubrey Strause, PE, Verdant Water

MWWCA’s Spring Conference was held on Friday, April 26 in South Portland, and was very well-attended- quite an accomplishment for the first sunny, warm Friday of the year!

For the first time, the Personnel Advancement Committee (PAC) included a session track dedicated to stormwater, and a review of attendee evaluations indicates this decision was a hit! The PAC will be meeting on May 21 to review Abstracts received for the Fall Convention, and will consider including additional stormwater and watershed-based technical sessions at that event, due to the success of the spring conference.

Select presentations from the Spring Conference are available on the MWWCA website (http://www.mwwca.org/?page_id=1045). If you were a presenter, and would like to make your presentation available on the website, please send it to me at aubrey@verdantwater.com.

Thanks to MMA and the Convention Committee for organizing the conference, to the PAC for coordinating the technical sessions, to all attendees, and to all the speakers who donated their time and knowledge to MWWCA: our organization is a success thanks to you!

WANTED!

Do you know someone dedicated to their job? Do they work within a wastewater or stormwater collection system? NOMINATE THEM FOR THE CHARLES PERRY AWARD! Nominations can be made by clicking on the link below. Additional information is available from Mathew Bodwell at Hydro International, 94 Hutchins Dr. Portland, ME 04102 or (207) 321-2294. http://www.mwwca.org/charles-perry-award.htm

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*For a complete Board Listing, please visit the MWWCA website at: www.mwwca.org

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:

June 21
Bangor WWTP

July 19
Augusta Country Club, Manchester
Attracting and Training the Next Generation of Operators

By Scott Firmin and Steve Sloan, Portland Water District

For decades, our industry has benefited from the service of long-term employees with a deep commitment to the mission of water quality and wastewater treatment. Wastewater operators have maintained our treatment plants, managed our pump stations, and improved water quality while supporting our communities’ economic activity. The unquestionable dedication of our workers is one of the hallmarks of the water quality industry. Many of these workers have been at it for a long time, and more and more are approaching an important milestone in their lives – the ability to retire.

Data from JETCC paints a clear picture of the situation – of the 795 or so Certified Wastewater Operators in the State of Maine, 15% or so could retire in the next few years. An alarming 50% will be eligible for retirement in the next decade or so. To place this in perspective, the state of Maine alone will see nearly 10,000 years of experience in our industry move into retirement in the next 10 to 15 years. We’re collectively facing an amazing challenge and it’s not too late to begin preparing the next class of water quality professionals.

Like any challenge, our industry is stepping up to deal with this by developing tools to help attract, train, and retain the next generation of water quality professionals.

The Management Candidate School was developed by JETCC to help develop the skills required for our upcoming leaders who will be called upon to replace Chief Operators and Superintendents. Critical skills like budgeting, personnel management, leadership, and asset management are taught during this 12-month program. This program has been working to train upcoming managers for over four years now and is expected to graduate its 75th student this September.

As an alarming majority of our long-serving operators and treatment professionals prepare for a hard-earned retirement, we’re all working to identify and attract the next generation. With tools like the JETCC Management Candidate School, training programs offered through JETCC and MWWCA, and WEF resources like the Wastewater Apprentice Program the future will be brighter than our fears.
SAFETY CORNER

Al Jellison, Safety Committee Chair

Safety Committee members are available to help with any safety questions and problems that you may have and we are in need of new members.

Ed MacDonald, Loss Control Manager MMA, and I met in 1982 when I first became active in the Association. We have been members of the Safety Committee off and on together since that time. Ed was one of the key people producing the 1983 ’ MWWCA Safety Development Guide” that was used as a basis for setting up many Safety Programs. At our recent safety meeting we discussed how much had changed, what areas of concern had changed, what was allowed, what isn’t allowed anymore, and what shouldn’t have been allowed. Hopefully all plants are beyond the initial setting up a safety program and just need refinements to their programs.

