



## President's Message

Randy Thater  
Waukesha, Wisconsin  
September 2012



### Post Aeration Blues

I was thinking of suggesting “WWOA President Randy Thater inspecting post aeration system” as the caption for the accompanying photo. As the more astute of you will notice, I’m actually slipping in a vacation photo. This was taken at McDonald Falls in Glacier National Park on our annual road trip in June. And no, even though this would help with post aeration issues to be addressed in our upcoming plant upgrade, I didn’t have the chutzpah to pass it off as work travel.

On the home front, June was one of the driest on record. Our official total at the plant was 0.58 inches for the entire month. Like many other plants, we are a cooperative weather observer reporting to the National Weather Service. Combined with a dry late May and early July, that left everything golden brown and the farmers in a world of hurt. But as weather has a habit of doing, late July got us caught up near average and things have greened up nicely, at least as far as lawns go. Of course, that will also end our break from having to mow - not only at the plant, but at lift stations, retention ponds, etc. around the city. Contrast that with the prior three years of abnormally wet Junes and at least we didn’t have to deal with I&I issues here at the plant and in our collection system this year. It has been a rather busy six weeks. Between the aforementioned road trip and my annual trip to the NASCAR race at the Brickyard, I sandwiched in my trip to attend the Northwest region meeting in Luck. As usual it was well attended and was very educational. Among topics were a talk on road construction signage and another on fracking sand mining for the oil industry. Lunch was up to the usual high standards as well. Coincidentally, the caterer was the same establishment where I had dinner the night before. Fortuitously the lunch entrée was pulled pork, while my dinner selection was a nice brisket sandwich – so I was able to sample a good selection of their offerings. The restaurant operators also compete in regional barbeque competitions and display numerous trophies in their entryway. Being a loyal Waukeshavian, I’d match the product from Pat’s Place just down the road from our plant against them, but it was very good. Anyway, my congratulations to the regional officers, Jeremy Boe, Brian Akason, Mike Romsos, and Wally Thom, for putting together another wonderful meeting. And thanks

also to the Luck staff for agreeing to be the hosts. It was especially nice seeing Wally again. He was on the state board back when I was a regional officer. Along with the recently retired Ron Dickrell from Marshfield, he is one of my role models for serving the members of this fine organization.

I did take a couple vacation days off and spent the weekend after the meeting taking in the sights of Polk County. Mostly just drove around taking in the natural beauty of the place, the roads along the St Croix National Scenic River (both sides) and the Fish Lake Wildlife area were two of the highlights. We also stopped in at the small museums in Balsam Lake and Frederic. I enjoy going to those types of places and seeing what the locals find special about their communities.

Next up is my final regional meeting visit to the Southern district in Janesville. Then the next week is our final board meeting prior to the annual conference. At this point everything is pretty well set up. I just checked out the web site and the conference brochure, exhibit rules and exhibitor letter and application are all posted on line. And my hard copy just arrived in yesterday's mail. By the time this makes print, the exhibitor registration will be long closed, but you should have another couple weeks to make the advanced registration.

Web registration is again offered this year. As I've mentioned in previous messages, we've put significant work in fixing some of the problems encountered last year. We hope you find it a much better experience this year. In addition we now offer new member application and existing membership renewal on line. I just recently signed up two new employees at the plant and found the process quite painless. And the new member packets followed in short order.

If you are planning on attending the conference and you are not a member, you should consider our non-member plus membership option. It is the same price as our member rate plus the new membership fee, and it is five dollars less than the non-member rate. So you can save five dollars and get a two year membership to WWOA in the process. Of course if you are not a member, you are reading this from a 'borrowed' copy of the Clarifier, since that is one of the perks of membership!

This is my last presidential message before my term as president ends. As I look forward to my last quarter as president, I can't help but ponder how easy it has went thanks to the work from all those that give of their time to WWOA. As soon as I start naming names, I know that I will be forgetting someone. In this and previous messages, I've mentioned a few of the regional officers by name. This is not to minimize the contribution of all twenty seven regional officers from the six regions. They have all volunteered their time to put on the regional meetings. They also serve as judges for the regional operator of the year award nominations, they stump to get nominees for the state-wide awards, push to put together teams for the operator competition, and generally do all it takes at the local level to keep this organization functioning.

There are the committee chairs and committee members that are not members of the state board. Just to mention a few are John Leonhard and Dean Faulkner working with other members of the Permanent Arrangements committee. They work to select the sites for future state conferences. Jon Butt is the Clarifier editor guiding the helm and handling the business aspects, while Doralee Piering is in the trenches doing the issue layouts. (I'm sitting here last minute, trying to get this message out to them by the issue deadline!) Carol Strackbein and Jim Shaw chair the Exhibits, Manufacturers & Consultants

committee putting together the Exhibition portion of the conference. Tom Crouse chairs the Historical committee, working with Ron Altmann and Richard McKee to put together the displays at the conference.

Finally, there is your board of directors. Directors Sharon Thieszen, Jim Bergles, Jeff Bratz, Lyle Lutz, and Kelly Zimmer each chair or serve on two or three committees. As Vice President, Kevin Freber chairs the technical committee and is in charge of the state conference planning. On Thursday evening I will be passing the gavel to President-Elect Wade Peterson. We will bid farewell to Past President Dave Carlson who will finish his eight years of service on the board. And I will join him in the ranks with the other past presidents I was proud to serve under; Tom Kruzick, Kay (not Jane!) Curtin, Jim Thalke (enjoy your retirement, Jim!), John Bond, and Bruce Bartel.

To all these people, and to all the members of WWOA, I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your contributions to our organization and our profession. Hoping to see all of you in Wisconsin Dells;

Sincerely,

Randy Thater

President, WWOA