

► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



David E. Riggs,
MS, REHS/RS

With a Little Help From My Friends

Recently it was my privilege to talk about the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) and what it means for our association to be the premier organization for environmental health. As I presented the many ways that NEHA serves the professional practitioner, I also considered who it takes to make NEHA the go-to environmental health organization.

The first group of people that comes to mind is the NEHA staff and management. This small but talented, dedicated, and intelligent group of professionals is responsible for the ongoing operation of our association. The many changes in NEHA over the last two years have been carried on their shoulders. It has been their responsibility to implement new software systems for all phases of head-quarter function including membership and learning management systems and a new and expanded Web site. Also of importance is that NEHA is in the midst of implementing a new accounting system under the direction of a new financial director.

Another great accomplishment will be the roll out of the NEHA 2017 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The 2017 AEC will be a new version of our AEC with more streamlined and interactive presentations on the most current national and local concerns and issues. Keynote and session presentations will feature national leaders and practitioners. Check out the 2017 AEC promo on page 49 for more information and to register.

In addition to our NEHA staff, this association could not exist or function without our volunteers. NEHA is first and foremost a vol-

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unteer professional organization. Volunteers range from the board of directors, which consists of five national officers and nine regional vice-presidents, to technical advisors, subject matter experts, and peer reviewers, as well as state affiliate presidents. These are but a few of the volunteer professionals that our association depends upon to function and accomplish the work of representing, educating, and communicating with all members.

Our state affiliate presidents and officers are leaders on the state and local levels. It is through the state affiliates that NEHA maintains its connections to the membership and on-the-ground environmental health professionals. It is through this relationship that practitioners can keep NEHA aware of environmental health laws, regulations, and trends. It is also through this relationship that NEHA can address concerns and develop position papers, as well as provide education aimed toward local and state needs. Most, if not all, of our national volunteers began by

being active members and officers in their state affiliates. State affiliates are the foundation of NEHA and give strength, expertise, and diversity to our national organization.

Another group of volunteers that plays a major role in the success of NEHA is the technical advisors. These volunteers are experts in their chosen fields. They work with NEHA staff during the AEC to put together the educational program, as well as provide their expertise to the board of directors and staff on questions and concerns that arise throughout the year. Recruiting speakers, reviewing abstracts, and moderating AEC sessions make up just a short list of what our technical advisors do.

Our *Journal of Environmental Health* is an outstanding example of a professional journal that presents noteworthy articles and columns on current issues, concerns, and environmental health practices, as well as scientifically sound research and application. It would be impossible to publish such a fine periodical without the *Journal's* managing editor, staff, technical editors, peer reviewers, columnists, and submitting authors. The combination of our staff and volunteers makes our *Journal* valid, original, logical, and scientifically sound.

Our volunteers also play a vital role in the success of NEHA and the environmental health profession; they are the people who donate time to various committees, projects, and professional activities. This group operates and volunteers on local, state, and national levels. Whether you volunteer to serve a city or county commission or board, or a civic or charitable organization, you expand the visibility of our profession. It is also impor-

tant to volunteer to serve on your state affiliates committees to build an active organization that promotes environmental health.

It is impossible to recognize or thank all the volunteers that NEHA, state affiliates, and our profession depend upon for their success. NEHA is an organization that depends upon all of us volunteering our time, knowledge, and expertise to support our profession and our association.

Over the years, I have posed the question, "How did you get into the environmental health profession?" The answers have ranged from "It was an open job where I could use

my degree," to "I started out studying pharmacy and didn't like it so I transferred my science credits into environmental health." Many of us found our way into the environmental health profession via different paths and many of us have made a conscious decision to join NEHA. We have found that our association is the premier environmental health organization and the recognized voice of environmental health practitioners. As members, we should feel the obligation and privileged to volunteer at all levels to ensure we remain a viable and top notch organization.

It is with pride in my profession that I say thank you to our volunteers that contribute to NEHA. If you want to get involved with either NEHA or your state affiliate, let us know. You can also go to www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved to learn more about all the volunteer opportunities NEHA offers. I believe volunteering will be rewarding and may change your career and life, like it did for mine. 🐼

David E. Riggs

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Did You Know?

NEHA has created blogs for the columns written by our president and executive director. You can read the columns online, leave your comments, and start a conversation. Check out these blogs at www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved/blog.

SUPPORT THE NEHA ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The NEHA Endowment Foundation was established to enable NEHA to do more for the environmental health profession than its annual budget might allow. Special projects and programs supported by the foundation will be carried out for the sole purpose of advancing the profession and its practitioners.

Individuals who have contributed to the foundation are listed below by club category. These listings are based on what people have actually donated to the foundation—not what they have pledged. Names will be published under the appropriate category for one year; additional contributions will move individuals to a different category in the following year(s). For each of the categories, there are a number of ways NEHA recognizes and thanks contributors to the foundation. If you are interested in contributing to the Endowment Foundation, please call NEHA at 303.756.9090. You can also donate online at www.neha.org/about-neha/donate.

Thank you.

DELEGATE CLUB (\$25–\$99)

Name in the Journal for one year and endowment pin.

HONORARY MEMBERS CLUB

(\$100–\$499)

Letter from the NEHA president, name in the Journal for one year, and endowment pin.

Tim Hatch, MPA, REHS
Montgomery, AL

Adam E. London, RS, MPA
Grand Rapids, MI

Paschal Nwako, MPH, PhD, REHS, CHES, DAAS
Blackwood, NJ

Larry Ramdin, REHS, CP-FS, HHS
Salem, MA

Ned Therien, MPH
Olympia, WA

21st CENTURY CLUB

(\$500–\$999)

Name submitted in drawing for a free one-year NEHA membership, name in the Journal for one year, and endowment pin.

Peter M. Schmitt
Shakopee, MN

LCDR James Speckhart, MS
Silver Spring, MD

Leon Vinci, DHL, RS
Roanoke, VA

SUSTAINING MEMBERS CLUB

(\$1,000–\$2,499)

Name submitted in drawing for a free two-year NEHA membership, name in the Journal for one year, and endowment pin.

James J. Balsamo, Jr., MS, MPH, MHA, RS, CP-FS
Metairie, LA

Gavin F. Burdge
Lemoyne, PA

Bob Custard, REHS, CP-FS
Lovettsville, VA

David T. Dyjack, DrPH, CIH
Denver, CO

George A. Morris, RS
Dousman, WI

AFFILIATES CLUB

(\$2,500–\$4,999)

Name submitted in drawing for a free AEC registration, name in the Journal for one year, and endowment pin.

Vince Radke, MPH, REHS, CP-FS, DAAS, CPH
Atlanta, GA

EXECUTIVE CLUB AND ABOVE

(\$5,000–\$100,000)

Special invitation to the AEC President's Reception, name in the Journal for one year, and endowment pin.