

## Parting Shot: A Good Year, But...

...John M. Barry, Ph.D.

This is the time of year when, as president, I am writing my last column; and I must admit, it has been an exciting year. For those of you who happened to be at the Annual Educational Conference in Orlando last year, you will remember that I said that I expected this year to be an exciting one—and that it has been—so much for prediction number one! I also said that for this to be a truly great year, *and perceived as such*, there would need to be a great deal of cooperation and commitment from all of us individuals. For the most part it is at least my perception that this has been a good year for NEHA—so much for prediction number two!

But I must admit that I believe we as an organization of professionals fell short in at least one instance—I'll address that later—but first, some of the positive things which have happened over the past year.

- For the past few years, NEHA has been in the same situation as many professional organizations in as much as expenses have been rising, but membership has not been rising at a rate to offset the need for additional income for the organization. In an effort to avoid a dues increase, NEHA staff has been actively pursuing various funding and grant opportunities within the private sector and federal government. One noticeable grant (within a cooperative agreement) was for \$75,000 from EPA for radon training. Not only did the grant result in a positive addition to NEHA's budget after expenses, but because of the manner in which it was done, NEHA is looking forward to an extension of the funding for 1994. While we certainly can enjoy the revenue, a side effect has been an extension and enhancement of our relationship with EPA and other federal agencies. And if you will remember, this is one of the goals we have been working toward.

- In what may be the single most significant development of the year, NEHA is entering into a contractual arrangement with the National Assessment Institute of Tampa, Florida. The purpose of this arrangement is

to engage the services of NAI to develop for the association a brand new and *NEHA-owned* REHS/RS exam. In addition, we are also contracting with NAI to develop both a workshop that enables professionals to study for the exam, and a study manual that can be used either in conjunction with the workshop or independently.

- Our newly created strategic plan process has been carried through during its initial year. If the interest shown at Orlando is carried over into Ft. Worth and future AECs, we will be well on our way to making our organization even more responsive to individual member needs.

- We have also undertaken a major transformation of the association's voluntary apparatus centering around the technical sections. These have been reworked, not in so much as the composition and names, but in their organizational structure—another effort to best use the expertise found within our organization, and to give volunteers more individual credit for their accom-

plishments.

- We hosted the first ever International Federation of Environmental Health Council meeting held in the United States. Representatives from five different nations, in addition to the United States, were in attendance to discuss matters ranging from IFEH's financial conditions to what needs to be done to make upcoming IFEH congresses successful. True international involvement for NEHA has been a long time coming, but now it's here!

- Not only have NEHA and CIPHI been working toward the next joint meeting to be held in Chicago in 1996, but we have implemented a joint membership campaign. We are already seeing benefits as members of CIPHI are joining NEHA, and NEHA members are also going north of the border.

- We have also completed a revision of the association's *Policy and Procedures Manual*. The revised manual brings NEHA's procedures into harmony with the recent *Articles of Incorporation and By-*

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laws changes that have been adopted by the membership. In addition, a variety of other policies have been updated to reflect NEHA's commitment to its individual members.

• And finally—and directly related to that part of our association which is seen by others—the *Journal of Environmental Health* has undergone a transformation to take advantage of new printing technologies, new understanding of what it means to be reader friendly, and how to be more responsive to NEHA's members! But the process is not finished, our managing editor and our new technical editor, Dr. Franklin Carver, still have a lot of work ahead of them. But with the help and commitment of a lot of individual members, we will continue to see an evolution of the journal.

At the beginning of the article, I said that I felt there had been at least one disappointment for the year. Yes, there has been one, and it relates again to involvement. For many years, I have felt that there has been a lack of interest in nominating individuals for most prestigious awards. Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying that past recipients have not been worthy of the awards, but I am saying that the *number* of candidates has been too few. This organization has a multitude of individuals who have distinguished themselves in many ways, but for some reason, they have not been nominated for the Mangold and Snyder awards. Why? Who knows? All I can say is that it must improve, and that we all must make the commitment to ferret out those qualified candidates and allow them to be recognized for their accomplishments.

But now back to being positive. The nice thing about this year is that I could have listed many more examples of accomplishments that would have been just as impressive as those above, but unfortunately, space is limited. Let me just say that in all the years that I have been associated with this organization, I can not remember a year when more individual members (not just elected officers) made the commitment to take part in their organization and get involved. Without your work, this year would not have been as successful. To all of you, I thank you!



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