

# 1996 Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition Lay The Tracks...

Nelson Fabian and Tabby Bernardo

## Introduction

*Advancement:* The act of advancing. A forward step. Improvement. Development. Progress; the advancement of knowledge. A promotion, as in rank.

Realizing that advancement is an ongoing and challenging process, the association undertook no small task this year when it adopted for its AEC the theme "Lay the Tracks for Your Advancement." And for four intense days, (not to mention the endless hours that were put in prior to the conference), that's exactly what the people behind the AEC this year dedicated themselves to.

The AEC's commitment to provide top quality educational programs, exhibits and networking opportunities was apparent through the myriad activities that were offered to what turned out to be the largest attendance at a NEHA conference in almost twenty years. Just a sampling of what greeted the attendee included relevant and timely presentations on new concerns such as emerging pathogens and mad cow disease, and continuing concerns such as food protection, indoor air quality and on-site wastewater. In addition, there were classes that outgrew their assigned meeting spaces. We provided training to help managers prepare for the future, exhibits of products and services to help professionals do their job more effectively, a golf tournament, focus groups, caucuses and meetings that brought people together for discussions and sharing,

business meetings, social events that introduced people to each other, the Taste of Chicago Fair, Fourth of July fireworks, and so much more. It was an intense but pleasurable educational, fellowship and *advancement* opportunity.

For three straight years, the attendance at the NEHA AEC has been increasing. With more and more professionals attending these conferences, the opportunities for attendees also increase. More educational sessions, more new colleagues to meet, more exhibitors to learn from, etc.

However, while the benefits to the attendee continue to grow, our AEC planners are finding it increasingly challenging to find hotels of the right size and price to accommodate our conference. Our crystal ball would seem to indicate that NEHA will more and more be locating its conferences in larger hotel facilities and perhaps even in convention centers if these trends continue.



*Educational Session*

With all that happened this year in Chicago, we've prepared a special report on the conference for the benefit of all of our members. This year's AEC can be highlighted as follows:

## Keynote Address

With the idea that advancement can be both a professional and personal goal, keynote speaker Frank Bucaro kicked the conference off with a stirring presentation on ethics and personal growth. He reminded his attentive listeners that despite the enormity of change sweeping through the world of work, there is tremendous satisfaction and fulfillment avail-



Some of the exhibitors at the conference



able to each and every one of us within the personal values and ethics we hold dear. He even went so far as to suggest that if one does what they love — which is almost a tenet in environmental health — the deserving compensation and respect will follow. He applauded the NEHA audience for their commitment to the noble cause we serve and for the value system underneath that drives that commitment.

He also offered numerous pearls of wisdom for attendees to ponder and take home with them. Through humor and sincerity, Frank suggested that everyone should write a personal mission statement and include within it goals — which are dreams with deadlines. He emphasized that values are what we believe, but ethics are what we do. He also implored his audience to remember that fighting change is a losing proposition but that we do have the power and intelligence to guide, anticipate, adapt and act on change.

Frank, a former professor of moral theology, was given a lasting ovation for his inspirational and personally meaningful address.

### Educational Activities

Market research continues to be the underpinning for NEHA's programs and especially, its AEC. Information compiled from hundreds of interviews is analyzed by the NEHA staff and used to define the conference educational program and the strategies that are offered to help NEHA members reach their professional goals.

In fact, three popular workshops on ISO 14000, Emerging Pathogens, and Career Advancement were scheduled because members specifically requested these topics when NEHA conducted its market research. In addition, the number one area of interest for NEHA

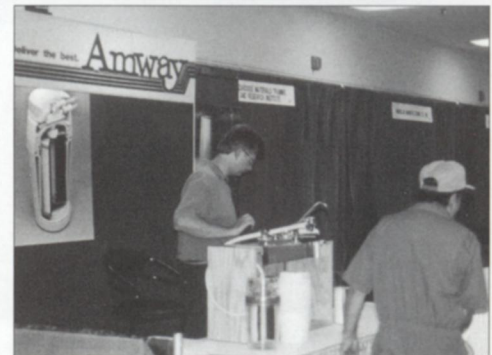
members — and this caught even the researchers by surprise — was management information, such as organizational theories and strategies. As such, extended sessions on this topic were offered this year. Attendees can count on more of this kind of management education being incorporated into future AEC programs.

