

## RIWWA HISTORY PART II 1990 – 2001

by Bill Falcone

In a postscript to Hedley's 80-90 write-up, in 1988 the RIWWA entered its first all out incursion on both water conservation efforts in conjunction with **Robert Griffith**, of the RI Statewide Planning Program (now Water Resources Board member) as well as an all out push, in time and money, on a watershed protection bond issue on the 88 ballot. The bond referendum was overwhelmingly passed by the public. In 1988, **Ed Burke**, longtime leader in regulatory reform nationally, became the Chairman of the Providence Water Supply Board. In addition, **Pasquale DeLise** became the new engineer for BCWA. In 1989, RIWWA lost one of the Giants of RI water supply when **Dr. Joseph Cannon**, former DOH Director, passed away. He along with **Phillip J. Holton**, the "czar" of water, led the way for decades in water supply in RI. State Building Code Standards gave us the **1.6 Flush** this year. **Michael Cooney**, RIWWA member, BCWA accountant, and true gentleman retired along with **John Hess**, former BCWA Chair, and a true leader.

We will pick up where **Hedley Patterson** left off in with Maurice commenting on the libation served at the Attitude Adjustment hour at RIWWA meetings. Water still isn't it. The late 80's and early 90's was the most active period in RIWWA history. **Nancy Barnes**, Ex. Dir., with Bristol County Water Authority became our President succeeding **Maurice Trudeau** who had succeeded Hedley before him. The beginning of the decade was extremely tumultuous. Nancy's first order of business was to lead the RIWWA contingent in the formulation of State Guide Plan Element 721, Water Supply Policies for Rhode Island. Other than when RIWWA helped in defeating the Citizens Utility Board (CUB), which would have dictated such things as what could go into supplier bills as stuffers, in the late 80's, this was the first time the powers that be recognized that RIWWA needed to be part of the solution. SGP #721, other than positions on legislation from the beginning, was the association's first real venture into policy development. Besides, the EPA illegally vetoing the Big River Reservoir Project and putting that project on indefinite hold, (member **Pete Calise** was WRB General Manager at the time) there was an all out press to finalize funding of the Cross Bay Pipeline from Providence to Bristol County (via East Providence) to move towards development. **Joe Rego** was Chairman and **Rande Wilson** was the Executive Director of BCWA at that time. RIWWA was involved from one extent to another in both of these undertakings. In 1990, **Hans Bergey** was Operations Director under **Wiley Archer** for many years at Providence and who was Acting GM at Providence until **Richard Rafanovic**, from California, was selected as the new General Manager for a 10-year run in that position. Hans was the RIWWA Treasurer in the middle to late years of the decade and kept many of us out of trouble in his unwavering conservative position in RIWWA fiscal matters. He was also always and is our example of reality-based environmentalism. In 1990, former Representative **Wayne Salisbury** of Scituate became the first legislator to petition state and local governments to limit the amount of salt placed on our highways and roads in our water supply watersheds. This is now common practice. The year 1990 was also the beginning of the infamous, first in the nation, surcharges on water supply in Rhode Island. The 1-cent/100 gallon charge under the RI Public Drinking Water Protection

Program where RI water systems have received \$18 million dollars for the purchase of some 2400 acres of watershed lands and water quality system improvements. Providence Water operates a similar program for itself and its wholesale systems. The 1.33-cent/100gallon charge goes directly to the State General Fund for state water supply operations. RIWWA was not pleased when this formerly restricted receipt account at the Water Resources Board was swept into the RI General Fund and the association made its feelings felt throughout the state. This same year our Westerly brothers and sisters experienced a gasoline contamination of some of their wells. Our treasurer in the early 90's was **David Golebieski**, Chief Engineer of the Pawtucket Water Supply Board. Dave is now running a system in Pennsylvania.

The 1990 was also the time that our members **Stan Knox, Henry Meyer, and Jon Schock** were active in the deliberations on whether a high water using power plant would be located at URI in the Chipuxet aquifer. They monitored this situation for RIWWA. The years 1989-90 saw the RI Water Resources Coordinating Council established under the chairmanship of Assistant Director of the Department of Administration, at that time, and Water Resources Board Chairman, today, **Daniel Varin**. The committee was the forerunner of the Water Supply Plan for Rhode Island 1990 (ADL Study), State Guide Plan Element #722. Numerous RIWWA members served on the committee directly or as advisors to the committee to include, Nancy Barnes, **Jim Marvel, Bill McGlenn, Mo Trudeau, Bill Falcone**, Hans Bergey, and others attending meetings from time to time. The years 1990-91 saw the contamination of wells in 40 homes in the Canob Park section of Richmond. With the oil companies paying most of the cost, a brand new water system now serving Richmond and Hopkinton was planned and built by the WRB with excellent engineering work of members **Larry Riggs** and **George Palmisciano** as the guide. **Ted** and **Mark Bragger** also had a lot of "hands on" in this project. The year 1991 saw the first appearance the BCWA "Water Hog". This was the first RIWWA system to spend time and money on water education and public information.

