



**Briggs Geddis and Doug DiVesta work with students at COWRA's 2011 Installer School**



**CONNECTICUT ONSITE WASTEWATER RECYCLING ASSOCIATION INC.  
SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT AND OUR ENVIRONMENT**

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**April 2011**

## Letter from the President

Dear COWRA Members,

It has been a very difficult winter and I am happy to see spring coming. Those of us who plow snow in the winter kept very busy, perhaps a little too busy.

As we begin our installations this year, please note the changes to the State Technical Standards. Those of you who provide COWRA with an email address have already received the Circular Revision letter. However, those who do not have email will find this Revision Letter enclosed in this news letter. Please make note of the changes.

I hope all of you are well and I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting, about which we will notify you soon.

Sincerely,

Frank Talarico

## NEW MEMBER PROFILES COWRA WELCOMES

**Eric Handy** of RCR Russo Corporation joined us in January 2011. He has worked for RCR Russo Corp for 2 years. Eric was a student in our 2011 Installer Course; we wish him well on his installer exam. RCR Russo Corp is located in Gifford, CT. Their services include Septic installation, excavation and Construction. RCR Russo has been in the septic industry for over 30 years.

**Lisa A. Lowden and Joshua Mussucci** of Interstate Septic Tank Company recently joined us. Interstate Septic Tank Co. is located in Greenwich Connecticut. Lisa is a co-owner of Interstate Septic and has been with the company for over 10 years. Joshua Mussucci is the foremen of Interstate Septic and has been with the company for 15 years. Their services include septic installations, cleaning and inspection. Interstate Septic Tank Company is a family owned business and has been in the industry since 1957.

**Christine McAllen** of McAllen Building and Remodeling Inc. joined us in December of last year. Christine is co-owner of her company. McAllen's services include septic installation and inspection, also excavation, foundations, drainage construction and trucking. McAllen Building and Remodeling is located in Prospect CT and has been in business since 1992. For more information about Christine's company, visit her on the web at [www.mcallenbuilding.com](http://www.mcallenbuilding.com)

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State of CT Circulars

1. Technical Standards Revisions 2011
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COWRA Brochures are available to our Members at \$22.50 per 100, including shipping.

## NEW MEMBERS PROFILE CONTINUED

**Blake Johnston** of Infiltrator Systems Inc. joined us in January 2011. Blake has been with his company for 8 years. Blake is the North East Regional Manager for Infiltrator Systems. Infiltrator Systems is a long time sponsor and member of COWRA. Infiltrator Systems is a supplier of quality drainage products, plastic septic products and septic tanks. Their products are sold in all 50 states and Canada. Infiltrator Systems has been in the septic industry since 1987 and is located in Old Saybrook CT. To learn more about Blake's company visit them on the web at [www.infiltratorsystems.com](http://www.infiltratorsystems.com).

**John Barnes** of J.B. Concrete Products, Inc. joined us in February 2011. John is the owner of his company. J.B. Concrete Products is a supplier of quality septic products. Their product line includes, concrete and plastic septic products, drainage products, baffles and filters, septic tanks and pumps. J.B. Concrete Products was founded in 1966. John's company is located in Putnam CT. John has owned and managed J.B. Concrete Products since 1985. For more information about J.B. Concrete Products Inc. and a complete list of products visit John on the web at [www.jbconcreteproducts.com](http://www.jbconcreteproducts.com).

**Duncan Downie** joined us in February 2011. Duncan is the owner of Duncan Downie's Excavation Inc. Duncan services include installation, septic & grease trap cleaning, excavation, foundations, drainage Construction Demolition Trucking and Waterproofing. Duncan also installs Proprietary Systems. Duncan Downie's Excavation Inc. is also a supplier of many septic products. These include, concrete and plastic septic products, septic tanks, baffles and filters, pumps and sand and gravel. Duncan's company is located in Westbrook CT and has been in business for 25 years. For more information about Duncan's company please visit him on the web at [www.duncandownies.com](http://www.duncandownies.com)

