



MEHA BULLETIN



Hello Fellow MEHA Members!

It has been a challenging summer. The unnecessary state shut down affected many of our members. The agreement to end it will no doubt have an effect on many of us. With State, County, & City budgets struggling to cope, many of us will see less and be expected to do more. Whatever happens, I ask all of you to remain professional.

**President
Rob Carper**

**Fall 2011 Issue
Volume 41, No. 3**

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It will be important to all of us to maintain a positive public image, especially with our interactions with the public and others in our profession. With the economy in its weakened state, we will no doubt be challenged with stressful situations. In these situations, plan to be professional, compassionate, and fair in our dealings with the regulated/consulted business community and other EH professionals.

At our spring conference, keynote speaker Bob Custard, shared a story with the attendees that we all should hear. I will try to paraphrase this story. Basically, it was about an operator that was being inspected. This was not one of this operator's best inspections and a number of violations were noticed. As they were showing some of these situations to the owner, it was discovered that the owner had recently been dealing with a tragic personal situation. At this point the inspectors showed some empathy and said they would return in 2 weeks to conduct the inspection. When they returned, all of the observed violations were fixed and the operator was very appreciative of the compassion and sensitivity that the inspectors gave in this situation.

I know many of you have similar stories. Please include this as part of your training or mentoring. Too many times we only focus on observe, document & enforce. As noted above, there is more than one way to gain compliance. The EH professional will know the intent of the law, apply their extensive knowledge of this intent, and gain compliance with whatever standard is applied. They use strategies that include compassion.

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This year MEHA is in the process of developing and launching a publicity and marketing effort to tell the public how important the EH professional is to their community in Minnesota. It will be important that we have many positive stories to tell.

Many of our committees are very active. I would like to recognize 3 of them. First, the history committee hosted a river boat ride where many members had an opportunity to network and just plain enjoy themselves. Thanks to Manny and the other committee members for making this happen.

Second, the registration committee has been active in developing and conducting RS registration training for some of our future members and professionals. Thank to Frank Sedzielarz & Chris Forslund for their efforts in making these happen.

Third, the technology committee is working diligently working with our website developer to establish our online payment system for conferences and membership renewals. I want to thank Joe Hibberd, Kim Carlton & the rest of the committee members for their efforts.

At the National Environmental Health Association Annual Education Conference, Minnesota was well represented. I had an opportunity to network with our Region 4 Vice President and Affiliate presidents from Iowa, North & South Dakota, and Iowa.

NEHA announced that they have help for communities (County or City) developing sustainability programs. They have a team that will work with these entities to identify and plan sustainability efforts. If you are living in a community that is interested in going down a sustainability path, you should recommend checking out this NEHA resource. In the efforts so far, EH professionals are needed as one of the top 5 resources to have a successful program.

There was a discussion at the Affiliate Presidents meeting that was pointed at whether or not private EH professions are a threat to traditional government regulatory jobs. I will just say that here in Minnesota we support all types of employment opportunities for our professionals. I would like to see industry looking to us for a highly qualified resource.

Your fellow MEHA member,

Rob Carper, President

Online Conference Registration and Membership Frequently Asked Questions

Nearly one year ago MEHA began a long process in updating our website and expanding our electronic services. Last December the Board of Directors selected Dan Moriarty Design, a Minneapolis consultant, to redesign and develop a new look for our website (www.MEHAonline.org). We have received many positive comments from the membership about the design and ease of navigation through the site.

In August we began using an online service, RegOnline, for our conference registrations starting with the NEHA 4 Conference in Rochester. It was the first time MEHA was able to accept payments with credit cards. It also reduced the many hours it took to process conference registrations. Many attendees stated they favored the online registration over the old paper registration method.

Starting October 1, 2011 MEHA completed the final stage of the project by using RegOnline for all membership applications and member renewals. Members will receive their renewal notice by email six (6) weeks before your annual renewal anniversary date. All membership applications, both new and renewal, will be done online. Members will have the option of paying by check or credit card. Renewal notices will no longer be sent through the U.S. mail.

MEHA has uploaded the entire membership database to RegOnline. You can view or update your information by visiting <http://www.regonline.com/MEHAMembership>. The first time you visit the site, you will need to create a password. Click on "forgot password" to start the steps in creating your password

Some email systems may block emails about your membership renewal because they are sent from the RegOnline server. When this happens, emails may appear in the spam/junk mail box, or may be blocked from an email system automatically. To prevent this from happening, you will need to have RegOnline added to the email system's list of acceptable senders (white list). See information below.

