

President's Message

Dick Pantanges,
R.E.H.S.



Who Are They? What Do They Do? How Do I Get There?

The NEHA Board of Directors

That's who they are. The NEHA board of directors (the "board") is composed of 16 members. There are five national officers (the "officers"), ten regional vice presidents (the "RVPs"), and the executive director, who is a nonvoting member of the board. The board is the governing body of NEHA.

The Executive Director

The board appoints the executive director, who is responsible for implementing and carrying out the policies of the board. Executive Director Nelson Fabian is responsible for hiring the staff necessary to carry out the functions of NEHA. The board annually evaluates the executive director and NEHA.

The Regional Vice Presidents

Ten RVPs represent nine geographical areas, and one RVP represents both members outside the United States and members of organizations that cross geographical boundaries. RVPs are elected for a three-year term, with staggered terms, so that approximately one-third of the positions are up for election or reelection each year.

Your RVP is your closest point of contact with the NEHA board.

The current RVPs can be found listed in the "Special Listing" section of the *Journal of Environmental Health*. They and their photos can also be found on the NEHA Web site, www.NEHA.org, by clicking on the "About" tab on the bar at the top of the page, then clicking on the "Regional Vice Presidents" tab at the left margin.

In my 17 years on the board, we have had some very contentious issues, but discussion has always been professional and courteous, with respect for varying opinions.

The regions are as follows:

1. Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Dave Riggs of Washington is the current RVP, and his term expires in 2011.
2. Arizona, California, Hawai'i, and Nevada. Alicia Enriquez of California is the current RVP, and her term expires in 2009. I served as the RVP for this region for 14 years prior to becoming second vice president.
3. Colorado, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming. Roy Kroeger of Wyoming is the current RVP, and his term expires in 2009.
4. Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Bette Packer of Minnesota is the current RVP, and her term expires in 2010.
5. Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Sandra Long of Texas is the current RVP, and her term expires in 2011.
6. Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio. Jim Dingman of Illinois is the current RVP, and his term expires in 2010.
7. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Tom Ward of North Carolina is current RVP, and his term expires in 2011.
8. Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, DC. Bob Custard of Virginia is the current RVP, and his term expires in 2009.
9. Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Ed Briggs of Connecticut is the current RVP, and his term expires in 2010.
10. Far East Affiliate, Foreign Members, Industry Affiliate, Jamaica, National Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators (NCLEHA), Past Presidents Affiliate, and Uniformed Services. John Steward is the current RVP, and his term expires in 2011.

The Officers

The officers of NEHA are the second vice president, the first vice president, the president-elect, the president, and the immediate past president. The second vice president is elected by the members at large, and then the progression through the chairs is automatic.

The current second vice president is Mel Knight of California, who will become the first vice president at the Annual Educational Conference (AEC) in Atlanta, Georgia, next June.

continued on page 72

President's Message

continued from page 4

The current first vice president is Keith Krinn of Ohio, who will become the president-elect at the AEC next year.

The current president-elect is Welford Roberts of Virginia, who will succeed me as the president at the AEC next year.

I am currently the president, from California, and will become the immediate past president at the AEC next year.

What Do the Board Members Do?

Besides setting the policy and direction for NEHA, the board members participate in at least four board meetings each year: a conference call meeting in October to set the budget (NEHA is on an October–September fiscal year); a winter conference call in December (the new board members come to the Denver office for orientation, and the president and president-elect come to the Denver office to help with the orientation and to evaluate NEHA and the executive director); a spring board meeting in Colorado (this is an intense two-full-day meeting); and a board meeting at the AEC. In between, we have conference calls on various topics that need discussion, and we send numerous e-mails on informational items or on various topics that don't require a conference call. Board members serve on various board committees, both long-term and *ad hoc*. Officers also perform a variety of other duties. For example, the immediate past president is the chair of the nominating committee. The president has weekly, or thereabouts, conference calls with the executive director to keep current on all the developments with NEHA. The president then summarizes this information and sends it to the entire board after each call.

