



President's Message

Kelly Zimmer
Baraboo, Wisconsin
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I have to be honest with you; when I joined WWOA in 2000, I really didn't see myself becoming this involved with the executive leadership of this Organization. As the years went by, my interest in WWOA grew, so I ran for the Board of Directors (that was in 2009). At my first meeting, past president, Bruce Bartel handed out the list of committee chairpersons. I sat rather quietly waiting to see what my first committee assignment(s) would be, as I was the last to receive the list. Low and behold, Bruce had listed me in charge of all committees! How everyone kept a straight face I have no idea, but I am quite certain I turned as white as a ghost. Now, I'm the President of this great organization, I am proud of the progress we have made and eagerly await to see what the future will bring.

The 48th Annual WWOA Conference that was held at the KI/Hyatt Convention Center in Green Bay was a huge success. We had 130 exhibitors (they were pouring out into the hallway) and our total number of registrations was 817, which is fantastic! The new DNR scanning registration for CEUs ran smoothly and lines at the registration were moving along quickly for this needed process.

The conference started on Tuesday with two Pre-conference Workshops, golf outing, sporting clays, the new bicycle ride and the annual regional officers meeting. The ever-so popular Tuesday evening 'Meet & Greet' was a good time with old friends and making new, telling stories of the last year and discussions of present issues.

Wednesday morning started with President Kevin Freber giving his opening comments followed by this year's keynote speaker, Morgan McArthur. His speech titled "Boredom Insurance" had us all laughing while learning. His speech involved the fear of public speaking, which personally hit home. If you know me, you know that I am a 'behind the scenes' type person. One of my personal goals as president is to become an example of one that can manage that fear. As my friend Wally Thom says, "We all get butterflies, you just have to get them to fly in formation". After the Keynote, the Exhibit Hall opened and the Technical Sessions got under way. Lyle Lutz and the Technical Committee put together a very informative technical training program with 18 sessions on Wednesday and another 18 on Thursday. Thanks to Lyle for all the work to make the sessions run smoothly and a special thank you to all the presenters and moderators. I was

told that the Guest Program was enjoyed, thank you to Jean Van Sistine and Bruce Bartel for all of the organization in getting that program set up. At noon on Wednesday the Operator Competition started with five teams. I have to say it again, **FIVE** teams!!! It's spectacular to see the competition back to life. Congratulations to the Southern District team "The Deuce is Loose" (Marc Zimmerman, Jeff Wellnitz and Josh Shere all from Janesville) for winning the competition this year. A big Thanks to Jeff Bratz, regions, sponsors, judges and all of the participants. The Annual Operator Luncheon and business meeting took place Thursday with Executive Secretary, Karen Harter, presenting the financial report for 2013. The proposed changes to the lifetime membership passed and elections were held. WWOA Board Director, Sharon Thieszen was elected Vice President. Next were elections to fill Sharon's Director position, and the position of Past President, vacated by Wade Peterson. I would like to personally thank Wade for his support and all of the hard work he has put forth to ensure the growth of this organization. Re-elected to a Director position was Don Lintner from New Holstein and the newly elected Director was Jim Johnson from the Pewaukee branch of Xylem, Inc. Congratulations to all new Board Members!

This year NEW Water hosted the plant tours at the NEW Water Green Bay Facility and the Fox Energy Center. The evening social hour started off the Annual Awards Banquet. Congratulations to all of the award winners and to the 20 new Lifetime Members. At the end of the banquet, President Freber passed the gavel to me, and so started my year as President of this great organization. Thank you Kevin for all of your help over the years, I value our friendship and will continue to look to you for guidance. Following the banquet, the evening ended with card games and several raffle prizes which once again was a lot of fun for all that stayed! The conference closed on Friday with the Farewell Breakfast and our closing speaker, Bill Hafs from NEW Water, who discussed experiences with Adaptive Management.

I sincerely hope everyone attending had a great experience and gained a wealth of information during the conference this year.

The WWOA Board of Directors has already started planning the 2015 conference that will be held at the Kalahari Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells from October 6th through the 9th, 2015. Reservation information is posted on the WWOA.org website. Planning for Government Affairs and Spring Biosolids Symposium is underway. Check the website for dates and registration information.

I am looking forward to focus my efforts on continued improvements within this organization this coming year to make it the best it can be. I truly value the opportunity to be the President. Please know that I and all of the Board of Directors are available for comments, suggestions or questions at any time. We want to hear from YOU, the membership, in order for us to better serve the needs of this organization and its membership.

The holiday season is upon us and is a joyful yet sometimes hectic time of year. I have come to realize that time goes by fast and it is so important to spend what spare time we have to relax and enjoy with family, friends and loved ones. I wish you and your families all a memorable, happy and safe holiday season

Until next time,

Kelly