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Amy Saupe	functions like finances, co legislation, re Your efforts k
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A BULLETIN

ddress

tive gourd season, MEHA members!

fall, I want to express my gratitude for the incredible our members, particularly in the face of competing work commitments. MEHA thrives because of those who e board, chair committees, and manage essential our website, conferences, scholarships and awards, ommunications, student and community outreach, gistration, and membership. (Wow, we do a lot of stuff!) keep the organization strong, and I am so proud to be mmunity. I have been incredibly grateful for the support rd and other long-term members as I transitioned into role this Spring.

ers were some of the earliest and greatest champions rtwork for the Minnesota State Fair (my Dad and I were ced" track for the first time this year!) - which tells me HA members have excellent taste in art, and that this is ion of kind individuals who truly support our fellow hile doing amazing work for EH in Minnesota.

e've hit key milestones, including: over 21,000 visits to and 50 job postings, a dozen or more community and gement events, two in-person education conferences, t of the Karen Casale Memorial Fund, eblast and mmunications to members, REHS study sessions, and you again to those who have stepped up to do this Ϋ́k.

am of four MEHA members and I talked science with high school students at the State Science and Fair in St. Paul. We awarded the 15th annual MEHA n Environmental Health Science" awards to inspire the on of emerging professionals. The winning projects had contaminated water solutions, and the effects of on butterflies. Contact me if you'd like to be involved in

ad, I encourage you to stay involved. Whether it's committee or helping to recruit the next generation of nals, we have a role that fits the time and energy you can give - reach out to me (president@mehaonline.org) or to any committee chair.

I hope to see you at the MEHA Winter Conference on January 30, 2024 (registration open later this year) - please come say 'hi'! Thank you for all you do, and I look forward to what we'll accomplish in the coming year.

> Yours sincerely, **Amy Saupe**

Volume 52, No.2

MEHA President

MEHA Awards

Congratulations to Jim Topie (MDH) who is the 2024 Frank A Staffenson recipient of the Environmental Health Professional of the Year Award!

Jim is a long-time MEHA member and Past President of MEHA. Jim has worked with both the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and most recently retiring from the Minnesota Department of Health's Partnership and Workforce Development Unit.

The award is presented to the MEHA member who has performed an outstanding accomplishment that significantly contributes development, to the expansion, or advancement of environmental health or performed a service that has produced a positive benefit to the profession as a whole.

Thank you Jim for all your contributions over the years and your dedication to our profession!

Award!



Department Health giving of an acceptance speech after receiving the Frank A Staffenson Environmental Health Professional Award



Pictured: Tom Moran of Hennepin County receiving his MEHA Emerging **Professional Award**

Congratulations Nick to Koreen, City of Minneapolis, Loreena Hilton, MDH and Nicole Kubitschek, Ramsey County on receiving the 2024 **MEHA Merit Award!**

The MEHA Conference Planning Committee takes on the heavy lift of orchestrating one of MEHA's most visible activities - our two yearly education conferences. These critical events are for educating our members as well as providing professional people to connect. Through their long-standing work on the

Environmental Health in 2021, and is now an Environmentalist. As an active member of the MEHA Conference Planning Committee, he has been instrumental in organizing conferences that have helped to educate and engage the profession on important environmental health issues. His dedication to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment has made the conference an exceptional experience for attendees. Tom also assisted with opening the MEHA membership store and organized volunteer work at Open Arms for our members as part of his work on the Outreach and Engagement Committee.

Congratulations to Tom Moran (Hennepin County) on receiving the 2024 MEHA Emerging Professional

Tom started as an intern with Hennepin County

Tom's contributions to MEHA and the field of Environmental Health have been exceptional, and his dedication is inspiring.



Pictured: Nick Koreen of City of Minneapolis and Loreena Hilton of MDH receiving their MEHA Merit Awards. Not networking opportunities for pictured: Nicole Kubitschek of Ramsey County

Conference Planning Committee, Loreena Hilton, Nick Koreen and Nicole Kubitschek have been instrumental in providing excellent conferences with great venues and wonderful speakers. Their long service to MEHA in executing successful conferences (among many other achievements!) is outstanding and appreciated by all.

