

Conference Wrap-Up

by Liz Royer, Executive Director

Thank you to everyone who participated in our conference events at the Lake Morey Resort this year. We appreciate our vendors, presenters, and attendees for travelling and taking time out of your busy schedules to be there. It was a special event for me for two reasons – (1) it was my first as VRWA's Executive Director and (2) my two-month-old son Elijah was able to be there as well! Thank you to all of the VRWA Board and Team for stepping up and helping out even more than usual with conference prep during my maternity leave.

Wednesday kicked off with our annual golf tournament, followed by happy hour and dinner with many of our partners. Congratulations to the winning golf team from Ti-SALES – Fay, Harris, Harte and Boyle. In addition, Brandon Boyle also had the longest drive AND closest to the pin—that might be the person to recruit for your team next year!

Thursday ramped up with the trade show floor opening, luncheon & business meeting, and five great training sessions. We appreciate all of the vendors who joined us to showcase their company's products and services and especially those who offered raffle prizes.

(Continued on page 4)

Highlighting Vermont Operators: Scott Wood

by Diana Butler, Source Protection Specialist

Scott Wood is the Water/Wastewater operator of Burke Mountain Water Company. Scott has been with Burke for two years. He has not only brought enthusiasm and optimism to this position, but also a variety of special skills and talents.

Scott is a native Vermonter, growing up on the Woodland Dairy farm in South Kirby, Vermont. He comes from four generations of farmers. Growing up, he was very active in 4-H, both showing and judging cows. Scott's father and brother still farm beef and dairy cows and have expanded into hemp farming. Currently Scott is building a house next to the family farm and raising two sons: Connor and



Greyson. Connor his oldest, 11, harvested his first deer last year and has already taken two turkeys this year. Connor is also a gifted baseball player with the Mets little league team. Greyson, 7, loves hunting and fishing just like his brother and dad. Greyson is also a gifted baseball player for the Diamondbacks little league team.

After graduating from Lyndon Institute, Scott attended the NASCAR Technical Institute in Mooresville NC. He received an Associate Degree followed by a Ford FACT Program Certification. He obtained multiple student awards and was put on the Director's honor list. Scott's work history spans a few industries. He worked for a manufacturing company where he performed maintenance on machines that produced heat shields and acoustic guards. This expanded his knowledge of pneumatics, hydraulics, PLCs, and electronics. He then

got the opportunity to work as a Diesel Mechanic. This was his favorite professional role! He performed mechanical maintenance on large construction equipment. This job however had him traveling excessively so after 5 years he started looking for work closer to home. Scott decided to join Utility Partners as a mechanic working in Saint Johnsbury, Cabot, and Marshfield. He eventually transitioned to Operations Manager for Burke Mountain Water and Wastewater where he has excelled.

(Continued on page 9)

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.

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Letters

Diana and Paul,

Thanks so much again for taking the time to meet with me on site today.

The issue of 15-20,000 gallons of water being lost a day had been occurring since the beginning of the year. The booster pump had run, essentially, every minute since then. Fortunately the well yield was able to (for the most part) keep up with demand.

Because of snow and very sandy soil, we were unable to begin the real search until this spring. We do not have the equipment (because of cost) to find leaks acoustically.

Your and VT Rural Water's services were essential to solving this issue. The ability to narrow the search, with your help, saved countless hours, dollars and resources.

As you know, a leaking system can result in massive water losses. I estimate this was about 2.5 million gallons of water in this situation.

This is a mobile home park, with a vulnerable population. Every dollar we spend is inevitably passed on to the consumer/tenant. Not by any choice of ours. This is not a profitable park and essentially break even.

We strive to use what ever resources we have available to keep costs low for our tenants. This, includes VT Rural Water.

Thanks again!