For the second year, NEHA provided customized learning modules for those professionals who wanted to concentrate on single areas such as air quality, food protection, hazardous materials/waste, and on-site wastewater. The use of learning modules has enabled NEHA to better target its marketing to members and non-members in specific areas of the profession.

While market research helps identify our members' educational needs and the topics to be covered at the conference, it is NEHA's technical section chairs who have the important role of fine tuning the topic and identifying the professionals who can best deliver the education to the attendee. We extend special thanks to these section chairs for their expertise, their support, and the many hours expended in assembling an AEC program: Tim Radtke, air/land/water; Brian J. Zamora, environmental health management; Michael Chappell, food protection; Thomas E. Wittkopf, general environmental health; Laura Studevant Thacker, injury prevention/occupational health; James Balsamo Jr., institutional environmental health; Vicki Everly, international environmental health; Jennifer Campbell, hazardous and toxic substances; and Paul Chase, on-site wastewater management.

### Exhibits

To NEHA, the exhibition hall is as impor-



tant as the classroom. Exhibitors provide cutting edge information on products and services that can sometimes make the difference between doing an adequate job and doing a great job.

NEHA actively seeks exhibitors who can enhance the depth and scope of its members' knowledge, and this year was no exception. The result of this effort was that members responding to NEHA's conference survey told us that what they learned this year was practical and useful and had on-the-job applications for them. Members developed corporate contacts and acquired needed education on the products and services available to this profession.

The exhibit event was also a success from the standpoint of our exhibitors. A number of exhibitors from this year's conference have already signed up to be with us again next year in Washington D.C.

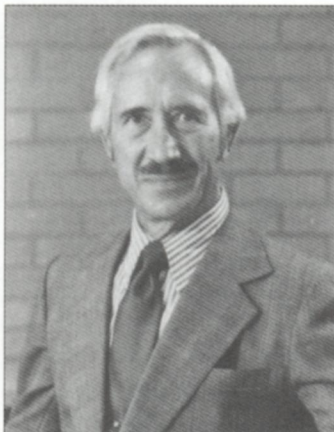
### Networking and Social Activities

In survey work that NEHA has done, "networking" has been identified as the number two reason professionals belong to NEHA. Taking that as important guidance, NEHA makes a determined effort to provide as many networking opportunities as possible for its attendees at the AEC.

And a lot of networking took place in



Leonard Rice, 1996 Mangold Award recipient



Robert M. Brown, 1996 Walter F. Snyder Award recipient

Chicago. Some of it is informal over coffee, and some of it takes place in the more structured setting of a classroom or committee meeting. Whatever the circumstance, it's reassuring to members to be able to share mutual concerns with colleagues and learn from the experiences of other environmentalists. Such networking is a valuable part of the national conference, and one that NEHA encourages.

One of the networking/social traditions at the AEC is the golf tournament, which this year was held at the Oak Brook Resort under the generous sponsorship of the World Dryer Corporation. On the winning foursome were Daryl Rowe and his son, Dennis Murano and John Cotter. At an unbelievable 63, they beat by one stroke our second place foursome of Sylvia Garrison, Tom Hatfield, Mike Price and Pat Seger. Finishing somewhere well below the pack was NEHA's perennial underdog but good sport, Art Bloom. Other social activities included a Chicago architectural tour via local waterways, and a dinner and murder mystery



Working at the conference, Steve Tackitt, Nelson Fabian, and Peter Thornton

co-sponsored by PRISM — PProfessional Integrated Sanitation Management. The Cajun style dinner featured jambalaya and blackened catfish; the mystery play was "Shear Madness," a comedic whodunnit in which the audience is always right.

