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## President's Corner

by Kevin DeBell

**Recent activity in Congress** has raised a question that I have asked myself again and again. The question is, how political should environmental protection be? I generally satisfy my curiosity on this matter by delving into the history, reading about other issues that were highly political in their day – slavery, votes for all, prohibition – that today seem to have only one logical answer. I see that the republic survived and indeed was strengthened by these great debates.

My concern returns when I ask myself some follow-up questions. Are environmental politics different from those other issues? If we get our politics wrong on the environment, are we destroying value in our world that we can never regain? Can technology keep us well if we incrementally creep toward some environmental tipping point? If there is such a point, how closely to it should we allow ourselves to go? Lately, Congress appears to be re-opening the debate on several issues that appear to have come to some sort of crucial juncture. At FWQA's February 15 luncheon, Congressional Research Service Analyst Claudia Copeland mentioned a number of vital issues on which attention is expected before the election season overtakes action in the nation's capital. A couple of items Ms. Copeland mentioned struck me.

In the House of Representatives, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved a bill to reauthorize the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which would provide \$20 billion over five years for loans to water and sewer projects. The bill also offers states increased flexibility in the financing packages they can offer to cities and local communities. Authorization for the revolving fund expired in 1994. Since then,

Congress has been unable to enact any legislation affecting the fund. Though there is no guarantee that this bill will succeed – far from it – it is a positive sign that this essential component of America's public health and environmental protection systems is receiving attention. We know the cost of keeping America's water infrastructure running is high, but we also know the cost of replacing it altogether will be much, much higher.

Climate change is the environmental issue with the highest public profile of our day. The tone of this discussion on Capitol Hill appears to have changed markedly since the elections. Clearly, some of the best thinkers in both parties, among many others, have worked on developing technological and economic solutions to many of the symptoms of climate change. A significant amount of debate continues on the matter of how long the changes predicted will actually take to appear in a way that will affect anyone.

The rate of technological change to make larger improvements in environmental protection for less money can be another stumbling block. Given the impact of many of the forecasts of global warming, however, should politics, rather than science, lead the decision-making?

The corollary to the useful dialogue that seems to be happening today is the matter of why such conversations haven't happened sooner. Blame is due, of course, to both political parties. We must ask ourselves, in an objective fashion, how stifling a highly partisan political climate can be to creativity and innovation. What good ideas are lost or destroyed due to their political origin? What does this mean for the future of environmental protection? I do not expect that these questions will be answered in any way in the next few decades, but they seem worth our close consideration.

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### Operations Goals

- Goal O (a) - Services  
It is the goal of the Federation to provide services and opportunities to its members responsive to their professional needs.
- Goal O (b) - The Business of WEF  
It is the goal of the Federation to be a well-managed, fiscally sound, service oriented organization, operated to efficiently serve its members, publics and communities.

### Core Values

- Stewardship - acting to manage the global water environment to protect the public and preserve water resources for current and future generations
- Knowledge - advancing and sharing the latest information; using data to make knowledge-based decisions

- Sustainability - promoting practices that protect and maintain the water environment; exhibiting vision and maintaining the vitality of WEF
- Integrity - adhering to a strict ethical code; maintaining an excellent reputation in the water environment industry
- Leadership - maintaining our position as a leader in the global water environment; acting in a timely, proactive manner; developing volunteers into future leaders
- Diversity - understanding issues and points of view of all stakeholders associated with the global water environment; providing opportunities for participation by all members and other interested stakeholders
- Responsibility - recognizing and acting on our obligation to protect the public and the water resources upon which they depend

- Credibility - maintaining our mission, values and principles at all times to ensure trust by our members and the public
- Collaboration - working cooperatively and stressing teamwork with our members, member associations, other associations with common interests, regulators, government officials, and the public
- Accountability - responsible and answerable for our actions, assignments, and duties within the organization
- Celebration - taking pride in our industry by recognizing excellence; providing opportunities for networking and enjoyment
- Professionalism - following the highest standards of technical and ethical conduct; supporting WEF's mission, values, and strategic plan.

