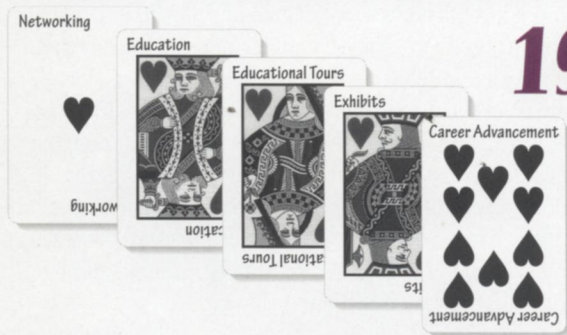


NEHA Deals a Winning Hand

1998 AEC and Exhibition

Las Vegas, Nevada



Introduction

Wow, what a conference and exhibition! With 172 speakers and approximately 1,700 attendees, NEHA's 1998 Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition (AEC) exceeded all previous records for quality and attendance.

Throughout the conference, NEHA staff received spontaneous comments from many attendees that the educational sessions, the opening and closing keynote speeches, the networking luncheon, the special events and tours, and even the registration process were unsurpassed in excellence and value. We thank and congratulate each of the estimated 1,700 people who attended for contributing to—and reaping the rewards from—this special experience!

Credit for this successful AEC is due to the tremendous support NEHA received from contributing speakers, corporate sponsors, and enthusiastic attendees. It is also due to the candid feedback you, our members, gave us during the market research we conducted for this conference. Attendee Peggy J. Guichard-Watters from Phoenix, Arizona, stated on her post-AEC survey form, "Even though I can't get my children to listen to me, I know that NEHA listens to me. I found the speakers and information that I told NEHA I wanted at the 1998 AEC!"

As a direct result of NEHA's market research, certain elements of the AEC were

changed. For instance, the blue-ribbon sessions (the most popular sessions, repeated at different times throughout the conference) that we instituted last year in Washington, D.C., were such a hit that we increased the number offered and made them a permanent feature



AEC attendees making productive use of the well attended networking luncheon.

of future conferences. We also offered more drinking-water sessions than ever before and, for the first time, packaged them as a separate, specialized track within the conference.

NEHA also made changes with respect to the exhibit hall. Exhibit hours were tailored so as not to conflict with the educational sessions, so that attendees had more opportunities to take advantage of this important part of the conference.

The program books distributed to attend-

ees were improved as well, complete with prominent organizational tabs, more detailed descriptions of the sessions offered, and the names and addresses of speakers—they even came with canvas tote bags! We also offered more of NEHA's best-selling books than ever before at a significant discount and had them on display in the exhibit hall.

In addition, NEHA improved the networking luncheon by making it possible for more people to attend and by setting an easy-to-read sign on each table to indicate specific areas of expertise for discussion.

Finally, we reinstated the popular closing keynote speech at the end of the AEC, giving attendees the opportunity to conclude the conference with a sense of pleasure and satisfaction about the entire week of events.

As the Managing Editor's editorial at the end of this month's *Journal* proclaims, those in attendance at this

year's AEC experienced the reward and excitement of becoming a part of something larger than one's self. Through this report, even those who were unable to attend can experience the AEC and all that it brings to NEHA members.

Sponsorships

The tremendous success of this year's AEC would not have been achieved without the generous support NEHA received from the following sponsors. We cannot thank these

sponsors enough for their continued dedication to NEHA and to the profession of environmental health:

- American Academy of Sanitarians—general conference support;
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—educational program development;
- Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association—general conference support;
- Mars Air Door—general conference support;
- McKesson Water Products Company—general conference support;
- Mid-Atlantic Environmental Hygiene Resource Center—general conference support;
- National Center for Environmental Health—educational program development;
- National Drinking Water Clearinghouse—general conference support;
- National Restaurant Association—general conference support;
- NSF International—general conference support;
- Prism Integrated Pest Management—Splash II, Monday evening's special event;
- Taco Bell Corporation—President's Banquet;
- Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.—general conference support; and
- United States Public Health Service—educational program development.

Opening Keynote Address—Ebola Outbreak

This year's keynote address by Colonels Jerry and Nancy Jaax concluded with a standing ovation from an audience of approximately 750 people. The Jaaxes are a husband and wife

team that became famous as a result of their 1989 experience containing an outbreak of the Ebola virus in Reston, Virginia. This incident became the basis of the best-selling book, *The Hot Zone*, and the movie, *Outbreak*. Their story was full of impressive slides, interesting information, and even humor (which was very well received, especially because of the contrast to the horror they described).

Ebola is a highly contagious hemorrhagic fever virus that kills by massive internal hemorrhage and is capable of jumping from one species to another. The Jaaxes specialize in hot (extremely infectious) viruses and high-hazard biological research at the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (U.S. AMRIID). Together, they described how the U.S. AMRIID team contained the Ebola virus after it broke out among some monkeys recently imported from the Philippines at a research laboratory in Reston, Virginia.

Jerry Jaax began the address with a question: "Why are we still discussing an outbreak that occurred almost 10 years ago?" The reason, he explained, is that the incident "has exceptional value to environmental health professionals as a case study ... because the containment plan that U.S. AMRIID employed worked!" Not one of the 42 U.S. AMRIID personnel at risk was infected, whereas four out of five (80 percent of the) personnel who were at risk before U.S. AMRIID became involved did become infected.

