



# MEHA BULLETIN



**President  
Dan Disrud**

**Summer 2012 Issue  
Volume 41, No. 4**

## **IN THIS EDITION**

**Science Fair Winners**

**Award Recipients &  
Photos from MEHA  
Spring Conference**

**Shallow Water Black-  
out Article**

**Photos from NEHA  
Conference**

**Calendar of Events**

**Member Updates**

## **President's Address**

**By Dan Disrud**

I consider it an honor and privilege to assume the role of President of our association that now looks forward to and celebrates the next great 50 years of Environmental Health. I am excited for the challenges and opportunities that will come with the changes to our profession, but am convinced that our professional success will continue to come through education, communication, treating others as we want to be treated, and keeping a healthy sense of humor.

Despite our lifelong education delivery evolving primarily to computer screens, our conferences remain a best-value for our professional development and credential maintenance. I enjoyed seeing many of you at Ruttger's for the Spring Conference and look forward to seeing you at our Fall Conference in Walker. It's not feasible or reasonable, but I wish that we could get 100% conference attendance. Titles that add "Lake Lodge" and "On the Lake" make attendance a difficult sell to the boss and spouse, but these locations have been brought to you with the intent of providing location variety and fiscal prudence through off-season rate negotiations. Please include and promote MEHA conferences in your education plans for the next year.

I have heard people over the years say that they won't attend a certain conference because they won't get anything out of it. Attendance justifications often requires focus on the satisfaction of personal needs, but consider what can be given to others through your attendance. Your service to fellow EH Professionals through presentation, mentoring, and sharing of ideas is needed. I always leave MEHA conferences inspired, mostly through the relationships formed. Good relationships require effort. Most of this effort is through networking and other communication.

**Minnesota Environmental Health Association**  
**www.MEHAonline.org**

Please save the most recent MEHA membership list that you are promised annually to your desktop and consider those folks unique professional resources as well as friends.

Our days are filled with a variety of relationships that come layered with applications of the Golden Rule. Our association is in the process of developing and implementing a Code of Professional Standards. The intent is to further define our association's professionalism and not to create division. Newly adopted objectives, code of ethics introduction, mission statement review, strategic direction update, and transition to e-commerce is a lot of change in a short period of time! But these changes are necessary for your association to stay relevant to your professional needs.

Don't keep concerns to yourself. Please keep communication open with me and my fellow Board Members; we are at your service. As for humor, I apologize in advance. I can only hold my tongue so long. I am reminded that I have a warped sense of what is funny and am due for offending someone. But those that laugh last ... don't get it.

Yours,  
Dan Disrud, REHS

*Sharon Smith received the following email from Dr. Robert Powitz, Forensic Sanitarian and Keynote Speaker at the MEHA Annual Spring Conference.*

**Dear Sharon,**  
**Thanks again for having me at your conference. I thoroughly enjoyed myself ... and learned quite a bit along the way. You and your colleagues deserve a heart-felt congratulations for organizing such a class-act conference. I have to say, it was one of the best I've attended in a long time.. Again, thanks for your kind hospitality and the opportunity to present the Keynote address.**  
**With warmest regards to all,**  
**Bob**

***Kudos to the conference planning committee!***

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**President.....Dan Disrud**

## State Science & Engineering Fair Awards Subcommittee

On March 19, 2012 MEHA presented the third annual “Excellence in Environmental Health Science” awards to high school and middle school students at the Minnesota State Science and Engineering Fair at the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington. Awards were judged by five (5) MEHA members for the best project for environmental factors impacting public health. Awards and abstracts are here: <http://www.fair.mnmas.org/Stats.asp?xYear=2012>

### The award recipients in the high school division were:

- First Place: \$200 to Timothy Renier, Duluth East High School, “The Effects of a Multi-Factor Hand Hygiene Intervention on Hand Washing Effectiveness and on Absences of Elementary and Middle School Students”
- Second Place: \$100 to Riley Tostenson, Perham Senior High School, “What’s in Your Water: Does Chemical Composition Affect Bacteria Growth in Your Bottle?”
- Third Place: \$50 to Jessie Hassebroek, Coon Rapids High School, “Effectiveness of Hand Sanitizers”
- Honorable Mention: Certificate to Seth Stafki, Perham Senior High School, “A Study of the Relation of Localized Heavy Metal Deposition and Waste Management”

