

# The New Guy



*By James Barnes*

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**H**i everyone, my name is Jim Barnes, and yes, I'm the new guy. I've been chosen to be your new Wastewater Technician/Trainer. I look on this as an awesome responsibility and I can assure you that I don't take it lightly.

I've been involved with wastewater for 32 years. I ran an industrial dairy waste, activated sludge plant for 28 years. The high BOD loading from dairy waste made this a challenging job, to say the least. Controlling filament growth and removing enough phosphorus to meet the discharge limits was a daily concern. I've also operated a municipal, activated sludge plant for the past 9 years, so I am familiar with some of the problems that you municipal operators have to deal with too. I know the numbers don't add up, that's because I was chief operator at both plants for a 5-year period. This fact might give you an indication into my mental stability, or lack thereof. In February 2009, I plan on completing a Statistics class which will be the final 4 credits needed for my AS degree

in Wastewater Management. It's never too late to finish up guys, I'm living proof, I will be 55 years old soon.

I make my home in Allegany County (near Olean) with my wife, Kathleen and 17-year-old daughter, Julia, who is the last of 9 children. There are times when I look forward to that "empty nest" thing you've heard about.

As I start this new job with New York Rural Water, I'll promise you wastewater operators one thing; that I know I don't have all the answers. I don't believe anyone could have all the answers when there are so many different types of plants throughout our state. I'll also pledge one thing to you; to do the best I can to help you find solutions to your problems. In the process of doing this, I won't be surprised if I learn more from you operators than I could ever share.

I'll do my best to visit all of your systems in the years ahead and look forward to the challenges we'll face together. 💧