Instead of worrying about training on SCBA’s for use when connecting chlorine gas cylinders and repairs, we now have concerns about having Job Hazard Assessments for Personal Protective Equipment, lock out/ tag out (LOTO) procedures for all equipment with stored energy, Work Zone Safety/ Flagger training and so much more.

In 2005 and updated in 2010, the Maine Bureau of Labor Standards produced a Compliance Directive that was to be used as a check list for our Industry. This directive lists the written documents and training requirements that are required for facilities to remain in compliance with safety standards. A copy of this directive will be put on the MWWCA Web site or you can contact Ed or me and we will get it to you. Regardless of whether the programs and training are done by your staff, or you hire someone from the “outside” you are responsible for knowing the regulations.

In following Newsletters, a member of the Safety Committee will go through various parts of the Compliance Directive and explain what is required and will provide new ways of looking at old problems.

Some thoughts as you wait for the August Newsletter. Did you know that in the State of Maine that you need to be State Licensed to apply any pesticides at your Plant? This means that you cannot go to the hardware store or local big box store and buy a can of spray to get rid of that nest of spiders, or pellets for the bugs that are chewing on your lawns or a box of rat bait. Also, remember that if your employees work within the right of way, they have to wear the appropriate vests. This may include such activities as checking pump stations, mowing by streets or roads or even through your parking lot or site if it is used as a roadway.

ON THE MOVE

Aubrey Strause is excited to announce that she’s formed her own firm, Verdant Water, PLLC. She’ll continue to support Tata & Howard on some existing projects, and will continue to focus on wastewater collection system asset management and stormwater management and compliance. Aubrey is the 2013 Vice President of MWWCA, and is active on its Personnel Advancement and Communications Committees. She can be reached at aubrey@verdantwater.com and (207) 641-7704.

UPCOMING 2013 EVENTS:

**NEWEA Spring Meeting & Exhibition**
June 2-5 – Ocean Edge Resort, Brewster, Massachusetts

**MWWCA Golf Tournament**
September 18 – Sugarloaf/USA

**MWWCA Fall Convention**
September 19-20 – Sugarloaf/USA

**WEFTEC**
October 5-9 – Chicago, Illinois

**MMA Convention**
October 2 & 3 – Augusta Civic Center
Nominations for the David Anderson Award for Laboratory Excellence

The Laboratory Committee of Maine WasteWater Control Association is seeking nominations for the David Anderson Award. This award is given by Maine Waste Water Control Association to recognize outstanding contributions to the laboratory community. The following are the criteria for nominations:

1. Unusual initiative or performance beyond the call of duty.
2. To recognize individuals for outstanding performance, professionalism and contributions to the water quality analysis profession.
3. Employment at an educational facility laboratory, industrial commercial or municipal laboratory which performs wastewater related analysis and must have direct analytical responsibilities.
4. Only those who have not been recognized by this award before are eligible.
5. The nominee’s performance must demonstrate a commitment to high quality control standards.
6. The nominee’s perspective should be dutiful and conscientious.
7. The nominee’s actions should demonstrate a commitment to professional development; e.g. by maintaining active membership in MWWCA.
8. A demonstrated commitment to continuing education in the field of wastewater analysis, either by courses taken or presentations delivered at training sessions.

If you know of someone you would like to nominate for this award, please contact June Mooney for a nomination form. Tel. 207-623-4633, ext. 229 or email: jmooney@augustawater.org. Nominations are due by August 15, 2013.

Schultz Heads out to Pasture
Or was that just the back nine!