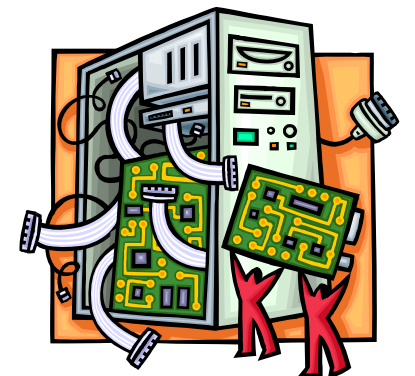
## FWQA's Website Receives TLC by Tim Schmitt

**FWQA has given its website** (www.fwqa.org) a facelift. The internet has become a ubiquitous presence in our lives, and, as one of the first things that new members (and potential members) see, our website represents us – who and what we are. It's a great outreach and communication tool, and therefore it was due for modernizing.

We have also reformatted the opening page to showcase who the FWQA is and what we do. On our updated Membership page, we describe the benefits of becoming a member of FWQA, including having access to excellent water-oriented technical and policy programming, the opportunity to take on a leadership

role in the organization, and getting to network with colleagues from all across the spectrum of water professionals. In the future, we hope to add several things to the website – perhaps information on past scholarship-winning projects, or additional links to presentations from past speakers. And of course, we'll include pictures of our various events, including the golf tournament. Please let the Board know of any suggestions you have for the website, and send in your photos!

The website was updated by a friend of FWQA, Sharon McDermott, so many thanks to Sharon for her technical skills and creativity in giving us a new website that we can be proud of!



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**Claudia Copeland Provides Overview of the New Congress**

by Kevin DeBell, U.S. EPA



The parity between parties in the U.S. Senate may stifle legislative action on environmental protection, Congressional Research Service senior analyst Claudia Copeland told attendees of a February 15, 2007, FWQA luncheon.

The 49-49 split, with two Independents who generally caucus with the Democrats, means that neither party can pass legislation on its own. The bold agenda of Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Barbara Boxer (D-CA), which includes action on global warming, Superfund issues, children's health, wetlands regulatory issues, and greater accountability for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), may fall short of its goals, Copeland said.

"With this new majority, how will we measure success?" Copeland asked. "Will we see lots of new legislation signed into law? Probably not."

Legislation that does pass will be more likely to be focused on specific geographic regions and on issues unlikely to raise controversy, she said. Passage of comprehensive bills such as Clean Water Act reauthorization is highly unlikely, according to Copeland.

Congressional committees, however, will exert their oversight authority on environmental and other types of issues that have been

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## Science Fair Volunteers Needed *by Janet Goodwin*

**FWQA is carrying on its tradition** of participating in local Science Fairs. We are looking for interested volunteers that can spare part of a Saturday to judge at one of the area science fairs for junior high and senior high school students. Most of the science fair events are being held on Saturday, March 17, 2007. FWQA participates in the Loudoun County, Prince William County, Fairfax County, Northern Virginia (includes Arlington County and Alexandria City), Washington, D.C., Montgomery County and Prince Georges Regional Science Fairs.

If you enjoy helping to develop young scientists and future engineers this is a terrific opportunity. Judging requires between four and six hours on a Saturday, starting in the morning. You circulate through the exhibits that are of interest (e.g., environmental sciences) visiting with the young researchers, then confer with the other judges about the best projects. I hope to assemble teams of three or more judges for each fair. FWQA provides all the materials you will need.

Please contact me at (202) 566-1060 or e-mail me at [goodwin.janet@epa.gov](mailto:goodwin.janet@epa.gov) if you are interested in volunteering to be a science fair judge.



Continued from Claudia Copeland page 1

less prominent for several years, Copeland said. Committees will hold numerous hearings on such issues. "The new majority wants to demonstrate to the public that they care more about the environment than the Republican majority did," she said.

In the House, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has requested the development of legislation to combat global warming for a vote by July 4 and has expressed her concern by testifying in Senate hearings on the issue. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair James Oberstar (D-MN) has passed three bills

related to wastewater infrastructure funding. Two of those bills reauthorize grants programs that have never been funded, but the third reauthorizes and modifies the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF), a perennial source of friction between Congress and the White House.