MEHA at NEHA

I had the privilege of representing MEHA at the NEHA Annual Education Conference (AEC), July 15-18 in Pittsburgh, PA. The convention center is in the heart of downtown overlooking the Allegheny River, close to restaurants, museums, and local colleges. While the heat in Pittsburgh was the topic of conversation it wasn't as hot as the presentations, and networking with other MEHA and NEHA members.

The first session I attended was a seminar on burnout. It is an important topic impacting the Environmental Health and public health community. The session explored how to define and identify burnout, and how to combat it in a post COVID-19 world. Other presentations I attended included one about navigating Environmental Health in a changing political climate, how difficult it has been and what barriers agencies are running into while trying to get support for environmental health programs. It seemed very timely with our upcoming elections. Another presentation on Cannabidiol dose in food focused on the growing market of CBD, focusing on different regulations around it, and the limited and incomplete information on its dosing standards. AI/ChatGPT seems to be all the rage in the media nowadays and was not left out of the conference. The presentation questioned what agency policies are around AI, precautions to take, emphasizing data security. These are all topics that many of us talk about frequently or are up and coming. One other highlight was the Environmental Health Photo Exhibit showcasing the talented professionals in our field.

I was very impressed with the number of MEHA members presenting at the conference, bringing some of our Spring Conference presentations to a national stage.

Kim Carlton from MDA spoke about Food Safety Management Systems. Amy Saupe and I spoke about Multistate foodborne outbreaks and collaborations amongst agencies

Matt O'Brien from the City of St. Cloud and Sagar Chowdhury from Olmsted County presented on their massage establishment project, bringing to light the collaborative, victim centered approach to inspections.

Leslie Foreman, Bill Kass and Kenya Urena-Muro from City of Minneapolis spoke about their NEHA-FDA funded grant that allowed them to produce recorded outreach videos in different languages. If you are looking for multilanguage hand washing materials reach out to them.

Adam Kalahar, also from City of Minneapolis presented on unapproved food additives to a packed house, overflowing with people standing in the back and crowding at the door. For anyone who has questions about unapproved additives he should be one of your first calls. He

did an amazing job and his presentation led to collaboration with other states. This is a true example of environmental health partnership.

Jim Topie, MEHA's 2024 Frank A. Staffenson award recipient, was recognized at the Town Hall Assembly conference breakfast as a NEHA Certificate of Merit recipient - congratulations Jim! Additionally, Joe Hibbard was recognized with a nice write-up at the entrance to the conference as part of the memorial wall.

On Tuesday evening MEHA hosted a dinner for our members at Sienna Mercato. The temperature was exceptionally toasty, but it did not distract from the good company and was a great topic of conversation for the rest of the trip--that and the amount of cheese they served us. Thank you to Amy Saupe for arranging this get together.

I am extremely thankful to MEHA for the opportunity to attend this conference. The MEHA to NEHA Scholarship is fantastic program for anyone involved in MEHA who wants the opportunity to connect to the Environmental Health community at a national level. If you have ever considered attending, stop wavering and go! It was an amazing time to connect with other MEHA members, network with NEHA members, and learn A LOT!

Lastly it was a treat to explore downtown Pittsburgh while the "Picklesburgh" Festival was going on. If you are a pickle lover and are in the Pittsburgh area in mid July, be sure to check it out. Although I don't know if I would recommend the chocolate covered pickles. Next year's NEHA AEC will be in Phoenix, AZ July 14-17th. (<u>https://www.neha.org/aec</u>)

Julia Selleys

MEHA Second Year Director

"Food

County

Wendy's

Approaches





Julia Selleys (Hennepin County) & Saupe (MDH) presenting Amy "Disease Detectives: The Critical Role Environmental of Professionals in Solving Multi-state Foodborne Disease Through Restaurant Investigation"

