



# OPERATOR



November 2004 Edition

## Inside

- ~ President's Prattle P. 2
- ~ Secretary's Scrawl P. 3
- ~ Conferences 2004 P. 4
- ~ Conferences 2004 Cont P. 5
- ~ Life Membership award P.6

### AROUND THE TRAPS -

- ~ Watch out for potholes P. 3
- ~ Central P.6
- ~ Did you know? P.7



*Jason Whittaker receiving the Actizyme Prize from Robert Unsworth for best paper at the Victorian conference. See details page 3.*



*"The WIOA's newest Life Member Mr George Wall with wife Marilyn. See stories page 6 and 7".*





## Editorial

### Welcome to the fourth edition of Operator for 2004



Recently I encountered some surprising information regarding the use of water within Australia. For example did you know that agriculture uses some 67% (16,660GL in 2000-2001) of Australia's water? Also that the largest irrigation systems are in the Murray-Darling Basin, which produce 40% of Australia's agricultural wealth.

Why is this important? Well salinity is threatening the future capacity of this important area for all Australians. As the water gets saltier, irrigators are forced to use more water and thus the problem is compounded.

This again demonstrated to me that not only is water its self an important resource but additionally it is how water is utilised, particularly here in Australia that is important. It is therefore significant to "factor in" the impact that water usage may have on the environment. With the current emphasis focused on using treated sewerage for water reuse schemes the potential impact will be an important factor.

As mentioned above the total impact, particularly the quality, of water usage in any reuse proposal needs to be carefully evaluated before being implemented.

THE EDITOR

## President's Prattle

Firstly, for those not at the Victorian conference, I have great pleasure in advising WIOA Members that our hard working Secretary Mr George Wall was awarded a Life Membership. This is only the fourth time in the Association's 30+ year history that such an award has been bestowed. It was great to look down on George's face when I announced that we were giving him the award, particularly with him not knowing anything about it. Not much gets past our George, so the Committee was pretty pleased that we were able to keep the award a secret. An outline of George's service to WIOA appears later in this edition.

The conferences in each State have come and gone for 2004 and from all reports have been resounding successes. Each of the respective committees must be congratulated for their efforts and outstanding commitment to increasing the skill base of operators. The participation of the trade exhibitors has been fantastic and we thank them and their companies for their ongoing support. With 110 booths occupied at the Victorian conference this year, it would be remiss of me not to make special mention of the trade show organizer, Mr Ron Bergmeier, who put in many hours of hard work to get the conference happening.

With summer bearing down it would give many operators some flutters seeing the recent bushfires around Brisbane. This will bring back some memories for the water boards in northern Victoria and Sydney of the fires that created so many operational problems in the past couple of years. Hopefully we're all the wiser from the experience and if you are impacted by fires this year, keep the Association in mind as a resource that may be able to help.

The new Drinking Water Act in Victoria has now been in operation since July 1 and it would be interesting to hear what problems or resource issues it has caused. If any operators have

some experiences or issues to do with the new requirements, please contact the Editor with an article so it can be published in the next newsletter. As we have stated in the past, we need you to share your experiences with us so they can be communicated to other operators.

After a lengthy period of exchanging e-mails and ideas, I'm pleased to announce that we have just signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New Zealand Water and Wastes Association. This provides some pretty unique opportunities for operators on either side of the Tasman to share ideas, resources and discuss issues of mutual interest. We ask that all WIOA Members read the document, a copy of which has already been sent out, and remember that we will be sending a couple of people to the NZ operators conference next year. Any volunteers??? We'd love to hear from you.

As this is our last newsletter before Christmas, may I take the opportunity to thank you all for your outstanding contribution to the water industry and assisting the Water Industry Operators Association have another great year. I would also like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

### "Happy Operating"

John Harris.  
WIOA President

### Certificates in Water Industry Operations - Victoria 2004

The Water Industry Training Centre and Goulburn-Murray Water Training Services attended the conference and announced that the following people had completed all the requirements to be awarded a Certificate in Water Industry Operations in the past year.

