

1997 – PRESENT: SWANA GOES CYBERWORLD (The John Skinner Years)

A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO

After some 18 years, SWANA had a new Executive Director, John Skinner take the reins October 1, 1996. It is an accepted fact that such a position, if filled by a qualified and skilled person, will influence the nature and culture of any organization they lead. This happened with Lanny Hickman as GRCD/ SWANA ED/CEO and it happened and is still happening (as this history is being completed in 2009 and 2010) with SWANA under the direction and leadership of John Skinner. The following discussion reviews the process that the Association followed to seek, locate and engage an individual to lead SWANA into the next millennium and the new information age presented by the internet.

Searching for and Hiring a New Executive Director

The Process

In the previous section of this history (Book 2 – The Growth and Charge Years (The Lanny Hickman Years) there is a discussion of the process followed to select a new Executive Director when Lanny retired. This occurred in 1996. However, because of the importance of making this selection and its impact on the future of SWANA, it seems reasonable to expand on how that process was done.

Interest in seeking a new Executive Director began in 1990-1991 when Lanny reminded the Executive Committee that his contract would end in 1991 and he might retire. In discussions with the Executive Committee his interest in retiring was driven somewhat by the workload of being the outside/advocacy key man, senior manager of the entire association organization, budget officer and technical expert. This led the Executive Committee, and Lanny, to examine ways to lessen the workload and at the same time improve the effectiveness of the Association. Tim Hunt prepared an analysis of ways to accomplish the above approach and presented a proposed transition plan for the EC to consider.

Tim Hunt's plan proposed the establishment of an executive staff (Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer). This plan was designed to accomplish the goals of less workload for Lanny and improved effectiveness for the Association. The plan was proposed to the IB, which approved the proposal; bylaws were amended, job descriptions were approved; and implementation began in 1991. Initially, the positions of Chief of Staff and Comptroller were established as a phase-in for the newly established executive staff. A new contract was written for Lanny with a set retirement date of September 30, 1996. Employees already with

SWANA, Lori Swain and Dawn Brown were appointed to the positions of Chief of Staff and Comptroller.¹

Under this new arrangement two executive staffers (COO & CFO) reported to Lanny; the technical and meetings/marketing groups reported to the Chief of Staff (COO) and the Comptroller would be responsible for budgeting and financial management. As reported in Book 2, implementation occurred over the time frame of 1991-1993.

The next step in transitioning to a new Executive Director began in 1994. The first concern was the need to fully describe what the roles and responsibilities would be for the newly hired Chief Executive Officer. A Transition Team was formed with the following members – ***Durwood Curling (Southeast Public Service Authority – the tidewater area of Virginia) as the Chair, John Abernathy (Merced County, CA Solid Waste Program); Tim Hunt (Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County – FL), Herb Flosdorf (Lancaster County Solid Waste Authority), Mark Hammond (Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County – FL); Steve Maguin (Sanitary Districts of Los Angeles County – CA) and Lanny Hickman (SWANA) a non-voting ex-officio member who served as the staff to the Transition Team.*** Barry Shanoff, SWANA Counsel assisted as needed as legal advisor. The professional and management acumen of the SWANA members on the Transition Team (TTeam)) was very high. All of the voting members were skilled in the field, held very high management positions, and had been instrumental in building successful organizations. In addition, their investment in SWANA personally and professionally was very high.

The TTeam surveyed and/or met with the EC, IB members, Chapter presidents and technical division chairs to seek their recommendations on the background, experiences, education and recognition that they thought were needed for the next ED/CEO. From those interactions the TTeam developed a list of criteria and qualifications that would be the basis for candidate recruitment, interviews and selection. In addition, the TTeam assigned scores (weighted) as a means to rate and compare the candidates that would be interviewed. The table below presents the outcome of that effort.

The Transition Team based on their views of what SWANA was and what and where they wanted SWANA to go were very important in the development of the weighted criteria. These criteria, but not the scores, would be made available to candidates in the recruitment phase. A real super star could score almost 200 points. The selection process was adopted August 4, 1995 at the EC meeting in Seattle.