Thank you to the Conference Planning, Membership, and Technology committees, and Treasurer John Tracy for their efforts in updating the website, and for providing automated conference registrations, membership renewal notices, and electronic membership renewals.

Some of you may have some questions about using RegOnline for your membership renewals. Here are some of the **frequently asked questions** (FAQ).

- *What is the internet address (URL) for MEHA membership?*
Visit <http://www.regonline.com/MEHAMembership>
- *I visited the site, but it asked for my password. What is my password?*
The first time you visit the site, you will need to create a password. Click on "forgot password" to start the steps in creating your password.
- *How will I know when it is time to renew my membership?*
You will be sent an email renewal notice from RegOnline six (6) weeks before your annual renewal anniversary date. A reminder will be sent 15 days before the due date.

- *Will RegOnline renewal notices get stuck in spam filters?*
They could! You should have RegOnline added to the email system's list of acceptable senders. This can be done by IP Address or Domain Name.
By IP Address:
72.18.216.98
72.18.216.102
204.144.151.225
By Domain Name:
*.regonline.com (if the mail server accepts wildcards)
mail.regonline.com
mail.effectek.com
Contact your information technology specialist for more information.
- *What does primary address mean where I enter my personal information?*
You should enter your preferred mailing address (either home or work). This will be the address MEHA uses for U.S. mail, including your election ballot.
- *What does alternate address mean?*
Your alternate address is your "other" address. If your primary address is at work, your alternate address is your home address, and vice versa.
- *What should I do if I change my job or my mailing address?*
Visit <http://www.regonline.com/MEHAMembership> and open your information. You may make changes at any time.
- *What should I do if I change my email address?*
Visit <http://www.regonline.com/MEHAMembership> and open your information. You may make changes at any time.
- *Can more than one person sign up or renew their membership at a time, such as an entire agency?*
Yes, you can.
- *I work full-time in the environmental health field and go to school full-time. What membership category should I use?*
People employed full-time in EH are expected to join as an Active member. Student membership is intended for those who are full-time students and not currently employed in EH.
- *Where should verification of student status be sent? What is acceptable proof of being a student?*
Students joining MEHA as either a Student or Junior member are required to submit proof of their full-time student status. They should send a copy of their current class schedule or a letter from a teacher or advisor to the Membership Committee. Send to P.O. Box 441, Anoka, MN 55303.
- *How do I pay by check if I don't want to use a credit card?*
The final step in completing your membership renewal is for payment. You may select to pay with either a check or credit card. If you choose to pay by check, select that option, and you will be instructed to send your payment to the MEHA Treasurer in St. Cloud. You do not need to print anything to send with your check, but be sure you indicate whose membership it is for.
- *[My employer requires a receipt for me to get reimbursed for my membership. How do I get a receipt?](#)*
If you pay by credit card, RegOnline will display a receipt that you can print. If you mail a check to the Treasurer, be sure to request a receipt be mailed or emailed to you.

Award Nominations for 2012– Start Planning Now!

Being nominated for an award by one’s peers can be most satisfying. Show your colleagues that their important achievements are appreciated! Who do you know that deserves special recognition? Help us find those individuals who exemplify the Environmental Health profession. MEHA is accepting nominations for awards, including the Frank A. Staffenson Environmental Health Professional of the Year Award, the Emerging Professional Award, and Merit Awards.

Information about the awards can be found at www.mehaonline.org/members/awards-committee.

Contact Joe Hibberd, R.S., MEHA Awards Committee Chair, at joe.hibberd@co.ramsey.mn.us or 651-266-1173 if you have any questions.



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December 13-14, 2011
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Food Inspections at Retail

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St. Paul

May 2-4, 2012
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NEHA Region 4 Conference

NEHA Region 4 Conference

Kahler Hotel
Rochester, MN



(L to R) Bette Packer, Consultant, Ling Jiang, MN Dept. of Labor, Barb McMonigal-St. Dennis, City of St. Paul



(L to R) Lynn Moore-City of Bloomington; Mike Nordos- MDH; Dan Disrud,-Anoka County and MEHA President-Elect; John Weinand-City of Minnetonka