#### Certificate II.

Peter Reberger, Peter Brown, William Watson, Peter Huggins, James Stephen, Neville Montgomery, Peter Moore, Ben Harris, Les Tonkin, Wayne Reither, David McPhee, Greg Hall, Paul Warren, Adrian Voogt, Belinda Murray, Laura Oaten, Peter Dwyer, Sarah Angel, Chris Spokes, Jason Gladman, Brett Sharp, Jason Whittaker, Gavan Keir, Jason Krzcuik, Bill Dilg, Bruce Tyler, Karly Roche, Paul Deakin, Sharon White, Darren Kruger, Scott Matthews, Wes Wilkie, Chris McLean, Hank Owen, Luke Ellis, Gavin Cato, Aaron Carr, Shane Small, Wayne Fleming, Michael Borlase, Dale Archer.

#### Cert III.

Gavan Keir, Jason Krzcuik, Bill Dilg, Karl Williams, Bruce Tyler, Craig Griggs, Dale McGraw, Daniel Irwin.



Trainers and recipients of Certificates presented at the Victorian conference

# Secretary's Scrawl

## WIOA - Secretary's Scrawl - November 2004

### Conference 2004

The 2004 annual Victorian conference in Wodonga was a huge success. Thanks again to our Committee, Ron Bergmeier and team, North East Water and all the other sponsors, trade exhibitors, delegates and anyone else who helped out in any way.



The conference award winners as presented this year were:

#### Hepburn Prize (best Paper overall)

Jason Whittaker, Goulburn Valley Water.

#### Actizyme Prizes (best Paper by an Operator)

##### 1st Place:

Jason Whittaker, Goulburn Valley Water

##### R/Up Actizyme Prize:

Bruce Tyler, North East Water

##### Third Prize Actizyme Prize:

Jason McGregor, Central Highlands Water

#### Water Industry Training Centre Prizes

##### (Best Operator Poster Papers)

##### 1st Place :

Karl Williams, South Gippsland Water

##### R/Up WITC Prize:

Helen Friend, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water

##### 3rd WITC Prize :

Ron Peters, South East Water

#### The AWA sponsored "Wal Whiteside Operator of the Year Award" was awarded to

Peter Tolsher from Purac.

### Conference 2005

The 2005 conference will be held on 7 & 8 September at the Schweppes Centre in Bendigo with Coliban Water again acting as Host. We will provide more information early in the New Year.

### Memberships

The 2004 year is fast coming to a close meaning that membership fees for the 2004 year (\$15 and \$165 for Corporates inclusive of GST) are almost due. We will be sending out a reminder and a Tax Invoice to everyone soon and if you don't wish to remain a Member, please let us know and we'll take you off the mailing list.

### Charity Golf Day

The 6th Charity Golf Day was staged on 31 October at Trafalgar. The winners and all the gossip from the day will appear in the next newsletter, but a big thank you to all the sponsors, players and helpers.

### New Members

Welcome to the following people who have recently joined our Association as Members:



Mathew Grove, Tony Formosa, Gary Tickner, Gary Fischer, Rudolf Seuntjens, John Paulger, Charles Jensen, David Smyth, Glenn Carroll, Rod Liversidge, Andrew Choake, John Granzien, Mark Forrest, David Old, Craig Phillips, Chris McDonell, Murray McMillan, Jason Mullins, Tim Froud, Peter Brown, Colin Haynes, Laurie Choake, John Granzien, Mark Forrest, Laurie Cittolin, John Jury, Jim Clearihan, Leigh Cook, Jim Abbot, Paul Webster, Mark Molloy, Chris Sayer, Gareth Ryan, Anthony Rosado, Des Ryan, Duane Bretherton, Neville Dutton, Tony Buckingham, Russ Phillips, Michael Chapman, Sesung Phothasenh, Ian Watson, Perry Proud, Bob Macintosh, Nigel Hesford, Stu Craib, Martyn Simpson, Bert Gray.

#### And the following new Corporate Members:

Water Industry Training Association (Qld), Omega Chemicals, EPCO Australia, WonderTreat Australia, Liquitek, Alldos Oceania, Doyle Pump & Engineering, WME Media, Rockwell Automation.

#### George Wall WIOA Secretary

## Watch out for potholes

There are many urban myths about how the trusty postal worker gets the mail delivered.

