



# MEHA BULLETIN

## MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION



**President  
Joe Hibberd, R.S.**

**Winter 2009/2010  
Issue  
Volume 40, No. 1**

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### **President's Message**

First, I would like to wish all of you a safe, warm, healthy, joyous and happy new year.

Your Board of Directors has been very active for the last year. I am pleased to report that MEHA continues to be financially sound. Treasurer John Tracy and Finance Committee Chair Lisa Schreifels developed a balanced budget that continues our efforts to provide quality educational conferences without raising your dues. At only \$30 per year, MEHA membership is one of the best bargains for a professional public health association. If you know of any co-workers who are not currently a member, I urge you to speak with them to get them to join us. Benefits of membership and an application are available at [www.mehaonline.org/join.htm](http://www.mehaonline.org/join.htm).

Past President Oren Larson and Board member Frank Sedzielarz are co-chairs of two committees. As the Nominations Committee they want to hear from you if are interested in running for one of these positions in April: Vice President (5-year commitment including 1 year as president), Secretary (1 year), Director (3 years), or Member-at-Large (1 year). The Board meets only six afternoons each year, so it's not a lot of time. I've been involved for many years, and have found it very rewarding.

As the Awards Committee they are seeking nominations for MEHA's highest award, the Frank A. Staffenson Environmental Health Professional of the Year Award. Visit [www.mehaonline.org/staffenson.htm](http://www.mehaonline.org/staffenson.htm) for information about Frank and the award, including past award recipients. If you would like to nominate a MEHA member for the Staffenson Award or a merit award for outstanding service to the Association, please contact Oren or Frank. Their contact information is at [www.mehaonline.org/directors.htm](http://www.mehaonline.org/directors.htm). They'd love to hear from you. We also occasionally award non-members for meritorious service to MEHA or the environmental health field.

Speaking of committees, I urge all MEHA members to get involved in one ([www.mehaonline.org/committee.htm](http://www.mehaonline.org/committee.htm)), and consider running for a Board position. I know we all have "full plates" at work, but participating

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in MEHA activities is professionally rewarding. You can work on a committee that fits with your interests. You also get a say in how MEHA does things, and you get to hang with a bunch of really great and fun people.

I would like to recognize our NEHA Region 4 Vice President (and MEHA past president) Bette Packer. Bette retired from Minneapolis several years ago, and has served Minnesota and our neighboring states for 3 years as RVP. She is a wonderful national leader in EH, and we wish her well as she leaves the NEHA position this year.

As my co-workers in our little cubicle cul-de-sac know, I love to tell stories about my life (almost 59 years) and many professional experiences (over 37 years). It's one of the side effects of gray hair. But here's one that they haven't heard yet because it happened just before my Christmas vacation. As I was testing the water chemistry at a community center swimming pool, an older gentleman swam over to me and asked if I was a sanitarian. After quickly recovering from the shock that he actually may know what a sanitarian is, I answered proudly that I was. He smiled in affirmation of his assumption, but I just had to ask him how he knew about sanitarians. He told me he was a retired pharmacy professor at the "U" and his wife had taken courses in the School of Public Health. She had told him all about EH, the work of sanitarians, and the unforgettable stories told by Frank Staffenson to the SPH students. He thanked me several times for doing important public health work to protect our community. It just goes to show you that you never know how or when your interaction with the public may contribute to a positive impression about our people and our work.

As I'm sitting here in a fast food restaurant writing this in order to meet our editor's deadline of tomorrow, there is a young woman next to me with her two hyperactive boys, probably ages 4 and 6. She is trying to read a book, possibly a textbook for school, while the boys are running amok throughout the store. They are loud, full of energy, and cute. The rest of us are probably thankful that they aren't our kids. The mom looks a little frustrated, very tired and probably privately embarrassed as the boys loudly accuse her of various excretions in all 3 physical states. She shows remarkable control. It brings to mind a saying that I saw in an antique shop in Stillwater 2 weeks ago. It said, "God doesn't give us what we can handle. He helps us handle what we are given." Good words to remember in tough times.

Hope to see you at the Winter Conference. Stay warm and be safe.

