Unsung Heroes

by Erik Peterson, VRWA

Every morning when we turn on a faucet in order to fill a glass, make coffee, or take a shower, we naturally expect a flow of water. The same way we rely on our car starting in the morning, the lights turning on at the flip of a switch, or the sun to rise, so we expect water to run.

In many countries this would serve as a minor miracle, but here we tend to take it for granted. It is only because someone has faithfully and diligently managed to accomplish their oftentimes thankless job, day in and day out, despite holiday, weekend, or late of night, that we have come to expect near perfect service.

Often as I visit water systems throughout Vermont, I’m asked by operators, “What’s new?” And while a new regulation or a large leak may come to mind, more often than not the water world is pretty steady and uneventful.

Because operators do their jobs, no one really notices and not so much seems exciting. So, once in awhile it seems appropriate to take notice of jobs that were otherwise accomplished without much fanfare.

On Tuesday night, January 2, a fire in Rutland Town could be seen for miles as it destroyed the Carris Reels vehicle garage. Firefighters from surrounding towns battled the blaze for nearly twelve hours and managed to contain the fire and prevent it from spreading to the Carris Reels main building.

Meanwhile, alone in a pump house, Howard Burgess, the operator of Rutland Town FD #1, kept a close eye on the water storage tank level as firemen fought the fire. When the tank’s level began to near bottom, hours before firefighters would leave the scene, he decided to open a valve connecting the town’s water system to the larger Rutland City distribution system.

Continued on page 4.

Vermont Drinking Water Week On the Way

by Elizabeth Walker, VRWA

Vermont Drinking Water Week (DWW) is May 6-12, 2007. This year’s theme is “Drinking Water, Past, Present and Future.”

The Water Fair is scheduled for Friday, May 11 on the State House lawn. We will feature performances by the National Theatre for Children, lawn games, displays, a water tasting contest, an award presentation and more!

New to this year’s program is a photography contest. Both the poster and photography contests are open to all 4th, 5th and 6th grade students in Vermont.

The DWW Committee is busy working on the details for 2007. If you would like to participate on the committee, we meet the second Wednesday of the month. If you do not have the time, please consider becoming a sponsor and supporting DWW financially.

An important way you can help us with the DWW celebration is to contact your local school and encourage them to attend the Water Fair.

Also, contact us if you want the National Theatre for Children to do a performance at your school during DWW. The theatre performances are for elementary age students and convey a very important theme about drinking water source protection and water conservation. We are also very interested in knowing of any local programs you may host.

Contact Elizabeth Walker at ewalker@vtruralwater.org or 800-556-3792 ext. 321 to become a sponsor or join our fun committee.
Who We Are
Since 1982, Vermont Rural Water Association has supported water and wastewater systems across the state. We provide many services, including training, source water protection planning, and onsite assistance.

Board of Directors
Ed Savage, Town of West Rutland
Richard Desautels, Colchester FD#2
Rod Lamothe, Castleton Meadows
Joe Voci, Town of Randolph
Jeff Vance, South Georgia Fire District

20 Susie Wilson Road, Suite B
Essex Junction, Vermont 05452-2827
802-660-4988 voice; 866-378-7213 fax
vrwa@vtruralwater.org; www.vtruralwater.org

For onsite assistance and training, contact our technical staff at 800-556-3792 (extensions below):

Philip Acebo, Training Specialist
Ext. 337, pacebo@vtruralwater.org

Brent J. Desranleau, Water Systems Specialist
Ext. 322, bdesranleau@vtruralwater.org

Shaun Fielder, Executive Director
Ext. 315, sfielder@vtruralwater.org

Wayne Graham, Wastewater Specialist
Ext. 319, wgraham@vtruralwater.org

Eric Hanson, Source Protection Specialist
Ext. 327, ehansomn@vtruralwater.org

Paula Jackson, Water Systems Specialist
Ext. 332, pjackson@vtruralwater.org

Erik Peterson, Water Systems Specialist
Ext. 331, epeterson@vtruralwater.org

Liz Royer, Source Protection Specialist
Ext. 336, lroyer@vtruralwater.org

Elizabeth Walker, Water Systems Specialist
Ext. 321, ewalker@vtruralwater.org

I am writing this letter in appreciation of the services of Elizabeth Walker, an employee of Vermont Rural Water. I serve as the certified system operator for Hartland and West Windsor. West Windsor has been involved in a water project for the past several years. Whenever there is a bump in the road, Elizabeth has provided practical suggestions of where to go next. I believe her suggestions have saved many dollars in planning and future construction.

We are most fortunate to have Elizabeth as our resource. The Vermont Rural Water Association plays an important role in the state of Vermont.