Jerry explained that the research U.S. AMRIID conducts is critical to national medical defense against threats such as biological warfare and terrorism. These threats are real and must be taken seriously, he stated. It is known that several countries (including China, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Russia, and Syria) are currently in violation of a multinational biological warfare treaty. One of the questions asked of the Jaaxes was whether they thought the Ebola virus would be "the big one", i.e., the virus of future biological attacks. Jerry's answer was emphatically no. He stated that because Ebola is not contagious until victims experience obvious symptoms, it would be virtually impossible to intentionally infect large numbers of people; the symptoms are so horrific that 1) any victim would seek medical help before he or she could in-

fect many others, and 2) most people would instinctively avoid coming into close proximity with anyone showing symptoms as severe as those caused by Ebola. In other words, an Ebola outbreak among humans would most likely be quickly contained before it became widespread.



NEHA President Ginger Gist places the past president's pin on outgoing President Art Bloom.

Despite the danger involved, it was evident that both of the Jaaxes love their jobs. Jerry joked that "one of the really cool things about my line of work is that I can go almost anywhere in the world and not worry about getting sick I've had over 35 different experimental vaccines." He also talked about how exciting it is to work in the hot zone (defined as a sealed area where it is mandatory to wear highly sophisticated personal protective equipment) wearing positive-pressure, HEPA-filtered "space suits" and studying deadly viruses and bacteria in negative-pressure glove boxes. He then showed the audience a slide of a small medical room in the hot zone at U.S. AMRIID called the "slammer." Two doctors (wearing space suits) were in the room, standing near an examination table, and one of them held a thermometer. Jerry humorously pointed out that "If you're unlucky enough to wind up in the "slammer" and you see these people hovering over you to take your temperature, be nervous!" The audience burst into laughter again when Jerry showed a slide of a man walking down a narrow hallway in the facility where the monkeys were infected, wearing nothing more than shorts and a T-shirt. As Jerry, wearing a space suit, passed the guy in the hallway, he thought to himself, "One of us here is obviously a fool."

On a more serious note, when Jerry was asked if he ever felt scared during the outbreak, he said no. "We were as excited as can be. We knew we were onto something big and important, and we viewed the incident as a once-in-



The Jaaxes and Art Bloom just prior to the opening keynote address.

1998 Mangold Award Recipient Eugene C. Devenport

The National Environmental Health Association is proud to present the 1998 Walter S. Mangold Award, its highest honor, to Eugene C. Devenport.

Eugene has been a professional practitioner of environmental health for 42 years. Throughout his career, he has impressed and inspired co-workers and supervisors alike. To those who know him, he is a man of "unquestionable integrity," as one of his colleagues wrote. In 1995, he authored two chapters of NEHA's Registered Sanitarian/Registered Environmental Health Specialist exam. He has also written or edited 22 environmental health regulations for Salt Lake County, Utah.

Eugene is currently supervisor of the Bureau of Environmental Sanitation and Safety at the Salt Lake City-County Health Department. In urging Eugene's candidacy for the Mangold award, the director of the Bureau of Environmental Sanitation and Safety had a unique reason why Eugene should receive the award:

... because of who he is not! To a large degree the award lends itself to candidates who work at the agency executive level or in academia. Eugene fits neither description. He is the practitioner who makes the science work on a day-to-day basis in the real world, and concurrently has significantly contributed to the profession at the national, state, and local levels.

Eugene's dedication to the profession of environmental health is exceptional. One of his former trainees (Bryce Larsen) wrote that he could not have hoped for a better mentor to teach him about environmental health. Bryce recalled conducting school inspections with Eugene and "wanting to quit on many occasions, feeling like we had done enough." Yet Eugene kept encouraging him to continue, explaining that parents trusted them to make sure that their children had a safe and healthy environment to go to school in. The Mayor's Office in Salt Lake City also recognized Eugene's dedication after he spearheaded a project to clean up a deteriorated inner-city block:

Following Eugene's lead, city and county code enforcement and police officials ... proceeded to reclaim the neighborhood. Boarded houses which for years had been a magnet for crime and environmental health abuses were either torn down or rehabilitated. Yards blighted by junk and refuse were cited and brought into compliance. Drug houses were shut down, and crime in general was brought to its lowest rate in years. Residents in this part of town are now enjoying a new image of themselves.

One of Eugene's hallmarks is his unfailing willingness to help others. He once agreed to fulfill the responsibilities of a colleague (chairman of the awards committee for the Utah Environmental Health Association) who was ill and recovering from surgery. Eugene completed all of the footwork necessary, from selecting the award recipients, to ordering the plaques and certificates, to bringing them to the banquet. When the time came for them to be presented, he sat back while the recovered chairman made all of the announcements. Despite the fact that without Eugene's help there would have been no awards to present, he did not want any recognition for his efforts.

This selfless trait was further emphasized by another one of Eugene's co-workers, who wrote that it was not uncommon for Eugene to help those who were sick or on vacation by anonymously diverting their work to his own desk while they were gone.

Given Eugene's humble and honest nature, coupled with his 42 years of experience, it is not surprising that his opinion is highly regarded. On many occasions, he has brought divided groups to consensus on controversial issues without making anyone feel that his or her position was not given full consideration.