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in our annual silent auction. While this event is always enjoyable, anticipated, and successful, what it is *not*, is silent. Sideline kibitzers, determined bidders and generous contributors all combine to make this a very special and sometimes noisy event. Auction items ranging from clever and artistic to sporting and decorative were donated by affiliates, sustaining members and individual members. The auction proceeds, which this year totaled \$3700, are used to help fund the speaker slate for the conference. For the second consecutive year, the high bidder was Ruth Clay, president of the Massachusetts affiliate, who paid \$625 for NEHA's offer of registration and hotel expenses for the 1997 AEC in Washington D.C. Ruth once again earned the distinction of being the first member to "commit" to the next AEC.

### Association Business

Because the AEC is NEHA's only membership-wide gathering each year, this is also the time when the association conducts its business affairs. The NEHA Board of Directors, composed of national officers and regional vice presidents, always meets on Saturday, just before the start of the AEC. The general assembly, which is open to the entire NEHA membership, is scheduled Sunday evening. NEHA officers and staff present the latest information, nominees for second vice president present their candidacies, and members are invited to express concerns, report on their activities, provide input for board decisions or

raise issues for the board's consideration.

Finally, the NEHA Council of Delegates meets on the final day of the conference. This body, made up of the NEHA Board of Directors and affiliate presidents, reviews the NEHA budget, conducts focus groups, and acts on changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws before these changes go to the membership for a vote. The COD also acts on agenda items presented by the board and the membership and, if

there are more than two candidates for second vice president, it conducts a primary election.

Following are highlights of each of the business meetings held during the 1996 AEC

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- With their dues notices, members of Region 10 also will receive a memo asking them to declare whether they wish to vote in future RVP elections in either Region 10 or in the region in which they reside.
- The board decided that a task force should
  - 1) examine the issue of NEHA having a presence in Washington D.C. and
  - 2) quantify the criteria that were established by previous boards as a prerequisite to studying this issue.
- When nominating candidates for the Mangold Award, affiliates must submit three nominations documents and five copies of those documents (for a total of eight) to NEHA. The board voted against having candidates automatically re-entered in the Mangold judging for a second year.
- The board approved several recommendations of the Credentialing Board:
  - 1) Contact hours will be granted for video viewing, computer based training, publishing in the *Journal of Environmental Health*, and presenting at the AEC.
  - 2) NEHA will explore with the American Academy of Sanitarians the possibility of developing a recognized environmental health management credential.
  - 3) To ensure that high standards are maintained for the REHS/RS exam and study guide, the Credentialing Board will review these products each year during the AEC.
- Position papers on emerging infectious disease and environmental justice were adopted for presentation to the council of delegates. Two recently-developed position papers on

global warming and Chernobyl will be acted upon at the board's next meeting.

- The board approved several changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. If these are approved by the council of delegates, they will be presented to the membership in next spring's mail ballot.

- 1) Article IX Section 5: Changes were made to update the council of delegates meeting agenda.
- 2) Article X Section 7: This change extends the mail balloting deadline by 15 days, giving members more time to vote.
- 3) Article V Section 2: While an affiliate must have 15 NEHA members to become a NEHA affiliate, there were no provisions on what to do when an affiliate's NEHA membership dropped below 15. This addition to the Articles requires an affiliate to have 15 NEHA members to maintain its affiliate status, provides a grace period not to exceed one year if an affiliate's NEHA membership drops below 15, and calls for automatic termination if the criteria of 15 NEHA members is not achieved within the one-year grace period.
- 4) Article X Section 6: There was a slight change in language to clarify that NEHA members may vote for regional vice presidents and that NEHA members may nominate regional vice president candidates.
- 5) Article X Section 8 C: This addition authorizes the board to appoint a regional vice president when there is no nominee from the region for that office.

