

NEHA's 2000 Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition Denver, Colorado

Introduction

The National Environmental Health Association's (NEHA's) 2000 Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition (AEC) was held in Denver, Colorado—the home of NEHA's headquarters. A total of nearly 2,000 people attended, including approximately 1,500 professionals and 130 exhibitors. Most attendees were from the United States, but some came from as far away as Canada, England, Germany, Jamaica, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia.

While many attendees commented on the beauty of the Adam's Mark Hotel and the wide variety of restaurants and entertainment in the vicinity of the conference this year, nothing has been the subject of more praise than the quality of the education. The following are quotes from attendee surveys NEHA received: "The educational sessions were excellent. It was hard to choose which sessions to attend with such a rich and varied fare being offered." "Excellent opportunity to learn about [the] latest traditional environmental health programs and also cutting edge information." To anyone considering attendance next year, one respondent wrote, "Go. [You will] learn about things you never even considered." Because it is NEHA's mission to advance the environmental health and protection professional, NEHA is hon-

ored to receive this kind of feedback—and challenged to make even higher marks next year!

Opening Ceremony and Keynote Address

This year's opening ceremony began in a lighthearted Denver fashion. NEHA's board of directors made a classic entrance to the theme of John Denver's Rocky Mountain High and crossed the stage wearing cowboy hats. Outgoing president Gary Coleman wore an oversized blue cowboy hat with a fake beard and a sheriff's badge. The ceremony started with a satirical gunfight that poked fun at Gary Coleman and NEHA's executive director, Nelson Fabian. The event became serious and thought-provoking, however, shortly after keynote speaker Dr. Michael W. Fox was introduced.

Dr. Fox is the author of *Beyond Evolution*, a book that challenges readers to seriously question the wisdom and ethics (or, as he asserts, the lack thereof) behind the use of biotechnology to develop "improved" agricultural resources, commonly referred to in the literature as genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In addition to writing *Beyond Evolution* and related books—to worldwide acclaim—Dr. Fox is a respected veterinarian

and bioethicist. At the beginning of his presentation, he requested that the honorarium NEHA had agreed to pay him for that night's speech be donated to an animal refuge in India that is of special interest and concern to him.

In his keynote address, Dr. Fox explained that the biggest problem with biotechnology, or "genetic engineering," is that the technology is developing at an extremely rapid pace "in a vacuum" devoid of important ethical considerations and is being driven by venture capitalism. Examples he gave of current biotechnology research included the insertion of virus particles into plants, human genes into pigs, fish genes into strawberries, and spider genes into goats. Despite the extremely experimental nature of biotechnology research, the industry has a powerful lure for entrepreneurs; enormous profits have been made by GMO patent owners, who direct resources and efforts toward the perpetuation of agricultural monocultures and monopolies. Monocultures weaken immune systems and make plants and animals highly susceptible to bacterial and viral infections.¹

Dr. Fox implored the audience to consider the wide range of environmental health problems—including their potential severity—that could result from biotechnology

and the increasing production of GMOs. A few "close calls" and small catastrophes have already occurred in the United States, Europe, and Canada. In the United States, for instance, large numbers of Monarch butterflies have been killed from eating "Bt corn" (corn genetically engineered to produce its own insecticide, a toxin normally produced by the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*). There is also the danger that viruses, when inserted into plants and animals, will combine with retroviruses to create new, more harmful viruses. The unavoidable spread of GMOs via air, land, and water is likely to increase the incidence of genetic pollution, and organic farmers could face economic ruin if such contamination compromises the "organic" qualities of their crops. Moreover, genetic pollution can create and foster the growth of superweeds if nontarget, invasive plants develop resistance to herbicides—as has been proven to happen through simple pollination.

Reminding the audience that human beings have only recently "broken the DNA code," Dr. Fox stressed the importance of gaining a deeper understanding about DNA before manipulating it in any life form. One of his greatest concerns about the alteration of DNA is the potential permanence and irreversibility of genetic changes—not just to the particular plant or animal, but to entire species and the world ecosystem. "All things are connected in nature's delicate web of life," he warned.

Dr. Fox made an excellent point about the importance of exercising great caution on the front end of this new technology, lest a tragic history lesson from the chemical revolution repeat itself: He showed a series of slides that depicted newspaper, magazine, and television promotions from chemical companies during the 1950s and '60s, including one from PennSalt Chemicals that read, "DDT Is Good For Me!" A silence in the room after the audience saw that slide seemed to punctuate his message. The similarity to current promotions by biotechnology advocates—with slogans like "Welcome to the Genetic Age," and "Improving upon Nature"—was startling.

At the end of his speech, Dr. Fox urged that we embrace a new paradigm based on bioethical principles instead of the "conquistador mentality" that seems so prevalent. He also challenged the audience to become informed to help society "make the right Godlike choices in the appropriate use of this

Sponsors and Partners of NEHA's 2000 AEC

The organizations listed below supported NEHA's 2000 AEC as sponsors and partners, making many valuable aspects of the conference possible. NEHA wishes to thank its financial sponsors for their generous contributions and also thanks its partners for their effort and teamwork.

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Underwriters Laboratory

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Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership
Rocky Mountain Food Safety Conference
South Central Partnership for Environmental Technology and Education
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8
Western Regional Radon Training Center

technology" and to ask themselves what it means to be human—"and what it means to use these powers with humility and loving concern."