The year 1991 saw final vote by the WRB to finance the Cross-Bay Pipeline and the first shot to rid state government of the WRB. RIWWA fought long and hard over a two-year period to insure that the Water Resources Board continued. **Roy Anderson**, who was Board chairman at the time, showed courage and lobbied hard for the Board's continuation and lost his chairmanship because of it. Roy is now in public works in Naples, FL. RIWWA member (BCWA Board member) **Dr. Lloyd H. Matsumoto**, noted professor of Biology at RIC was honored in 91 for his outstanding work in high technology training. He is also the RIWWA precipitation expert on rainfall distribution around the RI. At this period for a number of years, the tapping team of BCWA of **Chuckie Cruz, Ray Johnston, Fred Zompa, Al Silvia** and **Paul Ramsey** represented RIWWA and NEWWA at the AWWA competition and fared very well. The year 1991 saw the establishment of the Water Supply Management Division at DEM for the first round of management plans. Former RIWWA member **Elizabeth Scott** headed up the division. RIWWA members served on a committee in the establishment of the rules and regulations for the WSM Program. To say the deliberations were filled with both tension and humor at the same time would not be an understatement.

The year 1992 saw the continuation of familiar things and new things for RIWWA. Charter member **Joseph Mattera** of Cranston Water and WRB Chairman passed away. I never met anyone who did not love Joe as the great person that he was. Charter member

**Wiley Archer** became the second RIWWA member to become President of NE Water Works Association following **Jack Keaney** as our first member President of this AWWA section. Jack has the honor of knowing the Providence aqueducts (90 & 102) probably better than anyone working construction of the 102 as a PWSB engineer in the middle 60's and as a consultant on the both the 102 and 90 recently. The 80's and 90's saw a number of regionalization efforts for RIWWA water systems such as Pawtucket-Cumberland-Central Falls, Stone Bridge-Tiverton-N. Tiverton and Harrisville-Pascoag. All failed to come to fruition with much learned along the way. The year 1992 saw Pawtucket WSB customers, 100,000 people, restricted due contamination found in the system. The problem and the water were cleared quickly. A five-member commission was appointed to look into the problem including RIWWA's **Jim Marvel**, **Michael Covellone** and **John Morra**. North Kingstown Water experienced a well contamination one month later, which was cleared quickly. A month later saw URI with a boil water order due to coliform bacteria. Officials traced and corrected the problem. In 1992, an unnamed state agency placed a boat ramp into Stafford Pond in Tiverton, a public water supply. What was a local use situation became a regional recreation incursion. Safest to say **Frank Raposa** and **Dana Sumner** of Stone Bridge FD were not pleased. The Senate Corporations Committee (SCC) with **Senator William Enos** was not pleased either. RIWWA sprung into action. The association testified before an obviously perturbed SCC and **Jim Marvel** was appointed chair of the RIWWA Watershed Protection Committee. With a quick turnaround, the committee published a "Policy Statement on the Issue of Recreational Use of Watersheds for the State of Rhode Island". The NEWWA fully supported the RIWWA position with RIWWA members **June Swallow** and **Walter Combs** of the Health Department aiding in this effort. This document stands today. In this year, Mr. Marvel was also involved in trying to protect his raw water from Reservoir #3 down Crookfall Brook to the treatment plant and got tangled in "Roads and Toads" along the way. The pipeline was finally approved and built but we will not talk about safe yield and down stream releases because **Editor Dave Nickerson** will not allow those words in this publication.

The year 1993 saw the oft traveled Wiley Archer named Acting Chief Engineer of the Pawtucket Water Supply Board (PWSB). Wiley enlisted the man who was the glue that held PWSB together over the years **Russell Knibb** and brought **Owen Devine** out of retirement to help out. Russ and Owen together were a dynamic duo. Part of Wiley's job was to bring in a new GM & Chief Engineer and that was **Mike Woika** from Colorado. It became obvious from the beginning that Mike was special. Besides being a great guitar player, he had the ability to get things done and was able to converse and win over our water adversaries. RIWWA took notice and Mike was elected to the executive committee in short order and took on one RIWWA issue after another and got it done. He was also a good friend to any and all and is still greatly missed today but enjoying Florida by all accounts. Unfortunately, when Mike left **Jean Kay** retired too. It's called the double whammy. The year 1993 also saw a dry period, which affected some our water systems not having supply storage (larger reservoirs & aquifers). It also saw officials like **Mayor Francis Lanctot** of Woonsocket become active in water supply issues and supportive of RIWWA efforts. The year also saw Jamestown in its yearly battle to maintain dwindling supplies. **Steve Goslee** annually works his magic and gets the job done. Jamestown with less than 50 gallons per person per day is really a model of

when you have to get it done you “just do it”. The town is a model of innovation and Steve and **Maryanne Crawford**, Administrator, are the driving forces. **Bill Gollnitz** helped with a connection from North Kingstown over the old Jamestown Bridge.

