



October 12, 2007



# COWRA

CONNECTICUT ONSITE WASTEWATER RECYCLING ASSOCIATION  
SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

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## COWRA NEWSLETTER

The Executive Board of Directors  
2006-2008

President: Frank Talarico  
Vice President: Bill Coffey  
Treasurer: Phillip Zink Jr.

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## Letter from the President

By Frank Talarico

Hello to everyone. Hope your summer was enjoyable. Regrettably, the Board of Directors and I had to accept the resignation of our Executive Secretary Rosary Abate. She needed to move out of state in September. We want to wish her well for the future and hope she will stay in touch, as she was a great help to our association. Thank-you Rosary for your service.

On August 29th, 2007 the Board of Directors met and approved to hire our new Executive Secretary Janice Cavanaugh. I would like to welcome her to COWRA.

The Board will be meeting this fall to get ready for our installers school. Dates will be set as soon as we get exam dates from the State of Connecticut Department of Health.

In closing I would like to thank Rosary Abate, Janice Cavanaugh and the Board of Directors for their support for me after the passing of my father on August 24th.

Thank you,  
Frank Talarico

Do not forget to purchase the COWRA brochures.

Please Remember, we do not make a profit from the Brochures. The \$17.00 per 100 pays for the cost of the brochures and does not include shipping cost.

## NEW MEMBER PROFILE

Jay Reginatto of Ferguson Waterworks is our newest COWRA member. Jay joined us as of October 1, 2007. His company, Ferguson Waterworks is in Newington CT. Ferguson Waterworks is a distributor's of water, sewer, drain, and septic materials.

Founded in 1953 and headquartered in Newport News, Va., Ferguson is the country's largest wholesale distributor of plumbing supplies; pipes, valves and fittings; heating and cooling equipment; waterworks; mechanical and industrial products. For more information go to [www.ferguson.com](http://www.ferguson.com)

COWRA Welcomes Jay Reginatto

## A Change for Cowra

Dear Members,

After two years of dedicated service Rose Abate has left COWRA. She has moved to Virginia to be closer to her son and grandchildren. In the two short years Rose served as Executive Director she brought countless positive changes to COWRA. Through her exploration and resourcefulness she saved COWRA thousands of dollars. In the changes she implemented, she improved the quality of all she touched, from News Letters to the Annual Meeting.

With Rose's help, COWRA's Membership grew to over 300. The students enrolling in the Installers School doubled. Attendance at the quarterly board meeting increased. Rose gave COWRA an extraordinary two years. She will be deeply missed.

Rose will be a hard act to follow. However, I promise all COWRA Members that I will do my very best in service to the organization.

Sincerely,  
Janice Cavanaugh

## EDUCATION COWRA 2008

Wesleyan University has graciously agreed to allow COWRA to hold its classes again in 2008 at their institution. Because of its central location, Wesleyan provides easier access to students coming from various locations in the state.

Last year the Installers School held at Wesleyan University proved to be both cost effective for COWRA and instrumental in giving students an academic atmosphere, providing an environment that enhanced the learning experience. Many students had very positive comments about the new program.

The classes will run once a week for five consecutive weeks. Members and their employees will pay **\$150.00**. The fee for Non-Members is **\$300.00**

These fees do not include the study guide at cost of **\$55.00**. The fee of \$55.00 is the cost for those students who pick up their study Guide the first night of class. Students who would like their study guide mailed to them will be charged an additional \$8.50 for the priority-mailing fee. The Installer's School will be held at **Wesleyan University Campus in the Public Affairs Building #65 room 001, 350 High Street, Middletown, CT. Class will run 6:30-9:30 January 16, 23, 30 2008 and February 6, 13, 2008 with a snow date of February 20, 2008, if necessary.**

## NEWS

The following information is quoted from the NOWRA Summer 2007 Newsletter. For a complete reading of the articles discussed here please refer to the NOWRA website.

The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association and the Water Quality Association (WQA) have joined forces in an effort to understand the consequences of "Water Softeners on Decentralized Wastewater Systems."

Through a cooperative effort of information exchanges and investigation among university professors, representatives from various industries, health department officials, microbiologists, symposia and co-sponsored workshops, these two agencies, NOWRA and WQA seek the answer to this question.

The implementation of a pilot study was developed with a broad procedure that evaluated the fitness of the various septic systems studied, which included septic tanks and conventional systems.

Study samples are taken from systems affected by softeners and conditioners and also from systems that are not. Field sites are visited by outside experts from related industries. This collective knowledge of experts, NOWRA and WQA believe can only serve to broaden and deepen the understanding of outside influences and how they ultimately affect onsite systems.

This is an ongoing study, which remains extremely controversial, as it has grown into a much larger debate. It remains the intent of NOWRA and WQA to "create a professional synergy that will define the extent of influence that softeners and conditioners have on onsite systems."