NEHA thanks Dr. Michael W. Fox for his insightful and stirring keynote address this

year. Environmental health professionals who understand the implications of this incredibly powerful new biotechnology will be prepared to make a difference for the health and well-being of us all.

Awards and Honors

NEHA's AEC award ceremony was held immediately after the keynote presentation, so that the deserving individuals listed below could be recognized by their peers. Awards were presented for professionalism, various demonstrations of excellence, and contributions to environmental health. NEHA applauds these special people and is happy to recognize their accomplishments once again in this issue of the *Journal*.

Walter S. Mangold Award

NEHA regrets that the Mangold Award, NEHA's most prestigious honor, was not presented this year. While many deserving members are worthy of this tribute, the nominations submitted for the 2000 Mangold Award were few in number, and those submitted did not match the quality of nominations that have been submitted on behalf of extraordinary individuals who have received this award in the past.

Because the number of submissions has remained low in recent years, NEHA's board of directors took action designed to increase the number of nominations submitted for outstanding and commendable environmental health professionals. Previously, the responsibility for nominating candidates rested exclusively on the shoulders of NEHA affiliates. While affiliate nominations will still be accepted and encouraged, the responsibility now also rests with the NEHA membership: NEHA's board voted to accept nominations with signatures of support from five or more NEHA members. For more information about the new Mangold nomination procedure, please contact Tabby Bernardo at the NEHA office, by phone at (303) 756-9090, ext. 302, or via e-mail at <bernarado@neha.org>.

Walter F. Snyder Award

The Snyder Award was presented this year to Dr. Friedrich K. Käferstein. This award is a very special act of joint recognition by NEHA and NSF International. Please see the accompanying story on page 32.

NEHA/CIEH Sabbatical Exchange Award

This sabbatical exchange program, financed by NSF International and managed by NEHA and its British counterpart, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), enables a deserving NEHA member to spend a four-week sabbatical in the United Kingdom while a CIEH member spends four weeks in the United States.

Certificates of Merit

Each affiliate may select one of its members for a national Certificate of Merit, which recognizes exemplary contributions to the profession of environmental health. Award recipients are announced at the awards program, and certificates signed by the NEHA president and executive director are forwarded to affiliate presidents so presentations can be made at affiliate meetings.

Alabama

Alaska

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Illinois

Industry

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

National Capital Area

New Jersey

North Carolina

Oregon

South Carolina

Texas

Uniformed Services

Virginia

Robert Stanford "Rusty" Miller

Mike Halko

Trevor Hayes

Tom Dunlop

David Knauf

Valetta Starwalt

Tony Alan

Patrick J. Maloney

Chuck Lichon

Kent Rees

Cassandra Mitchell-Baker

Valeri Morone

J. Michael Reavis

Leisa Cook

Sue Ferguson

Janet Greenwood

Michael Adess

Calvin Jones

Rick Miklich, program manager at the Snohomish Health District in Everett, Washington, was selected as this year's sabbatical ambassador to the United Kingdom. Applicants were screened on the basis of their portfolios and essays, and finalists were personally interviewed by the jury.

NEHA hopes to offer dual sabbatical opportunities next year—one to the United Kingdom in partnership with CIEH (as described above), and one to Canada in partnership with the Canadian Institute for Public Health Inspectors. Details on the sabbatical exchange to Canada will be announced in a future issue of the *Journal*.

Certificates of Merit

Each NEHA affiliate is invited to have one of its members nationally recognized for exemplary contributions to the profession. A

national Certificate of Merit is prepared for and presented to each honoree. This year's winners are listed in the sidebar above.

Davis Calvin Wagner Award

This award is sponsored by the American Academy of Sanitarians and is presented for environmental health achievement so distinguished that it merits the academy's recognition. This year, Gary Noonan received the Wagner Award. CAPT. James Pees was honored as the academy's first Diplomate Emeritus. The academy also named four Diplomate Laureates: Robert W. Powitz, Trenton G. Davis, Larry Gordon, and James J. Balsamo, Jr.

A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award

Because the *Journal of Environmental Health* is a product of contributors, the A. Harry

2000 Walter F. Snyder Award Recipient

Dr. Friedrich K. Käferstein

At the close of World War II, surrounded by destruction and deprivation, Dr. Käferstein had childhood experiences that helped shape his internationalist views and his deep commitment to humanity.

In recognizing Dr. Friedrich (Fritz) K. Käferstein as the recipient of the 2000 Walter F. Snyder Award, we honor a man who has championed food safety in developed and developing countries. He is a man who has had remarkable success in convincing health authorities that food safety is an essential public health service that all governments are expected to provide to ensure the health of their citizens.

Dr. Käferstein studied at veterinary schools in Giessen and Berlin, Germany, receiving his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1964 from the University of Giessen. While attending the University, he worked as a research assistant for the Veterinary Faculty and submitted his thesis on the identification and significance of the presence of antibiotic residues in meat.

From 1968 to 1972, he served as a Supervising Veterinarian in the meat industry for the New Zealand Department of Agriculture to modernize their meat inspection services.