Peace be with you and your families throughout 2010,

*Joe*

Joe Hibberd, R.S.  
President

# FOOD MANAGERS: YOU CAN RENEW YOUR CERTIFICATION ONLINE

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From "Advances", Summer 2009 issue, published by the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health.

## **Bill Recognizes Minnesota Expertise**

When it comes to food-borne illness outbreaks, Minnesota solves puzzles and saves lives faster than other states through an exceptional collaboration among the SPH and Minnesota's departments of health and agriculture.

And one of the state's secret weapons is Team Diarrhea (aka "Team D"), a group of Minnesota Department of Health epidemiologists and SPH students who do much of the legwork essential for tracking down food-borne disease patterns.

Last year, Team D pinpointed the sources—jalapeño peppers and peanut butter—of two nationwide salmonella outbreaks.

In order to replicate what Minnesota does so well, Sen. **Amy Klobuchar** came to the School of Public Health in June to introduce "The Food Safety Rapid Response Act of 2009," which she co-authored with Sen. **Saxby Chambliss** (R-GA). She appeared at a press conference with SPH professors **Craig Hedberg** and **Michael Osterholm** to discuss the issue. The two food safety experts were instrumental in establishing Team D.

Two things set Minnesota apart from other states in response to outbreaks: attitude and quick action.

According to **Carlota Medus**, Team D staffer and SPH alum, each case of salmonella and E. coli is considered the first case of a yet unidentified outbreak. A Minnesota state health worker immediately interviews every victim and uses a standardized form to get a detailed history.

Hospital or clinics take specimens and send them, as required by Minnesota law, to the state lab in St. Paul for further testing to see if they match other cases nationwide.

That lab does its testing fast and sends reports to the state's epidemiologist every day. If patterns begin to emerge, a health worker interviews victims a second time.

Talking about how Minnesota leads the way in finding the source of serious food illnesses, Klobuchar said, "The nation should not have to wait until someone in Minnesota gets sick or dies before there is an effective national response to a large-scale outbreak of food-borne illness."

Visit [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWZq-GtSzGg&feature=player\\_embedded#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWZq-GtSzGg&feature=player_embedded#) to view a video about MDH's Team D.



This spring, Sen. Amy Klobuchar came to the SPH to introduce a \$20 million make-over of the country's food illness detection and response capability. It's modeled in part on Minnesota's stellar system. With her are SPH faculty, left to right, Mike Osterholm and Craig Hedberg, and SPH adjunct faculty and Minnesota Department of Health epidemiologist Carlota Medus.

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November 11, 2009

Joe Hibberd  
Minnesota Environmental Health Assn  
PO Box 441  
Anoka, MN 55303

Dear Joe,

As you are painfully aware, the challenging economy is taking a toll on the business community, with the hospitality industry being hit particularly hard. According to forecasting experts and industry analysts, it appears that the recovery for the foodservice and lodging industry may still be a year or two away.

The difficult economic climate affects not only hospitality businesses, but also those that supply it with products and services. In recognition of the difficulty of vendors to dedicate limited resources, as well as the decline of trade shows across the country, the Hospitality Minnesota Board of Directors voted to cancel the 2010 Upper Midwest Foodservice & Lodging Show (UP Show), to be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center, February 28 and March 1.

The UP Show has been an industry standard for 51 years and this decision was made seeking the best interest of the industry and the vendor community. In the future, Hospitality Minnesota, in cooperation with the Minnesota Restaurant Association, the Minnesota Lodging Association and the Minnesota Resort & Campground Association, will give consideration to a new event that could bring together buyers and sellers for mutual benefit.

The UP Show Committee is truly appreciative of your support of the Show over the years. These are challenging times and we must change and adapt with them. We look forward to an exciting rebirth of an industry event in the future.

I want to personally thank you for your support and wish the best for you and your company in the future.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (651) 925-4018 or at [susan@hospitalitymn.com](mailto:susan@hospitalitymn.com)

Sincerely,

Susan Larson  
Trade Show Manager  
Upper Midwest Foodservice & Lodging Show

## **Science & Engineering Fairs**

One of the goals identified in the 2008-2010 MEHA Strategic Plan is to increase the visibility of the EH profession, with a specific objective of educating the public through a variety of action steps. This year MEHA exhibited at the Minnesota Science Teachers Assn. annual conference. Next year we will be exhibiting at the Minnesota School Counselors Assn. annual conference and the St. Cloud University Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Summit for high school students.