Eugene's intelligence and accomplishments, his motivation, and his manner make him a rare kind of person who elevates the professional status of environmental health. "Through his work efforts and by the high ethical standards he has set," a former director of environmental health in Utah wrote, "he continues to improve the image of the local environmental health professional." No one is more deserving than Eugene to receive the 1998 Walter S. Mangold Award.

a-lifetime opportunity to learn as much as possible about this deadly virus." Jerry explained that the tight military teamwork culture and chain of command had a lot to do with the success U.S. AMRIID had in containing the virus without any mistakes. He stressed that for emergency situations in which decisions must be made and implemented accurately and quickly, military systems are extremely useful.

When Nancy Jaax took the stage, she told the audience about her dramatic discovery of Ebola in a blood sample drawn from one of the monkeys. It all began with a report that a research laboratory in Reston, Virginia, was experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of monkey deaths (18 total). Nancy carefully collected blood and tissue samples from the dead monkeys and examined them under an electron microscope. That is when she discovered with great shock the unmistakable filovirus, a deadly African virus of which there are two types (Marburg and Ebola). It was later determined that, of the two possible types, the monkeys were infected with Ebola.

Nancy explained that Ebola presents with flulike symptoms, and is not usually diagnosed until the third or fourth stage of replication, which is when the victim begins to bleed out. It has a short incubation period of seven to 11 days. Nancy then showed autopsy slides of the monkeys and their visible symptoms, including bruise "masks" on their faces, bruises on their skin, and large hemorrhaged areas on their livers, lungs, and intestinal tracts.

It is interesting to note that Nancy and her team of pathologists learned for the first time that Ebola was spreading via airborne mechanisms. This became apparent after they looked at slides from lung tissue under a microscope and noticed that the alveoli too had become infected. "With Ebola," Nancy described, "every macrophage in your body becomes a moving, mini-incubator for the virus, which then injects the replicated virus into nearby cells."

One of the last issues Nancy discussed was "Where are we now with Ebola?" A current hypothesis is that Ebola infects human beings via vegetarian monkeys that get into the human food chain (monkeys are often roasted and eaten in Africa). After the outbreak in Reston, Virginia, U.S. AMRIID sent a team of pathologists to Zaire, Africa, which is recognized as the region of origin for the Ebola virus. The team collected over 32,000 different live specimens in an effort to pinpoint the reservoir for the virus. Unfortunately, not a single positive sample was found. Despite this un-

successful attempt, scientists agree that outbreaks have been limited to, or directly linked to, sub-Saharan Africa. They will continue studying the disease to answer as many questions as possible.

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the opening keynote presentation by the Jaaxes. It was as entertaining as it was informative and had enormous significance for environmental health professionals. The public health implications from emerging infectious diseases are immense, and few people as uniquely experienced and talented as the Jaaxes can speak on the subject. NEHA thanks them very much for being such a valuable part of the 1998 AEC in Vegas!

Awards & Honors

An integral part of your annual conference is the recognition of individuals for their excellence, their professionalism, and their contributions to environmental health. Whether they are receiving the sabbatical award, a certificate, or the Mangold Award, it's a special occasion when members are recognized by their peers in the professional setting of the AEC.

Walter S. Mangold Award

NEHA's highest honor was bestowed this year on a very deserving Eugene C. Devenport for his many years of service to environmental health. Please see the accompanying story on page 42, which details Gene's contributions.

Walter F. Snyder Award

The Snyder Award was bestowed this year on Chris J. Wiant. This award is a very special act of joint recognition by NEHA and NSF International. Please see the accompanying story on page 44.

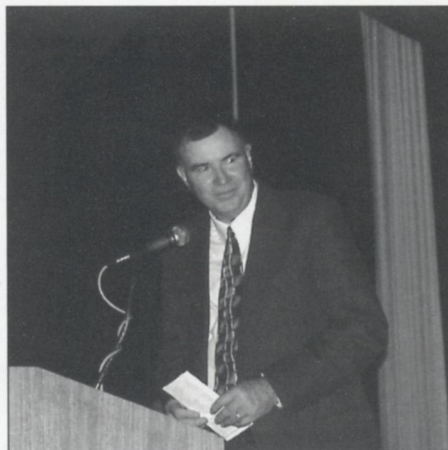
NEHA/CIEH Sabbatical Exchange Program

This program, financed by NSF International and managed by NEHA and its English counterpart, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (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.

Larry Yates, Chief of Environmental Health at the Loudoun County Health Department in Virginia, was selected as this year's sabbatical ambassador. Applicants were screened on the basis of their portfolios and essays, and finalists were personally interviewed by the jury for this award.

Certificates of Merit

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



Eugene Devenport accepts the Walter S. Mangold award.

is prepared for and presented to each honoree. This year's national certificate of merit winners are listed on page 46.

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 work on behalf of the *Journal*.



Bob Powitz and Jim Balsamo accept the Harry Bliss Editor's Award

This year, the award was presented to a duo of writers, Robert W. Powitz and James Balsamo, who write the "Tools for Environmental Health" department in the *Journal* each month. These two contributors were recognized because of the extra effort they consistently devote to NEHA members through the

preparation of this department. Of all the *Journal* program's contributing writers, these two alone have never failed to meet their deadlines and, in fact, are usually way ahead of schedule. Their "Tools for Environmental Health" department is also one of the best representations in the *Journal* of NEHA's new emphasis on publishing more content with practical applications.

Crumbine Award

The Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award is presented annually by 10 co-sponsors, including NEHA, to a local government health unit for the excellence of its 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 Clark County Health Department in Las Vegas, Nevada. Clare Schmutz, Director of Environmental Health, accepted the award on behalf of his staff and program.

