



## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Boyd T. Marsh



When running for this office several years ago, I thought I had answers to all our problems. After being elected and having time to do some thinking, I wasn't too sure what the problems were, much less what the answers might be.

Now I think I've grasped what the problems are but realize that I alone can't solve them. Each individual president of NEHA I believe can have, at best, a transitory but supportive effect on the planned goals and direction of this organization.

This past few years, and I hope extending on for many more, the officers of this organization have worked together as one to develop and implement continuing plans to make NEHA a viable, worthwhile and respected organization. Each president will have a part of considering problems and solutions to those problems and then implementing those solutions. The policies developed and implemented are not those of one person but of a team. We plan so that long term policies will develop under several presidents just as if there were one person as president. The advantage is that organizationally we're not dealing with a one-year presidency cycle but a coherent long-term planning, implementation cycle.

We have passed the point in our association when the tough problems have to be addressed and dealt with, not just discussed. I think we know what they are; we just need to make some decisions and move forward.

We need to decide what our association is, what role it has and base the future on that decision. It has become increasingly clear that we can't just keep muddling along trying to be everything to everybody. We must strike out to establish a role and place for our association—an association

where all of us can contribute our talents and where our association and profession can benefit from our collective contributions.

I think we have started that process. Under Harry Steigman's leadership, we defined Association goals and under Amer El-Ahraf, that was expanded to a formal and approved planning document with objectives and goals that will be updated annually.

The following are issues that were considered by the Executive Committee and recommended to the Board of Directors:

We recommended a dues increase to financially stabilize NEHA. The increase to \$40 was passed by the Board of Directors on July 2 to become effective immediately. An association is a fragile creature, depending for its survival on the continued good will of its members and the willingness and ability of members to support it financially. This dues increase is the first since 1976. Since that time, the organization has functioned and tried to stay viable with the indirect cost differential from government contracts we've been able to obtain. This has inadvertently created an unwillingness to address the need for our membership to pay its own way. I might add that paying our own way has become increasingly expensive in the past few years and those contracts and grants are not as available as they once were.

The Executive Committee recommended reorganizing our Section and Committee structure for meaningful and productive uses of each member's time and to insure outcomes beneficial to NEHA and our profession. The reorganization was delayed for one year for further study.

We're reviewing our Councils and

their role in the organization. This is not necessarily an issue of purpose but one of process, and I've asked Dr. Trenton Davis to consolidate our thoughts and recommendation on this.

We're taking a purposeful look into our organizational structure in an attempt to streamline our operation, making it more responsive and less costly. The Executive Committee suggests that the elected officers constitute the Executive Committee; the elected officers and regional vice presidents constitute the Board of Directors, and the current Board of Directors be constituted as a Council of Affiliate Presidents. Action on this was delayed until our 1982 Annual Meeting.

We will look at the Annual Meeting and develop a recommendation on the form and function of such a meeting. Should we continue our familiar format or consider another?—possibly one meeting for the western part of the country and another for the eastern part. Increased cost and decreased meeting attendance cause us to consider alternatives.

Membership campaigns have generally been a bust. We need increased membership; but how? Where? Should we be an association of members or continue as an association of members associated through affiliates? This is of serious concern, and the decision will establish organizational direction and philosophy for some time.

Last year we completed the Policy and Procedures Manual which is subject to continual review and update for smoother operation.

Thanks for your support and your interest in NEHA. Your ideas, your support and your professional contributions are vital to the continued success of our organization.