In addition, we will be presenting cash awards for the top STEM projects involving environmental health topics at the Minnesota State Science & Engineering Fair on March 26-28 in St. Paul. MEHA members will be the judges for these awards, and will make the presentations at the awards ceremony.

The Science & Engineering Fair is also looking judges with higher academic credentials **or** years of experience in one of the following fields:

- Animal Sciences
- Behavioral & Social Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Cellular & Molecular Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Earth and Planetary Science
- Energy & Transportation
- Engineering: Materials & BioEng.
- Engineering: Electrical & Mechanical
- Environmental Science & Analysis
- Mathematical Sciences
- Medicine & Health Sciences
- Microbiology
- Physics & Astronomy
- Plant Sciences



If you are interested in being a judge for either the MEHA awards or the fields listed above, please contact Joe Hibberd.

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*Sponsor an award  
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**Minnesota Academy of Science  
-State Science & Engineering Fair**

**March 26, 27, 28, 2010**

**Crowne Plaza Riverfront  
St. Paul, MN**

*Support for the State Science & Engineering Fair  
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*Please return form by  
January 1, 2010*

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## **Looking For Volunteers**

MEHA is looking for a few active members who are willing to volunteer to run for one of three board positions which are up for election this Spring. The positions are: Vice President, Director, and Member at Large.

The Vice President position is the start of a path that leads one to the President Elect, President, Past President and 2nd Past President. The director position is a three year term and the Member at Large is a one year position for someone who wants a look at what serving on the board is all about.

Please let us know if you are interested in one of these positions. We would appreciate hearing from you if you are interested by January 31, 2010.

Happy New Year!

Oren Larson  
651-266-9140  
Email: [oclarson@msn.com](mailto:oclarson@msn.com)

Frank Sedzielarz  
612-758-7153

## **Outreach Project**

Have you ever been wandering through your office and overheard things that make you say "Yeah... that's something you don't hear every day... unless of course you work in an Environmental Health office. The Outreach Committee is working on a little project using these types of quotes. We would love to hear from you about things you may have overheard (or maybe things you've even said yourself).

A couple of examples to jog your memory:

"So you're not actually going to be doing the slaughtering yourself, then?"

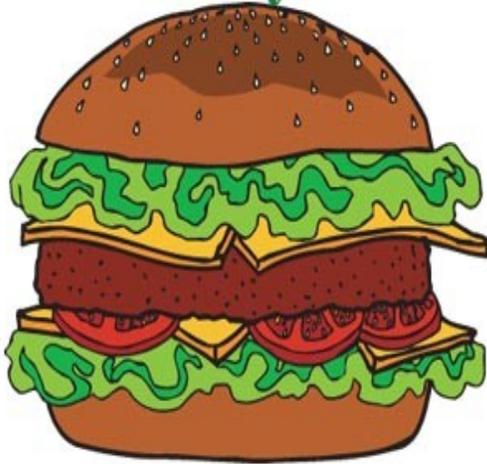
"Sir, SIR. I know that you are upset but no matter how you look at it, tacos ARE food."

"The goat ate my inspection report."

"I sent my employee out for test strips for bleach, and she came back with test strips for CHLORINE."

Send your ideas to Kim Carlton at [kim.carlton@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:kim.carlton@ci.stpaul.mn.us) before March 1.

# All about food safety...



Info on BSE, Food Irradiation,  
Ground Beef Food Safety.