### The award recipients in the middle school division were:

- First Place: \$100 to Daniel Rockcastle, Nativity School (St. Paul), “A Hands on Business: Can Natural Hand Sanitizers Work as Well as Store-Bought Ones to Prevent the Spread of Disease?”
- Second Place: \$50 to Anna Schoo, Cathedral High (New Ulm), “Quest for the Superbug”
- Honorable Mention: Certificate to Jackson Booth, Holy Rosary School, “Purifiers”

### Committee Members:

- Kim Carlton, MPH, REHS, Minnesota Department of Health
- Nicole Koktavy, MS, REHS, Minnesota Department of Health
- Stephanie Meyer, MPH, Minnesota Department of Health
- Pam Nelms, MPH, REHS, City of Minneapolis
- Sue Schmid, MPH, RN, RS, Hennepin County



*From left to right: Jackson Booth, Jessie Hassebroek, Seth Stafki, Riley Tostenson, Kim Carlton, Anna Schoo, Timothy Renier, and Daniel Rockcastle*



## STATE of MINNESOTA

# Proclamation

WHEREAS: The management of environmental conditions is an essential element in protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Minnesotans; and

WHEREAS: Environmental Public Health is the public health discipline concerned with the management of environmental conditions to prevent disease and injury to humans; and

WHEREAS: The women and men who serve in the Environmental Public Health field in Minnesota are experienced and dedicated public health professionals, who contribute to improving the quality of life for the residents and guests of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS: State and local environmental health agencies are working together to meet the public health needs of their communities in Minnesota; and

WHEREAS: The Minnesota Environmental Health Association is the educational group serving the environmental public health profession in this State; and

WHEREAS: The State of Minnesota recognizes the importance of the essential services provided by environmental public health professionals.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK DAYTON, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim the week of May 14-20, 2012 as:

## ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

in the State of Minnesota.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May.

  
GOVERNOR



SECRETARY OF STATE

# The Danger of Shallow Water Blackout

By Kendra Kozen

*Aquatics International*

November/December 2011 issue

Holding your breath underwater is part of swimming, and under normal circumstances, breathing as needed, there's no danger. That changes when you hold your breath repeatedly for extended periods underwater, which is typically done for training or endurance purposes. Preceded by hyperventilation (sometimes called overbreathing) it can be fatal: death by what's collectively known as shallow water blackout.

While aquatics professionals know what shallow water blackout is — more than 80 percent recognized the term in a recent online poll of 566 *Aquatics International* readers — a much smaller number seem to fully grasp how it's caused or its true risk. For example, nearly 90 percent surveyed labeled prolonged breath-holding as dangerous. But 40 percent also said they don't have rules at their facilities forbidding the practice.

The Divers Alert Network has tracked drownings linked to breath-holding for more than five years and reports at least 44 fatalities each year since 2004. In 2010, an analysis published in the *Southern Medical Journal* identified eight breath-holding related deaths in a survey of 180 pool drowning incidents that occurred between 1998 and 2008.

But those numbers only scratch the surface. "My expectation is, we're clearly not seeing how many cases where hyperventilation is a factor," says Neal Pollock, Ph.D., research director at the nonprofit DAN.

That's because when someone dies as a result of excessive breath-holding, no forensic evidence is left behind to tell the story, so such deaths often are not reported as drownings. Swimmers are equally oblivious to the risks, which leads to still more deaths.

"In many minds, it's still a safe, fun and acceptable practice," says Tom Griffiths, founder of Aquatic Safety Research Group in State College, Pa., referring to prolonged breath-holding. "People out there just don't know it's a problem."

Some, such as Rhonda Milner, find out the most tragic way of all: They lose a loved one to shallow water blackout. "I am actually a physician myself, and the medical examiner on my son's case had never heard of this phenomenon. This is shocking!" says Milner whose son, Whitner, drowned this spring, apparently from shallow water blackout.

