The Florida Section was well represented at this year’s AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE), presented June 12-16 in Washington, D.C., where we garnered more than our fair share of awards and recognition. A hearty congratulations goes out to FSAWWA members, utilities, students, and teams who were honored at the national level. We are proud of your accomplishments and success!

AWWA 2011 Larson Aquatic Support Scholarship – Doctoral Level

Stephanie Ishii, a student from the University of Florida, is the recipient of the 2011 Larson Aquatic Research Support Scholarship - Doctoral. The scholarship provides support for doctoral and master’s students interested in careers in the fields of corrosion control, treatment and distribution of domestic and industrial water supplies, aquatic chemistry, and/or environmental chemistry. For her efforts, Stephanie will receive a $7,000 one-time grant towards completion of her doctorate. Congratulations and good luck, Stephanie!

Annual Section Education Award

Each year, the Section Education Award is presented to AWWA sections that have developed or conducted an exemplary program that educates water industry personnel, the public, students, or other groups about water supply issues. Every section is eligible, provided that the section developed or conducted its program during the calendar year prior to the award year. Eligible entries for the award are judged in four key areas: innovation, effectiveness, applicability for other AWWA sections, and the benefits of the program.

This year, the FSAWWA was selected from among 13 sections that entered with programs representing the “best of the best” ideas from AWWA sections for our Florida 2030 Initiative. The mission of the Initiative is to develop and communicate a focused message on Florida infrastructure needs to ensure a sustainable, reliable, safe, and affordable water supply, as well as creating a framework and vision for future water supply development.

Congratulations to all the members of the Florida 2030 Committee who have worked hard over the past few years to make this a success.

Florida’s own Palm Coast Water Buoys won the first-place Top Ops trophy at ACE11. Top Ops is the “college bowl” of the water industry. Teams of water treatment operators from AWWA sections compete against each other in a fast-paced, question-and-answer tournament. A moderator poses a broad range of technical questions that test the teams on their knowledge of water treatment operations.

After finishing third in last year’s national competition, teammates Fred Greiner, Peter Roussell, and Tom Martens reclaimed the National Top Ops title over runner-up Tacoma Water of the Pacific Northwest Section. H2Ohio from the city of Columbus placed third for the Ohio Section, and Information, a team representing the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, was fourth for the Chesapeake Section. Palm Coast also won the 2006, 2008, and 2009 National Top Ops titles. Congratulations guys; can we say “Dynasty?”

The annual student poster session was held on June 14, featuring college-level students from across North America. This year, first place was awarded to Amy Borello of the University of Florida, for her poster titled, “Photochemical Removal of Aqueous Mercury in the Presence of Humic Acid.” Congratulations to Amy on a job well done!
Teegarden Earns Fuller Award

This year’s Fuller Award winner for Florida is Section Past Chair Rob Teegarden. George Warren Fuller Awards are presented annually by the AWWA to the sections’ respective selected members for their distinguished service to the water supply field in commemoration of the sound engineering skill, brilliant diplomatic talent, and constructive leadership that characterized the life of George Warren Fuller. Congratulations to Rob as this year’s Fuller Award recipient!

Meet the AWWA Volunteer of the Year, Dr. Fred Bloetscher.

As an active member of AWWA since 1989, Dr. Bloetscher has given his time and expertise unconditionally to AWWA members and staff on many levels. Among other significant accomplishments, he authored the groundbreaking eLearning program, Water Treatment Operator, and the best-selling book, Water Basics for Decision Makers: Local Officials’ Guide to Water & Wastewater Systems. He has also served on and chaired numerous committees. Fred contributes invaluable technical expertise that truly embodies the AWWA spirit as the ‘authoritative resource on safe water.’ The Florida Section is extremely lucky to have a talent like Fred here in our state.

If you type “Fred Bloetscher” into the search box of the AWWA’s Web site, a long list of links reveals why the AWWA staff chose the well-known educator, speaker, author, and researcher as the first recipient of the Association’s Volunteer of the Year award. The links list numerous books, manuals, and training courses authored by Fred, as well as his participation in AWWA workshops, symposiums, conferences, and webcasts.

Fred began volunteering in 1994 by helping with a groundwater workshop at ACE in New York. Since then, he has worked with AWWA staff from the public affairs, conventions, education, technical, and publications groups on various projects, programs, and products.

An assistant professor of civil engineering at Florida Atlantic University, he mentors future AWWA members and represents the Association on the U.S. Geological Survey’s Committee on Water Information.

When asked about his extensive AWWA volunteer activities over the years, Fred said it was like boarding “a train that kept on going.” His interest in groundwater in the late 1990s led to the editing of his first AWWA manual, M21, Groundwater. He also authored the Sustainable Water Resources CD-ROM.

“Fred has written several AWWA books, including the soon-to-be-published Utility Management For Water and Wastewater Operators, which is filling a void in our operator education books,” said Gay Porter DeNileon, AWWA publications manager. “That’s what Fred does; he recognizes where the gaps are and moves in to fill the void. He’s very perceptive and incredibly productive. And he’s a delight to work with.”

His volunteer efforts for the Water Resources Sustainability Division include participation in webcasts, workshops, and symposiums focusing on aquifer storage and recovery, reuse, low-inflow protocol, climate change, and regulations.

Frequently a presenter on water operations courses and four others on treatment operations courses and four others on water treatment plant management. “I’m still working on more,” he said. “I write a lot. It’s relatively easy for me to pull stuff together, and I enjoy writing and editing.”

What drives his volunteer spirit? In his own words, “I’m a naturally curious person, and I like new challenges.” He declines most of the credit for AWWA products to which he has contributed. “Nothing happens at AWWA without a lot of help from a lot of people. I’ve found that if you ask [AWWA members], they will volunteer. A lot of what I have done would not have happened without a lot of volunteers and great staff support.”

Fred also enjoys building and maintaining relationships with water industry colleagues. “AWWA develops consensus documents, where everyone has to agree; that’s not easy. But it takes a lot of people willing to get involved. It takes longer to do things that way, but it works—AWWA produces great products.”

Fred received his award at the opening general session of the annual conference. Fred, thank you for all you do for the Florida Section and the water industry!

Our hats go off to each and every one of these outstanding water professionals. Congratulations to all and best of luck in next year’s competitions!

Llewellyn, Oyler Earn FWEA Utility Council Appreciation Award

In May the FWEA Utility Council recognized two individuals at this year’s Florida Water Resources Conference for their leadership in co-chairing the “Reuse Workgroup,” a collaborative working group comprised of decision makers from the state’s water management districts, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and various utilities. Janet Llewellyn, FDEP environmental administrator in the Office of Water Policy, and Alan Oyler, who recently retired as public works director for the city of Orlando and currently serves as an FWEA Utility Council board member, were presented their awards during a June meeting of the Reuse Workgroup.

The Workgroup evaluates methods for expanding the efficient, beneficial reuse of wastewater, recognizing that inherent trade-offs and balancing must occur as its members work collectively to optimize various parts of the total water management pie. This group is widely recognized as a model for advancing water management regulation.