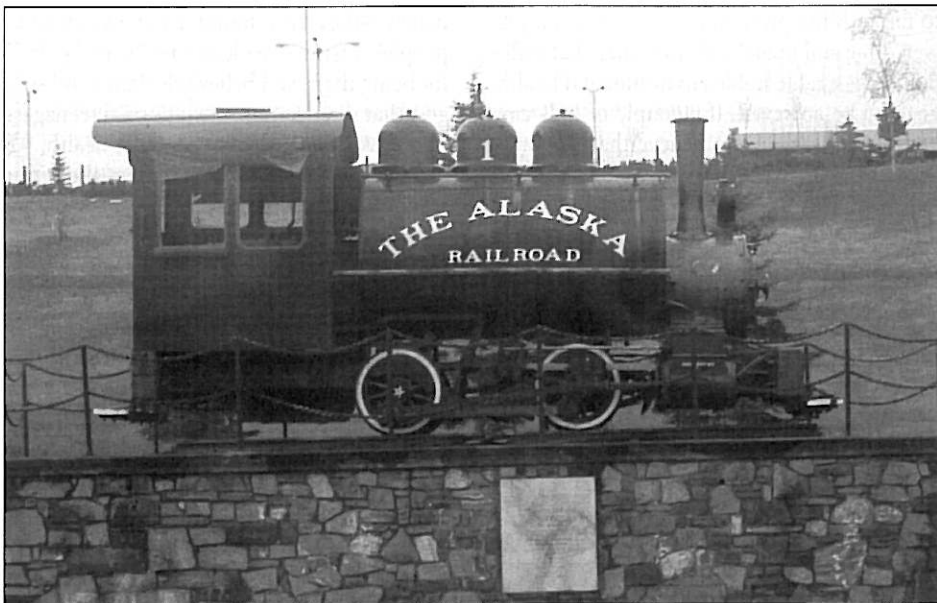


NEHA's 2004 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition—Anchorage, Alaska

Vanessa DeArman
Matt Cummings



A landmark to remember: Many AEC attendees enjoyed the scenic wonders of Alaska during the UL-sponsored railroad trip.

Introduction

The 68th Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition, which was held May 9–12, 2004, was the first ever in Alaska, had over 1,000 attendees and exhibitors, and was kicked off with a very appropriate Alaska entrance! President Doug Ebelherr entered the opening session on a dogsled drawn by four energetic huskies, some of which had been part of the Iditarod championship team. This exciting entrance set the tone of the AEC & Exhibition for the next four days. Talented speakers delivered over 150 exceptional educational sessions on topics ranging from terrorism and all-hazards preparedness to food safety and protection to onsite wastewater. And let us not forget the wonderful social events spread throughout the conference; they provided many great networking opportunities.

Alaska as an AEC destination won praise from many attendees. People from all over the United States and from countries such as Australia and Canada were present, and there were several new NEHA members as well as first-time attendees. Many made this Alaska AEC & Exhibition part of their vacation, so families also attended the conference and events. Sightseeing, shopping, enjoying seafood, and visiting museums and wildlife habitats were favorite activities.

An account from first-time attendee Julie Skolmowski, of the Child Nutrition Foundation, says it all:

I was pleased with the conference overall, particularly the educational sessions and the networking opportunities. I enjoyed the chance to experience and learn about Alaska culture as well as public health

applications in Alaska.... The quality of the sessions I attended was high. I found it to be a very good environment to share ideas, broaden my professional horizons, and get some information that will help me shape my work in the future. I also enjoyed the keynote presentations—especially the blend of a federal-agency perspective on the very timely topic of terrorism response with the Iditarod experience, which included topics on public health preparedness! I would recommend this conference to my colleagues ... and would certainly consider coming to another AEC & Exhibition.

Opening Ceremony and Keynote Addresses

Not only did the opening session begin with an exciting Iditarod entrance, but there was also a wonderful opportunity to experience more Alaska culture with a very moving and beautiful prayer of thanks sung in a native language. President Doug Ebelherr welcomed everyone to the conference and to Alaska, and President Elect Jim Balsamo offered the invocation. Sponsors were recognized for their generous support of the keynote addresses and the conference as a whole.

