

Go For The Gold, the 5-S Gold Shovel, That Is !

(by Greg Burk, MWEA Influent Integrator, pH 7.)



In the beginning, . . . there was the Congress of Sewage and Industrial Works (the original name of the current Water Environment Federation), whose members planted the seed to Recognize and Honor it's fellow members for achievements in our industry.

Many in the world today, give credit to folks in Arizona for holding the first Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers Induction Ceremony, back in 1940 (not Athens, Greece as many WEF members incorrectly believe). Many believe that the Original Chapter of the 5-S Society was formed by A.W. “Dusty” Miller and F. Carlyle Roberts, Jr. in Arizona. Others strongly contend that it had it's beginnings in Pennsylvania, with a connection to the *Ted Moses High Hat Award*.

Today, however, one thing is certain since the first days of the Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers, . . . there have been “secret 5-S societies” formed in almost every Country in the world, and in every State of the USA.

Our Michigan Water Environment Association 5-S Society was formed back in 1988, by a select group of men and women that saw the benefit in recognizing their fellow members for their commitment to our water environment industry, . . . and their commitment to the Michigan Water Environment Association, in particular.

The following “forward thinking” Members made up the Original Fourteen (14) Michigan Water Pollution Control Association (the original name of the current Michigan Water Environment Association) MWPCA 5-S Inductees back in 1988: Carl Huber, Joseph Bal, Doris VanDam, Jack Cooper, Paul Blakeslee, Jim Hubbell, Wallace Benzie, Otto Green, Chester Harvey, Fred Eyer, Charles Leland, Bob Peterson, Donald Pierce, and William Stonebrook.

Still, many others were instrumental in starting our MWEA 5-S, like Art Mass, Ted Mudgett, Daryle Smith, Jack Frost, and Lee Veldhuis.

The objectives of the Original Founder's of the Michigan Water Environment Association 5-S Society were very clear:

- **To Honor MWEA Members that have volunteered and provided “years, and years, and years, and years” of dedicated service for the betterment of MWEA, by serving on “many and various” MWEA & WEF Committees.**
- **Provide a means of Recognizing MWEA Members that have contributed freely of their personal time and talents, to the growth, well being and long term success of MWEA, including recruitment and mentoring of other MWEA Members.**
- **Induction into the 5-S Society is intended to provide a concrete and tangible method of expressing Recognition and Gratitude to our fellow MWEA Members.**
- **It is important to note, that one cannot “join” the 5-S Society, but that Members are “selected” on the basis of merit.**
- **Induction into the MWEA 5-S Society bestows upon the Nominee, the accolade of being elevated to the highest ridge of the sludge drying bed, and receipt of the coveted 5-S Gold Shovel. The Nominee is also entrusted with the prestigious title of “Sanitary Sludge Shoveler”, and all the Honor, Atmosphere, Reverence, Dignity and Odor that accompanies it**
- **All 5-S Society Members must proudly display their 5-S Gold Shovel at all “official” MWEA and WEF gatherings, to show respect for the 5-S Society, and to that they are a Member in Good Standing. The penalty for failing to wear the 5-S Gold Shovel at official gatherings will be decided by the Influent Integrator, pH 7.0**
- **There are no dues for 5-S Membership. There is only one (1) 5-S Officer – that being the position of the Influent Integrator, pH 7.0**
- **Lastly, even though there are “no rules”, . . . new 5-S Inductees must be initiated by the Influent Integrator, pH 7.0 in the presence of MWEA Member's at our Annual Conference, and all inductee's must go through the formal Induction Ceremony, for all to witness.**

As mandated by our Founding Father's, there is one and only elected Officer of the MWEA Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers. This position is that of the omnipotent Influent Integrator, pH 7.0, . . . and the I.I. is responsible for keeping this band of misfits in line at public gatherings (no small task I have learned).

The Influent Integrator must also: notify fellow shovelers of the nominating & voting procedures, . . . establish an election date for new 5-S inductees, . . . tabulate the voting results, . . . notify new 5-S Inductees of the Honor, . . . and perform the Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers Induction Ceremony at our MWEA Annual Conference each year.

The MWEA Member's that have held the dubious honor of being elected as Influent Integrator, pH 7.0, since 1988 are: Carl Huber, Daryle Smith, Jack Rydquist, Dan Wolz, Jimmy Spangler, Larry DeLong, and currently, Greg Burk.

The original fourteen (14) 5-S Members – signifying the acid/base scale of pH 1.0 through pH 14.0 – set up the rules and guidelines for the MWEA 5-S Membership that we still follow today. The first MWEA 5-S Influent Integrator (pH 7.0), was Carl Huber.

Each year, the Highly Esteemed, Admired, Honorable and Odoriferous Influent Integrator, oversees all aspects of nominating and voting for “the few worthy new members each year”. The I.I. has sole power of this “secret process”, and all decisions made by the Influent Integrator are final. The only rule that the I.I. follows is “that there are no written rules” !

The details of the “age old” 5-S Induction Ceremony, have been handed down from Influent Integrator to Influent Integrator, as the “official” Rites of Passage into our “secret society”. This is a long standing, and sanctimonious ceremony, that elevates the new inductee's to the Top of The Sludge Pile, with the rest of us 5-S Shovelers.

