



Robert J Waldele Section Spotlight Member

Congratulations to Robert J. Waldele Sr., the Section's October Spotlight member. Bob, as we know him, has been in the industry for 40 years and a member of the Section for most of those years. He currently works for Harper Control Solutions, Inc. as an outside sales representative where he handles sales, design recommendations, technical support, and training /service for many products within the water industry. He is presently an active licensed water operator holding a W3, T4 license. Bob has been active in the Section for a number of years. Most recently he was the co-chair of the Section's Vendor Committee for 12 years.

Bob is a present member of the North Jersey Water Conference where he is a past president and a recipient of the Member of the Year and Operator of the Year awards. Bob is also an active associate member of the New Jersey Water Association.

Why did you decide to go into the field of water?

While attending County College for business, I met a water system utility worker that was taking the same accounting class. After class, we would discuss the importance of safe drinking water and how it is one of the most valuable resources on earth. Right then and there, I started to look for a position within the water industry. Upon obtaining a position as an entry level operator, I slowly worked my way up to Superintendent and finished this portion of my career as the Division Manager for a medium size Water Utility. I worked within the water utility industry for 18 years before changing careers and entering into sales. Water is essential to life and the sustainability of our planet. Over the last 22 years I have helped many utilities maintain and improve their infrastructure in an attempt to continue to provide safe drinking water to their customers.

How did you become a volunteer for AWWA? What motivates you to be active in the Section?

I was a young operator attending the AWWA Annual conference in the mid 1980's, where I met many exceptional people. As a young operator, I was a little intimidated by the experienced superintendents and managers but, everyone I met immediately started to share their experience and knowledge. This experience convinced me that I wanted to be a part of this organization. While attending the AWWA Conference in 1988, the Chair Person of the Registration Committee (Thomas Dawson) asked me if I would like to join the Committee and I immediately said yes. I have enjoyed and benefited by being part of such a valuable organization still to this day.

How long have you been an AWWA member and what have you gotten from your membership?

I was a member for several years in the late 1980's to early 1990's but unfortunately had to step aside for several years. I rejoined the AWWA organization in 2001 and the membership provides me with the latest industry news and technology. The AWWA networking events allow me to meet others within the industry where we can share experiences and knowledge in an attempt to make things better.

Hobbies and outside interests?

I love to be outdoors. I enjoy camping, hiking, fishing, and occasionally playing golf. Of all that I have mentioned, my favorite is Fly Fishing as this puts me directly in touch with how important water is. Without water what would we have?

What legacy would you like to leave behind?

Over the past 40 years I have met so many interesting people and have learned so much from all of them. It is my hope that I have been able to help many of them in improving our water quality and infrastructure so that the next several generations can benefit from us.