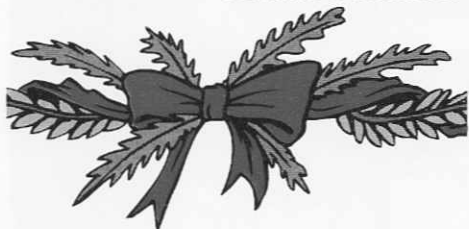


Water Connection

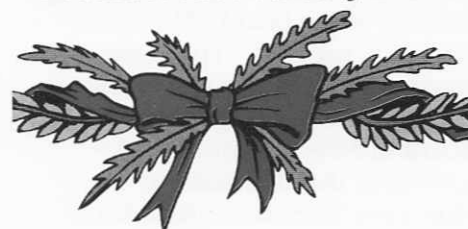
monthly newsletter for employees and retirees of Central Arkansas Water

Volume 6 Number 1

December 2005-January 2006



*Best Wishes for
the New Year*



New Employees ... Welcome Aboard


James Lewis, III, Water Treatment Plant Operator, who joined us November 28, 2005.

Earnest Franklin, Jr., Water Distribution Specialist (WDS) I, who came aboard November 28.


Ellen Huddleston, WDSI, who joined us November 28.

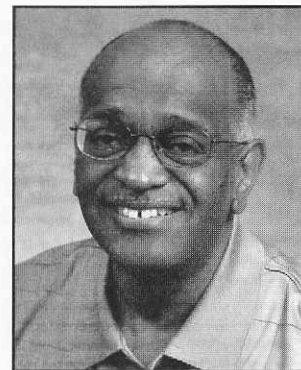
Benjamin West, WDI, who also joined us November 28.

Billy Riggs, Meter Reader, who came aboard December 5.

James Dunn, Engineering Assistant I, who joined us December 5. 

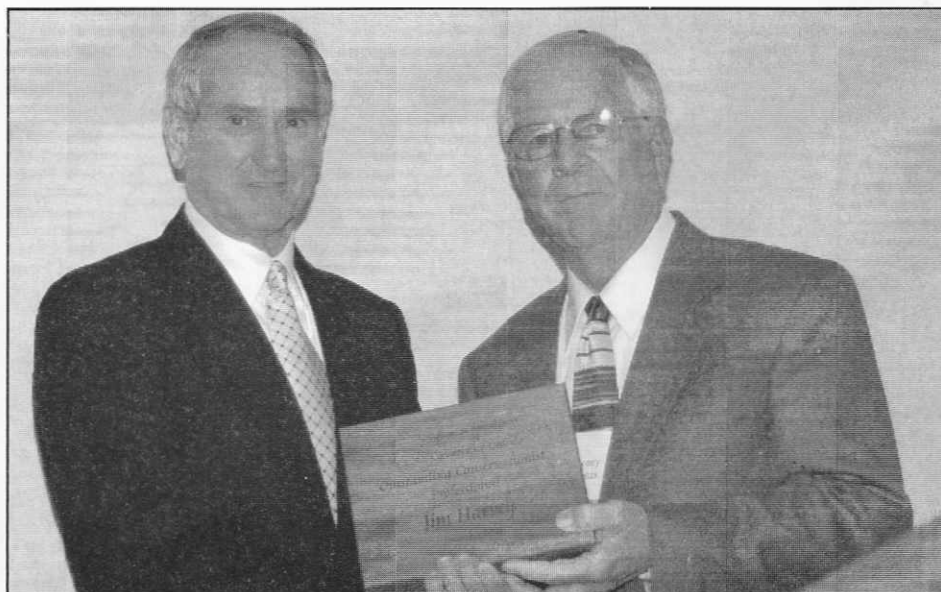
Management *Innovation* in U.S. Public Water and Wastewater Systems

Jos Bell, Geographic Information System Manager, is co-author of a 24-page chapter of a recently published book about the competitive edge that public drinking water and wastewater systems have been able to maintain in the age of privatization. Turn to Page 5 to read more. The American Water Works Association is marketing the book as a guide for public utilities seeking to develop a progressive and competitive culture within their organizations. 



ON THE INSIDE

Ovation for CAW Crews	.....2
Water Alliance News	.....3
Exceptional Service	.....4
Tribute to John Robinson	.....7
United Way Giving	.....10
Courtesy of the Little Ones	...11
News from Retirees	.....12-17
"Big Heart Award"	.....18
Personals	.....19
New Year's Resolutions	.....20
January Anniversaries	.....21
January Birthdays	.....22



PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATIONIST AWARD — R.D. "Sonny" Jones (right), president of the board of directors for the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), presents Jim Harvey, Chief Executive Officer of Central Arkansas Water, with the 2005 Arkansas Conservationist of the Year – Professional Award. The presentation was December 14, 2005, at the association's annual meeting at the Wyndham Riverfront Hotel in North Little Rock. The association's officers praised Jim for three decades of work in drinking water quality on the local and national levels and his commitment to the protection of Lake Maumelle, the Little Rock-North Little Rock metropolitan area's primary supply of drinking water. More than 400 delegates and guests attended the annual AACD meeting.