For more information go to:  
[www.beeffoodservice.com](http://www.beeffoodservice.com)

For education materials on food  
safety and food irradiation, and  
for Food Safety brochures and  
posters please contact:



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# Calendar of Events

**January 20, 2010**  
MN Food Code Mtg. /  
Videoconference  
Various MDH  
Locations

**April 5-11, 2010**  
Public Health Week  
[www.nphw.org](http://www.nphw.org)

**April 22, 2010**  
EHS/Sanitarian  
Registration Exam

**May 5-7, 2010**  
MEHA Annual  
Spring Conference  
Deerwood, MN  
Ruttgers Bay  
Lake Lodge

**June 5-9, 2010**  
NEHA National  
Education  
Conference  
Albuquerque, New  
Mexico

**Date TBA– 2011**  
NEHA AEC  
Columbus, Ohio

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**Mr. Environmental Health Specialist of the Year always  
hard at work– even on vacation.....**



Photo is of Hank Schreifels, Stearns County Environmental Health Supervisor showing his never ending dedication to safe water supplies. The absence of a back-flow preventer at Minnie Mouse's home in Disneyworld was duly noted.

**Check out the candidates for 2010 NEHA  
Vice President at  
[www.mehaonline.org/nehavp.htm](http://www.mehaonline.org/nehavp.htm)**

**Alicia Enriquez  
and  
Michele Samarya-Timm**

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Anoka, MN 55303

## ***KNOW YOUR PLASTICS***

Plastics are everywhere. Some are eco-friendly and appear to be very safe for kids. Most are made from non-renewable petroleum, much of which needs to be imported. Some plastics cause dangerous pollution during manufacturing and some contain chemicals suspected of causing harm - especially to kids.

You might choose to replace plastic water bottles with a refillable stainless steel version, or to replace plastic toy blocks with wooden ones, plastic teething chews with organic cotton, or plastic jars with glass. Even so, you'll probably find yourself using a lot of plastic.

To select the plastics that are best for your children and for the environment, get to know the easy-to-identify plastic recycling codes you'll usually find on the underside of the bottle or packaging. Look for these numbers and symbols before you buy. The safer plastic choices are coded 1, 2, 4, and 5. Try to avoid 3, 6, and most plastics labeled with number 7.

**Code 1: PET or PETE (polyethylene terephthalate).** You'll most commonly see this in the thin, clear plastic of bottled water (or bottled cooking oil, peanut butter, soda, etc.). It's appears safe for single use, but these bottles should not be reused, refilled, or heated. This plastic can be recycled once into new secondary products, such as textiles, parking lot bumpers, or plastic lumber.

**Code 2: HDPE (high-density polyethylene).** This is the thicker, milkier or opaque plastic found in milk and water jugs, juice bottles, detergent, shampoo, and motor oil containers, and toys. Unlike #1, these are safe to refill and reuse, even though they may not look as snazzy as #1 or #7. Recyclable once into products similar to those for # 1 plastics.

**Code 3: PVC (polyvinyl chloride).** Found in bibs, mattress covers, squeeze bottles, cling wrap, some peanut butter and detergent con- PVC releases di- potent carcinogen and in us. It may chemicals used, ten plastics. Some ruptors that have productive prob- even to smaller pe- ers have higher carded at the recy-



jars, and a few other food tainers. The manufacture of oxin into the environment, a that accumulates in animals also contain phthalates, among other things, to sof- phthalates are hormone dis- been linked to possible re- lems and birth defects, and nis size in boys. PVC work- cancer rates. May be dis- cling plant. AVOID #3!

**Code 4: LDPE (low-density polyethylene).** Found in soft, flexible plastics such as those used in grocery story bags, plastic wrap, dry cleaning bags, shopping bags, and garbage bags. One of the safer plastics - but recycle, don't throw away. Many of these bags could be better replaced with reusable bags, especially when shopping.

**Code 5: PP (polypropylene).** Found in hard but flexible plastics, such as those used for ice cream and yogurt containers, drinking straws, syrup bottles, salad bar containers, and diapers. One of the safer plastics - but recycle, don't throw away.

**Code 6: PS (polystyrene).** Found in rigid plastics such as opaque plastic spoons and forks, and in Styrofoam, such as those found in coffee cups and meat trays. These plastics can leach styrene, a known neurotoxin with other negative health effects. AVOID #6.