The TTeam considered the use of a professional headhunter to recruit candidates, but decided that this would not garner the type of candidates that would meet the adopted criteria. The TTeam concluded that the Association had a wide array of outlets in the field that would provide them with qualified candidates. Consequently, notices seeking indications of interest were sent to:

- all U.S and Canadian solid waste publications;

¹ Eventually Lori was appointed Chief Operating Officer and Dawn Chief Financial Officer.

- state/provincial solid waste agencies,
- all chapters
- a number of associations,
- all members, through the newsletter, were asked to make recommendations of potential candidates, and
- several hundred recognized leaders in the field were sent notices.

**Criteria/Qualifications and Scoring Weights
For Consideration of Candidates for SWANA CEO/ED Position**

Criteria/Qualifications	Score
Education – BS in Engineering/BS in Hard Science/BS-BA in Management and advanced degree in a related field, MBA, MBS.	0-20
Experience	
<i>Time in Practice</i> 5 years of professional experience in municipal solid waste management	0-10 2 pts/year
5-10 years of professional experience in municipal solid waste management	0-20 2 pts/year
10+ years of professional experience in municipal solid waste management	25 points
Ten years of professional experience	20 points
<i>Knowledge of Solid Waste Experience</i>	
Management Practices	0–10 points
Technologies	0-10 points
Policies	0-10 points
Peer Recognition	0-10 points
<i>Knowledge of Government</i>	
Local Government	0-15 points
State/Provincial Government	0-10 points
Federal Government	0-5 points
<i>Demonstrated Ability to Lead Diverse Groups</i>	35 points
<i>Demonstrated Ability to Facilitate Diverse Groups</i>	35 points
<i>Demonstrated Ability in Business Development (Revenue)</i>	35 points
<i>Demonstrated Ability in Policy Work</i>	20 points
<i>Demonstrated Writing and Speaking Skills</i>	20 points
<i>Knowledge of the Legislative/Regulatory Process</i>	10 points
<i>Energy, Verve, Persona</i>	25 points

The notices announced the search for a new CEO/ED for SWANA with a start date of July 1, 1996 and invited interested candidates to request an application package. The application package contained business and professional information about SWANA, several years of annual audits, a position description, the criteria to be used to evaluate candidates (scoring was not included with the criteria), and an application. The package also provided information on the review process and notification of successful

candidates (to be interviewed) and unsuccessful candidates (did not make the cut based on their scores).

Formal applications were to be sent to Durwood Curling (the chair of the TTeam) at the SWANA Offices with a closing date of February 1, 1996 for receipt of applications. The applications were not opened in the mailroom, but were given to Lanny and he opened and screened them for completeness and relevance. Incomplete submissions were followed up to get completion. Any candidate that he thought would be of interest were copied and sent to the TTeam.

Over 100 inquiries were received in the SWANA offices in Silver Spring. The candidate package was sent to all inquires that were clearly individuals that were interested in being considered. Ultimately 54 formal applications were received. All candidates were scored by the TTeam. The TTeam met on February 29, 1996 to short list an expected 4-5 candidates; ultimately 13 applicants were short listed for more detailed review. Response letters over the signature of Durwood Curling were sent to all who submitted an application. Those who did not make the cut were discouraged to continue with their interest. Those who made the cut were advised that their applications were being further reviewed and that the TTeam would be in touch later. More detailed reviews were made of the 13 applicants and eventually 9 were selected to be interviewed.

A date and location near Baltimore, MD was selected and notices sent to the 9 top score candidates. The top 9 candidates were very strong candidates. The TTeam was impressed with the group and were confident that one of the candidates would do well enough on the personal interview to be selected. Two of the candidates had almost their entire career in some aspect of solid waste management. Three of the candidates had engineering degrees. Three of the candidates had experience as solid waste management consultants. All candidates demonstrated major professional experiences that were environmentally based. Most of the candidates demonstrated background in how the various levels of government worked. Several were nationally recognized solid waste management "stars".

Interviews were held at a hotel near Baltimore-Washington International Airport on March 29-30, 1996. One candidate was interviewed by telephone due to scheduling conflicts. After the interviews were completed, the TTeam by secret ballot selected a final three for further interviews. The candidate with the highest number of ballots would be interviewed by an appointed contract negotiation team (Curling, Hunt, and Maguin) and approached to see if a suitable contract of engagement could be established.