## MANDATORY SEPTIC INSPECTIONS ON THE HORIZON

On Friday February 18, 2011, the State of Connecticut Planning and Development Committee held a hearing on **Proposed H.B. No. 5473 AN ACT REQUIRING THE INSPECTION OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS**. Although this proposed bill died in committee, it will surely raise it head again before long. This proposal was intended

to mandate that all septic systems in the State of CT be inspected prior to the sale of property. However, the proposal was a general statement; it did not include information on who would perform these inspections, or what level of education or proficiency the individual doing the inspection would need. Neither did it include a protocol for the inspection process. Our lobbyist David Evans of Evans Associates follows this proposed legislation very closely to assure that COWRA would be present at this public hearing.

At first glance this proposed bill might look like an excellent opportunity to bring business to our industry. However, without a defined procedure for mandated septic inspections and a defined level of expertise for those individual performing these inspections this bill could be a disaster not only for our industry but for all property owners as well.

Gary Yunkat and Tom Walker represented COWRA at this Public Hearing. Both Gary and Tom are on COWRA's Board of Directors. The following is the position COWRA presented:

*Unfortunately, Inspectors are not required to be licensed in the trade, although most are, either as system installers or cleaners. Inspectors are free to conduct an inspection in any manner they have adopted. As this evolution has taken place, many issues have arisen. Many we have dealt with and many remain as questions for the health department. These questions need to be addressed clearly and definitively, prior to mandating these inspections:*

- *For whom and what would be the benefit of requiring septic inspections?*
- *Will inspectors be required to file these reports with the local health department?*
- *Will health departments be enforcing necessary changes or recommended upgrades?*
- *What percentage of listed homes with on-site treatment systems are inspected at the present time?*
- *Who will be authorized to perform inspections?*
- *Will we develop a training program for inspector certification?*

- *When should soil testing be required – should this be a part of the inspection?*
- *What about systems that are too deep in the ground – as we know there are systems under water in the spring or sitting on ledge?*
- *Has anyone from the state had any dialogue with their counterparts in Massachusetts or any other state where inspections are mandated – what was their feedback?*
- *Has the state considered creating a fund available at low interest for septic repairs?*
- *What would the state recommend for undersized systems?*
- *Would all buyer questions be directed to health departments?*
- *What approach would the state take with cesspools?*

*We believe a large percentage of buyers are having septic systems inspected. Are state and local health departments equipped to handle the added work?*

*Is the state willing to provide a definition of what a failed system is? Presently, if it is not surfacing, it is considered functioning. Until such time as we can develop a performance based protocol, we feel this bill, which has its merits, is a bit premature.*

Many other groups made strong arguments against this proposed legislation, including the Home Inspectors Association, the Home Builders Association and the Real Estate Agents Association.

Since we expect to see some form of this bill re-emerge, as an industry we must consider what effective measures we can take to regulate ourselves, before the State does it for us. Our industry must take the necessary steps to establish a unified specific procedure for septic inspection and to institute a proficiency level for those performing septic inspection. By doing this we would create a standard that would protect both the property owner and our industry.

Connecticut Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association is currently investigating the development of a uniform inspection procedure designed in cooperation with the CT Department of Public Health. This would assure that authorized inspectors would follow an approved procedure, thus creating a standard of quality

inspections that would protect both property owners and the septic industry at large.

## DISABILITY INSURANCE- PROTECTING YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET

If someone asked you to name your most valuable possession, what would it be? Many would answer that it was their home. Until recently, the value of real estate has increased steadily year after year. Some might answer that their IRA or 401K or other retirement savings account was their most valuable asset. Young workers just starting out might say that their truck, car, boat or motorcycle was their most valuable possession. Others might say that it was their business building, tools and equipment.

Let's think this question through...What really makes something the most valuable? Is it its marketability? Or is it its cash value? Maybe it lies in the item's unique characteristics and difficulty in being replaced....