**Code 7: Other (including polycarbonate, nylon, and acrylic).** This is a grab bag symbol. It includes polycarbonate, an important source of the endocrine disruptor BPA, found in many baby bottles. Polycarbonate is also common in 5-gallon water bottles, sports bottles, clear plastic cutlery, and in the lining of food and formula cans.

But code 7 also includes some of the newer, compostable green plastics, such as those made from corn, potatoes, rice, or tapioca. (I wish they would make a code 8 for these!) AVOID # 7, unless it is labeled as one of these new bio-based plastics.

Whatever plastics you choose, when microwaving food or drink, try to opt for glass or ceramic containers instead of plastic, where possible, and wax paper or a paper towel instead of plastic wrap. Hand wash plastics to make them last longer and recycle them or find a non-food use for them when they begin to show signs of wear and tear.

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Blast from the Past—Can you identify these former MEHA Presidents?  
(Picture was taken in May 2001)



Front Row (L to R): Roger Carlson, Harvey McPhee, Dick Holloway, Rich Peter, Craig Gilbertson  
Second Row (L to R): Sherry Engelman, Colleen Paulus, Petrona Lee, Sue Hibberd, Bonnie Holtz, Bob Edelson  
Back Row (L to R): Larry Carlson, Walt Jopke, Dale Schroeder, Frank Staffenson, Jim Hensley, Dave Velde, Fred Mitchell and Sharon Smith

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Contact: Caron Mason  
Communications Manager

January 12, 2010  
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(703) 538-3550

**2010 CRUMBINE AWARD DEADLINE APPROACHING**

FALLS CHURCH, VA – (January 12, 2010) The Foodservice Packaging Institute (FPI) would like to remind prospective applicants for the 2010 Samuel J. Crumbine Award for Excellence in Food Protection at the Local Level that the **entry deadline is March 15, 2010**. More details for applicants may be found on FPI's Web site at [www.fpi.org](http://www.fpi.org) (in the "Awards" section).

Named for one of America's most renowned health officers and health educators – Samuel J. Crumbine, M.D. (1862-1954) – the award has elevated the importance of food protection programs within government departments and agencies and has inspired excellence in the planning and delivery of those services.

Entries for the Crumbine Award competition are limited to U.S. and Canadian local environmental health jurisdictions (county, district, city, town or township) that provide food protection services to their communities under authority of a statute or ordinance. The U.S. Uniformed Services and U.S. Indian Health Service area programs are also invited to compete, if they are not monitored by a state, county or city health unit. Past winners may apply five years after receiving the award.

(MORE)

## FDA Revises Food Code

### **Undercooked proteins and leafy greens are main points of change for restaurants under 2009 code.**

By Jordan Melnick  
[www.qsrmagazine.com](http://www.qsrmagazine.com)

The Food and Drug Administration has released its updated 2009 Food Code containing several recommendations that could impact the recommendations in- for cut leafy greens; no burgers and other even upon request; and foods comprised of greens provision fol- breaks between 1998 we had at our disposal, greens can in fact sup-



way restaurants operate. The new include time and temperature control longer serving undercooked ham- ground meats on a children’s menu, curbing non-continuous cooking of raw animal products. The leafy- lowed 24 multistate bacteria out- and 2008. “Based on research that the evidence was clear that cut leafy port the growth of pathogens if not

held under temperature control,” says Kevin Smith, a food-safety expert at the FDA.

Other significant enhancements to the 2009 FDA Food Code include:

- Each provision in the FDA Food Code is now designated as a “Priority Item,” a “Priority Foundation Item,” or a “Core Item,” to assist the industry and regulatory community in prioritizing their food safety interventions and their inspections. These designations are based on a qualitative risk assessment and replace the use of “Critical” and “Non-Critical” designations in previous editions of the FDA Food Code.
- Requirements are added to improve food worker awareness of food allergen concerns in the food service and retail setting.
- Several requirements related to the effective cleaning and sanitizing of equipment and surfaces are enhanced or clarified.
- 

The leafy greens provision is “really important” because fresh produce is so susceptible to bacteria, says Sandra Eskin, director of The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Food Safety Campaign. “Fresh produce is challenging because, unlike other foods, you don’t have a ‘kill step’—you don’t cook it,” Eskin says. “If you have one leaf or a few leaves that are contaminated and then you mix it with others, you’ve basically contaminated everything.” Eskin says temperature control can mitigate the risk: “If you keep it cold, you will inhibit multiplication of any bacteria that are in there.” Several of the Food Code’s new recommendations focus on what Eskin calls “temperature abuse.” “You heat things, you cool things, you heat things, you cool things,” she says, referring to the recommendation regarding non-continuous cooking. “The concern there is you’re providing opportunities for bacteria to grow and multiply by not keeping the food at a steady temperature.”