After over 42 years of making clean water from wastewater, one of the last originals, Tom Schultz of the Mechanic Falls Sanitary District will retire. Tom started out in this field near his Illinois birthplace as a Lift Station Maintenance Engineer in Elmhurst, Illinois back in 1972. After a stint in Cincinnati, Ohio supervising 35 package treatment plants, he moved to Mechanic Falls where he has been the Director since 1982. When Tom took over in the plant on the edge of the Little Androscoggin River, there was no SCADA system, no variable frequency drives, and dissolved oxygen meters were in their infancy. Tom has been involved with the Maine Waste Water Control Association in the biosolids area, and has often testified on issues affecting our environment before the Maine Legislature. Always interested in practical solutions, Tom advocated against unnecessary testing requirements for Maine’s treatment facilities. A decorated Vietnam Veteran, Tom’s motto of “I came, I saw, I made improvements!” will prove that his will be a difficult act to follow. An avid golfer who ran one of the state’s longest running biosolids farm application programs, the next grasslands he will be walking are bound to be in the fairway! We wish the best to Tom, and to Nick Konstantoulakis who has some pretty big spikes to fill! There will be a retirement party at the Mechanic Falls Sanitary District Office on June 26, Wednesday starting at 1:00 pm.

Nominations for Goodenow Award

The Awards Committee of Maine WasteWater Control Association is seeking nominations for the RICHARD B. GOODENOW Award. This award is given by Maine Waste Water Control Association to a treatment facility in order to recognize outstanding accomplishments in the operation and maintenance of a water pollution control facility. The following are the general qualities that determine the recipients of this award.

- Exemplary operation and maintenance of the facility
- Creativity in operations and problem solving
- A working environment that provides opportunities for personal growth
- Concern for the community
- Service to the profession
- Compliance with various permits

If you know of a facility that may be deserving of this award (including your own), please contact Mary Waring for a nomination form. Tel. 347-3609 or email mary.waring@casella.com. Nominations are due by Friday, June 28, 2013.
ON MY SOAPBOX: Comfortable Old Shoes

By Mac Richardson, Newsletter Co-Editor

Do you ever find yourself settling into old ways or routines that may not be up to current needs or may not be very effective, but because they are known and familiar you keep doing them? It is easy to fall into these “ruts” and I find myself yielding to this siren song from time to time. The antidote is to get back to basics and ask ourselves a couple of questions. What are we really trying to accomplish? Are the things that I am doing moving the ball closer to the goal?

Allow me to try to apply these thoughts to running a wastewater treatment plant (or should I say a water reclamation facility or possibly a clean water plant?). It might be tempting to say that my goal is to produce the best effluent possible with the resources at my disposal. Not bad, but this is “old shoe thinking”! Looking more carefully, who really cares? What we really want is a clean river or receiving water, a resource that is safe and healthy for fish, wildlife and people to use and enjoy. Does such a change in focus inform our decisions about where spent our time, effort and resources?

We have made great strides in Maine since the founding of the Maine Waste Water Control Association in 1966. The overwhelming majority of this improvement has come from treatment plants and sewer systems that cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build and hundreds of millions more annually to operate and maintain. Despite all of this laudable effort, at least 30 urban waterways remain officially impaired, many shell fish site remain closed and too many rivers do not meet water quality standards that they should. Do we continue to do what we have always done, a good job keeping our plants running well and putting out a good effluent waiting for the next tier of permit requirements to be mandated, or do we take off the old shoes and look a little more broadly at our mission?

If we really care about the quality of the waters of our communities, then increased performance at treatment plants will not get the job done. It is time for nonpoint source control and watershed focused approaches to the problems and issues we face. Clearly we have to maintain what we are already doing with treatment facilities (point source discharges) and improve where we can sensibly. This is not easy or comfortable, but if we are to make progress toward the goals we really want, then we have to stretch and move out of our comfort zone. Our spring conference is a good example of a small step in this direction. Excellent sessions were offered in control of runoff and how to achieve the collaboration needed to implement solutions between business (the “private sector”), local government (POTWs and Public Works) and State Regulatory Officials (DEP, and others). Other sessions focused on paying for storm water control and the difficulties associated with setting up a storm water utility.

None of these things are easy, as a matter of fact, they may be downright uncomfortable until we learn new habits and skills. But I assure you, if we are to make continued progress with the health of our rivers lakes and oceans, new thinking and new methods are going to be the order of the day.