One true tale is demonstrated in the *photo below*. It shows what lengths the intrepid postal service goes to when trying to negotiate a leaking water service in a nature strip. Fortunately after calling upon the local "car" towing service the trusty postal delivery vehicle was safely retrieved.





## CONFERENCES 2004

The WIOA Committee made a special effort this year to make sure someone attended the Operators conferences in Qld and NSW as well as sending a delegation to the recent New Zealand operators conference. A report from each follows:

### Queensland - by George Wall

The event was held in Hervey Bay in late July and proved an opportune time to get away from the below freezing morning temperatures in Victoria. Vice President Cynthia and I attended and I got to deliver two papers - one on WIOA outlining what we are all about and one about innovation in wastewater treatment at Goulburn Valley Water.

The event is organised annually by the Water Industry Training Association (WITA) and was well attended by operators and interested industry people. The venue was ideal, the papers were excellent and the Trade Exhibition was quite impressive. A highlight was the boat trip to Frazer Island for a magnificent conference dinner - shame it was dark so we missed the scenery, but the food made up for it.

There were five papers eligible for the Actizyme Prizes and the winner is awarded "Operator of the Year". This award went to Ross Shannon for his paper on solar sludge drying. He was presented his plaque and prize at the conference dinner.



*Caption - Ross Shannon (Old Operator of Year 2004) presented his award by Brain Davis from WITA(Right) and Tony Wright from Actizyme (Left).*

An interesting part of the event was the open forum where everyone was encouraged to discuss issues related to the industry. The topics raised were diverse and included discussion on issues like training, Council structures, finding operators, the difficulties of managing with small teams and whether there should be 100% recycling of reclaimed water. We were able to provide some comments relating to how we handle some of these issues and offered to help wherever we can.

### New South Wales - by Anthony Evans

The NSW Conference was conducted at Penrith Panthers Leagues Club in Sydney in late September and was attended by Anthony Evans and Barry Waddell. We accompanied the first and second place winners of the Victorian Actizyme prize - Jason Whittaker and Bruce Tyler who performed their papers again.

Ian Bicknell from G-Tech collected the crew from the airport and delivered us safely to our motel at Rooty Hill (Panthers was booked out). Barry demanded the role of navigator for the 30 minute drive to Panthers in the morning and much to my delight managed to steal the crown as worlds worst navigator by getting us lost.

The Keynote Speaker Phil Warner from Byron Shire reminded the participants that water matters. He commented that Sydney Water was worried about only having two years supply, but for most of NSW the situation is much more serious. When your supply is down to 40 days it certainly focuses your attention.



The fifteen papers covered topics ranging from new technologies to disinfecting water mains. A strong contingent from Sydney Water presented papers and the three specialty topics on Lime Dosing, BNR and on-site sewerage systems were popular with a lot of discussion generated.

The official opening of the trade show was also the start of the operators challenge and this year we entered two teams, managing to confuse the organisers and eventually take out 3rd prize for the "Mexicans". We still think we won but we were too polite to argue.

After enjoying the meal we settled in for the entertainment and Bazz and I were dragged kicking from the crowd to participate. Next time you see Bazz ask him how many animals can make pets. The evening was finished off with a game of night golf and us Vics showed how it was done.

Thursday morning we missed the start after getting stuck in traffic but we managed to get Bruce there in time to present his paper from the Vic Conference and listen to the last few papers.

The Best Operator Paper prize was presented to Suzie Hatch & Colum Kearney, Sydney Water who get to attend the Victorian conference to do it again next year.



*Tony Wright from Actizyme presenting the NSW Best Paper prize to Suzie Hatch and Colum Kearney*

The best Trade Site was won by Thiess.

Thanks again to Ian Bicknell for picking us up at the airport and taking us to the motel and conference.

## New Zealand - by George Wall

This event was held in Christchurch in early October and was attended by President John and myself. It was great to catch up again with a number of operators that I met on my last visit in 2001.

The primary objective for us attending was to finalise and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between our respective organisations. We are pleased to report that this was accomplished and we are now working on the finer details for future interaction. This includes sending operators to their event next year and vice versa. More details on the MoU will be included in the next edition.