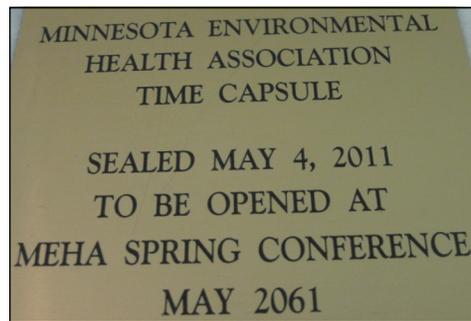
NEHA Region 4 Conference

NEHA Region 4 Conference

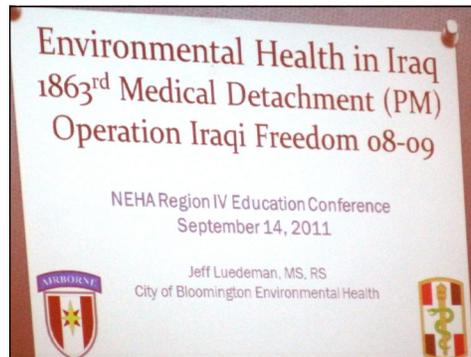
Kahler Hotel Rochester, MN



Conference planning ladies-Jessica, Sharon and Laura hard at work!



Lynn Moore, City of Bloomington, presenting on Dealing with the Media



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Vendor Displays

Environmental Health AND YOU!

Everyday, you come into contact with Environmental Health more than you realize. Here are some ways that Environmental Health is protecting your health and the health of your community.



Water
By permitting, inspecting and sampling public and private water supplies, we help to protect your community's water resources and your household water by preventing contamination from microorganisms and chemicals.



Lead Paint
Environmental Health Inspectors routinely inspect the living environment of lead-poisoned children. The inspector works with property owners to identify and remove all lead-based hazards to which the child has access.



Food
We license and inspect the restaurants you dine in, the grocery stores you shop in, and the schools your children attend. We work with management to ensure compliance with sanitation and food handling requirements and respond to concerns about foodborne illness outbreaks and product recalls.

Tattoos
We license and inspect tattoo shops and artists to ensure they are in compliance with regulations regarding record keeping, sanitizing of equipment, disposal of needles, and training of staff.

Swimming
We inspect public swimming pools and spas to identify any unsafe conditions that create a potential for injury or disease outbreaks.



Sewage System
By permitting and inspecting individual septic systems, we prevent your community's water supply and recreational waters from being contaminated with human waste.



Pests
We work with businesses, homeowners and pest control companies on preventing and eradicating roaches, bed bugs, mice and rats.



And So Much More
We also handle air quality, solid waste, food recalls, illegal dumping, mold, tanning salons, radon, sewage treatment plants, unsanitary living conditions, animal hoarding, mosquito and disease surveillance, boil water advisories, flooding and a whole lot more. Environmental Health staff is available 24/7 to respond to sewage spills, industrial accidents, food-borne illness outbreaks and many other public health emergencies.





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The Dream Vacation with Bed Bugs, a Tick and Legionnaires

By Lisa Schreifels, City of St. Cloud Health Director

To say that we were excited would be an understatement. Coworkers and family had been under siege with our incessant talk of trip preparations. “Trip of a lifetime!” people would say of our plans to visit five European countries in 19 days.

We had planned the trip ourselves. The route was dictated by events we wanted to attend, family we wanted to visit, and by a shrewd understanding of when the money would run out.

Armed with reading hours aplenty of guidebooks and Tripadvisor reviews, we set off for Copenhagen, Denmark. The kids knew that mom and dad would do a quick scour of the room for bed bugs before settling in for the night. Having two parents working as Environmental Health Specialists has its routines.

At 2 AM I felt something crawling on my arm. With the aid of the blue cell phone light the culprit was grabbed and placed quickly into a sandwich baggie. My husband Hank and I both thought it was some sort of tick, albeit it was the size of an adult bedbug.

I trudged down to the front desk for verification. They informed me that the baggie resident was a bed bug. Would we like a different room? Did we have bed bugs in our home? Being in Denmark at 2 AM with sleeping kids, jetlag and three Danish guys telling me that we had bed bugs was *not* in the plans.

However, I was not completely convinced and asked the staff to search Google images for bedbugs. Pretty soon I was behind the counter with them helping in the investigation. We made our way back home through cyberspace to the familiar websites of the City of St. Cloud and the University of Minnesota. It was definitely not a bed bug!

We continued to browse and identified the culprit as an American Dog Tick according to one site. (However it did not look like our familiar Minnesota wood ticks of the same name.) The name of the tick was unfortunate in this situation. As I was also an American the questioning began. Did our family have a dog? Did we have an infestation of ticks at home? How could this tick have gotten into their establishment?