Health Outbreaks Subcluster

Matt O'Brien (City of St Cloud) Sagar Chowdhury and (Olmsted County) presenting "Massage Establishment A Collaborative, Regulation: Preventative and Victim Centered Approach to Combat Human Trafficking"





Kenya Urena-Muro (City of Minneapolis), Leslie Foreman (City of Minneapolis) & Bill Kass (City of Minneapolis) presenting "Washing Away Violations"



of



Joe Hibbard (retired -Ramsey County) write National up Environmental Health Association Memorial Wall



Joseph Hibberd of Stillwater, Minnesota, passed away on May 26, 2024. He grew up in Pennsylvania and following high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Vietnam War. He started his environmental health career early in the U.S. Army where he was trained as a food inspection specialist. His duties included inspections of food service facilities (mess halls) and food storage and distribution facilities. After his service, Joe attended Ferris State College and earned a bachelor's degree. He continued his education at Western Michigan University where he earned his master's degree. Joe worked for Ramsey County Public Health in Minnesota for many years and retired in 2015. He was a long-time member of the Minnesota Environmental

Health Association and served as the association's secretary, president, and past president. He was awarded the Minnesota Sanitarian of the Year in 2001. He was also a Diplomate with the American Association of Sanitarians.



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MEHA Member Spotlight



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What is your current position? My name is Aaron Glasheen and I am the Lead Environmental Health Specialist for Anoka County.

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS.

What do you love about what you do? One part of this career I love is when I can directly help educate different members of the community, whether that's providing food safety training for a local church group, presenting to a community at a senior center, answering questions about how to operate a food stand, or educating operators during inspections. I think it's great when people reach out to us and want to learn more about how to operate safely.

Pictured: Aaron Glasheen, Anoka County

How did you study for the REHS/RS exam? To study for the exam, I completed the free Environmental Public Health Online Courses offered by Tulane University, studied flash cards on Quizlet, and then used a copy of Environmental Engineering, 5th ed, to study topics where I found I lacked knowledge when they came up on the flash cards.

How has your MEHA membership benefited you? My MEHA membership has benefited me through providing opportunities to network with people from other agencies or areas. I attended the winter conference earlier this year and got to have conversations with people I otherwise would not have met, and I enjoyed the speakers and learning more about the topics they presented.

What drew you to the field of Environmental Health? My education included a minor in Public Health, and I was drawn to EH from my experiences in some of those classes. Learning about different pathogens, outbreaks, and control methods was very interesting to me, and I wanted to become more involved in EH and Public Health in general. I initially worked at a food safety laboratory as a microbiologist but was always on the lookout for environmental health specialist positions and was excited when I got that opportunity with Anoka County.

How do you spend your time outside of work? Outside of work I like to spend my time camping or hiking whenever I can. I love going to different state parks in MN and WI to camp and exploring the hiking trails and different scenic overlooks. I haven't made it to any of the northern state parks or forests in MN yet but hope to make it up to the Lost 40 Scientific and Natural Area this fall.

MEHA at the MN Science & Engineering Fair



MEHA Judges pictured: Elizabeth Lyons (Anoka

County), Beth Cleary (MDH), Tom Moran

Saupe (MDH)

(an Awards subcommittee) reviewed some fantastic projects this year for the MEHA Special Awards for Excellence in Environmental Health Science. Many thanks to this year's MEHA judges; Marijke Decuir (MDH), Beth Cleary (MDH), Elizabeth Lyons (Anoka Co), Tom Moran (Hennepin Co), and Amy Saupe (MDH).

The 1st place High School project was "The Microplastic Butterfly Effect: Effects of dietary microplastic on survival and fitness of Cabbage White butterflies (Pieris rapae)" and the 1st place Middle School project was "Eco-Flow: Water Solutions for Third World Country Contamination".

A full list of award recipients can be found on the Minnesota Academy of Science website. Award recipients received certificates, awards checks, and MEHA swag.

(Hennepin County), Marijke Decuir (MDH), & Amy Upcoming Events

> The 2025 MEHA Winter Conference will be held on January 30, 2025

> The 2025 MEHA Spring Conference will be held on

May 7 - 9, 2025

Additional information to follow.