Previous bills to reauthorize the Clean Water SRF have been stymied due to dissension on requirements to pay workers on public works projects funded with federal funds to be paid the prevailing wage for the area in which they work. That concern still applies to the bill currently on the House floor, Copeland said.

## Annual Scholarship Program Underway

*by Sharon Nye*

FWQA is again pleased to offer scholarships to young women and men preparing for careers in environmental protection. Eligible applicants must be graduating high school seniors in the Washington, D.C. area and surrounding counties who plan to pursue an environmental career upon completion of a four-year

bachelor's degree program in an environmental discipline.

Applications are available at local high school career centers or on-line at [www.fwqa.org](http://www.fwqa.org). The deadline for submission is April 23, 2007, and judging will take place on May 5. Our annual Scholarship Luncheon to honor the outstanding recipients will be held on May 24, 2007.



**Go to our web page at**  
[www.fwqa.org](http://www.fwqa.org)  
**or upcoming news and events!**  
**and to**  
**Apply for Scholarship!**



## DELEGATE'S REPORT

by Mike Sullivan

I officially began my term as the WEF Delegate representing FWQA at WEFTEC.06 in Dallas. I took over these responsibilities for Jim Wheeler, whose long service in this role has been highly valued.

Jim knew the ropes; I am learning. One of the first things I observed in the Dallas meetings is that WEF's governance has undergone substantial change in recent years. Delegates were formerly known as Directors and had more power as Directors. The power at WEF seems concentrated in the Board of Trustees, and the Trustees make most of the decisions. The House of Delegates is primarily an advisory body. The new arrangement does not strike me as particularly democratic.

The House of Delegates is trying to find its role. During the past few months, I have participated in discussions on development of a governance structure for the House of Delegates. It is all rather fundamental: How do we elect a Chair of the House? Do we need a Vice-Chair? What about succession? What are the officers' roles? What committees do we need in the House of Delegates? Should we have a House of Delegates Leadership Council? How do we interact with the Board of Trustees? There are also issues concerning the best ways for delegates to interact on issues of common interest or regional issues.

The House of Delegates plans to roll out some of our ideas on governance at WEFMAX meetings this spring. WEFMAX offers the opportunity for House of Delegates committees and Member Association officers to get together

with WEF officers and staff to discuss challenges and share successes. I plan to attend the WEFMAX in Annapolis, Maryland, on March 29-31, 2007. I hope that others in the mid-Atlantic area will consider this opportunity too.

As I said, I am learning. It would be my pleasure to talk with you about any issues and concerns that you have about WEF. I hope to report back to you on House of Delegates activities on a regular basis. We have a great organization and we are doing some very good things. WEF's Strategic Plan for 2006, provided below, may give you some ideas and inspiration. Keep up the good work!

### WEF STRATEGIC PLAN 2006

#### Our Vision

- The Water Environment Federation will be recognized as a leader dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the global water environment.

#### Our Mission

- Develop and promote practices and policies, which assist our members to serve the public interest in providing efficient and environmentally protective water quality and wastewater management services.
- Deliver high quality products and services to members and stakeholders.
- Promote scientifically sound environmental practices and regulation.
- Educate members, the public and policy makers.
- Promote and advance the water quality profession.
- Promote public health by preserving and enhancing the global water environment.

#### Mission Goals

- Goal M (a) - Professional Development  
It is the Goal of the Federation to be a primary source of professional development for its members and constituents and to provide a comprehensive annual program of scheduled educational events, training materials, publications distance learning activities and related programs directed to the water environment community.
- Goal M (b) - Public Education & Outreach  
It is the goal of the Federation to develop and support comprehensive education and outreach directed at WEF members, the general public, the media, and elected officials and public policy makers to encourage informed decision making on public health, environmental, economic, operating, social policy, and sustainability issues.
- Goal M (c) - Advancement of Water Environment Sciences and Technology  
It is the goal of the Federation to enhance its profile as a resource for expert technical information on water quality and wastewater management, and in the process, to develop and promote optimal scientific, technical, management and engineering practices and their application throughout the global water environment community.

#### Vision Goals

- Goal V (a) - Broaden Constituencies & Create New Markets  
It is the goal of the Federation to broaden constituencies and create new markets to expand WEF's influence on all who impact the water environment.

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