President’s Message

By Rob Carper

MEHA has always been a non-profit, non-governmental, professional organization that was founded and remains a way to promote the professional development of environmental health professionals in the great state of Minnesota. This has never been more evident than at our recent annual spring conference. Our keynote speaker (Bob Custard) kicked off our educational sessions with heartfelt stories that had many feeling proud of their work, how they conduct themselves when interacting with the public, and left them with ideas on how they can improve. We are all professionals and we should all strive to present a positive image to our public.

We should all have some fun, too. This was very evident with our scholarship fundraising golf tournament, our awards banquet recognizing our best members, and all the other networking opportunities that left us smiling about who we are and being proud of what we do for our citizens.

I have been a member since 1992 and this was the first year I was able to participate in the golf tournament. Being the weakest link (hacker) on our team, I was not sure what to expect. Well, we had a great time. I hit some great shots but I also missed the ball a few times (we called those “practice swings”), and everyone on the team helped each other. By the looks of it, all the other teams were having a great time and working together, too. Not necessarily to win the tournament, but more importantly to have some fun with others we don’t get to spend much time with. I highly recommend the golf tournament to those who have not tried it—and it’s for a good cause too!!!
Congratulations to Angie Wheeler, the recipient of the Frank Staffenson Outstanding Environmental Health Professional award. I have known Angie for many years and cannot think of anyone more deserving. I admire her dedication to our profession.

Our two merit award winners were Sharon Smith and Laura Schmidt, who both serve on our conference planning committee. These two professionals have organized and brought us fantastic educational conferences for the past few years. Sometimes it isn’t evident how much work they have to do to make these conferences happen. They both have environmental health day jobs and put many hours of their own time in making these conferences a success. The conferences this year have had some awesome speakers with some diverse and interesting topics, keeping our members on the cutting edge. Congratulations Sharon and Laura—you two are the best!!!!!!

The networking possibilities were over the top, as usual. We had in our presence (because they are members) nationally and internationally recognized epidemiologists (Craig Hedberg, Kirk Smith, & Carlota Medus). The famous Bill Marler was again one of our great speakers. We also had in our presence a NEHA regional vice president (Bob Custard) who announced he has presidential aspirations. He will certainly remember his new friends in Minnesota. (We were Minnesota Nice.) Of course, there were all of you, our members, to network with. That in itself is worth the price of admission.

I look forward to serving the members of MEHA as your president this year. I believe it will be an exciting time in our history. Don’t forget to put something in Manny’s “Time Capsule”. It is our 50th anniversary. We have a new website (www.mehaonline.org) and we plan on taking steps to promote our profession in a meaningful way. And most important to our success, we have great volunteers. I challenge all of you to do one thing for the Association. It doesn’t have to be big or take a lot of time; it just has to be something. All of us together will make a big difference.

Stay tuned.

Your President,
Rob Carper
NEHA Region 4 VP Report
Keith Johnson, R.S.

Continuing Ed and Professional Development – That’s what we do!

Here’s hoping that you, the reader, find yourself still employed in the great state of Minnesota, and that you’re not holding one of those RIF letters that I’m hearing about! Now more than ever is the time to keep your credentials and professionalism up as high as possible. It’s also the time to rely on others within your profession to hold what we do up to the light so the decision makers can see its value. These are the reasons we belong to NEHA.

The Annual Educational Conference in Columbus OH is probably going on as you read this. Nationally, attendance is down a little, but not as much as you’d think. Additionally, you have the option of attending the conference virtually – just log into neha.org and follow the links. This is only the second year we’ve offered this, and it has grown by leaps and bounds since its inception.

I’m also looking forward to the Region 4 conference to be held in Rochester in September this year. It’s always a great conference when Minnesota hosts it, and this one will be no different.

I’ll see many of you at the AEC in Columbus. I’ll see you at the focus group, although other regional VPs will be hosting Region 4, where we hope to come up with success stories to show the world the great things this profession has done and can do. If not Columbus, I’ll see you in Rochester!

Keith Johnson, R.S.
Region 4 VP
Administrator, Custer Health, Mandan, ND 58554
Keith.johnson@custerhealth.com
701-667-3370

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.
On March 21, 2011 MEHA presented the second annual “Excellence in Environmental Health Science” awards to high school and middle school students at the Minnesota State Science and Engineering Fair at the Sheraton Hotel in Bloomington. Awards were judged by four (4) MEHA members for the best project for environmental factors impacting public health.