MEHA Registration Committee & RS Academy

The MEHA Registration Committee is tasked with tracking any updates to the Registered Sanitarian/Environmental Health Specialist (RS/REHS) credential as well as promoting the EH profession. For information on Minnesota RS/REHS please visit Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian - MN Dept. of Health (state.mn.us)

The MEHA Registration Committee holds study sessions called the RS Academy every 1-2 months for students and staff preparing for the RS/REHS exam. For more robust sessions, CEUs have been offered for attendees with an existing professional credential. The committee is fully competent, but also continuously looking for volunteers from all environmental health-related professions to help lead discussions, or subject matter experts to informally present on topics. This is a great opportunity to meet new faces in an academic setting and stay mentally sharp!

Contact Patrick Kuisle (Patrick.kuisle@state.mn.us) David Boberg or (David.boberg@state.mn.us) to receive an invite, present a topic or for further information.



Announcements

Congratulations to Jim Topie!

MEHA congratulates long-time MEHA member and Past President Jim Topie on his retirement! Jim is recently retired from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Partnership and Workforce Development Unit, after more than 40 years of state service. Jim received his bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of Minnesota,

Duluth. In 1984, Jim joined the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's food safety team. He worked for several years as an inspector, consultant, and trainer. Highlights include co-chairing the National Sprout Safety Alliance steering committee and becoming a certified instructor for AFDO and IFPTI food safety courses.

In 2012, Jim made the move to the Minnesota Department of Health's Partnership and Workforce Development Unit. In his role as a Planner Principal, Jim served as a technical expert in food safety for the agency. His duties included developing and presenting the new inspector training curriculum for MDH & delegated agencies, providing food safety training to a variety of audiences, coordinating HACCP intake and reviews, coordinating the Minnesota REHS/RS credentialing program, and participating in Minnesota Food Code and REHS/RS rule revision activities. Many MEHA members know and love Jim from these activities and his role as an FDA-Standardized Food Safety Inspection Officer, standardizing dozens of retail food inspectors throughout Minnesota.

Aside from his food safety knowledge, Jim is best known as a connector of people with common interests. He has a keen ability to identify "people who should talk to people." He puts his vast network of professional contacts to work, frequently identifying connections that need

to be made, and making introductions between individuals. Jim's knowledge, demeanor, and passion for imparting food safety wisdom combined to make him one of the most important environmental health professionals working in Minnesota, which is supported by many testimonials from his colleagues, peers, mentees, and friends.

Jim served on the MEHA Board of Directors from 2013-2017, fulfilling the role of President during the 2014-2015 board year. He was the winner of the 2024 Frank A. Staffenson Award for Environmental Health Professional of the Year, and a 2024 NEHA Certificate of Merit. Additionally, he was awarded an AFDO Presidential Leadership Award for Retail HACCP Guide Development.

Jim lives in Duluth and is a doting husband to his wife Julie, a devoted father to sons Erik and Nate, and proud grandfather to Rivers and Maddie. In his personal time, he has volunteered his time with several organizations. He has been a soccer and basketball coach, a Scoutmaster, a representative of Duluth District 2, President of Duluth's Park and Recreation Commission, and he is a founding member of the Friends of the Parks and Friends of the Lakewalk. Jim plans to spend his retirement cavorting in the BWCAW, taking in a Thanksgiving Day Packers vs Dolphins game, doting on his grandkids, biking, pollinator gardening, volunteering, and skiing.

Congratulations, Jim! Thank you for all of your service!



MDA Recognized for their Achievements!

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Retail Food program was recognized at the FDA Retail Food Seminar & Annual Educational Conference in September for their achievement in conforming to all nine of the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. The MDA is one of three programs in the country to currently enjoy this status! Congratulations to the MDA Retail Food program staff!