I am aware of numerous examples where stricter limits on point sources are proposed in order to deal with water quality issues, but limits approaching and even exceeding the limits of technology will not solve the problem. One of the most common examples of this involves eutrophication, the enrichment of waters from nutrients (generally nitrogen or phosphorus or both). In many watersheds, even the complete elimination of nutrients in the discharges from point sources will not significantly improve the water quality unless and until nonpoint source contributions are greatly reduced or other means are undertaken (such as dam removal) to change the other factors associated with poor water quality.

Certainly there is a lot to think about here, and Rome wasn’t built in a day (as the old cliché goes) but one small aspect of this includes how we present ourselves to the public. Do the names we use send a too limited, or possibly even a negative, message to those that don’t know us well? New efforts and new thinking might include more positive and inclusive names. In the case of my own facility, “water pollution control authority” seems to miss the mark, and in Maine our association does a lot more than control pollution as well. The whole idea of controlling something makes it seem OK as long as it contained – don’t let that pollution get off its chain – it might bite someone! Heck, we aren’t even claiming to protect the water environment! Maybe WEF and NEWA had it right and a broader name will reflect a broader vision and greater dedication.

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 WasteWater Control Association.

In 2012 members of the MWWCA participated in the Auburn/Lewiston leg of the Androscoggin Source to the Sea canoe “after hours” paddle down the beautiful Androscoggin River. In August 2013 we will once again participate. Please contact Paula Drouin with the YP Committee or Matt Timberlake with PR Committee to participate. This will take place in August and details will be posted to MWWCA website as soon as they are available.
Who Is the Water Environment Federation?

By Aubrey Strause, PE, Verdant Water

The MWWCA Executive Committee occasionally receives feedback that we reference other organizations without explaining to members who those groups are or how they connect to MWWCA. One of these organizations is the Water Environment Federation, or WEF. I thought it would be useful to our members to share information about the group, and what they do with (and for) MWWCA.

WEF describes itself as “a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 36,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world.” It is the parent organization of the New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA), which in turn is a parent organization of MWWCA. Based in Alexandria, VA, WEF has many professional staff that support 35 different committees, ranging from ‘Air Quality and Odor Control’ to ‘Watershed Management’. WEF also has dedicated Technical Publication staff that support the development (and update) of many Manuals of Practice (MOPs), one of the more well-known of which is MOP8: Design of Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants.

In the interest of full disclosure, I have a few unique connections to WEF. I was lucky enough to intern with WEF while I was an undergraduate at Rutgers University, developing the ‘Pumps: Operation and Maintenance’ training course for operators, published on CD-ROM (back in the day before there was “an app for that”!), and on other programs. Many of the folks who mentored me during that internship are still at the organization, including Eileen O’Neill, who is WEF’s Chief Technical Officer. A former colleague, Matt Ries, leads WEF’s Technical & Educational Services department, supported by Christine Radke, who serves as liaison to the WEF Collection System Committee and who is very engaged on the issue of non-dispersibles. The WEFTEC conference, being held this fall in Chicago, is also coordinated by WEF- last year’s conference in New Orleans drew nearly 17,500 attendees! Through these outlets, WEF focuses on connecting member associations around the country with current knowledge, practices, and training opportunities.