Returning to Germany in 1972, Käferstein joined the German Health Office, first as Chief of the Food Safety Unit in the Robert-von-Ostertag-Institut and later as Director of the Center for Monitoring and Health Evaluation of Environmental Chemicals in Food. In acknowledgement of his expertise in food safety, he was called upon to direct the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for Food Contamination Monitoring, at which time he worked closely with various other groups in WHO.

In 1980, Dr. Käferstein's 18-year career with WHO in Geneva, Switzerland, began when he accepted the position as manager of the newly established Food Safety Programme. His initial challenge was to overcome preconceived notions and misconceptions about food safety and foodborne diseases in the minds of public health authorities within WHO and the world.

"Recognizing the interdisciplinary nature of food safety," states a colleague, "he gathered a motivated staff of professionals in different disciplines, including veterinary medicine, food science and technology, food chemistry, food microbiology, nutrition and medicine. This way, [he] gave a signal to the world of the importance of intersectoral collaboration for achieving food safety objectives."

As leader of this team,

- He convened the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Safety in 1983. The report of this committee is regarded both nationally and internationally as one of the most important policy documents in the area of food safety.
- He emphasized the importance of education of consumers and food handlers for the prevention of foodborne diseases by developing a long list of educational and training materials, including one of the most well known, WHO Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation.
- He promoted the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) concept, facilitating its implementation in the food industry, making WHO a leader in the promotion of the HACCP system.

- He promoted the technology and acceptance of food irradiation for the prevention of foodborne diseases such as salmonellosis, *E. coli* infections, and foodborne parasitic diseases.
- He developed strategies to assess the safety of biotechnology-produced foods.

During his tenure with WHO, Dr. Käferstein served as WHO Joint Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. He guided the Commission with respect to the health and safety requirements embodied in the Codex standards and guidelines, which gained the recognition of the World Trade Organization. He was instrumental in strengthening the Codex policies and procedures to place greater emphasis on sound scientific risk analysis. As a result, many countries have amended their national legislation to the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. To further support his work, he has encouraged the establishment of databases on the epidemiology of foodborne diseases and chemical contaminants in the food supply. "Dr. Käferstein was one of the first advocates of food safety as a shared responsibility among governments, industry and consumers," writes a WHO colleague. "He strengthened the collaboration of the WHO Food Safety Programme with non-government organizations (NGOs), including consumer organizations and industry associations, such as the Industry Council of Development and International Life Sciences Institute, in a sustainable and balanced manner. The collaboration that he developed with industry is considered a model for other WHO programmes."

Retiring as the Director of WHO's Programme of Food Safety and Food Aid in 1998, Dr. Käferstein left behind a solid record of achievement in public health that both inspires and instructs.

Currently, Dr. Käferstein is a Distinguished Visiting Scientist for the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the United States. He also is an adjunct fellow at the Center for Food and Nutrition Policy at Georgetown University and lectures on food safety at the School of Public Health at Yale University.

Dr. Käferstein has published numerous articles, papers, and reports, and has made as many invited presentations and lectures. His dedication has brought him well-earned recognition for his work. His awards include: R.E. Engel Award for outstanding contribution and dedication to food irradiation, invited lecturer at the Ivan Parkin Lecture of the annual meeting of the International Association of Food Protection (formerly IAMFES), and Honorary Diplomat of the American Veterinary Epidemiological Society; he is also a Founding Fellow of the International Academy of Food Science and Technology.

Although food safety has a long way to go to be formally integrated into public health programs of developing countries, Dr. Käferstein has paved the way for his successors to continue his work and to meet public health challenges going forward. His integrity and compassion is an inspiration to his colleagues, as well as those in public health and the food industry. He truly fulfills the qualifications of an individual who has upheld a commitment to environmental health as subscribed to by the award's namesake.

Bliss Editors' Award goes annually to a NEHA member who has made an outstanding contribution to its editorial content. Dr. A. Harry Bliss was editor of the *Journal* in 1969, the year the award was first presented. When he retired, the award was named after him, to honor his 40 years of involvement in the production of the *Journal*. Dr. Bliss influenced the *Journal* program in many ways: in changing the name from the *Sanitarian* to the *Journal of Environmental Health*, for example; in changing the format to its present size; and in establishing the professional peer-review process for all scientific manuscripts.

This year, the A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award went to Thomas J. White, M.S., corresponding author of two papers about the efficacy of copper/silver ions in swimming-pool disinfection. Tom White made an extraordinary effort in the publication of both papers, the second of which was a special report featured on the cover and consisting of a detailed point-by-point response to three readers' letters about the original feature article. His co-authors, Charles W. Beer, Ph.D., Lawrence E. Guilmartin, B.S., and Thomas F. McLoughlin, M.S., also put a great deal of effort into the papers, and they received individual certificates recognizing them as co-recipients of the award.

Crumbine Consumer Protection Award

Each year, 10 co-sponsors, including NEHA, present a local government health unit with the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection award for excellence in a food protection program. Only local government health units in the United States and Canada are eligible for the Crumbine award.

The award was presented this year to the Olmsted County Health Department in Rochester, Minnesota. Laura Scheinoha, Sue Hibberd, and D.J. Inman accepted the award on its behalf. (See photo on page 36.)