Past Presidents' Award

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

Their award this year was presented to Bruce Wilson, Director of Environmental Health at the Tri-County Health Department in Englewood, Colorado. Bruce has served the association for over a decade as the chair of NEHA's finance committee.

NEHA/AAS Scholarship Awards

The scholarship program, sponsored both by NEHA and the American Academy of Sanitarians, awarded one \$2,000 graduate scholarship and three undergraduate scholarships worth \$1,000 each this year.

The graduate scholarship was awarded to Kendra Ann Morrison from the University of Colorado. Undergraduate scholarships went to Bruce Neumann from the University of Wisconsin, Kimberly Marie Grandinetti from Illinois State University, and Ruth Williams from East Tennessee State University.

Student Research and Poster Presentations

NEHA congratulates the following students for presenting their research and posters at the AEC. Thanks to the generous donations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and from Dr. Dan Boatright of the University of Oklahoma, the students who participated in these events received a plaque and up to \$1,000 to cover their travel and related expenses.

1998 Walter F. Snyder Award Presented to Chris J. Wiant, Ph.D.

In presenting the Walter F. Snyder Award for 1998 to Chris J. Wiant, we honor a unique individual who has a multitude of accomplishments in support of the environmental health field. Like Walter F. Snyder, Dr. Wiant believes that this world can, and must, be made a better place to live. Not only does he believe this, he has made it happen.

The citizens of the Tri-County Health Department are able to drink their water with less concern today. They know they have a strong friend and ally in their Executive Director, Dr. Chris J. Wiant.

Explains a supporting colleague, "without a doubt, the most notable example of Dr. Wiant's ability to work with all interests in solving environmental problems was his facilitation of final clean-up remedies for the most polluted place on earth, i.e., the Rocky Mountain Arsenal."

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal, established by the Department of Defense during World War II, was a chemical weapons manufacturing facility producing lewisite, mustard gas, and later sarin gas. In addition, after the war, private industry leased sections of the plant for producing agricultural pesticides. Left behind, in 1982 after all production ceased, was extensive soil contamination impacting private drinking water supplies and irrigation wells.

Led by his unwavering determination to find a resolution for clean-up that would be protective, cost-effective and timely, Dr. Wiant organized a coalition of local stakeholders and formed a united front to demand a Record of Decision. First, Dr. Wiant, led the effort to educate each of the local community players on the study results and clean-up alternatives. Next, he represented the coalition in negotiations with government regulatory agencies, Shell Oil company, the U.S. Army and environmental groups and was instrumental in achieving consensus. "Without Dr. Wiant's direct intervention, the local community's input would have been fractional and ineffective," added the colleague. A Record of Decision for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal was signed on June 11, 1996. For his effort, Dr. Wiant was awarded the "Commander's Medal for Public Service" from the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army.

Dr. Wiant was the primary architect of the Tri-County Health Department's changes in

the Food Service Establishment Inspection Program leading to recognition by the Crumrine Award Jury. The Department was awarded the Samuel J. Crumrine Award in 1992. This prestigious award is given for excellence and continual improvement (3-5 years) in a comprehensive program of food protection at the local level.

Education and training, always a factor in Dr. Wiant's agenda, was the instrument for bringing together industry, academia and regulatory bodies to create a voluntary food service education program. This training program on food safety for food service workers represents a true partnership between the food service industry and regulatory authorities. An Advisory Committee from this representation was formed



Chris and Cindy Wiant as Chris receives Snyder award.

to provide ongoing oversight and guidance for this program. He carried this one-step further as he pulled stakeholders together to hammer out words and support to make vital changes to state laws regarding food service and individual sewage disposal systems. "Food safety will command greater attention in our food service establishments," corroborated a colleague.

Dr. Wiant's influence beyond Colorado and Illinois has been aided by his appointments to a wide variety of expert groups: the U.S. EPA Regulatory Negotiation on Disinfection By-Products in Drinking Water; the U.S. EPA National Drinking Water Advisory Council; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Council on Hazardous Substances Research and Training; and a Commissioned Investigator, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Com-

mission. He is a current member of the Chlorine Chemistry Council, Disinfection Issues Team and serves on the Public Health Advisory/Board for the Chemical Manufacturers Association.

This Walter F. Snyder recipient also serves on the Council of Public Health Consultants for NSF International and was its 1995-1996 Chairman. A long-time member and strong supporter of NEHA, Dr. Wiant served as its President for the 1992-1993 term. He also is the author of the NEHA *Journal's* Out of the In-Basket column.

On the state/local level, Dr. Wiant has held his share of appointments both in Illinois and Colorado. He currently serves as Chairman, Colorado Pollution Prevention Advisory Board and was recently appointed to the Water Quality Control Commission.

Dr. Wiant earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Illinois State University in 1972, a Master of Arts in Health Service Administration from Sangamon State University in 1978, and in 1979 he received a Master of Public Health in occupational and environmental medicine from the University of Illinois, Medical Center, School of Public Health. Later, in 1995, he was awarded his Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration from the University of Colorado, Denver.