How is MWWCA represented in WEF? Each State Member Association designates delegates to WEF, where they become part of a group referred to as the House of Delegates (HOD). Current delegates from Maine are Howard Carter and Greg Cataldo, with Phyllis Arnold Rand set to replace Greg in October 2013. One of the functions of Maine’s delegates is to connect with others from across the country (and beyond the US) to learn about issues other states are dealing with, and sharing Maine’s issues, with the goal of collecting ideas, tools, and solutions. Delegates are asked to participate in one or more work groups that focus on specific topics. Ideas are shared by these HOD work groups at focused conferences around the country, called “WEFMAX”, and in online discussion forums. Recently, an issue picked up by the HOD was non-dispersibles: the ways that these consumer products affect clean water utilities, and the types of efforts being done around the country to solve these problems. I represented MWWCA in presenting on this issue at a session at the WEFMAX conference in Providence, Rhode Island this month, hosted wonderfully by NEWEA. I was encouraged by the enthusiasm and interest from delegates from around the country (including Hawaii) that were in attendance, and left with new approaches to discuss with our MWWCA work group. The public outreach and member support sessions at the Providence WEFMAX gave me lots of ideas for how MWWCA can improve, which I’ll bring back to the MWWCA Executive Committee.

MWWCA applied for funding from WEF in its 2014 Budget to help support the public educational campaign that we’re developing with the Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry (INDA), and we continue to work closely with the WEF Collection Systems Committee on this issue. Members of MWWCA will be participating, with others, in a WEF Collection Systems Committee webcast on June 19, 2013.

This article barely begins to describe the ways that WEF helps MWWCA be more efficient and effective to best serve our membership, and learn from others around the country. To learn more about the group, visit www.wef.org, and be sure to “Like” them on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/WaterEnvironmentFederation) and “Follow” them on Twitter (https://twitter.com/WEForg) to keep up to date with their work and outreach.

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.
Hanscom To Retire From Kennebec Sanitary Treatment District

Arnold D. Hanscom will retire from Kennebec Sanitary Treatment District on May 31, 2013. His career started at KSTD as an Assistant Operator on November 1, 1976, fourteen days before the facility started to treat wastewater. He advanced to Shift Operator and moved to Laboratory Assistant for a short time. Eleven years ago, he was promoted to his current position: Assistant Superintendent / Chief Operator. Arnold holds a record as the second longest serving employee of the District at 36.5 years.

Arnold is a 1970 Lawrence High School graduate. He received a certificate in 1976 from New England Regional Wastewater Institute majoring in Wastewater Treatment and a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from Thomas College in 1986.

In 1971, he joined the U.S. Army and served until 1974. Arnold continued his commitment to his country for 20 years in the Maine Army National Guard as a Battalion Engineer equipment maintenance officer and retired in 1993 with the rank of Captain. This gave him the necessary skills and experience to successfully perform his many duties at KSTD as well as many volunteer jobs. Arnold wears many hats and he will be hard to replace.

He has always been active in his community by volunteering at his church, local Credit Union as a director, and held many offices as a member of the Clinton Lions, Town and Country Snowmobile Club and American Legion.

It may be impossible to determine the number of hours he gave to each of these groups.

Arnold is highly devoted to his family; wife Rebecca, two sons Mark and Kevin, daughter Amy and their spouses. He is very proud of his four granddaughters.

It is expected that Arnold will continue volunteering within his community. His ambitions to repair and rebuild vehicles, boats and snowmobile grooming equipment and now the possibility of learning to fly his plane, will keep him active in his latest career, retired man about town!

Did You Ever Wonder?

Why is a milligram per liter (mg/L) the same as one part per million? The answer lies in the fact that in water quality and wastewater treatment we actually deal in very dilute solutions and water makes up 99+% of those solutions. Because water weighs one kilogram per liter and there are one million milligrams in a kilogram, each milligram is one part in one million parts contained in a liter.

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aubrey@verdantwater.com
MWWCA 6th Annual Ski Day – Perfect Weather, Superb Snow, and Great Company

By Scott Firmin, Portland Water District

On March 8th the annual MWWCA Ski Day took place at Saddleback Mountain in Rangeley, ME. This was the 6th year of this non-traditional networking event that encourages water quality professionals in Maine to get together in a non-technical setting and to experience the great State and environment we all work to protect.

The weather was nearly perfect as the temperature remained right around 30 deg.F under a calm but cloudy sky for most of the day. The clouds gave way to bright sun in time for the final few runs of the day.