Pictured: Ian Erickson (MDA), Kim Carlton (MDA), Greg Abel (FDA), Jill Herberg (MDA), & Jacob Schmidt (MDA)



Pictured: Mandi & Andy Veith (Hennepin County), Holly Batchelor (City of Minneapolis), David Boberg (MDA), Leslie Foreman (City of Minneapolis), Leah Larson (Hennepin County) & Traci Slowinski

View Current Job Postings

MEHA Member Events

In March 2024, a group of MEHA volunteers partnered with Open Arms to prepare and deliver nourishing meals to critically ill patients and their families-100% free of charge.

- As a group our MEHA members
- Packed 62 black bean enchiladas
- Packed 64 southwest turkey bowls
- Packed 215 spaghetti meals Packed 112 herb roasted pork meals
- Packed 480 molasses cookies Stay tuned for additional volunteer
- opportunities and educational classes offered by MEHA Outreach Committee

To view current job openings within Minnesota and NEHA Region 4 visit our website here. To post a job opening on the MEHA website, complete the submission form here. Update Your MEHA Member Profile

Please update your MEHA Profile on Wild Apricot

The membership committee has updated the new member form and the existing profile form. Please update your membership profile on Wild Apricot to indicate your interest in MEHA committees, the peer to peer network, and your demographic information.

The demographic information collected in this form allows MEHA to better understand who our members are and provide better representation for our membership. The information will be used internally to identify disparities, target quality improvement efforts and monitor progress. In addition, this information will help us tell the story of our membership to external partners about topics including: who is or is not represented within our membership, salary inequalities, and other challenges faced by Environmental Health Professionals in Minnesota.

Follow MEHA on Facebook! Follow and Like our Facebook page to stay up-to-

date with current MEHA news and other pertinent Environmental Health information and news!



Expand your EH Network by Joining a MEHA Committee! Take advantage of the volunteer opportunities available on MEHA committees!

By volunteering and participating in a committee, you will have the opportunity to grow your network in a way that you would not get through your normal work, and you will help maintain

an association that supports environmental health professionals in Minnesota. There are no pre-requisites to be on a committee, just a willingness to help the organization. The committees each determine how often they meet and how they approach their job duties. If any of the committees are of interest to you, please reach out to the committee co-chair to find out how to get involved.

What is the benefit to you? People who get involved in MEHA are the people who have demonstrated a passion for environmental health and are the leaders and innovators in this field. Also, we have a lot of fun!

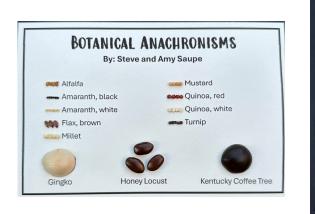
Congratulations to the Newest Minnesota Registered Sanitarians! Seth Cordry Colton Sveningson Ernest Jorgensen **Michelle Hovanes** Yutaka Roane Lauryn Bone Barbara Pena Beltrand

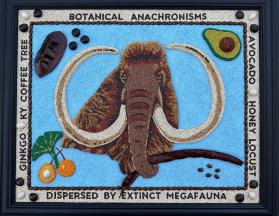
- Holly Sievers Marci VanHazinga Seid Sheka
- McKenna Mathews
 - Member & Staffing Updates

On the Move...Patrick Kuisle from Hennepin County to MDH PWDU Sanitarian Supervisor! Congratulations to Jim Topie on his retirement from MDH!

Congratulations to Cody Miller (Olmstead County) on the birth of his son!

Congratulations to Amy Saupe (MDH) & her dad Steve on their submission of Seed Art titled Botanical Anachronisms at the MN State Fair!





Abigail Laubenstein

Scott Vial

Thank you to the following members who contributed to this edition: Amy Saupe, Leah Larson, David Boberg, Patrick Kuisle, Kim Carlton, Leslie Foreman, Sagar Chowdhury, Julia Selleys, Denise Schumacher & Lisa Schreifels Request from the Editor

Please send member updates, births, weddings, retirements, honors, events, suggestions and more to: Angela.Dabu@hennepin.us or Rebecca.Thomes@co.nicollet.mn.us Deadline for the next issue is February 1, 2025