Sincerely,
Mike Howe
Operator, Hartland, VT and West Windsor, VT

This letter is to convey the great admiration and humble thank you for the superb accomplishments of Ms. Liz Royer in researching, drafting and completing the Source Protection Plan for the Georgia Dairy Industrial Park.

Ms. Royer made the process understandable to a diverse board of directors with a multitude of backgrounds and quietly did the work required as outlined. At our meeting on January 17, Ms. Royer presented her draft of the final product with a poise and confidence which can only come from a deep understanding of the issues involved.

Speaking for our entire board, I can tell you that we were deeply impressed with the project she presented and the professional manner in which she conducted herself throughout the process.

With great appreciation for a job well done,

Sincerely,
Carl Rosenquist
Chairman, GDIP

VRWA Staff
Front row (left to right): Erik Peterson, Eric Hanson, Sarah MacMillan, Liz Royer, Elizabeth Walker, Doris Dastalto.
Back row: Paula Jackson, Phil Acebo, Wayne Graham, Shaun Fielder, Brent Desranleau.

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Celebrate VRWA’s 25th Anniversary at our Annual Conference!

VRWA's Annual Conference will be held at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee on April 25-26. (See page 5 for details and a registration form.)

On the evening of April 25, the Board of Directors invites you to a BBQ to celebrate our first 25 years of assisting the state’s water and wastewater systems. Come enjoy all-you-can-eat baby back ribs, barbeque chicken, and all the trimmings with good company and a magnificent view of the lake!

The afternoon of April 25 is also the date for our Annual Golf Tournament. Proceeds benefit our equipment fund.

On April 26, join us for a trade show of area vendors and sessions on everything from managing system upgrades to inspecting a storage tank. We hope to see you there!

The Value of VRWA

by Shaun Fielder, VRWA

In recent months, we’ve been hard at work promoting the value of VRWA to our congressional delegation. This ensures that the benefits our services provide to many citizens of Vermont are recognized. Please note that a majority of the funding for our programs, as well as rural water programs across the country, is allocated each year in the federal budget by Congress.

While we have been fortunate enough to receive the ongoing support of Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders, and Congressman Welch to date, pressure is increasing on all areas of the federal budget. This makes it vital that we demonstrate VRWA’s critical role in helping all systems keep up with the demands of the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

Some of the information presented to illustrate our effectiveness includes reports on site visits, trainings conducted, and source protection plans completed.

In addition, your letters of support are showcased. This information from the “grassroots level” is appreciated by our representatives. The letters come from all types and sizes of systems from all corners of the state. The simple point, as illustrated by the two examples in this issue of our newsletter, is that our association makes a difference and fills an important need.

For those who have submitted a letter of support, we thank you. If you are thinking of writing one, please consider including the following items in your letter: explain how our assistance protected public health or the environment; demonstrate the financial benefits that your community derived from our assistance; and explain the adverse outcome that was avoided because VRWA was there to help.

All of us at VRWA are pleased to work side by side with you to solve problems and ensure that you have the resources to “keep up.” On behalf of our Directors and staff, I thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes

Melissa Green, one of the Association Specialists in our administrative office, has returned to graduate school full-time and will no longer be the cheerful voice on the other end of our phone line. We wish her the best of luck as she completes her degree in conservation biology at Antioch University New England.

If you need assistance, call us at 800-556-3792 and Sarah, Doris or Pat will be happy to assist you.

Our Deepest Sympathies

It is with sadness that we report the recent deaths of two well-known Vermont operators. Michael Sullivan, one of our Directors from 2003-2005 and a former President of VRWA, passed away at the end of December. Mike was the superintendent of the Vergennes-Panton Water District for many years and also the co-owner of Otter Creek Sports.

Mike Sullivan (left) receives an award honoring his service on VRWA’s board from Ed Savage.

Mike was born on January 18, 1945, in Middlebury. He attended Vergennes High School, UVM, and the Water and Sewerage Technical School in Neosho, Missouri.

He served with the US Navy as a Seabee in Da Nang, Vietnam. Later, he founded the Lake Champlain Walleye Association and was appointed to the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Mike also served as an alderman for the city of Vergennes. His strong voice and dedication will be sorely missed.

Leslie “Gob” Streeter passed away at his home on November 29, 2006 at the age of 82. Leslie was the long-time operator of Lunenburg Fire District #1.

Leslie was born in East Concord, VT, on July 16, 1924. He grew up in East Concord and served in the Navy during World War II. He received the WWII Victory Medal, Asiatic Pacific Area Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal, and American Area Medal.

Returning home, he attended UVM and the Lyndon Teachers College. For forty years he owned and operated the Lunenburg Oil Company, a lumber mill and a farm. He served the Lunenburg community as water commissioner for over 50 years.