Past Presidents' Award

The Past Presidents group, comprising former NEHA presidents, annually recognizes a NEHA member for outstanding achievement. Their award this year went to John Steward of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry in Atlanta, Georgia. John is also a NEHA technical section chair who has been deeply involved this past year in both the NEHA AEC and the Right to Know conference.

NEHA/AAS Scholarship Awards

The scholarship program, sponsored by

NEHA and the American Academy of Sanitarians, awarded one \$2,000 graduate scholarship and three \$1,000 undergraduate scholarships this year. Marc Hendon, a student of environmental and occupational health at California State University, Northridge, received the graduate scholarship. The undergraduate scholarships were awarded to Jeffrey Birdsall, a student of environmental and occupational health at California State University, Northridge; Erin Hart, a student of industrial hygiene and environmental health at Ohio University, Athens; and Loretta Jo Manley, a student of environmental health management at Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan.

Student Research and Poster Presentations

NEHA congratulates the following students for presenting their research and posters at the AEC. Thanks to a generous donation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the students who participated in these events each received a plaque and up to \$1,000 to cover their travel and related expenses.

Presenting research were Carrie Ames of Illinois State University ("Evaluation of Pollution Alternatives for a U.S. Automotive Plant"), Geraldine Dail of Franklin, North Carolina ("Evaluation of Total Coliform and *E. coli* Levels in North Muddy Creek"), Jennifer Stapleton of Illinois State University ("Public Awareness of Indoor Air Quality Issues"), and Angela Hobson of Illinois State University ("Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Kit Training Workshop").

Presenting research with posters were Douglas Dyer of the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire ("Using GIS to Develop a Mosquito Surveillance Database"), Anthony Scott Johnson of Colorado State University ("Proposed Use of Underground Mining Structures for Phytoremediation of Metals Using Duckweed"), Abigail Newton of East Tennessee State University ("The Prevalence of Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria on Eating Surfaces in Daycare Centers and Parks"), and Hongbin Xiao of the University of Washington ("Validation of a Passive Sampler for Monitoring Six Aldehydes").

Past President's Pin

Outgoing NEHA President Gary Coleman was recognized by the association for his exceptional year of service with both a past president's pin and a past president's plaque.

Presidential Citations

These citations are very special to the NEHA president and, therefore, very few are awarded. They are given to individuals or organizations that have made exemplary contributions to the association during the president's term of office. Tom Blewitt, Holly Coleman, Karen Holmes, the NEHA staff, Paul Rosile, Tom Ward, and Bruce Wilson received presidential citations this year.

Educational Activities

NEHA emphasizes the quality of the education it provides at the AEC more than any other aspect of the conference. Speakers are sought by NEHA's technical section chairs only after hundreds of interviews have been conducted with NEHA members each year to determine the most current and important issues facing them in a diversity of specialized fields. Educational sessions cover a wide variety of topics within environmental health, including ambient and indoor air quality, counter-biological and chemical terrorism, drinking water, emerging pathogens, food protection, hazardous materials, injury prevention and occupational health, environmental health management, geographic information systems, on-site wastewater systems, solid waste management, swimming pools and spas, uniformed services, and vector control. In addition, there were student research and poster presentations, as well as review courses and exams for the Certified Food Safety Professional, Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian, and Registered Environmental Technician credentials. This year, for the first time, a train-the-trainer food safety workshop was offered, as well as a radon overview workshop.

It would be impossible for NEHA to offer such high-quality educational sessions without the dedicated individuals who serve your association as technical section chairs. These are the people who carry out the important task of assembling speakers on particular topics—the topics you tell us you want to learn about—within their respective areas of expertise. NEHA extends special gratitude to the technical section chairs listed below:

- Drinking Water/Water Pollution—Sanjay Saxena,
- Environmental Health Management—Holly Coleman,
- Environmental Health Research—Darryl B. Barnett,

2000 AEC Exhibitors

A ADI International, Inc.
Advanced Drainage Systems
AdvanceOnline, Inc.
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Alexeter Technologies, LLC
Altro Safety Floors/Compass Concepts, Inc.
American Academy of Sanitarians
American Egg Board, Egg Nutrition Center
American Manufacturing Company, Inc.
AMS, Inc.
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B Baylor University
B.G. Youngkrantz Company
Bernier International
BioLab
Bio-Microbics, Inc.
BNA
Bord na Mona—Environmental Products, USA
Brass Smith, Inc.

C Carlisle Foodservice Products
Churches and Associates, Inc.
Colorado Environmental Health Association
Colorado State University
Comark Instruments
Compliance Control
Consolidated Treatment Systems, Inc.
Cooper Instrument Corporation
Cromaglass Corporation
Current Water Technology

D Daydots International
Decade Software Company
Delta Environmental Products
Denver Department of Environmental Health
Drayner
Ductworks, Inc.

E Ecolab, Inc.
Eljen Corporation
Environmental Biotech
Environmental Dynamics Group
Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee
Environmental Health Perspectives
Excal Visual Communications

F FirstNet Learning, Inc.
FoodHandler
Front Range Precast Concrete, Inc.

G Geoflow
Georgia Environmental Health Association, Inc.
Glo-Germ Co.

H Healthminder—A Sloan Valve Company
Highsmith Environmental Consultants
Hoshizaki America, Inc.
HMTRI

I Industrial Hygiene News/Rimbach Publishing, Inc.
Infiltrator Systems, Inc.
Intertek Testing Services

J J.T. Eaton and Company, Inc.