The keynote addresses by Joseph M. Henderson, associate director of the Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Martin Buser, four-time Iditarod champion, were phenomenal. Mr. Henderson is responsible for all of CDC's public health emergency preparedness and response activities. He has been with CDC since 1992, and during that time also has served as New York State immunization program director, the southeast regional consultant for the

National Immunization Program, and the team leader for the National Immunization Registry Initiative for the National Immunization Program. Mr. Buser won the Iditarod race in 2002 and became the first musher (someone who drives a dogsled or team of dogs) to break the "mystical eight-day barrier." He came to Alaska in 1979 from Switzerland to enhance knowledge about the care and training of sled dogs. Buser also has won the coveted Leonard Seppala Award four times for the humanitarian care of his dogs—no other racer has ever won this award more than once.

Henderson opened the keynote addresses, remarking that it was hard to believe we were actually in Alaska and that there was so much pristine beauty just outside the room. He began his speech by telling conference attendees that they were not only environmental health professionals, but also "health protectors," because the activity of protection defines the role of environmental health. "Being a health protector means something!" he noted. For health protectors, Henderson said, a role in terrorism preparedness and emergency response would be challenging, but feasible.

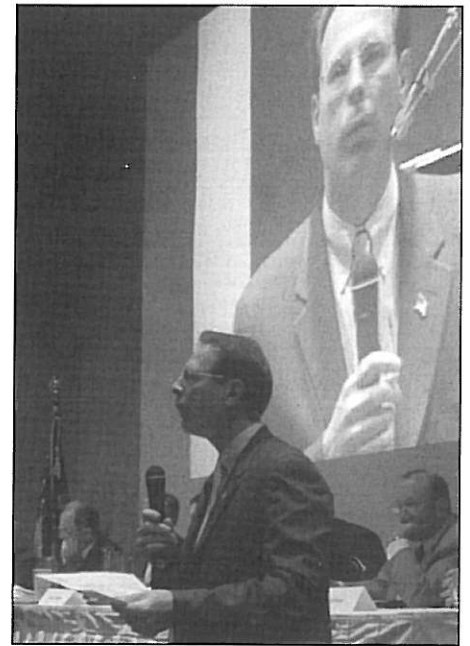
Henderson reminded everyone that terrorists have been around for centuries and will continue to terrorize people for many more centuries. He recently visited Israel to learn about how Israelis handle terrorist attacks, since they live with terrorism on a daily basis. In Israel information spreads very quickly by word of mouth instead of through media sources. Henderson found what he learned to be valuable, and when he returned, he initiated focus groups. He emphasized the need for just-in-time/just-in-case information to be made available to the public. In addition, he discussed the need to get families reconnected during a terrorist/disaster event, especially when mothers, fathers, and children are usually in different places, possibly far apart, during the day.

Since September 11, the big question has been: Are we ready for another terrorist attack? In the past, Henderson pointed out, the focus has been on bioterrorism; now there is awareness of chemical, nuclear, and other forms of terrorism. Resources are available, but they may not be fully utilized. Most local public health departments and boards of health laugh when asked if they are prepared for a terrorist attack; they don't feel ready—"Unless they blow up the septic system, because we'd know about that!"

Henderson provided a list of what environmental health and public health profession-

als have done to prepare for a terrorist attack and what still needs to be accomplished:

- Health departments were given funding for terrorism preparedness and emergency response, but some funding may not have been used entirely for terrorism response.
 - Over 8,000 environmental health professionals were hired in the last few years, but many professionals will retire soon, and there are not many environmental health students to replace them. Academic institutions are an important part of the equation, because they are resources for educating and recruiting more environmental health and public health professionals.
 - Health departments reviewed their public health policies, and 32 states have now made changes in terrorism policy, but they still need assistance in enforcement.
 - Twenty-three U.S. laboratories have diagnostic ability and have identified pathogens and specified harmful chemicals.
 - Ninety percent of health departments have established a system to receive health alerts from CDC, but they have not coordinated communications to distribute information within their communities.
 - Ninety percent of major cities have formed a plan for anthrax response.
 - Ninety-two percent of major cities have created and implemented a plan for a smallpox epidemic.
 - The U.S. government has made accessible enough smallpox vaccine for the entire population.
 - In general, public health now has the best epidemiologists working for it, but some disputes still occur between local public health departments and local law enforcement—even though law enforcement personnel also have been educated in epidemiology.
- Henderson then named some of the challenges environmental health and public health professionals have faced and continue to face:
- They lack resources and have significantly shrinking budgets.
 - Emergency response professionals have the ability to receive and transport materials from the Strategic National Stockpile, but are unable to disseminate it.
 - There is a need to define public health and initiate performance goals.
 - Health departments need to be strengthened with field exercises and knowledge of military procedures.