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- NEHA Administration Manager Becky Roland briefly spoke on navigating the AEC to get the most out of the experience.
- President Steve Tackitt summarized the past year's accomplishments, including the introduction of the REHS/RS exam and study guide, the membership directory on disk, and an improved journal.
- The president reported on the credentialing board's recommendations, as approved by the board of directors (see board report). He told the assembly that the credentialing board also serves as an appeals body for people who are denied the opportunity to take a credentialing exam, and it provides oversight of the various credentialing subcommittees.
- Reporting on the association's financial picture, President Tackitt shared the strong recommendation from NEHA's auditor, and from NEHA's board, that the membership dues be increased. He said that NEHA receives only 18% of its income from membership dues,

whereas similar associations of NEHA's size and scope receive more than 50% of their income from this source. The increase was needed to build equity in the association and support association activities.

- The president urged NEHA to expand its involvement in and support of international activities.
- Immediate Past President Evans reported on the results of the spring mail ballot and introduced new second vice president Gary Coleman. She encouraged regions two, three and eight, whose regional vice presidents' terms expire in June 1997, to begin to think about candidates for next spring's elections.
- There being no further nominations from the floor for the office of second vice president, candidates Tony Aiken and Dave Robbins presented their candidacies to the assembly.
- Immediate Past President Evans urged members to apply for the NSF International-sponsored sabbatical program.

#### COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

New officers are seated at this meeting. President Peter Thornton presided.

- Tony Aiken and Dave Robbins, candidates for second vice president on next year's spring mail ballot, made brief presentations.
- Finance Chair Bruce Wilson, President Thornton and Executive Director Nelson Fabian explained in detail the reasons for increasing the regular active membership dues from \$60 to \$75. NEHA's auditor and board strongly recommended an increase so the association can build equity (a reserve for down times), add a customer service position, and spend more time serving members rather than seeking non-dues sources of funding. In response to delegates' concerns about declining membership as a result of dues increases, Executive Director Fabian said that experience has shown that if there's a decline, membership rebounds in a year or two. He also said that a membership recruitment campaign was one of NEHA's major goals this year. The council approved the proposed fiscal 1996-97 budget, which included the dues increase.
- The changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as proposed by the board of directors were approved.

- The delegates passed a resolution saluting Immediate Past President Steve Tackitt for his work in guiding NEHA in the past year.
- The position papers on emerging infectious disease and environmental justice were adopted.
- The new procedure for asking Region 10 members whether they prefer to vote in Region 10 or in the region in which they reside was explained by President Thornton.
- Executive Director Fabian reported on plans for continuously improving the journal, which he described as "the engine for membership growth and retention." An effort is underway to aggressively seek out manuscript authors and build a manuscript inventory so that NEHA can eventually move from a 48-page to a 64-page journal, and ultimately to 12 issues a year.
- President-elect Bloom reported on the outcome of the position paper on the FDA Food Code, which had undergone several changes. A final position was formulated by the board and was previously published in the *Journal of Environmental Health*.
- The Crumbine Award, recognizing achieve-



President Pete Thornton thanks departing president Steve Tackitt for his year serving NEHA



NEHA president Pete Thornton accepting honorary membership in CIPHI from CIPHI president Charlie Young



Past president Diane Evans and president Pete Thornton



Silent Auction; Nelson Fabian and John Marcello

ment in food protection, is in danger of losing its funding. It was reported that NEHA and other organizations will join in funding the Crumline.

- Credentialing Board chair Rick Collins summarized the changes made in contact hours (see board report).

Each year council members participate in focus group discussions on topics of interest or concern to NEHA. This year, participants were asked to share their views on current trends in the organization and delivery of environmental health programs at the local level, and where those trends are expected to lead. Results from the focus group discussions will be incorporated into NEHA's programming.

### Awards and Honors

A vitally important activity at each AEC is the awarding of special recognition to members for their professional achievements and for their contributions to the profession of environmental health. The award program spans from the Mangold Award, representing the highest achievement in the field, to the Certificates of Merit, which are presented to affiliate members for their year of distinctive

effort. It serves as an important event for the profession, as this is when environmental health practitioners gather to define and embrace what excellence in this profession means.