*Signing the MoU with NZWWA (from Left to right) Stu Craib (NZ Operators Chairman), David Neru (NZWWA Business Manager), J.Harris, G.Wall, Murray Clayton (Immediate Past NZ Operators Chair)*

Apart from some minor hiccups with the management of the conference which were out of the organising committees control, the conference rolled on and was a success. The papers were of an excellent standard and we were even given an impromptu insight into wastewater treatment in the West Indies by an operator on an exchange program into to NZ.

As usual we struggled along with the language issues - how "Wh" gets to be pronounced "fa" is still beyond me. With permission from Jason Whittaker, I presented his paper on the development of operations manuals at GVW and the operators in NZ were suitably impressed. I also talked on the WIOA and where we are headed in the future.

The operators dinner was a highlight and the do it yourself entertainment was certainly a different concept. Bert "the Living Legend" Gray held court and kept things rolling smoothly despite some of the worst mixed company efforts ever communicated. A bottle of duty free "Johnnie Walker Red" we picked up on the way into NZ was duly awarded, but I dare not repeat the winning yarn here. Lucky we didn't have to judge who won it.

The operators competition was held and won by David's team. They are a bit more serious in NZ and bribery gets you nowhere. One A.Evans and Co. would have no chance of winning.



*Winding down after a hard day conference are Bert, Neil and David*



*Operators Challenge Jim Peek and crew*

Other interesting discussions were held during the conference and related to issues like training and operator registration. There was much comparison of the systems and requirements in both NZ and Oz and as we have so much in common, we must learn from one another and not reinvent the wheel. We intend to use our MoU and the contacts we have made to chase some of these things up in the future.

Another side line from the event is the promise (or was it a threat) from Jim Peek and his merry gang to attend the Victorian conference en mass next year. We'd be pleased to have you all here guys, and we look forward to it. Keep in touch.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone in NZWWA and those associated with the operators group for their wonderful hospitality, friendliness and for being so open in discussing issues of strategic importance to both our groups.

## Summary

By attending all these events we have managed to "steal" a few good ideas and noticed a few things that probably didn't work so well. This type of co-operative interaction can only help us improve future events and make them more worthwhile for both ourselves, the delegates and the trade companies.

The future holds many challenges and expanding our networks by attending events such as these is a two way street with wins on both side. There have been a number of people who have been impressed with what we are doing and have joined up. The challenge is to keep up this momentum and grow our Membership even more.



# Life Membership Award to George Wall

At the recent Water Industry Engineers and Operators Conference in Wodonga the WIOA highest award was presented to George Wall. A brief outline of George's involvement with AWWOA, WIOA and the Water Industry is as follows.



- 1989** Commenced employment with Shepparton Water Board and joined AWWOA as Member.
- 1993** Awarded Hepburn and Actizyme Prizes for Best Paper at 56th Conference in Ballarat, paper on Control of Blue-green Algae in wastewater lagoons.
- 1993** Invited onto AWWOA Committee to fill a casual vacancy in Nov 93.
- 1994** Headed a sub-committee to update the Constitution with amendments approved at AGM in 94. Further constitutional updates in 1997, 99, 2001, 02 and 03.
- 1995** Elected Secretary of AWWOA due to Colin Sandeman leaving the industry.  
Member Nos: Ind - 100, Corp - 1, \$15,000 in bank
- 1998** Conference in Shepparton with most of organisation completed by George. Awarded AWA, Operator of Year Award. Arranged the Inaugural Water Industry Charity Golf Day held at Broadford GC.
- 1999** Website established including development of concepts and sourcing all content.
- 2000** Awarded Actizyme Prize for Best Operator Paper at 63rd Conference in Warrnambool, paper on High rate anaerobic wastewater treatment processes.  
Arranged a strategic planning and directions work shop in Bendigo, which set in place a framework and vision for the future development of the Association.
- 2001** Inaugural edition of WaterWorks produced with Peter Mosse as editor and George and Russell Mack as co-editors.  
Performed Keynote address at NZWWA conference on behalf of AWWOA.
- 2002** Instrumental in change of name to WIOA and commenced work on processes to allow development of a National organisation.  
Member Nos: Ind - 288, Corp - 63, \$ 55,000 in bank.
- 2003** Appeared before the House Representatives Environment Committee Inquiry into employment in the environmental sector following a submission completed on behalf of WIOA.  
Invited onto the National Water Industry Training Package review Steering Committee.  
Conference in Shepparton with most of organisation completed by George.
- 2004** Developed and finalised MoU with NZWWA and performed paper in NZ.  
Organised distribution seminar with Anthony Evans. Presented papers at Qld Operators conference on WIOA and wastewater treatment.  
Member Nos: Ind - 375, Corp - 85, \$ 150,000 + in bank

George has been an outstanding contributor to our Association and when it was raised at our committee meeting the feeling was that it should have been done before.