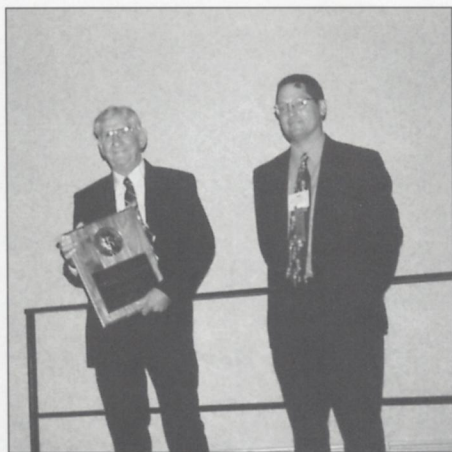
Beginning his professional career in 1972 as Product Safety Program Administrator, Illinois Department of Public Health, Dr. Wiant has accumulated 25 years in public and environmental health services. Today, as Colorado's No. 2 public health professional, Dr. Wiant oversees 260 employees, helps to manage a \$14 million budget while serving a population of 868,000 in three counties.

Dr. Wiant and his wife, Cindy, are well-known in the Aurora community where they are raising their two children and participate in many civic activities. In his leisure time, he enjoys flying single engine airplanes and is a member of the Colorado Pilots Association.

NSF International and NEHA take great pleasure in awarding to Dr. Chris J. Wiant the 1998 Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality. Dr. Wiant's intellect, integrity, and commitment to improving the quality of life through his work in environmental health has made a better world for us all.

Presenting research were Amanda L. Drake and Gretchen D. Legget of Missouri Southern State College (impact of food irradiation on the microbial content and taste of apple cider); Eleni Protopapas of Bowling Green State University in Ohio (demonstration of imperfect air mixing in a room); Doua Lo of Western Carolina University (potential particulate hazards in poultry houses); Laqueta Ollis Carrol of Western Carolina University (comparative water quality study of Young's Fork Creek); and Erica Cunningham of the University of Miami (in-vitro testing of pediculicide formulations using fresh specimens of *Pediculus capitis* and eggs collected from human volunteers).

Presenting research with posters that were awarded first, second, and third place, respectively, were Stephanie C. Felix and Kimberly S. Kloss of Salisbury State University (Distribution of Radon 222 in Drinking Water Supplies of the Eastern Shore of Maryland); Stephen R. Piontkowski of East Tennessee State University (Concentration of Bacteria in Groundwater and Two Streams in a Rural Community in East Tennessee); and Crista J. Trapp of Salisbury State University (Tropospheric Ozone Exposure on Maryland's Eastern Shore). Two additional posters were presented by three students from Missouri Southern State University: Brandon Rekus (Agency Cooperation at the Jasper County Superfund Site); and Amanda Drake and Gretchen Legget (The Impact of Food Irradiation Using Cobalt 60 on Microbial Content and Taste of Apple Cider).



James Steinhoff (right) from Madison Dept. of Public Health (last year's Crumbine Winner) presents the 1998 Crumbine award to Clare Schmutz (left), Director of Environmental Health at Clark County Health Department in Las Vegas.

Past President Pin

Outgoing NEHA President Art Bloom was recognized by the association for his excep-

tional 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 are given to those individuals who gave of themselves during the president's term of office. They are few in number and are meant to recognize extraordinary contributions made on behalf of the association.

Richard Collins, George Nakamura, Ron Hall, Franklin Carver, and Rose Bloom were honored with presidential citations this year.

Educational Activities

It is NEHA's distinct pleasure to announce that, once again, we found ways to improve the educational activities offered at your conference. Because it is our goal to accomplish this improvement each year, on-going market research with you, our members, is vital.

After last year's AEC in Washington, D.C., we collected information from hundreds of NEHA members to determine your strongest interests and highest priorities for educational material—and not only in regard to *what* is presented, but *how* it is presented.

Because so many of you requested hands-on learning experiences, we organized more educational tours this year than ever before. For instance, attendees were given the opportunity to sign up for a free tour of the modernized and highly acclaimed kitchen at the MGM Grand Hotel (thanks to the diligent efforts of Mary Hahn from the Clark County Health Department). We also offered tours of Yucca Mountain (an underground storage facility for nuclear waste) and the Nevada Test Site, where nuclear weapons were detonated both above- and below-ground during the Cold War era.

Also per your request, we added more blue-ribbon sessions (the most popular sessions, which are offered more than once throughout the conference) and also assigned a level of difficulty (from introductory to advanced) to each educational session in the program book.

Because so many of you enjoy attending specialized modules within the conference (as opposed to attending the full conference), we offered one-day conference registration for



One of the many educational sessions in progress.

separate topical tracks given on particular days. The list of specialized modules included tracks on food protection, hazardous waste, emerging pathogens, management, indoor air quality, on-site wastewater, and drinking water. (Thanks to your feedback, the drinking-water track was a new addition to the list this year!)

Two more new additions to the AEC were the outstanding student presentations and student poster sessions. For details on these events, please see the heading "Awards and Honors," above.

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:

- Tim Radtke, air/land/water;
- Mia Zmud, environmental health management;
- Darryl B. Barnett, environmental health research;
- George Nakamura, food protection;
- John A. Steward, general environmental health;
- Jennifer Campbell, hazardous & toxic substances;
- Laura Studevant-Thacker, injury prevention/occupational health;
- James Balsamo, Jr., institutional environmental health;
- Vicki Everly, international environmental health; and
- Paul Chase, on-site wastewater management.

Learning Through Exhibits

A total of 92 companies and organizations were represented at this year's sold-out exhibit hall. The exhibits at the AEC represent an important component of our educational programming, because what is seen and heard in the exhibit hall can reinforce and enhance what is seen and heard in the classroom. NEHA actively recruits exhibitors who can present the cutting-edge of the profession, and the effort is rewarded when attendees report that they have learned about educational opportunities through exhibitors, and that they were finally 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 are assuming a teaching role and helping AEC attendees to understand what is new and how it will affect the

attendees' jobs. Some exhibitors are also serving as presenters in AEC educational sessions, so the classroom and the exhibit hall constitute an integrated educational experience.