I believe that your 'most valuable asset' is contained in your arms, legs, hands, eyes and minds. We are our own 'golden goose'. If we lose the ability to work, who will provide the 'golden eggs' we and our families need to survive?

Consider this...A 35 year old person that rents a small apartment, earns \$40,000 a year and plans to work until the age 65, is sitting on an asset worth almost **\$1.2 million**. If this person's annual earnings are pegged at \$65,000, this asset grows to a value of nearly **\$2 million**.

Let's review the following scenarios...

- 1) You are on a stepladder doing chores around your residence, lose your balance, fall hard on your shoulder, and tear your rotator cuff. The injury is pretty severe, and after the healing and rehabilitation, you cannot raise your arm above your chest without tremendous pain. You have also lost the strength and grip for the arm and hand on that side of your body.
- 2) You are in a trench while installing a new septic tank, and there is a partial collapse resulting in your foot being crushed. The healing and rehabilitation process is estimated at 24 months.

- 3) You are finishing a particularly difficult tank drain, and while loading the hoses and equipment into your truck, you suffer a back injury. When checked by the doctor, you are diagnosed with a degenerative bone disease that has gone undetected, but will prevent you from moderate physical labor for the rest of your life.

With disability insurance, injuries resulting from personal auto accidents, vacation mishaps, hunting/fishing trips and time spent at home are covered. Workers Compensation claims are triggered when an injury or illness comes as the result of an 'on the job' incident.

While most of us have a life insurance policy, we have between a 400% and 700% more likely chance of suffering a disability in the course of our working lives than dying. Think about it...We protect our families in case we die to provide them funds to carry on. Isn't it more important to provide for them if our ability to work is taken from us?

Disability Insurance is a way to protect your ability by providing income when you are unable to perform work due to a serious accident, injury or illness. Unlike workers compensation, which is triggered from job related situations only, disability insurance covers many non job-related illnesses and accidents. A workers compensation claim would not cover injuries incurred in a non job related auto accident, a hunting mishap, or a fall from a ladder painting your home. Disability insurance can respond to these situations, and more.

As important as Life Insurance is to protect your family in the case of your untimely death, imagine how difficult it would be for you and your family if forced to meet all of your regular expenses... without the benefit of your income!

If you would like more information on any insurance question, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

By: Sal Provenzano (917) 650-5547  
[sprovenzano@randinsurance.com](mailto:sprovenzano@randinsurance.com)

## COWRA'S 2011 INSTALLER SCHOOL

### Briggs Geddis 2011 Installer Class



Each year in mid January, COWRA holds its annual Installer School. This is a 6 week course that covers all aspects of septic system Installation and maintenance. Briggs Geddis,

director of Environmental Health at the New Canaan Health Department and Douglas DiVesta, P. E. of DiVesta Civil Engineering Associates teaches our installers course. Both are long time COWRA Members who each year generously donate their time and expertise for the benefit of our incoming students. In addition, Briggs and Doug prepare and revise our Study Guide which over the years has become a reference guide to many of our COWRA members.

Under the tutelage of Briggs and Doug, students are guided though the entire process of septic installation, from understanding the differences in soil composition to determining the MLSS of an installed system.

Students emerging from our installer course understand the proper method in the placement of test holes, can determine the precise percolation rate for each test perk hole and will comprehend the importance of this data to the overall function viability of the installed system.

Briggs and Doug spend a great deal of time teaching our students the math calculations that will be needed to design a viable system. Each student emerges from the installer's class with the skills necessary to determine all aspects of well functioning systems. In addition, students are well versed in those provisions of the Public Health Code that will regulate each install or repair they will make in their new profession.

COWRA students do very well on the State Licensing's Exam. Each year Sean Merrigan of the Connecticut Department of Public Health reviews the Study Guide prepared by Doug and Briggs. This assures that all aspects of septic installation are covered each year.