It was immediately apparent that none of these Danes knew what a tick was. I tried my best to explain how this random tick traveler still waving to us from its baggie confinement was not a cause for panic. There would be no need to implement immediate pest-control strategies. With the conversation somewhat stilted by broken English and my desperate need for sleep I tried to explain how a tick eats.

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With a great smile, one of the Danes suggested putting the tick on his arm so he could see it swell up. This was met with a very enthusiastic response from the other two. In my best middle-aged mom mode I tried to convince him that it would not be a good idea. I mentioned allergies, possibility of disease transmission, not to mention the yuck factor. We finally parted as they continued their study of the fascinating little American bloodsucking creature.

Two days later we were in the Copenhagen airport getting ready for the next leg of our adventure. Something small crawled onto my purse. My very non-squeamish husband quickly placed the creature onto his hand. We both looked at it and then each other. There was no doubt about our fellow would-be traveler was indeed a bed bug.

After promptly squashing the bug, we moved quickly to a different area. We realized it was almost futile to try to prevent these creatures from sharing our space. Carry-ons are placed together in overhead bins, planes and trains transport thousands of international passengers daily. We would be vigilant, but not panic.

After Estonia we were going to visit Latvia and stay in my uncle's apartment. I was determined not to have the memories of our visit together be tainted by leftover pests. We would need to examine our belongings closely.

Great news upon arriving in Estonia! We were upgraded to the hotel's presidential suite! We took advantage of the ensuite huge white Jacuzzi. Our luggage was placed along the edge and every item shaken and examined for any additional hitchhikers. None appeared.

Upon arrival a few days later in Latvia my uncle reluctantly showed us the notice on the outside of his apartment building. There would be no hot water during our visit. In fact, there would be no hot water during the month of July.

My knowledge of Latvian is slim, but the notice posted explained it all – Legionnaires. Later we would notice the excavators replacing pipes in the area.

Doing an internet search for Legionnaires and Riga, Latvia would yield only minimal results. There are still some leftovers from the Soviet regime in regard to public infrastructure communication. Information can still be hard to find.

The next week in Norway provided us with stunning fjord views. No pests - not even the infamous Norway rat- made an appearance.

We wrapped up everything with a short stay in Iceland. At our hostel we noticed pest monitoring stations in the rooms. At a visit to a large public hot spring/spa, staff ensure that all guests take hot soapy showers prior to entering the water. Their environmental health practices exceeded our expectations.

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Upon returning home, we took extra precautions while unloading our travel weary gear. Although we realize bedbugs are not the end of the world, eradication can be time-consuming and costly. Our luggage was unpacked in the driveway. Laundry was sorted into large garbage bags and promptly washed and dried. All items were again visually inspected prior to bringing them into the house. Each piece of our luggage sits in a garbage bag awaiting its turn in the chest freezer.

Would we do it again? Absolutely! In addition to the many wonderful experiences we had, our knowledge of environmental health provided the perspective to more fully understand the circumstances around us and prompted some fun cultural exchanges.

Lisa would like to thank her husband Hank Schreifels, Stearns County Environmental Health Director for his contributions to this article and his ability to squash bugs whenever needed.

(See the enclosed pictures from Lisa and Hank's trip on page 13)



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Hank, Lisa, Ben & Abby



The Jacuzzi/luggage inspection area in the Presidential Suite at the Baltic Imperial Hotel in Tallinn, Estonia. The stone wall dates from the 13th century.

Legionella

Legioneloze ir tehnogēna infekcija, kas var savairoties dažādās ūdensapgādes sistēmas iekārtās – karstā un aukstā ūdensapgādes sistēmās (dušu, vannu, tvertiņu organiskajā aplikumā, nosēdumos, ūdenskrānu ūdenī, elektriskajos sildītājos), gaisa kondicionētāju dzesēšanas iekārtās, gaisa mitrinātājos. Īpaši labvēlīgi augšanas apstākļi izveidojas stāvošā ūdenī, kurā atrodas organiskās barības vielas.