### WALTER S. MANGOLD AWARD

*This award, NEHA's most prestigious, is named for the late Walter S. Mangold, professor of public health at the University of California School of Public Health, an outstanding sanitarian and educator, and first editor of the Sanitarian, forerunner of NEHA's Journal of Environmental Health. The Mangold Award recognizes superior achievement and attainment of the highest standards in the profession.*

The award consists of a cash honorarium and plaque, and inscription of the winner's name on a larger plaque at the NEHA headquarters office.

Leonard F. Rice, R.S., M.E.S., district health director of Edisto District, Orangeburg, South Carolina, and winner of the 1996 Mangold Award, is a familiar face on these pages — just last year he won the Snyder Award at the

AEC. Rice, who is credited with developing several innovative environmental programs in his community, has a degree in environmental health from East Tennessee State University and a master's of environmental science from the University of Oklahoma.

Because Rice is one who leads by example, in 1990 he introduced an office paper recycling program and later collaborated with the Department of Utilities for a joint recycling effort. He developed the first county-wide vector control program in his state, and had a rabies program that was so impressive that it was recommended as a model for other state health districts. He also developed a mosquito control program and was among the first to recognize that computers could play an important role in this effort.

As NEHA president in 1991-1992, he appointed a committee to report on "The Future of Environmental Health." This comprehensive paper, which was designed to identify issues, provoke discussion and offer recommendations to address those issues, for the first time defined NEHA's vision of environmental health and protection. During this same period Rice met with environmental health officials in Russia and attended the World

Environmental Health Congress in the United Kingdom. As a result of these contacts, he encouraged NEHA's active participation in the international field.

Such is the esteem in which the Mangold recipient is held that he serves as an environmental health consultant for the U.S. Department of Justice and holds honorary memberships in several NEHA affiliates as well as in the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors.

So intensely involved is Rice in community affairs and the protection of the environmental health of his community that one colleague wrote, "There is no casual involvement from Leonard. He rolls up his sleeves and only slows down at the completion of the assigned task." Another wrote, "Leonard is one of those individuals who can win an argument through conciliation; with grace and good humor." Still another colleague had this to say of Rice, "His no-nonsense reasoned approach to complex problems demonstrates his understanding that goes far beyond code enforcement."

Like the man for whom the award was named, Rice is also a champion of the profession. He set up an environmental training school for his state, he lectures environmental health students at East Carolina University, and he serves as mentor and role model to others.

The first Mangold Award was presented to Mangold himself in 1956. It seems appropriate that 40 years later this award is presented to Leonard Rice.

### WALTER F. SNYDER AWARD

*The Walter F. Snyder Award, jointly presented by NEHA and NSF International, is named for Walter F. Snyder, who established the National Sanitation Foundation, now NSF International, at the University of Michigan, School of Public Health, in 1944. He served as NSF's executive director, pioneering the concept of solving environmental and health problems through cooperation, until his death in 1965. The award consists of a glass-enclosed trophy clock.*

The Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality was presented to Robert M. Brown, president of NSF from 1967 to 1980 and the person responsible for guiding the organization through a period of transition, in which the horizons of public health were being expanded to encompass environmental health as well.

Brown earned a degree in chemical engineering at the University of South Carolina, and a master's in public health from Johns Hopkins University, before joining the faculty

of the Department of Health at Yale University. He spearheaded NSF's movement into new environmental program areas, such as water quality, wastewater, air quality and solid waste. In his leadership role, and having a strong business sense, he developed and implemented improved management techniques and operating procedures for the organization and adopted sound fiscal management practices to ensure NSF's continued growth.

Perhaps most importantly, during his tenure, NSF continued to fulfill its important role as a trusted neutral organization that helped resolve differences and unite groups in finding solutions to environmental health problems.