So George on behalf of all WIOA Members and the Corporate Members we congratulate you on being awarded Life Membership of WIOA.



**John Harris President WIOA**

## Around the Traps Central Region

### \$20 MILLION INVESTMENT SET TO IMPROVE GEELONG'S DRINKING WATER QUALITY

The Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Elaine Carbines, on 8th October 2004, officially opened a \$5M pipeline and a \$15M Water Treatment Plant designed to improve Geelong's drinking water quality.

The Moorabool Water Treatment Plant can treat up to 65 million litres of water a day, providing one third of the water for the Geelong region.

"Having secure access to high quality water is a key part of the Government's water reform action plan - Our Water Our Future," Ms Carbines said. "The Stony Creek to She Oaks pipeline and new treatment plant ensures that the Geelong region will continue to have high quality water well into the future." Barwon Water constructed an 11-kilometre 750mm diameter rubber ring steel pipeline to transfer water from the Stony Creek reservoirs to the site of the new treatment plant.

"Our Water Our Future recognizes that water authorities need to work with local communities, other government agencies and the private sector to find the best way of managing our water resources," Ms Carbines said.

"I know that in this project cooperation was of particular importance when it came to constructing the pipeline in the Brisbane Ranges National Park and the Steiglitz Historic Park.

"Barwon Water worked successfully with a community reference panel to ensure the highest standards in engineering and environmental management were achieved. "This level of cooperation and ongoing commitment to taking a holistic view of providing water services will ensure the Geelong region is well served by this and future infrastructure projects."



*Local MLC Elaine Carbines and Parliamentary Secretary for Environment with Steve Vaughan chairman of Barwon Water at official opening of Moorabool water treatment plant*

## Life Membership - *What an Honour*

I was certainly surprised and honoured when it was announced at the recent Victorian conference that the current Committee considered my contribution to the WIOA worthy of Life Membership. To be held in such esteem as our other three WIOA Life Members - Ray Holloway, Stan Franzi and Ron Bergmeier is a great honour for me.

I'd like to take this opportunity to briefly outline what has sustained my level of interest and enjoyment derived from both the WIOA and the water industry over a long period.

When I started out as a wastewater treatment operator in the late 1980's, I was happy just to have a job. We were told exactly what to do and when, and there was little room for creativity. The engineering fraternity were the brains of the organisation and we operators provided the brawn to get the job done. Our views and ideas were sometimes discounted as the engineers and chemists calculated away at a problem looking at it purely from a first order kinetics or chemistry stance. On the other hand, we operators worked from past experience and gut feel. In many cases the same answer to the same problem was determined by both the engineer and operator - they just got there a different way. The acceptance that operators were indeed professionals in our own right and we could perform at a higher responsibility level was a major victory and turning point for our industry. It came about only after prolonged efforts by many very committed and competent operators.

With all due respect to the previous generations, the role of the operator "came of age" through the late 1990's and has continued to evolve at a great pace. The operators were, and are, provided training and opportunities that were not available only a few years ago. As a result the industry now demands a much higher performance level. In addition, along came the personal computer, electronics and such innovations as automatic control of treatment plants, CITECT, PLC's and SCADA to name a few. It pleases me to see operators who were once too scared to turn on an electronic calculator, progress to the point where they can now operate and control a fully automated computerised treatment facility, or can easily develop, update and use their own spreadsheets.

I've been fortunate to work for a progressive organisation in Goulburn Valley Water where these ground breaking concepts are quickly swallowed up and then considered the norm. My own learning curve has been steep and I must convey my thanks to all at Goulburn Valley Water for providing me with the time, opportunities, encouragement and for being supportive of my role with WIOA.