John H. Skinner Selected

There is no doubt that John Skinner was a great choice for SWANA. John scored high on all of the criteria and in addition had the "star" recognition sought by SWANA.

John Skinner held B.S. in Engineering Science from Hofstra University, a Masters in Aeronautical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic University, and a PhD in Aeronautical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic University.

His early years after receiving his doctorate were spent with General Electric Corporate Research and Development Center as the Manager of Energy and Environmental Program.

John entered the field of solid waste management when he came to work in 1972 as a Branch Chief and Deputy Director in the Resource Recovery Division in the Office of Solid Waste, USEPA. and held that position until 1978. In 1978 John was promoted to the position of Division Director of the Land Disposal Division in the Office of Solid Waste and served in that position until 1982 when he was appointed Director of the Office of Solid Waste. While this position was not a political position, selection of office directors in USEPA was given close attention all the way up the chain to the Administrator of EPA.

During John's time in the Office of Solid Waste he was deeply involved in the development of EPA recycling initiatives; had the responsibility for the development of the RCRA Subtitle D original rule; and eventually all activities of the Office of Solid Waste including the hazardous waste program.

John left the Office of Solid Waste in 1985 to become the Director of the Office of Environmental Engineering, Office of Research and Development, USEPA. In 1988 John was appointed to the position of Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Research and Development, USEPA.

Still working for USEPA, in 1992 he was assigned to the United Nations Environment Programme as a Senior Advisor in the Industry and Environment Programme. He served 4 years in that assignment and retired from the USEPA in 1996, just in time to be appointed as the Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of SWANA.

Listed before are some of the notable highlights of John's professional career.

Professional Activities

- National Representative to International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), 1996 – present
- President, International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), 1992 – 1996
- Vice President, ISWA, 1988 – 1992
- Chairman U.S./Japan Solid Waste Management Bilateral Agreement
- Board of Governors, International Public Works Federation
- President, Institute of Solid Wastes of APWA 1990 – 1991
- Member, Pacific Basin Consortium for Hazardous Waste Research 1988-1990
- Co-editor of International Perspectives on Hazardous Waste Management, Academic Press, 1988
- Co-editor of Waste Minimization and Clean Technology: Waste Management Strategies for the Future, Academic Press, 1992

Awards and Honors

- Presidential Distinguished Executive Award, 1992
- Presidential Meritorious Executive Award, 1988
- A.J. Barnes Human Resources Leadership Award, EPA, 1992
- Gold Medal for Exceptional Service, US EPA
- Silver Medal for Superior Service, US EPA
- Honorary Fellow, UK Institute of Wastes Management, 1994
- Honorary Member, Institute of Solid Wastes, APWA
- NASA Fellowship, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI)
- Academic Scholarship, Hofstra University
- Graduated cum laude and with honors, Hofstra University
- Doctoral Thesis presented at international symposium on combustion in Novosibirsk, U.S.S.R.

There is no doubt that the TTeam did a commendable job in recruiting John Skinner to lead SWANA into the next millennium. John had an extraordinary career in the federal government, was internationally recognized and had management skills to do the job.

1997

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

There appears to have been a modest pause as the new main man got acclimated to SWANA and SWANA members and staff got acclimated to John Skinner. John spent a good deal of time traveling the various chapters to get acquainted and to sample the thoughts and perceived needs of the membership. Business as usual was underway with the staff, the COO and CFO.

Governance

▪ **Officers**

Officers for 1997 included:

President – Durwood Curling, Southeastern Public Service Authority, Virginia.

Vice President – Steve Maguin, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, CA.

Treasurer – Mark Hammond, Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County, FL.

Secretary – Steve Viny, Norton Environmental, OH

Past President – Herb Florsdorf, Lancaster County Solid Waste Authority, PA.

Walt Brodowski, Lethbridge, Alberta was elected to a 3-year term on the Executive Committee as the Canadian Representative.