James Unsworth

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News on Tap

VRWA Board Updates

Vermont Rural Water is pleased to welcome John Lazelle to our Board of Directors. Currently the Chief Operator for the Wilmington WWTP, John is a second generation "legacy" in Wilmington as he began his career in 1987 under the tutelage of his father, the previous Chief Operator. John is a Vermont Grade 5 Wastewater Operator and a Class 3 Drinking Water Operator. In 2000, John received the EPA Operations and Maintenance Excellence Award and in 2017, he received the Alfred E. Peloquin Award from NEWEA. Outside of work, he is a proud 24-year member of the Wilmington Fire Department as a volunteer. He lends his expertise and interest in computers and cooking at the firehouse.

John has been appointed by the VRWA Board to serve until the next election in May 2020.

In addition, Jon Thornton has been appointed to fill Ed Savage's role as our National Rural Water Association Director. Jon is presently the Chief Water and Wastewater Operator for the Town of Bradford, VT. Starting as the Assistant Chief Wastewater Operator, he has been employed by the Town for over 28 years. Jon is a 1991 graduate of Plymouth State College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and was awarded the Michael J. Garofano Water Operator Excellence Award by GMWEA in 2014. He will be traveling to Oklahoma in July for board orientation at the National Rural Water office. Congratulations, Jon!

Letters of Support

Have you received assistance from VRWA recently? Was that assistance valuable? Did VRWA save your system money? If yes, please consider submitting a commendation item to Liz Royer, VRWA Executive Director. Formal letters on system letterhead, emails, and handwritten notes are all appreciated. We are continuously collecting letters and sharing with state and federal partners to illustrate the value of program funding. Funding is needed to continue the services we are



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Conference Wrap-Up (continued from cover)

A huge thank you to all of our presenters this year for providing some outstanding training sessions: Tom Allen, Ashley Lucht, Misty Sinsigalli, Andrea Ansevin-Allen, Matt Dow, Jon Thornton, Margaret Dwyer, Gail Tiffany, Patrick Smart, April Busfield, Dave DiDomenico, Kara Shaugraw and Lora Marchand. Next year we are hoping to increase the number of TCHs available, so please know we are hearing your feedback.

At the annual luncheon and membership meeting, VRWA Vice President Rod Lamothe reported that Ed Savage unfortunately had stepped down from both the VRWA Board and the National Rural Water Board. Ed had been very active on both Boards for close to 15 years so he was sorely missed at the conference events and will be for years to come. The keynote speaker was one of our longtime trainers and one of the most popular, VOSHA State Manager, Dan Whipple. In December, VRWA, VOSHA and Project WorkSafe renewed their Alliance to continue to foster safer and more healthful workplaces. We also had the honor of hearing from Phil Combs, National Rural Water Executive Board Member from Tennessee.


As you all know, the past several months have been a time of major transition for VRWA – at the end of December, Shaun Fielder left to become the Town Manager in Hardwick.

Shaun spent 20 years with VRWA and 12 as the Executive Director – his dedication to and enthusiasm for the industry was well known and much appreciated. We were excited to be able to present the Tony Torchia Award to Shaun this year. We couldn't think of a more suitable candidate who upholds the passion for advocating for Vermont's water and wastewater systems more than Shaun.

Congratulations were given to our 35-year system member, Barton Village, and our 30-year members, the Town of Shaftsbury and Westminster Aqueduct Society. Unfortunately, they couldn't make it Lake Morey but we did present two membership awards to non-system members: EJ Prescott, 35 years and Statewide Aquastore, 30 years.

Finally, a big shout out to all of our conference sponsors and sustaining members:


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Yankee Ingenuity

Continuing Stories of System Innovations

by Wayne Graham, Wastewater Systems Specialist

This column details unique solutions to difficult problems that operation specialists come up with every day. Below are several cases of them solving large problems, saving money and making life at their second homes (treatment plants) a little easier.

Trevor Welch, of the Jeffersonville WWTF had issues with his surface aerator performance. The aerator props were very prone to getting tangled with debris from the influent. This limited aeration and even caused motor failures. Trevor added a manually cleaned fine bar screen to the headworks and now has his pump station wet wells cleaned regularly. These improvements have made the aerators much more reliable. Speaking of manually raked bar screens, ever try to rake one when it is below zero? It results in quite a frozen mess. Try splashing influent on the racks, drainage platform and the rake itself. A very thin layer of ice results and keeps the screenings from sticking to the metal.