#### PRESIDENTIAL CITATIONS

*These citations are presented by the NEHA president in recognition of extraordinary contributions made to the association.*

President Steve Tackitt presented Presidential Citations to the following: Charles Felix, Charles Felix Associates; Glenn Brown, Wayne County (MI) Health Department; Martin Smilo, Mars Air Doors; Simonne Gallaty, former staff journal coordinator; and the EPA/Indoor Environments Division.

#### INDUSTRY SANITARIAN AWARD

*This NEHA award recognizes an environmental health professional who has distinguished himself or herself in the practice of environmental health in industry.*

The award this year was presented to John Marcello of the Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association. John was also the host affiliate coordinator for the AEC this year.

#### HARRY BLISS EDITOR'S AWARD

*The Journal of Environmental Health annually honors a member who has contributed in a special way to the advancement of NEHA and the environmental health profession through their work on behalf of the journal.*

This year's recipient was Thomas Hatfield of the Department of Health Sciences at California State University. He has made numerous contributions to the journal program, particularly as a peer reviewer of manuscripts and as author of the former and popular Computer Corner.

#### NEHA/CIEH SABBATICAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

*This program, financed by NSF International and sponsored by NEHA and its English counterpart CIEH, enables a deserving NEHA member to spend a four-week sabbatical in England while a*

*CIEH member spends four weeks in the United States.*

Brian Bennion, Bureau Director of the Salt Lake City-County Health Department since 1991, was selected for the sabbatical program this year. Applicants are required to submit essays, and finalists are personally screened by a jury before a selection is made.

#### PAST PRESIDENT'S AWARD

*The Past Presidents, a group of former NEHA presidents, annually recognizes a NEHA member for outstanding achievement.*

The award this year went to David Z. McSwane.

#### CERTIFICATES OF MERIT

Each NEHA affiliate is encouraged to select one of its members for a national Certificate of Merit, which recognizes exemplary contributions to the profession of environmental health. Recipients are announced at the AEC Awards Luncheon, and certificates are forwarded to affiliate presidents for presentation.

Certificates were awarded at the 1996 AEC to the following individuals:  
 Alabama, Haygood Lynn Scott  
 Alaska, Cory Willis  
 Arizona, Joelle Wirth  
 California, Douglas Wigle Jr.  
 Colorado, Roberta Boitano  
 Connecticut, Edward Briggs  
 Idaho, Dale King  
 Illinois, Garry W. Bird  
 Indiana, Rosemarie Neimeyer Hansell  
 Iowa, Judy Harrison  
 Massachusetts, Ruth Clay  
 Michigan, Terry Anderson  
 Minnesota, James A. Feddema  
 Missouri, Stan Cowan  
 National Capitol, Mia Zmud  
 NCLEHA, Ronald Buege  
 Nevada, James Pierce  
 New Jersey, Dana Terreri  
 New Mexico, Michael Sacoman  
 North Carolina, Crystal Smith-Cooper  
 Ohio, Gary L. Matson  
 Oklahoma, B.Y. (Nick) Sheldon  
 Oregon, Greig Warner  
 South Carolina, Leonard Rice  
 Virginia, Catherine W. Cummins  
 Washington, Daryl E. Way  
 Wisconsin, Terry L. Brandenburg



Silent Auction



Conference is over! Past president Steve Tackitt

#### OUTGOING REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

President Steve Tackitt presented plaques to outgoing regional vice presidents Stacey Madson, who represented Region 2 for three years, and to Larry Gales, Region 5 and Michael Moon, Region 7, both of whom served six years.

All in all, the 1996 AEC truly represented a celebration of what it means to be an environmental health professional and what it takes to advance in this important profession. Thank you everyone who contributed to the success of this very special event. 🐶

Every AEC represents a building block for the next conference. The NEHA staff extends its appreciation to those attendees who completed their survey forms. Your suggestions, your perspectives, your ideas and your complaints are carefully considered as we begin planning for the next AEC. Our congratulations to Karen Holmes of St. Paul, Minnesota, whose name was drawn from among our respondents. A member since 1989, she receives a full year's free NEHA membership.