



Meet July's Spotlight Member, Oleg Kostin. Oleg is the Production Manager and T-4 Licensed Operator of Record for the Central Operating Area of New Jersey American Water (a.k.a. the Raritan System). He is responsible for the operation of a system that includes two "run of the river" surface water treatment plants (combined treatment capacity of 275 MGD) as well as 28 ground water plants producing 13.2 MGD, 51 booster stations and 43 distribution system tanks holding 98 MG in reserve. Oleg manages 28 pressure gradients, 14 allocation permits, as well as other environmental permits (e.g. TCPA and DPCC programs). He has been with New Jersey American Water in various capacities since November of 1987. Oleg began his water career at the Passaic Valley Water Commission (PVWC) in Little Falls, NJ in April of 1985 as a Senior Laboratory Technician.

Oleg has been a member of AWWA since 1989. He's been on various committees and is currently on the Education and Professional Development Committee, which he previously chaired, and the Licensed Operator Committee. He is a Vice Chair of the EPA/AWWA Partnership for Safe Water PEAC (Program Effectiveness Assessment Committee). He is currently a member of the Board of Examiners for Water and Wastewater Licensing and a past member of the Advisory Committee on Water Supply and Wastewater Licensed Operator Training. Oleg is the 2012 Hal Florence Meritorious Operator Award Recipient.

**Why did you decide to go into the field of water?** As an undergraduate and graduate student I was drawn to environmental/ecology areas of study dealing with aquatic ecosystems. Like many in the general population I was not familiar with what happens "behind the scenes" to produce and deliver the life sustaining resource we are privileged to be a part of providing. Just as I was completing my Master's degree a future friend and colleague Linda (Bernal) Pasquariello approached my graduate advisor one afternoon asking if he knew of anyone who would be interested in a job at the PVWC laboratory. I was soon interviewed by Joe Bella for the position and was fortunate enough to be offered the position. I have the distinction of being Joe Bella's first hire at PVWC, something I will always be grateful for. As I became more involved in the treatment processes I was monitoring I began to immerse myself in the industry.

**How did you become a volunteer for AWWA?** When I first started at New Jersey American Water Company I had a conversation with the Director of Water Quality for NJ and he suggested that I might be interested in the Research and Technology Committee given my science background. He was correct and I've been involved with AWWA ever since.

**That was what motivates you to be active in the Section?** Giving back to the industry that provided me with a career and vocation is my major motivation. Much of what I have become professionally was molded by the relationships I developed in the industry many of which came about through AWWA.

**How long have you been an AWWA member and what have you gotten from your membership?** I became involved with AWWA in 1989. I've had the opportunity to make presentations both locally and at the AWWA ACE and developed both professional and personal relationships that have lasted for years. The people that I've met have influenced me in many ways that helped set me on my career path.

**Hobbies and outside interests?** I am an avid physical fitness enthusiast. I lift weights and run almost every day. When I was younger I was a competitive powerlifter.

**What legacy would you like to leave behind?** When I finally hang it up I hope to leave my successor(s) a system that is better than when it was handed over to me. I would like to be remembered as a passionate advocate for the industry and for doing the right thing for my friends, family and the public I served.