CAW's Jos Bell includes CAW in national study of water and wastewater system privatization

Jos Bell, Central Arkansas Water's (CAW) Geographic Information (GIS) Manager, became an international co-author with this year's publication of **Management Innovation in U.S. Public Water and Wastewater Systems**.

In a chapter of the book, he shares the challenges of merging the operations and facilities of two separate municipal water systems — Little Rock Municipal Water Works and the North Little Rock Water Department into Central Arkansas Water.

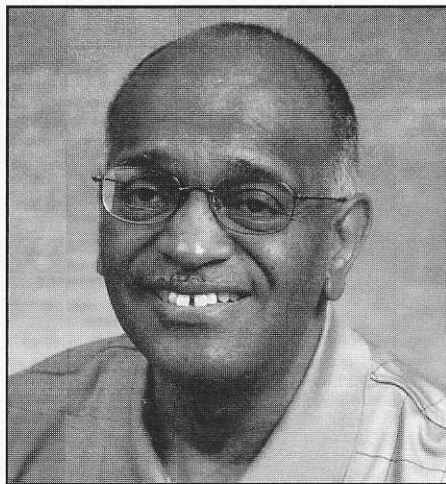
A national team of economists, veteran water utility officials, advisors in privatization and competitive government conducted the research and edited the book, which they published this year. They dedicate the entirety of Chapter 16 to the formation of CAW.

"**Simon Hakim**, one of the researchers, called me about three times. I hesitated, but he insisted. He said CAW would be a model for this particular project," Jos says in inflection. "So I got with **Ronald Butcher** of Woolpert, Inc., who was serving as our GIS consultant at the time, and put together a paper on the CAW merger.

"It was a good experience for me and a great opportunity for CAW. GIS continues to be an evolving technology and was an integral tool in the merger of our operations and facilities management databases," he adds.

The researchers for the book started from the premise that private water and wastewater utilities emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as leaders in efficiency, streamlined operations, positive customer relations, and very importantly budget controls.

They then took a look at the prediction that private companies would by the end of the 20th Century dominate ownership and operation of the water and waste-



Jos Bell

water systems that serve most of the cities and communities in the United States.

"While many investor-owned water utilities have continued to grow, and many contract operations have been retained and renewed by satisfied customers, a variety of forces have been at work to slow the push toward the use of private firms," the editors found in their research. "As a result, the great majority of U.S. citizens continue to receive their water and wastewater services from municipal (and publicly-owned) systems."

What ebbd the tide of privatization? Increased concerns about risk and change, customer satisfaction, community and utility employee opposition, reduced budgetary constraints, and very significantly, the ability of municipal and public managers and workers to adopt new and innovative approaches to service delivery and cost-control.

In the late 1980s, private water companies looked at the possibility of moving into the Little Rock-North Little Rock market, but after an assessment, decided the cost-savings would be insignificant, if any.

And, despite the relief of pressure regarding privatization, our

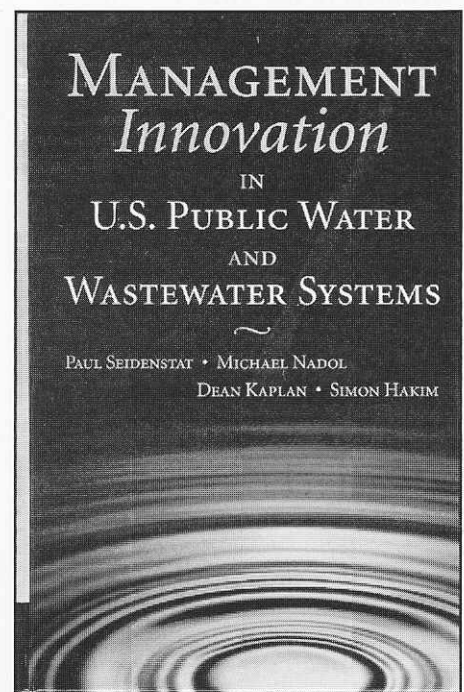
metropolitan community continued toward greater efficiency, cost-control and cost-sharing, and regionalism. Thus the creation of CAW occurred.

