



THAT'S ALL FOLKS.....

By Douglas Smorol

For most of you, by the time this article reaches your desk, my career at the New York Rural Water Association will be over. That's right, I'm calling it a career, the end of work, retiring. I have logged twenty-four (24) years as Circuit Rider #2 with the New York Rural Water Association. With that, I also have the dubious distinction of having been the longest serving Circuit Rider in NYRWA's history, which goes back to 1979. Before I was hired in October of 1996, there was only one Circuit Rider (George Flummer) to cover the entire State of New York. John Hraska did it briefly in 1995 until the NRWA awarded another position to NYRWA in the Fall of 1996 when I was hired. John and I split the state from North to South at Sharon Springs, NY. John serviced the East, and I the Western part of the State of New York. It took me years to convince Pat Scalera that I got the short end of the stick. You see, back then the bulk of our membership was cloistered in the Hudson Valley. When George Flummer was hired he began to expand the membership further West. Either way, it's a long way between Sharon Springs and Ripley, NY. When I came on board in October of 1996, the New York Rural Water Association had a membership of about 300 systems, many of those were Mobile Home Parks. That number has swelled to include over 1400 systems, a majority of those are municipalities. I remember the first NYRWA Staff meeting I attended at our old office in the Red Apple Realty building on Route 23 in Claverack. Attending the NYRWA October 1996 staff meeting were the following individuals:

Pat Scalera - newly minted CEO
Beth Cone – Financial Officer
Valerie Ogden – Member Services
Steve Winkley – Source Water Protection
Rick Wood – WW Trainer / Technician
Yvonne Tucker – WW Technician
Jim Smith – Water Trainer
John Hraska – Circuit Rider #1
Doug Smorol – Circuit Rider #2

What a crew, never a dull moment, right? Then Dave Cole came along a few months later and we started to hit on all cylinders. Membership began to grow, equipment got better, and we found out that a lot of the positions were interchangeable and at times, change was necessary. Cheryl Kearns came as the right person, at the right time. Cheryl and Steve Winkley will now and forever be known as the "Old-timers"!

As you all know, most of us get nowhere in this life without some help from others, allow me to drop a few names of people that were in some way, shape, or form contributed to my success during my career at NYRWA:

Buzzy LeDain, Jack Haywood, Dave Barker, Ron Trinkl, Walt Sweed, Roger Mullen, Jerry Barron, Steve Freeman, Don Koester, Walt Vosburgh, Dan Reed, Karl Vebber, Steve Lillie, Jeff Lee, John O'Connell, Barry Walters, Kurt Wilmot, Ralph Downey, George Capece, Jeff Swartz, Phil Perry, Florence Braunius, Steve Lane, Jim Seymour, Elwin Terwilliger, Dana Harris, Mike Root, Jim Gilligan, to name a few...

I would like to thank every Water Operations Specialist, Village Clerk, Mayor, Supervisor, and employee that missed a lunch or stayed a few minutes to chat when I came knocking at their door at the wrong time of day. I apologize; life on the road can be cruel. I loved every minute of it.

This will be the culmination of 50 years of drawing a paycheck. I've been paying into Social Security a long time and I plan on getting some of it back. My retirement plans are simple, do some traveling, putter around my property, spend time with my wife, my sons and their wives, and my grandson. As of November 12th, 2020, I am 66 years old. How many years have I got left? I don't know, but I plan on enjoying every minute that fate allows.

I'll finish this up with a tip of the hat to two cherished friends (Dave Cole and Pat Scalera) at NYRWA that made my job as Circuit Rider much easier. To Dave Cole: I was the idea guy, but you made it happen. And to Pat Scalera: For always hearing me out and placing me in position to be successful. I thank both of you from the bottom of my heart.

And to Cheryl Kearns: This is my 93rd and final article for Aquafacts and I know that whoever takes the reins at CRIL, they will continue to produce articles that promote "Quality on Tap"....💧💧💧