▪ **International Board of Directors**

President – Durwood Curling

Vice President – Steve Maguin

Treasurer – Mark Hammons

Secretary (and Ohio Chapter Director) – Steve Viny

Past President – Herb Florsdorf

Canadian Representative – Walt Brodowski
 International Equipment Show Chairman – Don Warren
 International Floor Show Chairman – Dick Townley
 International Seminar Chairman – Tim Hunt
 International EC Corporate Director – Constance Hornig
 International Corporate Director – Rick Jordan
 International Corporate Director – James Caron
 International Corporate Director – Michael Knaub
 International Corporate Director – Marlene Feuer
 International Corporate Director – James Walsh
 Regional Council 1 Director – Mike Tomlinson, also New Mexico Road Runner Chapter Director
 Regional Council 2 Director – Allen Lynch, also British Columbia Chapter Director
 Regional Council 3 Director – Lance Welter, also Illinois Chapter Director
 Regional Council 4 Director – Tom Smith, also Virginia Chapter Director
 Regional County 5 Director – Mark Bryant, also Alabama Chapter Director

IB Chapter Directors

Chapter	Director	Chapter	Director
Alaska	Henry Friedman	Nebraska	Steve Owen
Arizona	Mark O'Connor	Nevada Great Basin	Doug Martin
At-Large	Bill Darcy	New Hampshire/Vermont	Fred Rice
Atlantic Canada	Don MacCallum	New Jersey	William Vokoder
CA Gold Rush	Tom Horton	New York	Charles Veidner
CN Prairie	Richard Prankev	North Carolina	Phil Carter
Colorado	Danamaire Schmitt	Oklahoma	Ken Parr
Florida	Bill Dillard	Ontario	Doug Robinson
Georgia	Mack Belue	Oregon	Ben Masengil
Indiana	Harold Dungan	Pennsylvania	Ted O'Neill
Iowa	Teree Caldwell-Johnson	South Carolina	Susan Harrison
Kansas	Tim Williams	Southern CA Founding Chapter	Joe Delaney
Kentucky	Ed Taylor	Tennessee	Dave Grafton
Massachusetts	Paul Stoller	Texas	Nancy Nevil
Michigan	Vacant	Utah	Dan Bauer
Mid-Atlantic	Steve Lippy	Washington	Lisa Haley
Minnesota	Susan Young	West Virginia	Vacant
Mississippi	Paul Vanderfin	Wisconsin	Joe Spear
Missouri	Alan Ollar		

- The Association began general discussions about new membership classes at a lesser cost and about membership classes, other than Regular Members, serving as officers. This issue will continue for several years before resolution.

Management

- Over the years the issue of the requirement for Chapters to have liability was always a somewhat contentious issue. The insurance was purchased by SWANA on behalf of the chapters and the cost was allocated evenly to all chapters. At the mid-year meeting of the IB this issue once again was discussed, The decision was to split the cost – 50% would be divided equally and 50% would be apportioned based on Chapter membership size.
- Regional realignment was considered and was to be studied by the Members/Chapters Committee with a report due to the IB at a later date.
- The IB approved \$25,000 for bonuses for the staff for a very successful 1997.

TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

- The Association began the process of implementation, on a test basis, training by Chapters under a partnering agreement with SWANA. Early results of the test training were very positive.
- Distance learning training packages were being provided by the Association.
- The development of a policy position of advocacy related to legislation was authorized.

WASTECON

- The 35th. Annual WASTECON was held August 25-27, 1997 in St. Louis, MO in the St. Louis Convention Center.

CHAPTERS

- The Arkansas Chapter entered on the rolls at the 2007 SWANA Annual Membership meeting on October 28, 1997 in Saint Louis, Missouri. The new chapter presented a State of Arkansas state flag to President Curling... The flag was installed with the other state and provincial flags representing the Chapters of SWANA. No information on the formation and development of the chapter was available.
- Provisional Chapter status was awarded to:
 - Louisiana

This introductory section of Book Three of the SWANA History was authored by Lanny Hickman and stops in 1997. The author believes that someone more intimately involved in the extraordinary progress made by SWANA from 1997 to 2010 should compile that period of SWANA's history.