"I can remember back to when the assessment consultant, PSG, came in and evaluated our operations," recalls **Jim Harvey**, our Chief Executive Officer. "We always had tried to balance our publicly-owned status with the business practices of the private sector, but to be honest, we were a little uncertain about what they would find. In the final meeting we had with the consulting group, they said there was no cost-savings to be had here."

Jim, at the time of the assessment, was Assistant Manager of Production, Distribution, and Human Resources. The production — or source and treatment — operations of water utilities were a prime area into which private companies moved during the 1980s and 1990s.

"From that point, we began to even more aggressively pursue

(continued on Page 13)



innovative work practices and encouraged individual employees to be more involved in developing recommendations for improved efficiencies," he says. "It was then that cross-training, work management, best business practices, and more stringent staffing controls became even more fundamental components of our operations."

In the **Management Innovation in U.S. Public Water and Wastewater**

Systems chapter on CAW, Jos, with a focus on GIS technology, outlines how the merger occurred and what challenges we faced.

"Time was of the essence, and several potential decisions had to be made. A whirlwind of activity occurred after the signing of the merger (agreement). To operate as a single utility, it was essential that the combined utility systems appear as a single entity in every respect. The ability to display and visualize the entire new service area as one map on computers throughout the organization was critical," he explains in the book.

He devotes the chapter to a discussion of data conversion, maintenance objectives, GIS technology and application review, and workflow issues.

The book, which the American Water Works Association is marketing internationally, represents the second global recognition our eight-member GIS team has garnered. In 2003, our team was one of 133 (out of 100,000 worldwide) to earn the international Special Achievement in GIS Award. The award was in recognition of our being a world-class leader in the utilization, application, and innovation of computerized mapping, planning, and design.

Jos also manages the Pulaski Area Geographic Information System (PAgis) and its six staff members. ●

also a regular participant in the Senior Center activities, sometimes joins the group.

Ms. Geneva credits the beginning of her music career to lessons from her mother on an old pump organ. She also taught herself to play the accordion and guitar.

Growing up in a musical family, Ms. Geneva and her sister joined their mother and father to make the Bryant Family Quartet. The group sang Southern Gospel at area churches and even at a "brush arbor" (tent revival) gathering that marked the start of the original Little Rock Geyer Springs Baptist Church back in the late 1930s.

"I was only 12 years old at the time," Ms. Geneva shares, with a note about her experience singing as a soloist, trio, and quartet.

Ms. Geneva came to the water utility after several years in the local office of Mobil Oil Company. It was there she met her husband, **Raymond**. She started work with the water utility in 1971 and retired in 1989 after 18 years of service.

At CAW, she was known for life and laughter. Upon retirement, she promised to spend her days putting more time into reading, walking, bicycling, visiting the sick, and playing the piano. And, the latter she definitely has done.

In the newspaper article, Ms. Geneva describes her talent as "a gift from God." Her music-making has an upbeat rhythm that catches hold of her audience and does not let go until long after she's finished her songs. Oh yes, listeners also have the time of their lives.

In addition to the Senior Center, Ms. Geneva also performs at Fourth of July, Christmas, and AARP (Arkansas Association of Retired Persons) programs. She shares her music regularly with the Sunday school class and church congregation at Little Rock's Asbury United Methodist Church, where she attends and sings solo during the offerings. She also has been a part of our water utility groups that have visited local nursing and assisted-living centers for Christmas caroling and fellowship.

Ms. Geneva and Mr. Raymond were married for 45 years. He passed away in 2002. They have two godchildren, one in Little Rock and one in Kansas City, Missouri. The Little Rock godchild has a three-year-old-son.

"Raymond and I had a good marriage and I miss him," she says.

For Ms. Geneva, life is about making others happy, which in turn makes her happy.

"Our souls get blessed," she adds. ●

Calling all AWW&WEA history buffs!

A History Exhibit will be a feature of the 2006 Arkansas Water Works & Water Environment Association's Conference, Short School, and Expo in Hot Springs. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the organization and conference and the History Exhibit will take us back in time. After seven and a half decades, there have to be a few "old-timers" and "newcomers" who have collected fabulous stories, memorabilia, and artifacts about the conference and the people who make it happen each year. If you are one of these people and you have old photographs, conference lapel pins, hats, T-shirts, program booklets, signs, or just a wealth of knowledge, please, join us in sharing this history with the 2006 conference delegates and guests.

If you would like to donate or lend items for the History Exhibit, please, contact or mail to: **Fredricka Sharkey**, Communications Specialist, Little Rock Wastewater Utility, 11 Clearwater Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204. Her telephone number is 501.688.1449.

The 2006 conference dates are April 30-May 3. ●