Leslie also enjoyed hunting, fishing and trapping, and was a very avid Red Sox fan.
This interconnection between the town and city had been years in the making and was only completed this last summer. The connection was considered and adopted by the fire district because it was concerned that the district's sole source was limited in yield and subject to drought. So, when Rutland City was called to open the newly created connection, additional supplies of water allowed the fire fighting effort to continue unimpeded.

Similarly, while the interconnection was being constructed, Howard and Vermont Rural Water Association went through all of the fire district's hydrants with a four foot pipe wrench and ten foot cheater bar to break open hydrant caps that had been frozen in place. On January 2nd, the night of the fire, water never stopped flowing, the hydrants all worked without a hitch, and no one thought twice about it.

This November, Williamstown completed a water system upgrade which included the construction of a 675,000 gallon Natgun water storage tank and two pressure reducing vaults, as well as several system management applications. The developments had been in the planning for over six years.

Low system pressures throughout town, especially near the Williamstown High School, had prompted the work. Previously, the two hydrants near the school dribbled a measly 450 gallons per minute at only 26 psi. Following the upgrade, the school now finds itself protected with 960 gallons per minute at 78 psi.

The actual switch from the older water storage tank to the newer and more elevated storage was intentionally planned by Allen Chouinard, the town's operator, to take place so early in the morning that the change would be imperceptible. Well, the following day a few people said they were almost blasted to the back of their shower stall by the increased pressure, but they seemed rather pleased about it.

In 2005 the town of West Rutland completed water system improvements that included the development of system-wide water metering. Jumping right into the twenty-first century, West Rutland installed radio read meters on over 700 connections. I accompanied Ed Gilman and Dave Zawistowski during an initial read of the water system. It was rather boring. So much so in fact, that during the twenty minutes it took to read all 700 plus meters, Dave nearly fell asleep.

While the meters themselves did gain some recognition from the town's water users, what did go unnoticed was a savings of 25.5 million gallons of water over the course of a year. The savings was directly attributed to the installation of water meters and is reflected in power and chemical savings as well.

By the way, 25.5 million gallons equates to a reduction in use of nearly 100 gallons per day per household for a year. Or, enough water to fill 50 Goodyear Blimps or over 38 Olympic swimming pools.

Finally, and most notably, on Saturday December 16 in Bellows Falls, friends, family and co-workers joined Floyd LaFoe at the VFW in celebrating his retirement from the Village of Bellows Falls Water Department. It was an honor to witness years of otherwise unsung recognition properly bestowed upon Floyd.

For 34 years, Floyd has worked tirelessly for the people of Bellows Falls. Imagine, 34 years ago the Safe Water Drinking Act was but a twinkle in our Congress' eye. Floyd's service has seen the implementation, completion, and management of the water department's filtration system. Floyd has trained numerous water operators, and led the water department throughout years of change, expansion and operation. His expertise and knowledge will be sorely missed.
Vermont Rural Water Association
Annual Conference & Trade Show
April 25-26, 2007, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, Vermont
Come Celebrate VRWA’s 25th Anniversary!

Who Should Attend
Operators, managers, directors and other representatives of water and wastewater systems, as well as regulators and industry vendors.

Location
Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, Vermont. Fairlee is on the Vermont–New Hampshire border about 20 miles north of White River Junction. Directions: From I-91, take Exit 15. The resort entrance road is just west of the exit.

Golf Tournament
Our Sixth Annual Golf Tournament will be held on Wednesday, 4/25, the day before the main conference. Come early and join the fun! The tournament begins at 12:30pm.

25th Anniversary Barbeque!
Join us at 6:30pm on Wednesday, 4/25, for baby back ribs, honey barbeque chicken, all the trimmings, and a chance to celebrate our first 25 years of assisting Vermont’s water and wastewater systems!

Sessions
An early-bird session will begin at 7:30am on Thursday, April 26. Other sessions will take place during the morning and after lunch. Topics may include:
- Planning and Managing a System Upgrade
- Mutual Aid Agreements
- Inflow and Infiltration
- Regulatory Updates
- Tank Inspection Demonstration

Training contact hours will be awarded for all sessions. Earn up to 3.5 TCH.

Trade Show
More than 50 industry vendors will display their products and answer questions from 8am-3pm on 4/26. Keep an eye out for door prizes!

Luncheon & Awards
Our annual awards luncheon is the perfect chance to talk shop with your peers.

Lodging
The resort’s overnight package includes your hotel room and the barbeque on April 25, a full breakfast in the dining room on April 26, and use of all resort facilities. Rates are $148/night ($216/night for double occupancy), plus 9% Vermont rooms & meals tax and a 19% service charge. Reservations should be made directly with Lake Morey Resort by March 26; call 800-423-1211 and mention Vermont Rural Water.

For More Information
Call us at 800-556-3792 or visit our website for updates: www.vtruralwater.org.