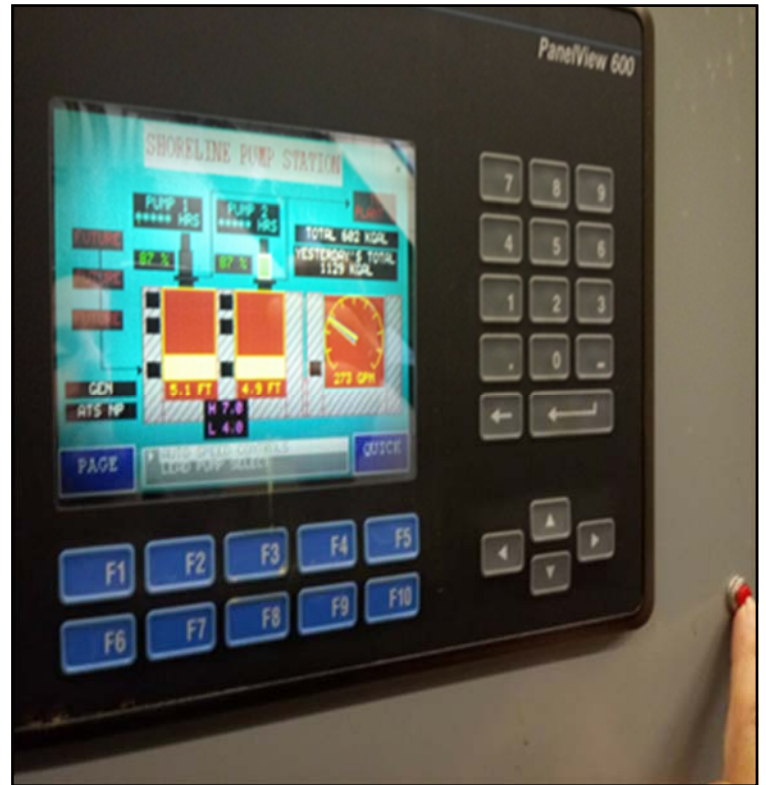
Newport City Operators Donald (Pedro) Grondin, Tim Dagesse, and Alex Russell completed huge pump room improvements by replacing their aging plunger pumps with repurposed existing Penn Valley pumps. This project included all new piping, valves, cement bases and was done completely in house by the three operators. This high energy team knows how to save their community money!



The same Shelburne WWTF crew (Chris Huestis and Jeff Pillsbury) that came up with installing gun safe heaters in outdoor pump station electric panels, once again have found a work-around for an expensive repair: “We have an Allen Bradley operator interface terminal (OIT) that has been problematic over the past 10 years. The backlight LED board has been replaced numerous times at a cost of hundreds of dollars each time. While investigating the issue once again they noticed that the display lit up when a flashlight was shone into the back of the unit.

A quick trip to the parts store came up with an \$18 12 volt DC LED bar. The light bar was attached to the cabinet door and directed to the back of the OIT. It worked perfectly. The guys then proceeded to install the “Try Me!” momentary switch in the door that came with the packaging. Now just a push of the switch lights the screen for viewing and programming. Interesting enough, it appears that the voltages are the same for the old board and the new LED light bar. So the next step is to hardwire the light bar so the battery can be eliminated!” I don’t even have a comment about this other than that these guys are geniuses! (See pictures on page 6)

If you have interesting ideas that you want to share, send them to me; we will include them in News Leaks in the future. I also encourage you to tour other facilities and share ideas; you will find that networking with other operators can be very beneficial. Several organizations and agencies can also help; VTWARN, GMWEA, Vermont DEC. and of course, VRWA! ●



Operator Interface Terminal LED lighting solution at Shelburne Wastewater Treatment Facility