Milner and others are angry the industry hasn't done more to warn against the danger — and they're determined to do something about it. If aquatics refuses to police itself, they say, they'll get government to step in. To that end, Milner is leading a grass-roots effort to outlaw breath-holding at public pools.

"Pools are required to have signs for 'No running,' 'No glass,' 'No diving in shallow water,'" Milner

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says. "But we are not educating and warning against shallow water blackout, where swimmers are persistently and regularly killing themselves."

**Understanding the risk**

"Shallow water blackout" is a somewhat ambiguous term, first used to explain blackouts among divers using closed-circuit systems. These systems are similar to a standard scuba set, except that the tanks contain a mix of oxygen and recycled exhaled gas, which makes them lighter and smaller. The U.S. Navy formally identified shallow water blackout after it lost several divers.

Here's how it happens: Hyperventilation (either voluntarily or as a result of extreme exertion) causes the body to expel larger than normal amounts of carbon dioxide. The CO<sub>2</sub> acts as the catalyst that triggers a person to breathe, so less of it means a swimmer can remain underwater for longer than normal conditions. But that process starves the brain of oxygen, which causes a blackout, according to research published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*. No physical cue indicates when an individual underwater is about to blackout, and when it happens, the body's natural reflex is to take a breath, forcing water into the lungs.

If the person is not rescued and resuscitated immediately, a drowning will occur. A shallow water blackout can become fatal in less than 2½ minutes because the body is so depleted of oxygen, Griffiths says. Under normal conditions, a drowning death happens in somewhere around 5 minutes.

"The general public needs to be educated as to the dangers of hyperventilation prior to becoming submerged in water, and hyperventilation followed by breath-holding needs to be actively discouraged," says Jerome H. Modell, M.D., the author of that analysis in the *Southern Medical Journal*.

Among aquatics professionals, a majority know the term, but drownings linked to breath-holding are still happening, so it's clear that not everyone fully understands the risks, he adds. Fielding's greatest concern is with pools that don't generally have someone dedicated to aquatic management, such as hotel and apartment pools.

The complete article is available at [www.aquaticsintl.com/2011/nov/1111\\_breathe.html](http://www.aquaticsintl.com/2011/nov/1111_breathe.html).



*MEHA is on Facebook! Visit our page and join the group! Please "Like" us so we can share MEHA news and other interesting Environmental Health info with you in a timely manner.*



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Full schedule, registration and details at [www.cposeminars.com](http://www.cposeminars.com)

### 2012 Schedule

	Cost: \$245.00
February 22-23	8-5:30pm - Rochester, MN
February 24-25	8-5:30pm - St. Paul, MN
March 14-15	8-5:30pm - Bloomington, MN
March 21-22	8-5:30pm - Duluth, MN
April 11-12	8-5:30pm - Eau Claire, WI
April 25-26	8-5:30pm - St. Paul, MN
April 25-26	8-5:30pm - Baxter, MN
May 9-10	8-5:30pm - St. Paul, MN
May 9-10	8-5:30pm - Bemidji, MN
June 6-7	8-5:30pm - St. Paul, MN
July 11-12	8-5:30pm - Bloomington, MN
September 19-20	8-5:30pm - St. Paul, MN
September 19-20	8-5:30pm - Siren, WI

Looking for additional education?

Check out our Horizon Advanced Aquatic Education Seminars at [www.aaeseminars.com](http://www.aaeseminars.com) or email [aae@horizonpoolsupply.com](mailto:aae@horizonpoolsupply.com)



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# MEHA Spring Conference

## MEHA Spring Conference

### Ruttger's 2012



Merit awards were presented to Karen Casale (retiree) and Dan Disrud, (Anoka County) for their service on the Membership Committee. An award was also presented to John Tracy (Stearns County) for his service as Treasurer. Lastly, Lori Green (Ramsey County) received an award for her service as MEHA Secretary and Newsletter Editor.