To further refine the success of this event in the future, exhibitors were invited to participate in a special focus group at the end of the conference. Many good ideas were discussed and will be implemented next year, so stay tuned for more detailed information about the Nashville 1999 AEC and Exhibition!

Networking and Social Activities

Networking Luncheon

The networking luncheon this year was phenomenal—over 800 people turned out! The luncheon was held on the penthouse floor in the Top of the Riv ballroom, with panoramic views of Las Vegas. According to overwhelming feedback NEHA staff received from attendees, the food and conversation were excellent!

One of the new things about the luncheon this year was the addition of a sign at each table indicating a specific area of environmental health for discussion (such as food protection, vector control, drinking water, etc.). The signs made it easy for people interested in particular topics to sit with professionals and others interested in the same field.

Everyone who attended this event deserves credit for making it such a success. Thank you!!

Golf Tournament

The golf tournament this year was held at the Legacy Golf Course in Las Vegas. The winning team was the foursome of Vanderbush, Dyer, Plander, and Schuttloffel. In second place was the team of Price, Garrison, Hatfield, and Seger. Third place went to "Team America," made up of Galvan, Grenawitzke, Tackitt, and Jenkins.

Silent auction

A combined networking and fundraising opportunity that has become an AEC tradition is the silent auction, which raised approximately \$4,200 this year. Items donated by affiliates, exhibitors, and NEHA members and friends

were snapped up by enthusiastic buyers looking for something beautiful, practical, whimsical, collectible, or professionally useful.

Among the hot items generating traffic jams were a beanie baby, a football signed by the Nebraska cornhuskers championship team, a handmade knife and sheath, a carved Eskimo horn doll, Arizona Diamondback mementos, and a Raytek noncontact thermometer. The biggest bidder of the day was former NEHA president Diane Evans, who paid \$685 for NEHA's offer of registration and hotel expenses for the 1999 AEC in Nashville, Tennessee. Diane thus became the first member to commit to the next AEC.

Proceeds from the silent auction support



Executive Director Nelson Fabian (far left) and incoming President Ginger Gist (far right) mingle with NEHA staff in line for the Splash II event.

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—Barry Walker
Alaska—Ervin L. Moore
Arizona—Norm Marrah
Connecticut—Judith Wrenn
Florida—Roy Costa
Georgia—Dr. Harold Barnhart
Illinois—Kerry O'Shaughnessy
Indiana—Charles Sullivan
Missouri—Charles Kendrick
National Capital Area—Charles S. Otto III
New Jersey—Peter Tabbot
New York—Dr. Fred Moy
North Carolina—Thomas R. Ward
Ohio—Daniel S. Chatfield
South Carolina—Vicki Blair
Texas—Tom Hatfield
Utah—Phil D. Wright
Virginia—Larry Yates
Wisconsin—Wayne Kopp
Wyoming—Dean Finkenbinder



Tabby Bernardo, NEHA Executive Coordinator and Silent Auction Manager, discusses details of the Silent Auction with NEHA Executive Director Nelson Fabian.

the AEC speaker fund, which covers speaker honorariums, travel and hotel expenses, equipment rental, and handout materials.

A Special Thank You to the 1998 Exhibitors

3E Company
AK Industries
All Quality Assurance Products
AmbiTec
American Academy of Sanitarians
American Manufacturing Co., Inc.
Amway Corporation
Atkins Technical, Inc.
Audits International
Becton Dickinson
Berner International
Big Honkin' Ideas Advertising
Biological Mediation Systems, Inc.
Bio-Microbics, Inc.
Bord Na Mona
Carfax Publishing, Ltd.
CDC -- National Center for Environmental Health
Chlorine Chemistry Council
Clean Water Revival
Clearstream Wastewater Systems, Inc.
Comark Instruments, Inc.
Cooper Instrument Corporation
Cultec, Inc.
Decade Software Company
Delta Environmental Products, Inc.
Disaster Resource Guide
Drayner, Inc.
Ecolab, Inc.
Eljen Corporation
Environmental Assessment Association
Environmental Health Information Service
EnviroTemps, Inc.
ERDAS, Inc.
FoodHandler
Food Safety First! (Drexel University)
Fulcrum Publishing
GemCom (USA), Inc.
Geoflow, Inc.
Glo Germ Company
Hanley & Belfus, Inc.
Harry's Farmers Market, Inc.
Hydro-Action, Inc.
Infiltrator Systems, Inc.
Intermetro Industries
Intertek Testing Services - ITS
J.T. Eaton & Company
Kairak, Inc.
KatchAll Industries
Kenkut Products, Inc.
MicroSeptic, Inc.
Nasco Modesto
NAI Block
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Drinking Water Clearinghouse
National Library of Medicine
National Restaurant Association's Educational Foundation
National Swimming Pool Foundation
Norweco, Inc.
Norwesco, Inc.
NSF International
Orenco Systems, Inc.
Polylok
Portable Sanitation Association International
Premier Tech Ltd.
PRISM
PSA, Inc.
Radiation Monitoring Devices, Inc.
Radon Environmental Monitoring (REM)
Raytek Corporation
Red Jacket Pumps
Rimbach Publishing, Inc.
Rucon Enterprises (Cromaglass Corporation)
San-Aire Industries, Inc.
SJE - Rhombus
SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals
Sneezeguard Solutions, Inc.
Solutions Plus, Inc.
Stemcell Research
Tennessee Environmental Health Association
Triple E Marketing
Tucel Industries, Inc.
Tuf-Tite, Inc.
Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
US Army Center for Health Promotion
and Preventive Medicine
USDA -- Food Safety and Inspection Services
US EPA -- Office of Environmental Justice
US EPA -- Waste Policy Institute
USPHS -- Indian Health Services
Volusia County Public Health Unit
Water Environment Federation
Western Partnership for Environmental
Technology and Education (PETE)
Zabel Environmental Technology