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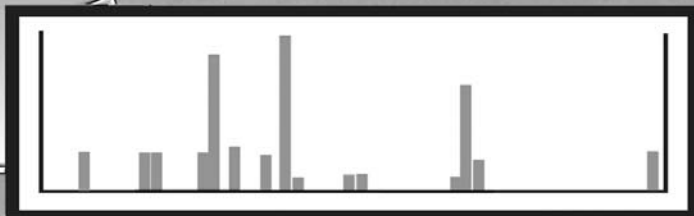
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Changing Of The Guards

By Elizabeth Walker, Wastewater Systems Specialist

A small community in the northern part of VT has both water and wastewater utilities serving approximately 290 customers. As with many systems in VT the older population of operators having either recently retired or are retiring in the near future. In North Troy Marcel Mayhew has been working for the utilities since August 16, 1988, starting part-time. He had no background experience but his previous work in a machine shop gave him the mechanical experience that has been useful. He has like many of us in this field learned on the job with troubleshooting from the hip. Marcel was grateful to Judy Mirro from DEC who was instrumental in providing basic operational knowledge. Within 2 years Marcel had taken the SAC class with Mark Simon and was able to pass both the wastewater and water grade certification exams. He later passed the grade 3 wastewater exam. He has also been very grateful for all the assistance and training provided by VRWA.

Over the years Marcel had part-time help but occasionally he was a one man shop on 3 different occasions that last 6 to 8 months. The wastewater facility was started-up in 1977 and is still in operation today with the diligence of Marcel keeping everything operational. What Marcel liked most about his career in water and wastewater is the challenge of the work and working on his own. One of the most important wastewater improvements before his retirement was the installation of additional chlorine contact tanks and the new WAS return pump. For the water system water line replacement and developing and maintain replacement parts inventory. Marcel has always considered himself as frugal when managing funds due to tight budgets.

Marcel has received commendations from both DEC and the selectboard for going above and beyond the call of duty on several occasions.

Marcel mostly retired recently but puts in 8 hours a week while the new operator learns the operations in the same way Marcel did 31 years ago. In steps a new young operator Curtis Laramée a native of North Troy. Marcel enjoys



teaching Curtis about how the systems have been operated. This is the foundation for Curtis making future improvements.

Curtis began working for North Troy on April 30, 2018. He comes to the job after working for the Newport public works for the previous 10 years. Although Curtis had no water/wastewater operational experience he did work on both wastewater collection and water distribution that has been valuable to his job in North Troy. Curtis has been a quick study and passed his grade 2 water in November 2018 and is working to

pass his grade 2 wastewater.

Curtis helped with the installation of the new WAS pump at the wastewater plant and with help from Wayne Graham from VRWA cleaned the aeration tanks and clarifier making necessary repairs. He was also on the job when the new contact tanks were installed. On the water side he has repaired several water line breaks and had a new VFD and generator installed at the well house. All this experience has given Curtis good hands on knowledge of the inner workings of the water and wastewater systems. What Curtis enjoys about his job is the independence of maintaining the utilities, and there are no 2 days alike. Curtis is looking forward to stepping in as Chief Operator once he fulfills the requirements, working with the engineer on the 20 year evaluation and the rebuild of the Dominion Ave. pump station.

As we as operators move on to retirement we are looking for people like Curtis to step into our shoes and continue doing the job of providing safe reliable drinking water and protecting the environment from the waste produced in homes and businesses. At VRWA we are looking forward to developing an apprenticeship program to assist with the changing of the guard and of course we look forward to continuing to providing training and technical assistance to small water and wastewater systems throughout VT. ●

“Scott has been with Burke two years. He has not only brought enthusiasm and optimism to this position but also a variety of special skills and talents.”

“Highlighting Vermont Operators” continued from cover

Scott enjoys the challenge of operations. He likes working toward improving and evolving his procedures, as well as achieving system goals. He has pride in his work and product. What doesn't he like about operations? The 2am calls, feeling overwhelmed at times, and the fact that the work is never done. In addition to being an Operator (Water & Wastewater), Scott is a property manager and runs his own sampling business, Top Water Solutions. In his down-time he is an avid truck puller, competing in Vermont and New Hampshire.

