



A Satisfying Year to Remember

This winter issue of *Clearwaters* marks my last message to you as my year as President draws to a close. As many of my predecessors pointed out to me, your term as President passes quickly, and it does. However, it has been one of the most satisfying experiences I've ever had. I would encourage anyone who is considering service as an officer of NYWEA to do so. In addition, even if you are not thinking about serving at the state officer level, I would ask you to seriously consider

service as a committee or chapter chair and, subsequently, a position on the NYWEA Board of Directors.

NYWEA continues to move forward with many established programs and a few new ones. Throughout the year I have tried to encourage chapters and individuals to submit award nominations for individuals, corporations and municipalities. We hope that this will provide acknowledgement for the many deserving people who work tirelessly to protect the environment at our Awards Luncheon at the 80th Annual Meeting. Our "Just One More" program has been successful in bringing 130 new members into our Association.

Positive Programs

Other popular programs and services to our members continue to be well-received, such as:

- Voluntary Collection System Certification provided training and certified 138 new collection system operators.
- Professional Development Hour (PDH), with 608 certificates granted this past year.
- The Watershed Conference in the Lower Hudson Chapter was held at the Hotel Thayer in West Point and drew over 300 people. The Association will hold the event there the next two years.
- The Operator Training Task Force provided training and contact hours to nearly 150 people.
- The Spring Meeting was held in Syracuse for the first time and was very successful with 276 people in attendance.
- The Scholarship Cruise this year was a big success with \$70,000 raised for the Scholarship Fund – a new record for this event.
- At WEFTEC this year, NYWEA was represented by two teams in the Operations Challenge and provided excellent results. The Long Island Chapter Brown Tide improved on last year's result and finished second overall in their division, while the Bowery Bay team from the Metropolitan Chapter finished in 19th place in one of the closest competitions among the teams ever at WEFTEC.

In the future, there will be changes to the NYWEA bylaws that will make the Association more efficient and strengthen the bonds between the Association and its Chapters. In addition, the bylaws may contain changes to Water Environment Federation (WEF) membership categories that are being considered by WEF presently.

Mercury Issue

This issue of *Clearwaters* is dedicated to mercury in the environment and its toxic impacts. Mercury has been an important topic of our industry for quite some time. Previously, the focus had been on removal of mercury from treatment plant effluents. At this time, there is a concerted effort to reduce mercury in our water bodies in order to end fish consumption advisories. In our region, New York and six New England states have partnered to reduce mercury in their waters and will need help from other areas of the country to do so (see Sandra Allen's *Water Views* column). In addition, you will find excellent articles concerning mercury, to include a USGS fact sheet on "Mercury Contamination of Aquatic Ecosystems," the Northeast TMDL, mercury treatment technologies and mercury pollution minimization plans, to name a few.

Recognitions

I would like to thank all of the people who were a big help to me during the past year. First, of course, would be Executive Director Patricia Cerro-Reehil and the NYWEA staff. The Board of Directors has been great to work with and especially Bob Kukenberger, NYWEA's next President, who has filled in for me on occasion. I know that Bob will provide the same leadership that he provides as vice president for CDM in charge of their Syracuse office. Bob has a unique perspective both as a consultant and with his work with American Water Works Association that he will bring to all of our members.

A special thanks goes to the Central Chapter and its Board of Directors for all their help with the Spring Meeting, especially Sandy Lizlovs, Mark Greene and Ken Knutsen, who were outstanding.

I hope to see you all at the 80th Annual Meeting at the Marriott Marquis, February 3–6, 2008 in New York City. You can help make this the best meeting yet, with over 80 presentations in 20 technical sessions and over 150 exhibitors that will bring together what we hope will be over 1,200 operators, engineers, scientists, vendors, students, and academicians.

See you in February!

Thomas Lauro, PE