In a related article written by Mark Gross Ph.D., a very definite conclusion was made regarding the influence of softeners and conditioners.

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Mark Gross is Training Manager at Orenco Systems, Inc. and formerly of professor of civil engineering at the University of Arkansas, with 20 years of experience in the decentralized wastewater field as a teacher, researcher, and designer.

Gross states in his article that water softener backwash is a problem for both septic tanks and drain fields. Water softener resin backwashes concentrated brine that enters the wastewater stream. The problem is twofold.

(Continued on page 3)

## DATES TO REMEMBER

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE INSTALLER'S SCHOOL OCT. 1, 2007

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS DEC. 1, 2007

SUBSURFACE SEWAGE/CLEANER EXAM December 14, 2007

See complete list of 2008 Exam Date on Page 4

## SOIL TESTING SEMINAR CANCELED

The Department of Environmental Protection announced that the Soil Testing Seminar held at the DEP will not be held in 2007, due to a lack of State funding. However, according to Sean Merrigan of the DPH, they have received funding for 2 soil seminars in 2008 and 2 seminars in 2009.

## August 2007 Board Meeting

On August 29, 2007 COWRA held a board meeting at Jerry's Pizza in Middletown. Many topics were discussed at this board meeting including how COWRA can increase participation in the Annual Board Meeting and Board Meetings in general throughout the year.

At the Annual Meeting held in March in 2007 only 55 members out of 305 attended. All members are notified of the Annual Meetings. COWRA Board Members encourage all COWRA members to consider joining us for our Annual Meeting to be held in the spring of 2008. Please remember that all members are welcome at any board meetings.

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Board Members discussed the fact that the DEP will not be holding its Soil Testing Seminar this year. The Board will be reviewing the possibility of COWRA offering a Soil Testing Seminar in the future, in a cooperative effort with the State and other agencies.

The State of CT would like to make a soil Seminar a requirement of phase one of the installer license.

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On August 29, 2007 the Board reluctantly accepted the resignation of Rose Abate as Executive Director. The Board voted to hire Janice Cavanaugh as the new Executive Director.

## NEWS CONTINUED

First the septic tank discharges solids into the drain field, which plug the drain field and causes the field to fail.

Secondly the treatment component or media filter, ATU, will perform abnormally. This problem can be solved quite simply, Gross states, by routing backwash brine directly into the drain field.

In a study of septic tanks Gross found that "high concentrations of salt carried to the tank in the backwash brine caused stratification of the tank. In that case salt water dives to the bottom and the fresh water rides across the surface of the brine layer. The heavy salt water can lift the sludge from the bottom of the tank and wash it into the downstream components. Septic tanks that receive water softener brine have no distinct layer of sludge, scum and clear zone as they should to perform primary treatment."

Field observations of side by side dispersal systems in a shared mound, showed that the trenches receiving the effluent of water softener brine formed a thick gelatinous slime layer that clogged the infiltrative surface, while the trenches receiving no salt water discharge remained open with normal microbial clogging layer."

Due to the evidence of the salt waste on systems, municipal systems prohibit the discharge of salty wastes into their systems and Manufactures these systems have clauses in their warranties voiding the warrantee when backwash brine is discharged into the treatment system.

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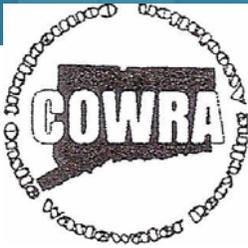
Dr. Richard Otis, PhD, and member of NOWRA Technical Practices Committee, criticizes Gross's article stating, "There is no Substitute for Good Data!"

Otis reminds us that there has been no conclusive evidence found that proves water softener discharges are detrimental to onsite treatment systems and that more study needed.

Otis points out that the amount of brine entering the backwash cycle in Gross's article is unusually high and many fewer gallons actually enter the system. He questions how Gross actually observed the non-stratification of sludge, scum and clear zone in the tank.

In the shared mound observed in Gross's article Otis questions how the mound was shared and the habits of that mound contributors.

Dr. Otis' article brings up many valid questions. There is much that we need to learn about the relationship between water softener and wastewater systems.



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## FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

### UPDATES!! Registration Information for 2008 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 register you for the State exam. Please contact D.P.H. at 860-509-8141 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)

### 2007- 2008 Examination Schedule

#### Subsurface Sewage Installer/Cleaner

##### Exam Dates

December 14, 2007

March 07, 2008

September 05, 2008

December 05, 2008

##### Application Deadlines

November 09, 2007

January 25, 2008

August 01, 2008

October 31, 2008

For a copy of COWRA 2008 study guide please call (860) 267-1057  
**Connecticut Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association COWRA**