The ten-year water extension on Log Road to the Smithfield Water Supply Board system (EPA Super Fund monies) proved that only water supply entities should build water systems. The year also saw the end to the effort to dismantle the Water Resources Board when the legislature said no. RIWWA Vice-President **Bill McGlenn** was required to lead the Executive Committee in the association’s all out push to save the WRB because, as a board employee, I had to rescue myself from the discussions most of the time. In 1993, the US Navy in Newport balked at paying the water surcharges but relented when the state proved that the charges were fees for specific water supply functions. RIWWA saw the new Water Supply Management Division submit “Management of the Withdrawal and Use of the Waters of the State” 92-S 2402 introduced as legislation. On March 5, 1993, RIWWA developed a position paper on Water Withdrawal and RIWWA assured, with others, that this legislation never saw the light of day.

The year 1994 saw a loss to RIWWA in chemist and songwriter **John Collins**, formerly with Providence Water as Superintendent of Filtration for 25 years. John’s safe yield analysis, with a pencil in the most perfect penmanship found anywhere, still stands as the model to be followed. John was also a very humorous soul who kept all of RIWWA very close in the early years. The year 1994 also saw a big drill make a big hole in a 42-inch water main in Warwick. Some 70,000 people were affected for a long time and the **Dan O’Rourke** and late **Ted Sheahan** had some very long days and nights. Those Brothers were singing Blues during this period when the Governor signed a declaration of a water emergency. Ninety-four also saw member **Tim Brown** in Kent County begin a massive program of upgrade to the system long overdue. He also endeavored to bring on as much groundwater supply as possible to alleviate the pressure and need for Providence water. The year also gave RIWWA a regional approach to watershed protection. North Kingstown Water (Bill Gollnitz and **Sue Licardi**), Quonset-Davisville system (**Howie Cohen**), KCWA (Tim Brown), the Town of East Greenwich and the City of Warwick together submitted a combined Watershed Protection Plan for the Hunt Aquifer. Sounds like an economy of scale situation to me.

The year 1995 saw the RIWWA having great reservations about DEM handling the land transactions for the Water Resources Board Corporate under the RI Public Drinking Water Protection Program. Reservations were still high over the failed DEM reorganization into the DOE in which the WRB would have gone. As it turned out, **Mary Kay**, Esq. and **Lisa Primiano** and the Planning and Development Office have done a superb job on watershed land acquisition for the program and at a good price. The WRBC sold the Richmond Water System to the town for \$1. Governor Almond dug into his pocket and came up with the buck, which he gave to **Daniel Schatz**, WRBC chair. RIWWA member **Jon Schock** took the lead issue in South Kingstown upon himself as Utilities Director and led an education effort. RIWWA and many others fought long and hard on draft Water Quality Regulations being proposed by DEM. These regulations, in this form, would, on paper confiscate the existing safe yields of water suppliers. Led by **Jim Marvel**, **Rich Blodgett**, Providence Water, **Carleton Maine**, retired DOH & DEM, **Dan Schatz** & **Paul Sams** of WRB, the RIWWA put forth logical comments countering aspects of the draft as written. The Economic Development Corporation and

Narragansett Bay Commission both commented in like manner as RIWWA. Even **Brian Bishop** of RI Wise Use, in more colorful terms, stated similar views. I guess everyone can be wrong.

In 1995, environmental writer for the Providence Journal, **Peter Lord**, wrote an excellent piece on RI water supply in a section called Air, Land & Water. As usual, it was well done and factual as well as even handed without an agenda. Mr. Lord, with others, did an eight page Big River Reservoir color piece in 1990, which was unprecedented at the time. The year saw Ocean State Power, denied public water when developed, build a 17.5 acre pond in an old gravel pit on Rt. 102 in North Smithfield to tide them over when denied Blackstone River water below a certain level. The funny thing is that the tank is filled with water purchased from municipal water suppliers and trucked to the pond (tank). Ask Mo what he thinks of this since the trucks drive by his house. **Julia Forgue** (Newport PW now) and **Ken Booth** of East Providence Water replaced that landmark and checkered water tower, which was used as a guide for commercial airlines over the years. The year 1995 had a dry summer despite the papers calling it a drought. I guess they never saw 1963-65. Any dry summer is always tough on the Farm Community in Rhode Island to include the apple growers in the north to the ornamental growers on the east bay to major growers and turf farmers in Washington County. Farmers who work well with RIWWA like **Bill Stamp**, **Steve Donohue** (WRB member), **Senator Susan Sasnowski**, **Representative Eileen Naughton**, and many more allow for coalition building dialogue in our common needs.