I have often reflected on my early days in the industry and am pleased that a number of insightful people that I admire and respect encouraged me to keep pushing my own personal boundaries. I now see it as important in my roles at both work and at WIOA to assist and push others wherever I can. There is nothing better than seeing people learn, advance, take on responsibility and succeed at what they do.

There are many operators out there who just need to be encouraged and mentored a bit to reach their potential. The WIOA provides many opportunities for operators prepared to put themselves out of their own comfort zone. I've seen lots of operators over the years bite the bullet at the WIOA conference and present a platform paper. To some this is not a big deal, but to many operators it is the most daunting experience of their lives. I'm speaking from experience - I've been there and done it. To see the satisfaction they attain once they finish their paper is truly rewarding to all and for many, it changes their lives and how they view and handle difficult situations. By facing their fear and conquering it, many adopt the philosophy of "bring on some more challenges - this was easy!" I see this in people almost every time we run a WIOA event.

Our Committee has always been a great source of inspiration for me. There is a wide variety of people, backgrounds and skills represented. A responsibility of our Committee is to continually come up with better resources and ideas to allow all operators to be more efficient and reach their full potential. The Committee members have one thing in common - they are the "doers" of the industry. They all love their jobs and their role on the Committee and share the same thoughts as me - they want to be part of a group which can and is making a difference.

I must thank my wife Marilyn and daughters Sherryn and Aleesha for their support and understanding over the years. Having a job, studying and being Secretary of WIOA all at once, steals a lot of time from them.

Finally, I want to thank all the WIOA Members and supporters with whom I have had contact over the years and also those who congratulated me at and after the conference. You are the lifeblood of this organisation and I am privileged to call you my friends.

**George Wall**  
WIOA Life Member

## Did You Know?

### Free Directory Assistance from Telstra

Did you know that there is a number for directory assistance that is FREE? It is 1223 (as opposed to 12 455 where this is charged at 25 cents) and is exactly the same service.

Apparently Telstra under Government law is supposed to provide a free operator service - hence the number 1223. They don't advertise this. They are trying to make as much money as possible with the number 12455.

From your mobile the number for call connect is 103, its the same deal under legislation they have to provide the free service; they just don't have to advertise it

Check it out (And spread the word, they make too much profit from us per year)

**Russell Mack**



## NEXT EDITION

**Article Contribution Deadline  
For the February 2005 Edition  
7th January, 2005**



**North East** - North East Water,  
Goulburn Valley Water, Coliban Water and Mt. Buller Resort  
Management Board

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**South East** - East Gippsland Water, Gippsland Water,  
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**South West** - Glenelg Water, South West Water and  
Portland Coast Water

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mobile 0419 103 885, email: [aeva@swwa.com.au](mailto:aeva@swwa.com.au)

**North West** - Central Highlands Water, Grampians Water  
and Lower Murray Water

*Expression of interest required*

**Central** - Barwon Water, Western Water and Metropolitan  
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Articles can be forwarded to area contacts or directly to  
The Editor email: [graham\\_thomson@barwonwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:graham_thomson@barwonwater.vic.gov.au)

### Free Environmental Directories and Magazines

We have a number of copies of WME's 2004 edition of the  
Australian Environment Industry Directory which normally  
retails for around \$70 and is a great resource. There are also  
a number of individual WME magazines which can be sent out.  
If you want a copy, please send an e-mail or give Secretary  
George a ring and he'll mail a copy to you.

### Electronic and Credit Card Payments now Available

Please note we can accept payments for Membership or  
anything else by EFT. We can also now accept payment via  
Credit Cards (Visa, Mastercard and Bankcard only). If you  
would like to take advantage of this service please send me all  
your details including credit Card No, expiry date, amount to  
transfer and sign it and we can process the payment from this  
end.

**'OPERATOR' is printed by Barwon Region Water Authority. The  
WIOA gratefully acknowledges the support provided by Barwon  
Water in producing 'Operator'**



Recent photo of WIOA committee - see if you can match names to  
faces. Correct responses eligible for mystery prize.

### WIOA 2004 OFFICE BEARERS & COMMITTEE

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Any articles, news snippets,  
information on improved work practices, ect as contributions to your  
magazine