The award recipients in the high school division were:

First Place: $200 to Katie Morris, New Prague Senior High School, “Do Different Concentrations of Bleach Affect the Resistance of E. Coli?”
Second Place: $100 to Sachin Rao and Sid Gopinath, Hopkins High School, “Determining the Relative Effectiveness of Water Purification Techniques Used in Developing Nations”
Third Place: $50 to Matt Krych, Champlin High School, “Effective Hand-Washing”
Honorable Mention: Certificate to Beth Errett, Park Christian School, “Does Agricultural Production Affect Water Quality?”
Honorable Mention: Certificate to Emily Wood, Minnesota New Country School, “Double Dipping: Chips and Dip”

The award recipients in the middle school division were:

First Place: $100 to Tim Renier, Holy Rosary School, “Can a Multifactor Intervention Improve Effectiveness of Hand Hygiene and Reduce Absence Rates Due to Illness Among Students?: Phase2”
Second Place: $50 to Katherine Plachta, Holy Rosary School, “Would You Like Microbes With That? A Study of What is REALLY in Your Soda Fountain Drinks”
Honorable Mention: Certificate to Gates LeSavage, Holy Rosary School, “Does Food Really Get Contaminated With Bacteria After 5 Seconds Of Being On The Floor?”
Honorable Mention: Certificate to Elizabeth Scobie, Calvin Christian School, “E. Coli – Dead or Alive”

Committee Members:

Joe Hibberd, R.S., Chair
Ramsey County

Kim Carlton, R.S.,
City of St. Paul

Nichelle Danielson, R.S.,
City of Minnetonka

Nicole Koktavy
Minnesota Department of Health
MN Food Code Rule Revision

Submitted by Angie Wheeler

MEHA was given the honor of having a voting seat on the Minnesota Food Code Rule Revision Advisory Committee. Early in the process, a survey was sent to our membership to obtain anonymous opinions on hot topics that the committee was expecting to address. The bulk of this committee’s work is complete and a follow-up to your opinions follows.

47.8% of our respondents supported the adoption of the 2009 FDA Model Code with Code Consensus Committee consideration.
30.4% supported the adoption of the 2009 FDA Food Code with the updates recommended by the Conference for Food Protection that were agreed upon by the FDA (annex inclusion).
21.7% supported a rewrite of the Minnesota Code with a focus on regional hazards using peer reviewed science that supports each regulation.

The advisory committee recommended the adoption of the 2009 Model Code with consensus committee and advisory committee revisions.

80.4% supported the rewriting of the employee illness language based on recommendations from Minnesota Epidemiology subject matter experts.

The advisory committee recommended adoption of employee illness rule language suggested by MDH–Epi.

60.9% supported adding language on nail brush use and special hand wash procedures currently not included in the FDA code

The advisory committee recommended adding language on nail brush use and special hand-wash procedures

69.6% supported the retention of NSF/ANSI standards requirements for food service equipment.

The advisory committee recommended the retention of NSF/ANSI requirements.

Look for stakeholder meetings scheduled in the coming months in your area. Support the hours of work dedicated to this collaborative venture that included your peers and your professional association.
Minnesota Environmental Health Association
50th Anniversary Celebration
1961-2011

MEHA is looking for recipes from members for a cookbook that will be printed in honor of our 50th year and be available at the fall NEHA Conference in Rochester.

Please include your favorite recipes, your name, where you work and any other information you would like to share.

Send recipes to:
Molly.Wellens@ci.maplewood.mn.us
Or
Lori.Green@co.ramsey.mn.us
By August 15, 2011
MEHA President Rob Carper and **Keynote Speaker** Bob Custer, NEHA Region VP from VA

Retiree Harvey McPhee attending the 50th anniversary celebration

MEHA Historical Display

Bill Marler presenting at the conference
MEHA Spring Conference

Ruttger’s 2011-50th Anniversary Year

Pooches, Patios, Politics, and Public Health
Dogs in Outdoor Restaurant Dining Areas
A Case Study (A True Story)
Bob Custead, REHS, CFPS
Environmental Health Manager
Alaska’s (Un) Health Department
The Frank A. Staffenson Award for Environmental Health Professional of the Year was presented to Angie (Wheeler) Cyr, Planner for Minnesota Department of Health. Angie received several letters of nominations and comments included:

- “Angie has been a valued employee and a exemplary environmental health professional. She is passionate about the profession of Environmental Health, not simply her job.”
- “She has always worked for the “good of the organization” and demonstrated leadership qualities time and time again.
- “It is Angie’s leadership, public health spirit and positive work ethic that sets her apart and makes her a deserving candidate of the Frank Staffenson Environmental Health Professional of the Year award.”