K Kairak, Inc.
Katchall Industries
KD Engineering
Kenkut Products, Inc.

M Multi Media Foodsafe

N National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Environmental Health, CDC
National Drinking Water Clearinghouse
National Environmental Training Association, Inc.
National Indoor Environmental Professional Association
National Library of Medicine/Specialized Information Services
National Registry of Food Safety Professionals
National Restaurant Association
National Testing Laboratories, LTD Network
NCS—Wastewater Solutions
NEHA National Radon Proficiency Program
Niton Corporation
NoMound Onsite Systems
Norback Ley & Associates, LLC
Norweco, Inc.
NSF International

O Orkin Pest Control

P Portable Sanitation Association International
Premier Tech
Press-Seal Gasket Corporation
Pure Air Control
Pure Water, Inc.

R Raytek Corporation
Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership
Rocky Mountain Food Safety Conference
Rocky Mountain Water Environment Federation

S Same Day Distributing, Inc.
SCG Enterprises
Shat-R-Shield, Inc.
S.J.E. Rhombus
SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals
SneezeGuard Solutions
South Central Partnership for Environmental Technology Education

T Tel-Tru Manufacturing Company
trainingonline.com
Tri-County Health Department
Tucel Industries, Inc.
Tuf-Tite, Inc.
Tundra Specialties

U Underwriters Laboratories
University of Denver, University College
University of Findlay
University of Michigan, School of Public Health
USA CHPPM
USEPA
USEPA, ETV Program
USEPA, Indoor Environments Division
US Food and Drug Administration
US Public Health Service

W Webbstar
Worldstone, Inc.

Z Zoeller Pump Company

- Food Protection—George Nakamura,
- General Environmental Health—Patrick O. Bohan,
- Hazardous and Toxic Substances—John Steward,
- Injury Prevention/Occupational Health—Richard F. Collins,
- Institutional Environmental Health—James Balsamo, Jr.,
- International Environmental Health—Vicki Everly, and
- On-site Wastewater Management—Tony Smithson.

Special Educational Tours

Adding to the educational experience at the AEC were special educational tours that attendees could sign up for in advance to get hands-on practical experience. Tours included visits to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, an on-site wastewater system in the mountains of Clear Creek County, the National Medical Response Team's mass-casualty decontamination demonstration (see photos on page 39), and a seafood-freshness hands-on demonstration and workshop.

Learning Through Exhibits

The exhibit hall at each AEC is an important part of NEHA's educational programming. What is seen and heard in the exhibit hall can reinforce what is seen and heard in the classroom. This year, the exhibit hall was full, with 130 exhibitors.

NEHA actively recruits exhibitors who can present cutting-edge tools and services for the environmental health profession. This effort is rewarded when attendees report that they learned about educational opportunities through exhibitors and that they were able to have hands-on experience with equipment they had read or heard about. A noticeable trend in the exhibit hall, and one that attendees have commented on, is that exhibitors are not there for the hard sell; instead, they assume a teaching role and help AEC attendees understand what is new and how it will affect the attendees' jobs. Some exhibitors also serve as presenters in educational sessions, so the classroom and the exhibit hall constitute an integrated learning experience.

Networking and Social Events

Events that encourage members to get together to exchange stories and opportunities are a valuable aspect of the conference. These events make it easy for members to interact in a casual manner and create both

professional and personal relationships—relationships that sometimes last a lifetime. While the NEHA staff organizes a number of social events (described below) as functions of the conference, informal and spontaneous networking opportunities abound throughout the proceedings. NEHA strongly encourages attendees to be alert and receptive to these opportunities as they arise—and to create opportunities for themselves. Who knows where an impromptu discussion with an experienced peer could lead!

Networking Luncheon

In response to the fact that AEC attendees consistently rate networking second only to education as the primary reason for attending, NEHA organizes a networking luncheon at each conference. In the congenial setting of a buffet luncheon where tables are set with placards indicating areas of environmental health expertise, attendees can easily identify professionals of specific disciplines to mingle with while they enjoy good food and a bit of relaxation.

Silent Auction

The silent auction, managed by Tabby Bernardo, NEHA's executive coordinator, is an occasion that members look forward to all year. This year, NEHA shared the auction with the National Environmental Training Association (NETA); together, the two organizations raised over five thousand dollars. NEHA's proceeds will be deposited into a speakers' fund to help cover the cost of getting good speakers for next year's AEC.

The items auctioned this year ranged from autographed sports memorabilia to gift baskets to tools for the environmental health professional to various works of art. Drawing the most intense bidding was a framed, numbered print, "Split Rock Lighthouse," by Mary Demroske. The winner was a very determined Karen Holmes of Illinois, who was the highest bidder at \$300. As examples of other items in the heated, competitive bidding, there were a thermometer/barometer/hygrometer, passes to Disney World, a Native American necklace of turquoise and silver, noncontact infrared thermometers, fishing jigs and baits, and memorabilia from the inaugural season of California's Pacific Bell Park. CAPT. J.T. Coyne was the high bidder on NEHA's AEC 2001 offering of four nights at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, and a free conference registration. He thus becomes, officially, the first registrant for next year's AEC.