Dzīvokļu īpašniekiem/ ģimiekēm, lai izvairītos no inficēšanās dzīves vietā karstā un aukstā ūdens sistēmās nepieciešams nodrošināt apstākļus, kas kavētu legionellu savairošanos:

- ❖ Regulāri veikt dušu galviņu tīrīšanu no organiskā un neorganiskā aplikuma, dezinficēt tos, izmantojot dezinfekcijas līdzekļus vai ar augstu temperatūru, ieliekot verdošā ūdenī.
- ❖ Vismaz reizi nedēļā dažas minūtes jāteicina reti lietotajam ūdens krāni un dušas. Tas jā dara ikreiz pirms ūdens lietošanas pēc ilgstošas prombūtnes.
- ❖ Laiku pa laikam nepieciešams skalot reti lietotajos krānos.
- ❖ Dzīvokļa īpašniekiem/ ģimiekēm regulāri jāveic sienu, grīdas, aprīkojumu, krānu, ziepju trauku dezinfekcija (izmantojot mūsdienīgus un drošus dezinfektus).

Ar cieņu,
SIA „Rīgas namu pārvaldnieks” iecirkņa „Centrs” administrācija.

Legionella sign in the apartment building lobby where we stayed in Riga, Latvia.



Waterpipe excavation from apartment in Riga, Latvia.



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For Questions

Call: 507-337-2819
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Gas for McDonald's soda fountain caused Ga. death

By *RUSS BYNUM*
Associated Press

September 15, 2011 SAVANNAH, Ga. -- Carbon dioxide piped through gas lines to a soda fountain leaked in a **McDonald's Corp.** restaurant in Georgia and sickened 10 people, including a woman who later died after being found unconscious in a restroom, police said Wednesday. Investigators determined a leaky gas line between the walls caused the gas, used to pump carbonation into sodas, to build up a week ago to the point where people inside were unable to breathe.

"It caused what is normally a harmless gas to be pumped into the wall cavity and leak into the women's restroom," said Pooler Police Chief Mark Revenew. "At a high level of concentration, it displaces oxygen."

Firefighters were called Sept. 7 to the restaurant in Pooler, about 10 miles west of Savannah, and two women were found unconscious in a restroom. They were later admitted to a Savannah hospital, where eight others from the restaurant were treated and released. Eighty-year-old Anne Felton of Ponte Vedra, Fla., died the next day. Investigators initially suspected customers fell ill to noxious fumes from cleaning chemicals. An autopsy found no trace of chemicals in Felton, Revenew said, but it indicated she succumbed to asphyxiation.

The restaurant's franchisees, John and Monique Palmaccio, said in a statement they "are committed to running safe, welcoming restaurants." "We worked closely with the authorities to determine the cause of this incident and we've taken action to correct the situation," the statement said.

The police chief said the owners had replaced the soda fountain's gas lines and valves and were allowed to reopen the restaurant. "At this point we don't anticipate criminal charges," Revenew said. "It just appears to be a mistake."

The U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration is also investigating. OSHA investigators were conducting interviews last week, looking into possible workplace safety violations.

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Recently Manny Camilon and his wife Mary visited family down in Arizona. While near Phoenix, they decided to drop in on David Ludwig, keynote speaker from Maricopa County at our 2010 MN Spring Conference!

David is doing well and is very busy managing 120 employees in the Environmental Health Division. They ate at a very authentic Mexican restaurant and discussed work, family and hobbies! (Dave and his family motor home to dog shows in the Southwest!) The food and company was enjoyed by all!"



Congratulations to the following people who passed the R.S. exam in October!

David Distad

Kent Johnson

Nicole Kocktavey

Mindy Lang

Abigail Miller

Daniel Opsahl

Sarah Savengseuksa

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facebook

MEHA is on Facebook! Visit our page and remember to "like" us!



Member News



On the Move... Michelle Koch from the City of Minnetonka to Feed My Starving Children as their Food Quality Coordinator.

Congratulations to Bill Buckley, MDH, on his retirement.

Congratulations to our MEHA President, Rob Carper, who was recently on an episode of Minnesota Bound with Ron Schara of Kare 11 TV. Check out the link at

<http://www.mnbound.com/watch-mn-bound/2010/10/5/minnesota-bound-571-october-3-2010.html>

Thank you to the following people who contributed to this newsletter: Manny Camilon, Lisa Schreifels, Tracie Zerwas, Rob Carper and Joe Hibberd.

A special thanks to Manny Camilon for all of his outstanding pictures from the Region 4 NEHA conference!

Request From The Editor

An important part of the newsletter is the human element—what is going on with MEHA members. Please let the editor know about any comings and goings, births, weddings, honors...

Deadline for the next issue is
December 1, 2011.

Send to:

Lori Green, R.S.

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