Frank Sedzielarz presenting the award to Angie on June 8, 2011 at the Food Safety Partnership Meeting. Congratulations Angie!
Sharon Smith and Laura Schmidt have served as co-chairs for the MEHA conference planning committee for many years and were awarded merit awards for their outstanding service to the organization. Congratulations!
September 14-15, 2011
NEHA Region 4 Conference
Kahler Hotel
Rochester

September 14-16, 2011
MDH Community Health Conference
Breezy Point

October 21, 2011
Sanitarian Registration Exam

May 2-4, 2012
MEHA Annual Spring Conference
Rutgers Bay Lake Lodge
Deerwood, MN

76th NEHA AEC
San Diego, CA
Hyatt Regency Conference Center

For the latest information and educational materials about Food Irradiation, Beef Safety, Modern Beef Production, and Consumer Topics relating to Beef contact:

www.mnbeef.org
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
Are you interested in purchasing a MEHA 50th anniversary binder? They are available for $12.50.

Contact Manny Camilon at MCamilon@stlouispark.org Or at 612-924-2589.

Thank You

To the following people who contributed to this newsletter: Angie (Wheeler) Cyr, Sharon Smith, Dan Disrud, Bill Phillips, Cheri Lewer, Karen Casale, Keith Johnson and Joe Hibberd.

A BIG thank-you to Manny Camilon for all of his wonderful pictures from the spring conference.

In addition, a gift basket from the raffle at the spring conference was found at Ruttger’s. Contact Sharon Smith to claim (218-332-5145).
Chancellors Society

Honors

Minnesota Environmental Health Association

Through your generous support of the Mary Lauren Olson Memorial Scholarship, you are helping to expand the horizons of individuals and enrich our community. Your partnership helps the University of Minnesota to improve lives through excellence in teaching, discovery, and outreach to the public. With gratitude, we honor your generosity and commitment.

Robert H. Bruininks

Robert H. Bruininks
Karen Casale will be retiring from employment with Anoka County in August.

Karen began employment with Anoka County Community Health and Environmental Services Department in 1972. Prior to this, Karen worked for the District of Columbia Bureau of Food and Drug. Karen received MEHA certificates of merit in 1990 and 2000 and was awarded the Frank Staffenson Environmental Health Professional of the Year and NEHA merit award in 2003.

Karen has been a MEHA and NEHA member since 1973 and continues to serve our association as Membership Co-Chair.

Congratulations Karen!

Dues Increase Notification

Have you browsed the new website? MEHA has listened to your requests and is looking to the future. Coming soon will be on-line membership renewals and payment options.

Our membership database management, membership application printing, and the assembly of membership mailings have primarily taken place from living rooms and office cubicles in the Anoka area for decades. Our Board of Directors has decided to contract with a company that will be integrated with our website to provide membership database services.

Unfortunately, it has become necessary to increase dues to match the expense we expect to incur with this service. Starting October 1, membership fees will be increased by the amount of $5.00 for all membership categories. We hope that you agree that this is a modest increase and the fees to belong to the best association in Minnesota remain an incredible deal.

Please notify your Board of Directors or Membership Committee with concerns about this change. Your trust in that we are prudent with your MEHA information and money is a priority. Here’s to a strong MEHA as we venture into the next 50 years.
Congratulations to Angie Wheeler, MDH, on her recent wedding.

Congratulations to Justina Pope, Washington County, on the adoption of her son.

Congratulations to Sue Hibberd, MDH, on her retirement.

Congratulations to Jessica Berti, City of Bloomington, on her wedding.

Congratulations to Sarah (DeLong) Berry, Waseca County, on her December 14, 2010 marriage to Paul Berry.

Congratulations to Bill Phillips, Scott County, on the birth of his third son.

Congratulations to Tony Mariotti, MDH, on the birth of his son.

On the Move… Todd Whalen from MDH to MDA.

On the Move… Jamie Kuenzel from MDH to Michigan.

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, 2011.

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