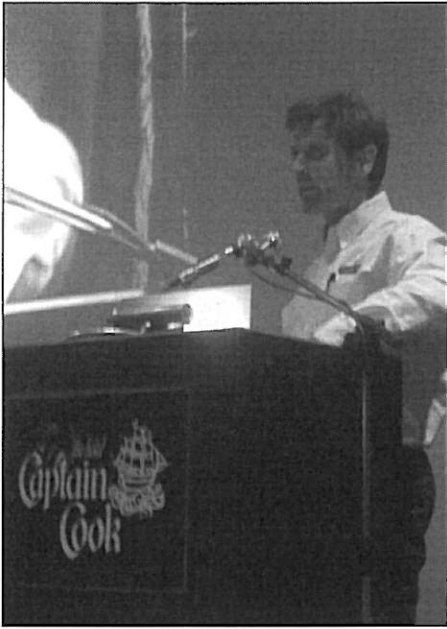


Keynote speaker Joseph M. Henderson, associate director of CDC's Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response.

- Health departments need to communicate and partner with local hospitals.
- They need to acquire good, solid, science-based information to make decisions.
- An early national warning system needs to be established.
- Public health departments need to institute leadership programs. Leadership is the most important issue in environmental health and public health, and leaders must be trained in keeping and maintaining staff and professionals.
- Health departments need to know how to organize in times of crisis and obtain leadership with authority.

Henderson said public health departments should be able to handle catastrophes; if they cannot, then they are not doing their job to protect people and health. Environmental health and public health professionals, he said, need to focus on prevention. He described a training exercise that he has used to help professionals understand the importance of prevention strategies: he has people write an article for the *New York Times* a year after a major tragedy with 100,000 casualties. It may be hard to imagine such a tragedy, he said, but it is possible to prevent it.

Henderson went on to say that response and spirit are strong in public health, but that currently implementation and organization are weak. Change can happen only if local public health departments get involved



Keynote speaker Martin Buser, four-time Iditarod champion.



Immediate Past President Douglas Ebelherr at the opening ceremony.

with their communities and ask how they are getting information to the communities. He emphasized the need to develop institutional relationships instead of personal relationships within organizations. If a person leaves an organization, he said, a relationship may end, but if the relationship is with the organization, then it will not end.

Finally, since it was Mother's Day, Henderson recognized the mothers who were attending the conference instead of celebrating: "You're here because of your service to public health!"

When Buser took the podium, he continued the theme of relationships, describing the

preparation involved in fielding a winning Iditarod team and the importance of team building. At first the audience may have had questions on how he was going to fit environmental health into his Iditarod experiences, but throughout his speech, he did just that—eloquently! In his account of the difficult journey of the Iditarod, he incorporated stories and described events related to environmental health.

He spoke of the diseases the sledgers encountered in the villages they passed through along the trail, such as Norovirus and, especially, a diphtheria epidemic occurring in outlying areas—local airplanes were able to get much-needed medication to people. He also spoke of the challenges of keeping himself and his team (his huskies) healthy by making sure everyone had enough sleep, food, and water—and was vaccinated. All participants in the Iditarod are required to be vaccinated, but much of the Alaska population does not receive vaccinations. Buser has helped with promoting vaccinations and recognizes the importance of this need in Alaska.

Buser admitted there was not a lot of strategy to the race—mostly determination and the will to finish it. The musher and the sled dogs must be in great health and have great strength. Sled dogs are kept lean and trim so that they perform at faster speeds, but rest is also important—the race included 50 percent travel/work and 50 percent rest. There were 18 checkpoints along the trail with supplies, food, and sometimes cabins (and there were a few outhouse stops, too). These checkpoints allowed for maintenance of health and safety as well as support from the local communities. Of course, there was not always a checkpoint nearby when it was needed, so Buser had to use whatever resources he had to solve problems. In this way, he said, the Iditarod is very much like the environmental health field—professionals must be strong in spirit and knowledge, have determination and will, know when to work and rest, and learn to work with limited resources.