Register today!
Mail this form, call 800-556-3792, or visit www.vtruralwater.org.

Rates for One Attendee & Lunch for 4/26
Registration Rates before April 9, 2007
- $40 Member
- $50 Non-Member
- $60 all registrants after April 9 and at the door

Golf Tournament (4/25 at 12:30pm)
- $45 if overnight resort guest
- $65 for day attendees

25th Anniversary Barbeque (4/25 at 6:30pm)
- $25/person (if not staying overnight at the hotel)

Questions? Call us at 800-556-3792.

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Questions? Call us at 800-556-3792.

Cancellation policy: A full refund will be issued if cancellation is made by April 9, 2007.

For office use only:
Check amount ___________________________ Check # ___________________________
By whom ___________________________________________ Date received ___________________________

News Leaks, Spring 2007
There are five primary myths that hinder source water protection. By understanding these and helping to educate consumers, we can better protect public health.

Myth #1. Vermont’s water is pure.
All water needs to be periodically tested before consumption because there are naturally occurring contaminants. In surface water, these are principally bacteria, protozoans originating from animals, and toxins from blue-green algae. Human activities can make matters worse, however, through concentrating livestock feeding, removing vegetation buffer zones along streams, and by adding nutrients that promote algae growth to the surface waters. Wastewater plant discharges can also increase our exposure to human pathogens.

In Vermont’s groundwater, the naturally occurring contaminants are usually uranium, radium, radon, and arsenic. As with surface waters, human activities have made groundwater contamination issues worse with the use and release of artificial chemicals, petroleum products, and increased wastewater disposal into the ground.

Myth #2. There is unlimited water available in Vermont.
The truth is that water availability is not unlimited due to increasingly competitive uses. Water is used both for waste disposal and drinking water. As population and development pressures increase, there is a greater demand on our water resources.

In addition, basic stream flows need to be maintained for aquatic habitat health. Wetlands need to be maintained for plant diversity. Wells developed too close together or in low yielding groundwater areas can have adverse interference with each other, diminishing the well yields and affecting the water table.

A related myth is that groundwater forms lakes and rivers underground. This is true in Vermont in only extremely rare instances. In reality, almost 100% of Vermont’s groundwater occurs in porous grained deposits of sand, gravel, silt, and clay, and in pores and fractures in the metamorphic schist, shale, marble and granite bedrock.

Myth #3. Groundwater is out of sight, out of mind.
Not so. 70% of Vermonters get their drinking water from groundwater. The majority of bottled water companies use groundwater sources. It is groundwater that maintains the base flows to streams and rivers and is critical to the health of many wetlands in the state.

It is also not out of mind when groundwater clean-up efforts cost thousands to millions of dollars to remove contaminants that have entered the aquifers.

Myth #4. Surface water and groundwater are two separate waters.
That is just plain not so. Groundwater and surface water need to be seen as a whole entity in constant interaction, not as independent, separated resources. Groundwater and surface water mingle and interchange, perhaps several times in the water’s journey.

Myth #5. Drinking water should be free.
The water is free; however, being assured of safe, adequate quantities of drinking water is costly. Operators know better than anyone the amount of work involved in running the financial, managerial, and technical aspects of a system to keep the water flowing.

This also means actively managing the Source Protection Plan to prevent an expensive contamination incident.
Vermont Drinking Water SRF Loan Information

by Elizabeth Walker, VRWA

The Vermont Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) low-interest loan program is accepting applications for projects for the FY 2007 project priority list. The FY 2007 funding will fund projects between October 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008.

The deadline to submit your priority list application is end of business Friday, April 6, 2007. It is that time of year when consideration for water system projects and the costs should be addressed. Even if you are unsure about the status or scope of a project, you have nothing to lose by signing up for the priority list.

It is very important to reapply each year if you still intend on doing a project and are on a previous year’s list. Assistance or questions should be directed to the contacts listed below.

This year’s DWSRF Intended Use Plan (IUP) public meeting will be held at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, June 20, 2007 at the Pavilion Auditorium in Montpelier. This is your opportunity to have input on how the DWSRF program funds are used and how the loan program is administered. Copies of the draft IUP will be available prior to the meeting. Final written comments to the IUP are due by Friday, June 29, 2007.

Contact Information
Applications for the DWSRF FY 2007 priority list can be found online at [www.vermontdrinkingwater.org/grants.htm](http://www.vermontdrinkingwater.org/grants.htm) in Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word format.

For assistance, contact: Bryan Redmond, DWSRF Program Specialist, at Bryan.Redmond@state.vt.us or 802-241-3408; or Elizabeth Walker, VRWA Water Systems Specialist, at ewalker@vtruralwater.org or 800-556-3792 ext. 321.

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