The weather ensured that the snow conditions remained ideal for the duration of the event. Perfectly groomed trails, snow-capped trees in the glades, and vistas of the surrounding mountain ranges gave participants a day to treasure and remember. For the 38 MWWCA skiers (and at least one boarder) who were able to participate, it will be difficult to beat the conditions experienced on this day. The youngest and oldest skiers in the group came with the gang from Methuen Construction and represented three generations of the Spooner family including awesome Austin, age 8, Jay, a bit older and Gary still kicking!

Lunch provided a much needed break to weary skiers who enjoyed a tasty buffet in the Swig n’ Smelt Pub and two tickets for Saddleback good through the 2013/2014 season and an Adirondack Chair made from retired skis by Bob Poirier were raffled off. (and Bob is always looking for old skis to re-purpose!) After lunch, the skiing and riding continued until the 3 pm Apres Ski Party gave members the chance to relive the heroics of the day over a beverage or two. The day ended with an amazing sunset that painted the sky and mountain endless shades of purple and pink as we drove towards home.

This event was organized by André Brousseau of the Sanford Sanitary District and Dave Madsen of the Lewiston-Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority. Thanks to the following event sponsors: CDM Smith, Woodard and Curran, Wright-Pierce, Methuen Construction Company, Inc, Aqua Solutions, and Ritec Environmental LLC. Finally, our hosts at Saddleback Mountain were simply unbelievable – thanks to the staff for their hard work to make us feel so at home.

We’re looking forward to seeing you on the slopes next year and are setting our sites to growing this event to at least fifty participants. If you know a skier or boader that could use a good day on the mountain, be sure to invite them next year! I’m working on my turns in hope I can keep up with the other 37 skiers in the future.😊

The sun sets on Saddleback Mountain – the perfect end to an amazing day of skiing.
Step Right Up...No Waiting... ...To Guess the Weight... of your MLSS

By Steve Clifton, Underwood Engineers, Inc.

That’s right. Let me guess the weight of your mixed liquor! For only 5 cents I will guess the weight of your mixed liquor, regardless of your aeration tank size! Sound too good to be true? Well, let’s start and see where we end up. Have a seat and let me ask you a few questions.

First of all, I do need some data from your facility, concerning your influent and wasting habits. Sure, we all have numbers, be they daily, weekly, monthly, etc. You get the idea. I need the annual average daily numbers. This is the sum of all the daily numbers divided by the number of numbers in a year. So if you do BOD$_5$ twice weekly, you would have 104 BOD$_5$ tests in a year. So total up all the BOD$_5$ and then divide by 104.

So, here is what I need to know:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Your Value</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average Daily Flow, MGD</td>
<td>1 MGD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average Daily BOD$_5$, mg/L</td>
<td>120 mg/L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average Daily TSS, mg/L</td>
<td>80 mg/L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Sludge Retention Time, days</td>
<td>8 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have written down those values, I can now attempt to guess your weight (MLSS weight)!

Your weight is: ______ Flow x _____ BOD$_5$ x ____ SRT x 2.46 = _______ MLSS in pounds

For the example values shown above, we are using the flow and concentrations of the wastewater going into the reactor (primary effluent example in this case), we get the following weight of MLSS:

Example weight is: 1 MGD Flow x .120 mg/L BOD$_5$ x 8 day SRT x 2.46 = 2,362 pounds

Now if you want to know your MLSS concentration, take the pounds of MLSS estimated and divide it by your aeration tank volume in million gallons (MG) and 8.34. If our example WWTF has 200,000 gallons of aeration tank volume on line, then the MLSS concentration would be:

Concentration of MLSS - 2,362 pounds MLSS/ (0.2 MG x 8.34) = 1,416 mg/L

This estimate assumes a typical residential wastewater from a WWTF with primary clarifiers.