What else is there to know about this person with such a diverse history and extremely busy life?

Scott became a percussionist at a young age. At Lyndon Institute he was the head of the Jazz band playing the vibraphone. His jazz band competed in various Jazz competitions including the Discover Jazz Festival and won many.

The group's pianist attended Harvard and the fiddle player has a successful career in Nashville.

As an industry, we are lucky to have people with these abilities, positive attitudes, and drive. ●



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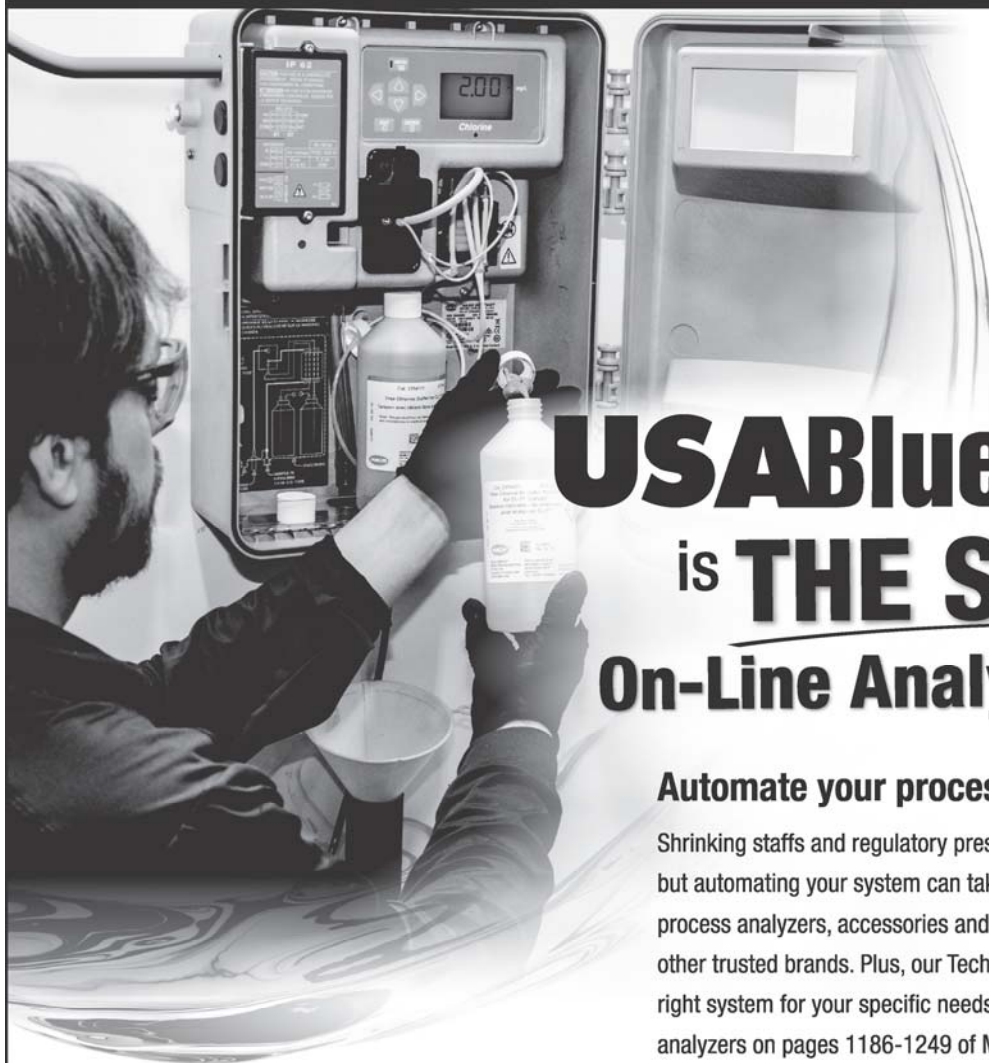
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