Students learn the whole spectrum of proper procedure, including pumping and cleaning, safety

**Doug DiVesta 2011 Installer Class**



There were 42 students in this year's Installer School. Students entering the installer class have varying levels of knowledge and skill. Some students have been working in the field for several years but have never taken the licensing exam, while other are just beginning in the

septic field and want to learn the skills they will need to become proficient in the field. Regardless of the level with which a student enters the class, he leaves with vast knowledge of septic installation and the Health Code that governs it.

COWRA thanks Doug DiVesta and Briggs Geddis for the generous donation of their time and expertise that they bring to our organization. It is their standard of excellence that makes our school a success. COWRA is truly grateful and sincerely appreciates all that they do.

practices while cleaning tanks, septic inspection, inspection of filters and baffles and preparing Permit to Discharge forms.



This year's Pumper/Cleaner course had 31 students. Students who take our installer course are automatically enrolled in the Pumper/Cleaner course. Although some installer students decline, as they already have the license to pump and clean septic tanks.

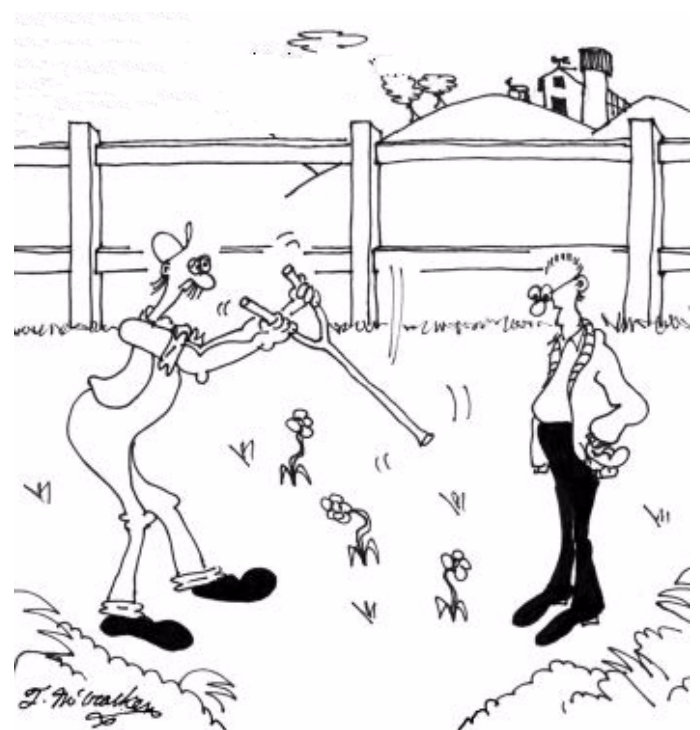
We thank Jon Skipper and Drew Gilbert for their generous gift of time and knowledge and for providing our students with the skills they need to secure their Pumper/Cleaner License.

**COWRA'S 2011 PUMPER/CLEANER SCHOOL**



**Teacher Drew Gilbert Pumper/Cleaner School**

Our Pumper/Cleaner School is a one night course taught by Jon Skipper and Drew Gilbert. Both Jon and Drew are with Skip's Septic Tank Service, and their services include every aspect of septic installation cleaning and repair. Jon and Drew spend many hours developing the program of Septic Cleaning Procedure for this course.



"Great. You found my septic tank."



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## FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

**UPDATES!!** Registration Information for 2011 State Installers & Cleaners-Exams:  
 You **MUST** contact the Department of Public Health to register for the Installers & Cleaners Exams.  
 Attendance at the COWRA Installer School **DOES NOT** registers you for the State exam.  
 Please contact D.P.H. at 860-509-7296 for any information pertaining to your results and license.  
 You may also contact them by going to [www.dph.state.ct.us/licensure/apps/subsew.pdf](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/licensure/apps/subsew.pdf)

### 2011 Examination Schedule Subsurface Sewage Installer/Cleaner

Exam Dates	Application Deadlines
June 17, 2011	May 13, 2011
September 9, 2011	August 5, 2011
December 9, 2011	November 4, 2011

**Connecticut Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association**  
 For a copy of COWRA's 2011 Study Guide please call (860 267-1057)