Joe Hibberd is pictured presenting the Frank A. Staffenson Environmental Health Professional of the Year Award to Frank Sedzielarz for his outstanding contribution in teaching the R.S. exam preparation classes. Congratulations Frank!

# MEHA Spring Conference

## MEHA Spring Conference

### Ruttger's 2012



Past-President Rob Carper presenting a Certificate of Merit to Angie Cyr from the National Environmental Health Association.



Candice Carmichael, City of St. Louis Park and Dr. Robert Powitz, keynote speaker



President Disrud presenting Rob Carper with a MEHA President's Award



Raffle Girls!

# MEHA Spring Conference

## MEHA Spring Conference Ruttger's 2012



**October 3-5, 2012**  
MDH Community Health  
Conference  
Cragun's  
Brainerd

**October 11, 2012**  
MEHA Fall Conference  
Chase on the Lake  
Walker, MN

**October 19, 2012**  
Sanitarian Registration  
Exam  
St. Paul, MN  
*(Applications due by  
August 12, 2012)*

**September 27-28 &  
November 15-16, 2012**  
U of M HACCP,  
Sanitation and Auditing  
Workshops  
St. Paul Campus

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[www.mnbeef.org](http://www.mnbeef.org)  
[www.beeffoodservice.com](http://www.beeffoodservice.com)

Colleen Zenk  
Director of Consumer Information

Minnesota Beef Council  
2950 Metro Drive, Suite 102  
Minneapolis, MN 55425  
952-934-4468  
[colleen@mnbeef.org](mailto:colleen@mnbeef.org)



## Food Service Training July-December 2012

### Food Manager Initial Certification—ServSafe®

- Little Falls, July 16
- Montevideo, July 17
- St. Paul, July 19
- Rochester, August 23
- Moorhead, August 30
- Bemidji, September 20
- St. Cloud, October 11
- Marshall, October 17
- Mankato, November 8
- St. Cloud, December 4

Unless noted classes are 9 AM-4:30 PM, exam following.

Classes in Spanish are available.

For more information call Glenyce Peterson-Vangsness at 507-389-6732.

### Food Manager Certification Renewal

- Little Falls, July 16, 9 AM- 1 PM
- Montevideo, July 17, 9 AM-1PM \*
- St. Paul, July 19, 9 AM- 1 PM \*
- Rochester, August 23, 9 AM- 1 PM
- Moorhead, August 29, 1-5 PM
- Bemidji, September 19, 1-5 PM
- St. Cloud, October 11, 9 AM-1 PM
- Marshall, October 16, 1-5 PM
- Mankato, November 8, 9 AM- 1 PM \*
- St. Cloud, December 4, 9 AM—1 PM

\*At these locations, participants will attend four hours of the Certification Course.

Pre-registration strongly recommended at least two weeks in advance for all classes.

Manager Certification and Renewal classes are also available online.

For more information contact: Connie Schwartau at 507-337-2819 or [schwa047@umn.edu](mailto:schwa047@umn.edu) or go to [www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety](http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety)

## NEHA CONFERENCE 2012 SAN DIEGO



Poster Presentation at the 2012 NEHA Conference by Suzanne Driessen and Kathy Brandt from the U of M



Poster Presentation at the NEHA Conference by Deb Durkin, Suzanne Driessen (U of M) and Jim Topie (MDA)

## MEMBER UPDATES



**CONGRATULATIONS** to John Tracy who's son Patrick graduated summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics.

**ON THE MOVE....** Deborah Durkin from MDH to MN Fish Advisory as an outreach coordinator.

**OUR SYMPATHY** to Sharon Smith, MDH Fergus Falls, on the loss of her father.

**OUR SYMPATHY** to Kim Carlton, MDH, on the loss of her sister-in-law.

**THANK YOU** to the following people who contributed to this newsletter: Kim Carlton, Jim Topie, Sharon Smith, Joe Hibberd, Dan Disrud, John Tracy and **Manny Camilon** for all his wonderful conference pictures!

### 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

September 1, 2012.

Send to:

Lori Green, R.S.

St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health  
2785 White Bear Avenue N., Suite 350  
Maplewood, MN 55109-1320  
651-266-1172