Splash II

The evening of entertainment at the Splash II show was the kind of show Vegas is famous for, and it was conducted in tasteful and impressive style. Some of the acts included synchronized swimming by showgirls dressed as mermaids, a motorcycle-riding quartet inside an enclosed globe of high-speed danger, a ma-

gician, three hilarious and extremely talented jugglers who could probably juggle the hotel if they had to, and a contortionist who could support her entire weight on one hand while bending her body into unimaginable positions. Most of all, it was a great opportunity for attendees and NEHA staff to relax, laugh, and marvel at the show with each other—what a

night of rejuvenation!

Association Business

Board of Directors

- Discussion was held on NEHA's continuing involvement in the national Public Health Functions Working Group. This group provides an opportunity for NEHA

to be involved in the shaping of national public health policy.

- Discussion was held about proceeding with some type of educational program on biological counter terrorism. NEHA will be seeking grant funding to sponsor a major national conference on this topic.
- It was reported that the AEC in Las Vegas was NEHA's largest ever with approximately 1,350 professionals in attendance and an overall attendance of over 1,700.
- The board decided to allow an additional month for continued policy debate over the qualification criteria for NEHA's new food credential. The board set the end of the summer as the time by which NEHA will have in place clear policy criteria regarding what qualifies an individual to take the new food credential exam.
- The executive director explained that NEHA was also moving through processes to secure conference support grants to sponsor two new national educational conferences on community right to know (September 1999) and vessel sanitation (September 2000).
- It was announced that former NEHA president John Barry would be the new technical editor for the *Journal*, replacing Dr. Franklin Carver, who served the *Journal* in this capacity for almost four years.
- It was announced that Larry Yates from Virginia was selected as the recipient of the NSF International-funded NEHA/CIEH Sabbatical Exchange Ambassador Award.
- The board acted to curtail any future investments that would involve front-end load funds.
- The board directed its representative to the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) to vote no on a pending IFEH dues increase.
- The board also elected to make a contribution to Public Health International to help in its environmental health work with international relief agencies.

General Assembly

- President Bloom summarized the highlights of the previous year (NEHA's 61st). He noted that NEHA was now publishing *e.n.d.*, has a food credential to offer, is participating by invitation in President Clinton's food safety initiative, has its own web page, provides information clearinghouse services to the membership, now has approximately 200 volunteers involved in NEHA, has made a model body-art code available and is working on one for swimming pools, has study guides now available for both the R.S./R.E.H.S. and R.E.T.



NEHA President Art Bloom gives professional advice to riveted attendee Ron Hall.

credentials, has significantly expanded membership benefits, has increased the number of pages printed in the *Journal*, has established over 20 liaison arrangements with different federal agencies, has updated and enhanced the association's investment plan, has increased the computer sophistication of the Denver office, now has a new section on environmental health research, and has grown to an almost \$2 million-a-year enterprise.

- Jim Dingman, who is the candidate for the NEHA office of second vice president next spring, presented his qualifications.
- Executive Director Nelson Fabian outlined NEHA's strategic direction, emphasizing that the association was making significant strides in opening up membership to non-traditional professionals as well as to traditional ones.
- President-Elect Ginger Gist summarized the various issues on which NEHA is taking national policy positions.
- Various members commented on issues ranging from the *E. coli* outbreak in Atlanta to the possibility of lobbying for a national environmental health week, to ways in which NEHA could exert more leadership in environmental health.

Council of Delegates (new officers were seated at this meeting—President Ginger Gist presided)

- President Ginger Gist distributed a new leadership directory to each council delegate.
- Election results from this past spring were reported as follows:
 - Laura Studevart-Thacker was elected second vice president of the association.
 - Mary Myszka, Doug Ebelherr, and Dave Rogers were re-elected to their regional vice president positions.

–Also, the proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation/By-laws were approved.