All of the items sold at the silent auction were donated by NEHA affiliates, exhibitors, members, and sustaining members. Thank you to everyone who donated and purchased these items in support both of this event and of the educational program at next year's conference. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game—UL Theme Party

Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL) sponsored "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," an opportunity for AEC attendees to pay a nominal price for a Friday evening of dinner and Rockies baseball. When the baseball game was canceled because of rain that evening, the 450 unused tickets were donated to local Denver charities. NEHA also offered alternative places for attendees to go, from restaurants to art galleries in Denver's "Lower Downtown."

Golf Tournament

This year's AEC golf tournament (NEHA's 15th consecutive one) was won by the fabled "Team America" foursome of Robert Galvan, Harry Grenawitzke, Steve Jenkins, and Steve Tackitt. To the dismay and disbelief of the other participants, this group—which many thought was the staff for the course beer cart—somehow found a way to slip past the skilled players competing for the trophies and prizes.

In view of the way they defied the 10,000:1 odds against them, NEHA salutes "Team America" for its shocking upset.

President's Banquet and Entertainment

The president's banquet, a semiformal occasion of dinner and celebration, is the final networking and social event at each AEC. As the name implies, the official transfer of NEHA's presidency takes place at this ceremony. Gary Coleman, NEHA's outgoing president, gave a warm farewell speech to the audience before handing the president's gavel to NEHA's new president, COL. (ret.) Anthony Aiken. The president's banquet represents the new president's first opportunity to share with NEHA members his or her vision and plans for the upcoming year—something Tony Aiken did with inspiration and style. Throughout his presentation, Aiken emphasized that he saw NEHA as a family. He also pledged that good communication from his office would be his priority for the coming year.

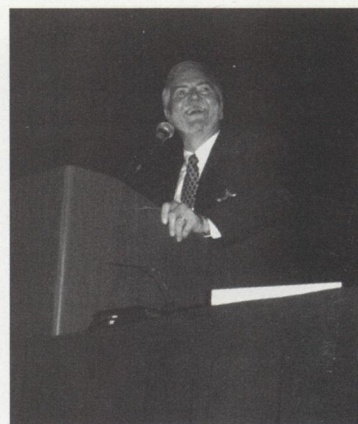
The evening closed with entertainment by a professional magician, who astounded the audience with feats such as swallowing over 100 separate pins and then pulling them out in a long string, attached to each other. The crowd was also amused when he took out an ax, used it to chop a piece of wood on stage, and then threw the ax into the audience. (No one was hurt!)

Association Business

Board of Directors Meeting

The NEHA board of directors always conducts a business meeting at the AEC. The board comprises five national officers and 10 regional vice presidents. Highlights from this year's AEC meeting can be summarized as follows:

- The board heard from the following special guests:
 - Paul Raynes, of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), invited the entire board to meet with FDA officials in Washington (at FDA's expense) to develop a partnership that would enhance the food safety and protection efforts of both organizations. The board agreed that this was an important opportunity for NEHA and, pending further discussion and the development of an agenda, voted to accept the invitation.
 - Chuck Treser, of the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council, reported that the council is sponsoring food workshops designed to help instructors in accredited colleges and universities develop food courses for their curricula.
 - NEHA's investment advisors, Bruce Squires, of Allmerica Financial, and Vic Casado, of American Funds, reviewed a portion of NEHA's investment portfolio.
- As a result of the discussion on investments, the board moved 1) to invest \$71,000 in a six-month (preferably) or a nine-month certificate of deposit earning at least seven percent, 2) to review NEHA's investments and reallocate assets as necessary, and 3) to review NEHA's entire financial portfolio.
- On hearing of the accidental death of Pennsylvania affiliate president Jim Pavlicek, the board asked the executive director to send his family a condolence card and agreed to pause the upcoming council of delegates meeting with a moment of silence to respect and honor Jim.
- Executive Director Fabian reported on the new online learning courses available on the NEHA Web site, and on NEHA's new association management program, whereby NEHA provides its administrative and management expertise to smaller environmental health organizations. He also described his participation in a national counter-bioterrorism exercise held in Denver, New Hampshire, and Washington, D.C.
- The board approved a revision to Article X, Elections, of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws: "Mail Ballots will be used only if the NEHA Board of Directors and Council of Delegates are recommending Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws revisions to the membership (for approval) or if there are contested elections in which there is only one candidate." This change was based on member responses to a questionnaire on the subject of single-candidate elections in the *Journal of Environmental Health*.
- The board also clarified in Article X that when a regional vice president is appointed to fill a vacancy, that appointment is for the remainder of the three-year term for that office.
- Resolutions adopted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) on food safety and indoor air quality were supported by the NEHA board.
- President Coleman reported on the spring election results as follows: President-Elect Laura Studevant; First Vice President Jim Dingman; Second Vice President Doug Ebelherr; Region 2 Vice President Dick Pantages; Region 3 Vice President Richard Clark; and Region 8 Vice President Larry Yates.
- The board made a major change concerning nominations for the Mangold award. Hearing that there was no Mangold recipient for 2000, and wishing to encourage more qualified nominations and more well-prepared documentation for the award, the board voted that nominations could be made by any five NEHA members. As in the past, affiliates can also make nominations.
- The board voted to take action regarding those affiliates that are in violation of



Outgoing NEHA President, Gary Coleman



Attendees outside the exhibit hall



Networking luncheon



Crumbine award presentation to Minnesota's Olmsted Co. Public Health Services Dept., accepted by Laura Scheinoha, Sue Hibberd, and D.J. Inman (left to right)



Ron Grimes (left) and incoming NEHA President Tony Aiken (right) enjoy themselves at the golf tournament



The infamous Team America, post-golf tournament



Attendees enjoy the networking luncheon



Outgoing President Gary Coleman converses with Immediate Past President Ginger Gist

Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws requirements that affiliate presidents must be NEHA members and that each affiliate membership must have at least 15 NEHA members.