The RVPs make an effort to attend the affiliate meetings in their region. They produce e-newsletters for the members in their region. Formats for the newsletters are available from the staff in Denver, and the distribution to the members is handled by the staff at the Denver office.

How Do I Become a Board Member?

Before I go into the details, let me remind you that a decision to become a board member entails a commitment from 3.5 years to a little over six years, or more! I'll explain that more later. It entails being current on the issues affecting NEHA, a dedication to the pro-

feSSION, and a willingness to make sacrifices in order to perform the duties necessary to guide NEHA. It requires an ability to reach consensus and to compromise. In my 17 years on the board, we have had some very contentious issues, but discussion has always been professional and courteous, with respect for varying opinions. It has been my experience that, once a decision has been made by the board, the entire board supports that decision. I cannot recall a single instance of a board member saying, "I told you so," or "If you'd have done it the way I wanted to."

I don't want to make this sound daunting. There are some great rewards. You get the opportunity to work with some very hard-working, dedicated professionals as your fellow board members. You get to work with an excellent staff at NEHA. You get to participate in decisions that will affect the course of the environmental health profession for years to come.

Let me share a personal observation with you. The spring board meeting in Colorado has us arriving in Denver in the early afternoon on Thursday. We spend some time in the office, meeting and visiting with the staff and having something to eat. In the late afternoon, we leave for the site of the meeting, which is sometimes a three-hour drive. We check in, perhaps have some light dinner, and go to bed. On Friday and Saturday, we meet from about 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. We all go out to dinner together both nights. On Sunday, we head back to the airport, sometimes 3+ hours away, and fly back home. Invariably, I'm really beat after two days of intense discussion and decision making. But also invariably, on the flight back home I think to myself, "I can't wait for next spring's meeting!"

How to Become a Regional Vice President

A candidate for RVP has to submit their nomination papers by the first of February, in order to take office at the AEC later that year. If more than one candidate is qualified and has submitted the appropriate nomination papers, the NEHA members in the affected region will vote in the spring to determine who is selected. If there is only one candidate, they are declared elected, and no election is held. The nomination papers are available on the NEHA Web site. Go to NEHA.org and click on "About" near the top of the page, and then click on "Regional Vice Presidents." At the bottom of that page is a link entitled, "find out how to nominate a candidate for regional vice president." Click on that link, and

the instructions and nomination form come up. When you submit your form, the NEHA office will send you information on the rules for campaigning for office. A platform statement that you submit will be published and mailed out with the ballot.

How to Become the Second Vice President

I strongly urge anyone considering running for second vice president to serve at least one term as a regional vice president first!

NEHA is a corporation with a complicated, multimillion dollar budget; approximately 30 employees; and a myriad of programs, which are constantly changing and evolving due to NEHA's strategic goals and opportunistic, entrepreneurial operating philosophy. So, it takes time to really get familiar with the operation *before* you run for second vice president.

The decision to run for second vice president is a more complicated decision than running for RVP, because in the case of an RVP candidate, only about 3.5 years pass from the time you submit your nomination papers until your term is over. In the case of a candidate for second vice president, *over six years* pass from the time you submit your nomination papers until your terms are up.

Nomination papers must be submitted at least 30 days before the board of directors meeting at the AEC. In 2009, that will be May 21st. In the spring of 2010, the election will be held to determine who is elected as second vice president. If there is only one candidate, that candidate is declared elected, and no election is held. He or she will then assume office at the end of the AEC in 2010. Since the progress through the chairs is automatic, s/he will become the first vice president at the end of the AEC in 2011; the president-elect at the end of the AEC in 2012; the president at the end of the AEC in 2013; the immediate past president at the end of the AEC in 2014; and go off the board at the end of the AEC in 2015!

So anyone wishing to be on the board of directors of NEHA is looking at anywhere from 3.5 to a little over six years! I hope that this makes you appreciate the dedication of the current board members. Several of the RVPs have served multiple terms!

If you are interested in running for office in 2009, contact Genny Pfeufer at gpeufer@neha.org 