For raw sewage going right into aeration (no primary clarifiers), multiply your answer by 2.13! So this would be 2.13 x 2,362 pounds MLSS = 5,031 pounds of MLSS.

The more technically correct explanation is that the wastewater contains substrate (food) and inert solids. The food and inert solids along with your operating sludge retention time controls the weight of MLSS that can be achieved. The weight from the organics can be divided into solids created by bacteria growing on the substrate, solids from bacterial decay, and inert organic solids from the influent enmeshed in the mixed liquor. These make up the volatile content of your MLSS (your MLVSS). You also have inert non-organic solids accumulating in the aeration tank from the inert TSS (typically 15 to 25% of your influent TSS) in your influent. These inert solids are increased by your SRT (calculated by multiplying the mass of inert non organic solids in your aeration tank influent by the SRT).

Let me know by email if I guessed your weight correctly. If you are interested, email me and I will provide you with the spreadsheet to more accurately estimate your MLSS weight at wsclifton@underwoodengineers.com.

Nominations for the Young Professionals Award

The Young Professionals Committee of Maine WasteWater Control Association is seeking nominations for the Young Professionals Award. This award is given by Maine Waste Water Control Association to recognize notable contributions to the water environment industry, wastewater operations and/or to MWWCA. The following are the criteria for nominations:

1. Member of MWWCA
   - Under 40 years old or less than 5 years in the wastewater field
   - Demonstrated achievements and contributions to enhancing the activities of MWWCA through active participation in a standing committee or Association sponsored program, notable contributions to wastewater operations or design, and/or improvement in the fundamental knowledge wastewater collection, distribution and treatment systems, stormwater, water resource protection, and research on wastewater issues.

If you know would like to nominate someone for this award, please contact Paula Drouin for a nomination form. Tel. 207-782-0917 or email pdrouin@lawpca.org. Nominations are due by July 15, 2013.
Update on Non-Dispensibles
By Aubrey Strause, PE, Verdant Water

In the last few issues of Maine WasteWater News, I’ve tried to update our members on the work MWWCA is doing to address the issue of non-dispersibles (ND). This refers to consumer products that are often flushed to sewers and thereby cause pump clogs, backups, and other interference in collection and treatment systems. It’s been a very busy few months, and here’s a wrap-up or our activities:

MWWCA is presently working with the Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry (INDA, the association that represents the manufacturers of wipes and other consumer products) on a pilot education campaign to be implemented this year. As of the date of this publication, we’ve agreed that the campaign will focus on baby wipes, will educate consumers about the damage to sanitary sewer infrastructure that can be caused by improper disposal, will use the number/weight of wipes that enter Portland Water District’s Cottage Place pump station as a measure of success, and will focus the message on the service area to that pump station. We’re still discussing other key factors, including whether a third party firm will assist, the total cost and MWWCA’s financial contribution, and what group(s) will have the responsibility for implementing the campaign.

MWWCA is currently completing an inventory of baby wipes sold in the service area to see how many bear INDA’s standard “Do Not Flush” logo. INDA has been requested by the Maine legislature’s Environment and Natural Resources Committee to implement this pilot project with MWWCA.

Scott Firmin (Portland Water District) is coordinating an article for publication in the NEWEA Journal. This feature would summarize the ND issue in an effort to raise regional awareness- and hopefully increased engagement- through the NEWEA CSC Flushable Subcommittee that he chairs. It will introduce and summarize the NEWEA position paper, update NEWEA members on the efforts to work on the issue (including the Maine pilot education campaign), national efforts (including the American Public Works Association [APWA] and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies [NACWA] as well as those listed in other bullets, below), review some case studies in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and announce a survey NEWEA will host (similar to the one Maine did a few years ago).

We learned in April that INDA will not be providing the water quality associations with an advance copy of the 3rd Edition of its Flushability Assessment Guidelines. INDA had previously presented this as a peer-review opportunity, so this was a very disappointing development. Nevertheless, our partners across the country continue to interact with the developers of the Guidelines, attend INDA conferences, and invite INDA members to participate in panel discussions. The 3rd Edition is due for release in late June, and INDA has committed to making copies available to us free-of-charge.