- President Coleman and President-Elect Tony Aiken reported that they are appointing a committee to assist Underwriters Laboratories in establishing indoor air quality goals.
- Section chairs, who are responsible for the AEC educational program, will have new colleagues this year. The board created a new section called Counter-Bioterrorism and split the General Environmental Health section into two separate sections: Emerging Pathogens/Vector Control/Zoonotic Diseases and GIS/Swimming Pools/Environmental Justice.
- It was reported that about 1,500 professionals were expected at this AEC and a record-setting 130 exhibitors.
- Executive Director Fabian reported that the process of developing a NEHA credential for on-site wastewater has begun.

Council of Delegates Meeting

The NEHA council of delegates comprises the NEHA board of directors and all of NEHA's affiliate presidents. New NEHA President Tony Aiken presided. Highlights of this meeting, which is also held at each AEC, can be summarized as follows:

- The council observed a moment of silence for the late Jim Pavlicek, Pennsylvania affiliate president. He attended the council of delegates meeting last year.
- President Aiken urged members to collectively work together to achieve some ambitious goals and thus end the year on a high note when NEHA arrives in Atlanta for its 2001 AEC.
- The results of the spring board election were reported (see board of directors report).
- Jim Balsamo and Mike Halko, candidates for NEHA Second Vice President in 2001, presented their candidacies to the delegates.
- Initial silent auction earnings of \$4,400 were reported for NEHA, with \$800+ for the National Environmental Training Association (NETA), which partnered with NEHA at this AEC.
- Executive Director Fabian reported on some of the new initiatives being undertaken by NEHA, and on the staff and office growth taking place to support this increase in services.

- Since NEHA is now in the midst of site selection for the 2002 and 2005 AECs, the executive director requested comments about the timing of future AECs, room rates, and other AEC concerns. There was considerable input from delegates, ranging from concerns about the fiscal year to issues of work schedules and family activities.
- Reports and information were presented on some of the opportunities available to NEHA members.
 - With respect to the Mangold Award, Regional Vice President Bruce Chelikowsky encouraged council members to seek out qualified Mangold applicants and invest the necessary resources in developing well-designed portfolios of their achievements. A Mangold winner in 1995 and chair of this year's award committee, he told delegates to look at the nominee's diversity of accomplishments and impact on the profession, and to offer a top-quality document on the nominee's behalf. He emphasized that there are qualified people within NEHA's membership and that they should be identified and nominated. Mr. Chelikowsky circulated four award-winning nominations portfolios from past years as samples of the time and effort that must be invested in the nomination. He also announced the board of director's decision to allow any five members to nominate a Mangold candidate. As always, affiliates may also nominate NEHA members for the Mangold Award.
 - Nominations were also encouraged for the Snyder Award, an award co-sponsored by NEHA and NSF International. This prestigious award recognizes excellence in the profession and an individual's ability to bring parties together for consensus and achievement.
 - Regarding NEHA scholarships and sabbaticals, Past President Coleman reported that details on a sabbatical exchange between NEHA and the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors should soon be available.
 - Regarding radon/indoor air quality classes, a U.S. EPA-funded program offers all-expenses paid training on radon and indoor air quality in Washington, D.C., and is available to NEHA members.

- Past President Coleman, who now chairs the nominations committee, asked the council to help identify good candidates and encourage them to run for office.
- It was reported that R.E.H.S./R.S. and C.F.S.P. study classes are available to any NEHA affiliate.
- Operations Manager Becky Roland explained how NEHA tracks continuing education for its credentialed people and offers the same tracking for state credentialing programs and affiliates.
- Executive Director Fabian reported that NEHA's membership is stable and growing slightly, with a trend toward greater diversity. NEHA has growing numbers of women, people of color, and representatives from the private sector and the environmental protection field within its membership.
- The executive director also reported on a new NEHA effort, the Association Information Resource Center. This program is designed to provide the products, services, and information that will help make the center the first resource people turn to when they seek information about the environmental health profession and environmental health issues.
- Resolutions were adopted by the council on 1) recognizing Immediate Past President Coleman for his service, 2) congratulating the Indiana affiliate on its 50th anniversary, 3) labeling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), 4) antibiotic feed and human health, 5) food safety (proposed by NACCHO) and 6) indoor air quality (proposed by NACCHO).
- Executive Director Fabian presented the fiscal 2001 budget of \$2.5 million. The budget was approved.
- The council approved Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws changes to 1) Article X, Elections, concerning the use of mail ballots and clarifying the terms of office for regional vice presidents who are appointed to fill a vacancy (see section of the board of directors meeting), and to 2) Article VI, Section 2, Officers, clarifying, for conflict-of-interests reasons, that a person cannot be a board member of both NEHA and an affiliate at the same time: "However, an affiliate officer or other voting affiliate board member cannot serve as a member of the NEHA board of directors. Should an affiliate president be elected to

the board, he or she must resign their affiliate position before assuming their new NEHA position. Conversely, if a NEHA director is elected an affiliate president, that director must resign from the NEHA board before assuming the affiliate presidency." These changes will go to the membership on the spring ballot for final approval.

