

Harlan Kelly



BC Water and Waste Association *at Leading Edge of Water Quality in BC*

An interview with Harlan Kelly, President of BC Water and Waste Association

The Scrivener: *Good morning, Harlan. When was your association formed and what is its mandate, please?*

Harlan: From modest beginnings in 1973, the British Columbia Water and Waste Association has evolved into an organization that supports over 3600 water and wastewater professionals in BC and the Yukon with training and educational opportunities. Active participation is growing in leaps and bounds—about 20 percent each year.

We are a non-profit organization—not an advocacy group. We have been instrumental in organizing technical workshops for a cross-section of people in the industry.

1. Our members include a large cross-section of people: operators of utilities and wastewater collection and treatment centres; utility owners; First Nations members; consultants and engineers; and OEMs—original equipment manufacturers.

2. Volunteers are essential to our organization. The BCWWA Board, Executive, and all Technical Committees are volunteers, without whom we would not have achieved as much as we have.
3. The third leg is comprised of paid staff members.

BCWWA has followed as its mandate the safeguarding of public health and the environment through the sharing of skills, knowledge, and experience in the water and wastewater industries. We encourage all water purveyors to upgrade their skill levels and training on an ongoing and regular basis, to meet provincial certification requirements.

The Scrivener: *What is the main objective of BCWWA? Are you affiliated with other water associations?*

Our goal is to advance knowledge in all fields related to water and wastewater. To stay fully abreast of industry developments, we have strong affiliations with our parent organizations: the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the Water Environment Federation (WEF).

These international organizations set industry standards worldwide, keep their members on the leading edge of new

developments in their industry, and provide opportunities for education, professional development, and the recognition of peers and other professionals in their field throughout the world.

We are also closely aligned with EOCP (Environmental Operators Certification Program that provides operator certification) and CWWA (Canadian Water & Waste Association), which lobbies in Ottawa, and many other organizations around the world.

The Scrivener: *How do you disseminate new information to industry members?*

We organize technical workshops and seminars and deliver training courses. BCWWA, through its technical committees and annual conference, works diligently to promote the transfer of education as well as offering forums for dialogue and information exchanges.

In many instances, BCWWA works hand-in-hand with local, provincial, and federal ministries to promote understanding and appreciation of regulatory changes and new legislative initiatives.

We present new ideas on how to treat or handle wastewater. Our quarterly newsletter *Watermark* is available on our Website at www.bcwwa.org and also in hard copy.

The Scrivener: *How is BCWWA funded?*

Harlan: Through membership dues, our AGM, operator education and prescriptive work, and through specialty seminars, conferences, and teleconferences.

The Scrivener: *We understand you have a very exciting AGM planned for May of this year at Whistler.*

Harlan: The 2004 AGM—held from May 1 through 5—will be one of the biggest and best. Our goal is to attract 1000 delegates to the conference. There is more information on our Website at www.bcwwa.org. We invite your readers to attend the conference.

The theme this year is “Water For People: How can I play my part?” Water For People is an international, non-profit development organization committed to the long-term impact of increased access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation and health in Third World countries. The Chair of our conference this year is Brian Barnett, Director of Water for People.



The Scrivener: *What events do you have on the drawing board for the AGM?*

Harlan: Here is a partial list to date.

- 112 manufacturer, supplier, and consultant displays—for the first time, all on one spectacular conference level
- More than 100 technical papers on a wide range of timely topics that will appeal to all water and wastewater professionals [full technical program at www.bcwwa.org]
- A new and dynamic Operators

Program including a Top Ops Competition where operator teams can test their knowledge and skills against each other and vie for awards

- Specialty workshops geared to operators’ needs
- A superb Partners Program and social events to encourage networking with friends and colleagues in the industry
- Technical Transfer Sessions on water quality advances and ultraviolet applications to treat water and wastewater, Liquid Waste Management, and Drinking Water Regulatory rollout
- Infrastructure funding session to be presented by senior government officials

The Scrivener: *That sounds like an outstanding lineup. What plans and goals does BCWWA have for the future?*

Harlan: Recently, members have suggested it is time for BCWWA to be more proactive, to increase our focus on issues such as protection of the watershed regarding BC Crown land issues in the Interior and the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)* Pollution Prevention (P2) plan requirements (CEPA P2).

BCWWA has been asked by the BC Ministry of Health to develop a set of Best Management Practice Guidelines (BMPGs) to assist water professionals in a broad range of management and operational areas. These guides will identify and disseminate best practices while encouraging innovation to support sustainable municipal infrastructure decisions and actions.

The primary users of these guides will be water system managers and operators—who will use them as a tool to assist in meeting the requirements of the legislation—and by drinking-water officers—as a tool to assist them in evaluating this compliance as they implement the BC Drinking Water Protection Regulation.

The province and the federal government have asked BCWWA to become more directly involved in partnering with government in rolling-out regulatory changes, which will require our greater involvement in training and mentoring.

In accordance with our mission statement, BCWWA will grow and expand

its mandate to education and training for the water and waste industry.

We will continue to advise government on science-based issues where we have found that our suggestions and experience would be beneficial in developing better legislation and training. In the past our suggestions have been heard and adopted. We have increased our profile as water and wastewater industry leaders.

The Scrivener: *How can the people of British Columbia help BCWWA achieve its goals?*

Harlan: People are becoming very conscious of water and water quality and the environment. The tragic water situation in Walkerton, Ontario, raised awareness about the significance of safe water.

We want British Columbians to know who we are and to understand our objectives and the importance of our mission. We can help people stay informed and to use common-sense environmental practices against water pollution.

The Scrivener: *Thank you, Harlan, for taking the time to talk to us about your professional association and its continuing efforts to improve our water.* ▲

For more information, please contact Del Haylock, Executive Director. dhaylock@bcwwa.org www.bcwwa.org



Harlan G. Kelly holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, in Civil and Environmental Engineering. He has 30 years’ experience in the wastewater treatment field. He has authored over 60 papers comprising research and general-interest topics in the water and waste fields.

Harlan is a WEF member and is currently president of its member association, BC Water and Waste. He holds professional engineering status in the provinces of BC and Alberta and in Florida and Colorado. Harlan is an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia, Environmental Engineering Department, and President of Dayton and Knight Ltd., Consulting Engineers.