I was pleased to attend JETCC’s North Country Convention in Presque Isle on April 3 on behalf of MWWCA, and share our work with members in that part of the state. I was excited to learn from folks, such as those in Madawaska, who struggle with this issue constantly, about their experiences. (My presentation is available on the MWWCA website).

The HOD Workgroup is focusing on educating members of Congress about this issue, pushing for standards on “flushability” (in conjunction with the WEF Collection Systems Committee), and expanding outreach and communication to the public.

I gave a presentation on behalf of MWWCA at the WEFMAX conference in Providence, RI on May 3, informing attendees from across the country what MWWCA, NEWEA, and the WEF House of Delegates are doing to address the issue of ND.

Scott is working with WEF Collection Systems Committee Flushables Technical Group leader Rob Villee (Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority, New Jersey) and HOD Non-Dispersible Workgroup Chair Hiram Tanner (DC Water) to develop a national strategy for dealing with ND. This national strategy will be discussed during a breakout session at the June 10, 2013 WEF Collection Systems Conference in Sacramento, CA, and conference call for those not at the conference.

MWWCA has been asked by the Water Environment Federation to participate in a June 19 webcast on ND hosted and sponsored by the WEF Collection Systems Committee. I’ll represent MWWCA, primarily discussing our attempt to pass legislation requiring clear labeling, summarizing why it wasn’t successful, and showing how we continue to engage INDA on issues including labeling, public education, and changes in manufacturing. We’ll make sure to get information onto the MWWCA website for anyone not at the conference.

Scott will represent Maine in a Non-Dispersibles Panel Discussion at WEFTEC 2013 in Chicago, IL in October. WEF blocked out valuable time in the WEFTEC schedule for this panel discussion because of the
Digester Start Up in Lewiston

The first load of seed solids from the Nashua, New Hampshire treatment facility were introduced into LAWPCA digester #1 on May 9, marking the first use of anaerobic digestion for municipal wastewater treatment in Maine in over 30 years. The fourteen million dollar project includes two 690,000 gallon conventional, fixed cover, mesophilic primary digesters, a digested solids storage tank with membrane gas holder, gas conditioning system, and two 230 kilowatt engine generators. With little firsthand experience the LAWPCA process control team is taking a conservative approach to feeding the new process, so that full operation may take as long as six to eight weeks to accomplish. LAWPCA expects to continue both land application and composting of the biosolids produced, however with nearly 40% less solids expected to be produced, some modification of these programs will be needed as well. Recently JETCC hosted a class on composting wastewater solids at the LAWPCA facility and a brief tour of the new digestion facilities was included. Photos on this page show attendees climbing the stairs to the roof of one of the digesters. As gas starts to build, so does the excitement for a new means of processing wastewater solids.

Non-Dispersibles cont’d

rapidly-growing interest on the issue, and invited the HOD Non-Dispersibles Workgroup to put together the program and select panelists.

MWWCA has been invited by national and regional APWA leaders to write features on the ND issue for their publications. The national publication, “The Reporter”, has a distribution of 26,000, so this opportunity will help us extend outreach to a new group of public works professional who are experiencing problems with ND’s but who are not involved with state member associations affiliated with WEF.

Scott has been receiving completed Pump Clog SOP forms from around the country (!), but we always need more! Go to http://www.mwwca.org/PumpClogSOP.pdf to download a blank form.

As you can see, this issue is keeping MWWCA very busy, but we know that these efforts will continue to build support for a national approach that can’t be ignored by INDA or legislative and regulatory leaders. The voices are getting louder and more numerous. We are always looking for people willing to help with legwork and outreach on this issue. Please contact me (aubrey@verdantwater.com) or Scott (sfirmin@pwd.org) if you’d like to get involved. 🌟