- NEHA Executive Coordinator Tabby Bernardo reported initial earnings of \$4,175 from the silent auction.
- Executive Director Nelson Fabian explained that next year's conference in Nashville would be shifted by two days from NEHA's traditional meeting pattern.
- President Ginger Gist encouraged affiliate presidents to nominate deserving people in their areas for NEHA's Mangold and/or Snyder awards.
- President Gist also explained that by virtue of the support that she had from her employer, she would be able, on NEHA's behalf, to visit with any affiliate over the course of the coming year, at no cost to the affiliate. She encouraged those affiliates that might be interested in having the NEHA president attend their meeting to contact her. (President Gist's telephone, fax and e-mail are all listed in the *Journal*.)
- NEHA President-Elect Gary Coleman, a former exchange ambassador, encouraged NEHA's affiliates to promote the sabbatical exchange program to the NEHA members of their organization. He described the program as one of the finest the association offers and a career opportunity of a lifetime.
- Executive Director Nelson Fabian described NEHA's AEC site selection process and identified sites being considered for upcoming AECs. He explained that the association was looking at Atlanta, New Orleans, Louisville, Indianapolis, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Pittsburgh for its 2001 AEC and Reno, Kansas City, Spokane, Anchorage, and Salt Lake City for its 2002 AEC.
- Executive Director Nelson Fabian explained how NEHA affiliates could join with the association as distributors for any of NEHA's publications.
- NEHA Operations Manager Becky Roland explained the new membership benefits that NEHA was now offering, emphasizing that the association has substantially increased the benefits available to NEHA members.
- NEHA Sales and Marketing Coordinator Kim Brandow reported on the volunteer opportunities now opening up within the association, noting that some 200 different people were now contributing to NEHA's activities in various ways.
- NEHA Research and Development Manager Larry Marcum described the radon/indoor air quality classes that were available to NEHA members by virtue of U.S. EPA grant funding and encouraged

council delegates to inform their members about this unique and all-expense-paid opportunity.

- President Gist summarized the many different federal liaisons that the association has now established.
- Resolutions and position papers were adopted by the council, recognizing President Bloom for his service, acknowledging the bicentennial of the U.S. Public Health Service, discussing second-hand smoke, discussing clean-air act amendments, and discussing pesticides.
- NEHA Treasurer Bruce Wilson presented the \$1.71 million 1998/1999 NEHA budget. The budget was approved.
- Focus groups summarized their discussions about the proposition that a culture of indifference exists within the environmental health profession. In general, the focus groups came back to the delegates with the conclusion that such a culture existed. Presentations dwelled on why this culture has developed and what sorts of approaches should be taken to change this culture.

Closing Keynote Address, Brian O'Malley

Back by popular demand, Brian O'Malley wrapped up the conference with a very enlightening and moving talk about his recent experiences in Africa as a climber and photographer. (In 1995, he addressed NEHA conference attendees in Denver about his inspiring climb to the summit of Mt. Everest, which many of the people in the audience recalled.)

The theme of his presentation was that mountains (including personal or professional mountains) don't have to be as big as Mt. Everest to be just as challenging and, sometimes, formidable. On his first attempt to reach the summit of Mt. Kenya in Africa, he and his partner had to retreat. "Oh, the tears of disappointment to go home without reaching the summit." One might be amazed at this "failure," on a mountain only 17,000 feet high, since this same team of climbers had previously reached the summit of Everest at over 24,000 feet. But conditions were worse this time, and Brian's partner didn't feel good about continuing on to reach the summit. Respecting his partner's judgement, Brian accepted the idea of retreat for the time being. He and the same partner, however, returned a few years later to successfully reach the summit.

Brian said that the secret to a happy and fulfilling life is "having something to love to do." He also talked about the importance of



Dennis Mangino, CEO of NSF International (right), presents the Sabbatical Exchange Ambassador award to Larry Yates (left) of Virginia.

having a good partner in your adventures to share your joys and burdens with, and to help you make wise decisions. He talked about the meaning of regret and said that his biggest regret would not be something he didn't finish, but something he never started. "Waiting is a dangerous place to be," he said "because you can lose focus, concentration, and courage."

Brian is as relentless in his pursuit of stunning photographs as he is in his pursuit of adventure. He told a story about his encounter with the Masai tribe while in Africa. Being a photographer, Brian knew he was in trouble when word got out about a man found speared to death in his tent as a result of taking a photograph of one of the members of the tribe. "These people," Brian said, "believe that if anyone takes their picture, it takes their soul away." Brian was brave enough, however, to ask "But if I take your picture and give it back to you (he had a Polaroid instant camera), then does that cover that soul thing?" Fortunately for Brian, the answer was yes, and he returned with brilliant photographs of the Masai people.

With his slides and his imagination, Brian made many significant points. One of the slides showed nothing but a thick mass of fog and clouds. About this picture he said, "This was our first view of Mt. Kenya." His point was that when you first set a goal, you can't always see exactly where you are headed; but as you get closer, the goal becomes much clearer. He also showed a slide of a large herd of gazelle running across the African landscape. After the herd had passed by, a few of the smaller ones lay on the ground with broken limbs. "Sometimes, if you follow the herd," Brian said, "you end up getting trampled." He stressed the im-

portance of setting your own path in life, and referred to the actor George Burns for an example. "When George first started out, he said he was going to reach the age of 100, and he did. *I don't believe that was due to chance.*"

To Brian, nothing is due to chance; everything is due to self-assertiveness and determination. Whether one is climbing the face of an ice-covered summit or protecting public and environmental health, obstacles need to be faced head-on. In environmental health, summits such as budgetary constraints and the public's perception of the need for the profession are comparable to the summit of Mt. Kenya. While they may not measure up to Mt. Everest in height, they can be just as difficult to climb. One last word of advice from Brian was that to climb is to risk falling, but *not to climb* is to risk never knowing what you can achieve.

Conclusion

NEHA is already preparing for next year's AEC in Nashville. As promised, we will continue listening to your feedback and ideas for improvement through the market research we will be conducting over the next few months.

We hope that even more of you next year will join your colleagues in environmental health and attend the Nashville conference. It will be a unique opportunity to develop your own ideas, listen to those of others, and in general, improve both your outlook, your career, and the profession of environmental health.



Participants of the golf tournament enjoy lunch together.