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The recommendation against serving undercooked meat on children’s menus recognizes children’s greater susceptibility to food-borne illness. The new Food Code is “a key component of public health-focused food safety development in federal food safety supply,” according to an FDA press release. Another development in federal food safety came Wednesday when the Senate’s Health, Education, and Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee unanimously approved the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. The bill, similar to a House bill passed in July, would empower the FDA to order mandatory recalls of tainted food products,



Recall compliance is currently voluntary. The move indicates a fundamental change in federal food-safety policy, Eskin says. “Given the type of food-safety concerns you have, like bacterial contamination which you can’t see or smell or touch, we need to take a different approach,” she says. “So there’s a paradigm shift from reaction to prevention.” With the battle over health-care legislation still raging, it is unclear when the full Senate will take up the food-safety bill.

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**The new Minnesota Guidelines for Commercial Kitchen Ventilation (CKV) will not be printed to save paper. The document is available at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/sitecore/content/Global/MDADocs/food/business/ventguide.aspx>**



## *Congratulations to Laura Scheinoha, Olmsted County!*



Contact: Lynda Nicely  
800-248-1946, x 7587  
lnicely@asq.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Laura K. Scheinoha Receives ASQ-Certified Quality Improvement Associate**

Milwaukee, WI, December 19, 2009 — The Certification Board of ASQ (American Society for Quality) is pleased to announce that Laura K. Scheinoha has completed the requirements to be named an ASQ-Certified Quality Improvement Associate (ASQ CQIA). As such, Laura K. Scheinoha has reached a significant level of professional recognition, indicating a proficiency in and a comprehension of quality principles and practices. Individuals who earn this certification are allowed to use "ASQ CQIA" on their business cards and professional correspondence.

"ASQ provides certification as a way to provide formal recognition to professionals who have demonstrated an understanding of, and a commitment to, quality techniques and practices in their job and career," explains Peter Andres, ASQ president. "This is a great accomplishment and, although not a formal registration or licensure, it represents a high level of peer recognition."

A Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA) selects and applies quality tools in a variety of problem-solving situations. Typically, CQIAs work on quality improvement projects and work on teams that are chartered to identify continuous improvement opportunities with a strong customer focus.

Since 1968, when the first ASQ certification examination was given, more than 163,000 individuals have taken the path to reaching their goal of becoming ASQ-Certified in their field or profession, including many of who have attained more than one designation. To learn more about ASQ's Certified Quality Improvement Associate program, visit <http://www.asq.org/certification/quality-improvement-associate/>.

ASQ, [www.asq.org](http://www.asq.org), has been the world's leading authority on quality for more than 60 years. With more than 85,000 individual and organizational members, the professional association advances learning, quality improvement and knowledge exchange to improve business results and to create better workplaces and communities worldwide. As champion of the quality movement, ASQ offers technologies, concepts, tools and training to quality professionals, quality practitioners and everyday consumers. ASQ has been the sole administrator of the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award since 1991. Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wis., ASQ is a founding sponsor of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).

# # #



## Member News



**Congratulations** to David Weisberg, City of St. Paul on his retirement.

**Congratulations** to Carl Samaroo, City of Minneapolis, on his retirement.

**Congratulations** to Jaime Dion, City of St. Louis Park on obtaining her Masters of Public Health from the University of Minnesota

**Thank you** to the following people who contributed to this newsletter: Sharon Smith, Laura Scheinoha, Kim Carlton, Oren Larson, Lisa Schreifels and Joe Hibberd.

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### **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**

**March 1, 2010**

**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**

**Lori.Green@co.ramsey.mn.us**