

## Operator Profile By Mike Dill

You people are retiring faster than I can acknowledge your accomplishments. If you or one of our fellow operators has obtained the goal of retirement, let us know so we may have the opportunity to wish them well and tell them how envious we are.

The honorary, this time, is Gene Colorito of the Village of St. Johnsville. Like many others, Gene started as an entry-level trainee in 1974. The plant had recently opened, everything was new, and Gene had much to learn. This plant was designed as an activated sludge facility to treat domestic and textile mill waste with a flow of 1 MGD. Shortly thereafter, the mill closed and flows were reduced to about 300 thousands per day, so there was a new challenge of having to deal with underflows. Like other things the adjustments were made and operations proceeded smoothly. The learning process involved laboratory, process control, and maintenance. In 1985, Gene was made Chief Operator for the plant. Through the years, different situations have come and gone, without incident, because of Gene's professionalism and expertise. His ability to deal with different situations was put to the test in 1988, when an accidental oil spill made its way to the plant. Address the problem, solve it and move on to the next, is how he handled things. His credentials include Grade 3A Wastewater Operator and Grade C Water Operator. In 1999, the plant received the Andy Wiest Award from DEC, and in 2001, NYRWA gave St. Johnsville the Wastewater System of the Year.

Gene still works for the Village part time, so occasionally he can be found at the plant. If you see him, tell him what a lucky man he is for retiring while he can still enjoy it.

Gene has been married to Marie for 32 wonderful years, (Marie, he made me say wonderful), and they have two daughters. Obviously Marie deserves a medal for her time with him.

Nice people deserve credit and NYRWA would like to say THANK YOU for your years of service to the environment and to St. Johnsville. Marie if he gets in the way at home, give him cleaning and laundry duties to keep him off the streets.

Gene remember what I said, "Worry about what you can control and skip the rest". From one old lumpy water guy to another . . . . Thank you, you will be missed.