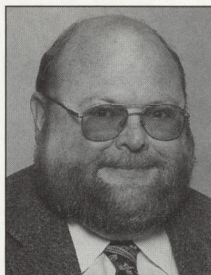


## President's Message

James D. Dingman, M.S., R.E.H.S.



**W**ell, here I am in Chicagoland in February, where it is a balmy 28 degrees outside, composing my last column. As I write, I still have four months left of my term as president of NEHA. And what a full four months they will be—presentations at affiliate annual educational conferences (AECs), board of directors meetings, and the NEHA AEC to name a few.

As I reflect on the past eight months of my term in office, my first thought is Where did the time go! It seems like yesterday that I was at the AEC in Minneapolis, just beginning my term of office. I can truthfully say that this opportunity to serve the association, the membership, and the profession has been the high point of my career. I initially joined NEHA because it was (and is) my professional association, and joining seemed the right thing to do. I never dreamed that a mere 19 years later I would be given the opportunity to serve NEHA as its president.

We have made progress this year in establishing NEHA as the premier organization for environmental health professionals—but we still have a long way to go. Unfortunately, we have also faced some challenges and uphill battles that have slowed our progress and, quite honestly, hampered our ability to achieve all that we intended to do.

I can say that, overall, I have tremendously enjoyed the opportunity to serve this association and, as I said to the NEHA staff in December, I would do it again in a heartbeat! The reason I say this is not what I have contributed to the association, but the contributions of many dedicated, committed, and diligent individuals.

I hope it will not seem an inappropriate use of this column if I take a few lines of type to publicly recognize and thank each of the individuals who have made my term in office one that I will remember forever.

First, my colleagues on the board of directors: Jim Balsamo Jr., Bruce Chelikowski, Richard Clark, Brian Collins, Doug Ebelherr, Rich Gabriel, Ron Grimes, Pat Maloney, Mary Myszk, Dick Pantages, Mike Phillips, Laura Studevant, Tom Ward, and Larry Yates. What a great group of people! Believe me when I say that they have the best interests of NEHA at heart and that their interest shows in the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of their deliberations and decisions.

**I can truthfully say that this opportunity to serve the association, the membership, and the profession has been the high point of my career.**

Technical-section chairs spend a great deal of time and energy putting together the technical program for the AEC—often with little recognition or thanks. Tom Butts, Gary Coleman, Holly Coleman, Alicia Enriquez, Brenda Faw, Dan Holcomb, Barry Moore, George Nakamura, Welford Roberts, Owen Seiver, Tony Smithson, John Steward, and Bob Vincent—I appreciate your willingness to serve NEHA in this capacity, and I thank you for your hard work in developing the technical side of the Reno AEC.

I cannot say enough about the quality of the individuals on the NEHA staff. I have had the pleasure of working with many of them for several years, and I have watched them grow in their career paths. You have an intelligent

and dedicated staff, and, like the board of directors, they all have the best interest of the association at heart. So, to Kristen Benn, Tabby Bernardo, Patricia Bolte, Kim Brandow, Vanessa DeArman, Tom Dickey, Cindy Dimmitt, Nelson Fabian, Jake Hofer, Margaret Ipatenco, Kristen Kuhar, Larry Marcum, Julie Muñoz, Christl Pokorney, Cristi Robb, Becky Roland, Toni Roland, Ryan Rudolph, Joanne Scigliano, Megan Thomsen, Allegra Woods, and Brennen Woods—thank you for all the hard work you do to make NEHA the quality organization that it is.

To the members of NEHA, for all of the letters, e-mails, and phone calls—thank you! I appreciate the thoughts, issues, and concerns that you have raised. None of them fell on deaf ears. I believe that communication from members is important if NEHA is to meet the needs of, and be the organization of choice for, environmental health professionals. So—keep those cards and letters coming!

To my employer, Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., who, without hesitation, allowed me to devote as much time as needed to handle the duties and responsibilities of this office—thank you.

Finally, I would be terribly remiss if I did not say thank you to the one that still remembers who I am when I return home from traveling (70 percent of the time this year)—my wife Cheryl. Without her support and encouragement, this year would never have been possible.

As I fade out of the picture and the gavel is passed to our incoming president, Doug Ebelherr, I wish him success during his term in office. I know he will continue to provide positive leadership for NEHA.

Adios, my friends ...

*Jim Dingman*