- Focus groups summarized their discussions on the resources people use when seeking information about the environmental health profession and environmental health issues. Their discussions centered on why certain resources were selected and on what NEHA could do to become more often the first organization that professionals turn to when seeking information about environmental health issues and interests.

General Assembly

President Gary Coleman commenced the General Assembly by inviting the board of directors and the affiliates to introduce themselves. He then opened the floor to nominations for the seat of second vice president; none were received.

- The official candidates for next year's election of second vice president were announced: James Balsamo, Jr., and Mike Halko.
- Michael Vince, affiliate president for the Louisiana Environmental Health Association, introduced candidate James Balsamo, Jr., who presented a speech about his platform for the upcoming election.
- Richard Collins, representing the Uniformed Services affiliate, introduced candidate Mike Halko, who also presented a speech about his platform for the upcoming election.
- Following the candidates' speeches, Gary Coleman invited the audience to voice any opinions and concerns they had about NEHA or related issues.
 - Warren Abrahams stepped up and enthusiastically shouted, "Ya'll come to Atlanta next year" (Atlanta is the location of next year's AEC), and tossed bags of Georgia peanuts to the audience to take to the Rockies' baseball game later that evening.
 - Vince Radtke expressed the desire for an officially recognized national sanitarians' day or environmental health professionals' day, and he urged the board of directors to consider this during the upcoming year.



Inside the exhibit hall



Glenn Mallory, Bruce Wilson, and Nelson Fabian (left to right)

- Sue Hibberd voiced concern about the boundaries of the nursing profession expanding into the environmental health profession, and she stressed the importance of preparing for this potential shift in responsibilities between the two—especially with respect to significantly different training requirements.
- Larry Yates encouraged participation in the NEHA/CIEH sabbatical exchange program and reminded everyone that the next deadline is March 1, 2001.
- Doug Ebelherr shared his opinion that environmental health departments should make it a priority each year to send to the AEC at least one professional who has never before attended. He also acknowledged the NEHA/AAS scholarship recipients.

Conclusion

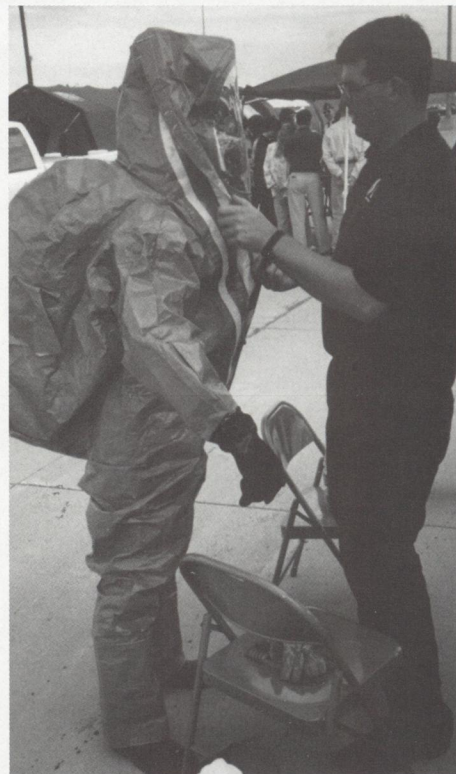
NEHA hopes the information presented in this special report is informative to attendees and non-attendees alike. The report is designed to serve both as a recap of highlights for those who were able to attend and as an opportunity for those unable to attend to enjoy some of the AEC offerings nevertheless.

Providing education is one of NEHA's best tools for achieving its mission to advance the environmental health and protection professional. As preparations get under way for next year's AEC in Atlanta, Georgia, we are excited and hopeful that even more of you will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities it offers. Perhaps the best words of encouragement come from past attendee surveys: "[NEHA's AEC] is an excellent opportunity to gain professional education and to have the chance to network with environmental health professionals from all over the country." "Without reservation, [it is] the best conference that exists to gain a wide variety of updated, highly professional information." "The networking is invaluable." "Attend next year!"

Each year, NEHA staff return from the AEC motivated and challenged to respond to your feedback, so that "next year's conference" will be even better. With 64 AECs now under our belt, we know that constant changes in the environmental health profession are a given, and that by conducting careful research about what those changes are, we can always find ways to improve the conference. Here's to seeing you in Atlanta!



Jim Balsamo and Bob Powitz (NEHA members and authors of JEH's "Tools for Environmental Health" department) try out the latest in chemical terrorist agent detectors.



At the AEC tour of the National Medical Response Teams for Weapons of Mass Destruction (NMRTWMD) exercise, two members of Colorado's Disaster Medical Assistance Team put on protective gear for chemical terrorist agents.



Decontamination tents at the AEC tour of the NMRTWMD exercise.