Buser shared another insight with relevance to environmental health: There would always be a weak link in the team, but he considered it a worthwhile challenge to make the weak link stronger. Every member of a team contributes to the effort; a weak link could be a valuable contributor under the right circumstances. And among the dogs, there is not a natural hierarchy—all on the team are equal. Members of a team can al-

ways be eliminated, he told the audience, but that approach does not make for much of a team. Winners are not born; they must train, work, believe in the team, and have strong bodies and minds—winners have to be challenged. Buser encouraged everyone to push himself or herself to the limit, and as he and his sons have said, "If the bone is not sticking out, you cannot quit."

Awards and Honors

The main awards ceremony was held during the opening session, just before the keynote addresses, to draw everyone's attention to the award winners. NEHA is proud to introduce these deserving professionals and is happy to highlight their accomplishments.

Walter S. Mangold Award

The Walter S. Mangold Award, NEHA's highest honor—given for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the environmental health profession—was bestowed this year upon the very deserving Daryl E. Rowe. Please see the accompanying story on page 56, which details Rowe's contributions to the profession.

Certificates of Merit

At the awards ceremony each year, Certificates of Merit are announced for affiliate members who demonstrate exemplary contributions to the profession of environmental health. Each affiliate sets its own criteria for recognition, so recipients do not need to be NEHA members. What they do have in common is service to their communities, NEHA members, and the world through their knowledge, dedication, and commitment to the field of environmental health. While recipients are announced at the awards program, the certificates are mailed to affiliates for presentation at a time and place of their choosing. The 2004 winners are

- Alaska—Nancy Napolilli,
- California—Dick Pantages,
- Connecticut—Sands Cleary,
- Florida—Eliot M. Gregos,
- Idaho—Bob Erickson,
- Illinois—Dave Yahn,
- Kansas—Jolene "Jo" Funk,
- Massachusetts—Stephen Ward,
- Minnesota—Bette Packer,
- National Capital Area—Christopher Gordon,
- New Jersey—Harriett Zivin,
- Ohio—Janet Rittenhouse,
- Utah—Robert Swenson, and
- Virginia—Bill Warner Perry.

Affiliates may submit their nominees at anytime for the Certificate of Merit awards to be announced next June in Providence, Rhode Island.

A. Harry Bliss Editors' Award

Dr. A. Harry Bliss was editor of the *Journal of Environmental Health* in 1969, the year this award was first presented. When he retired, the award was named after him to honor his 40 years of involvement in *Journal* production. NEHA often gives the annual Harry Bliss Editor's Award to outstanding writers and columnists, but the award may also go to individuals who, through the *Journal*, advance both the cause and interests of the association.

This year, on NEHA's behalf, John Barry, technical editor for the *Journal*, proudly presented the Harry Bliss Editor's Award to Clare A. Schmutz. Mr. Schmutz has been a highly respected peer reviewer for the *Journal* for five years, and he has been a member of the association for 40 years. As a peer reviewer, Schmutz has helped ensure the technical integrity and educational value of the *Journal*. He has an extensive history as an excellent, prompt, and thorough peer reviewer. Although he is retired, he remains active and dedicated to this responsibility. He has successfully utilized his diverse environmental health background during his evaluation of the accuracy, presentation, logic, and value of numerous manuscripts. Since Schmutz could not attend this year's AEC & Exhibition, George Nakamura accepted the award on his behalf.

NEHA/AAS Scholarship Awards

The NEHA/AAS Scholarship Award program is sponsored jointly by NEHA and the American Academy of Sanitarians. The program annually awards one graduate scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 and up to three undergraduate scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. President Elect Jim Balsamo presented the scholarship awards on behalf of the scholarship committee. James Speckhart, who is enrolled in the Master of Science in Community Health Program at Old Dominion University, was awarded the graduate scholarship, and Kimberly A. Cole, who is enrolled in the Environmental Health Program, also at Old Dominion University, was awarded the undergraduate scholarship.

Student Research Presentations

Every year, the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP) and

CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) sponsor and financially support the undergraduate and graduate student research presentations. Thanks to a generous donation from NCEH, six students and their faculty mentors had the opportunity to present their research at the AEC & Exhibition. Each student participant received a plaque and a stipend of up to \$1,000 to cover travel and related expenses. Presenting the student research awards were Dr. Carolyn Harvey of Eastern Kentucky University and Captain Michael Herring of the U.S. Public Health Service/CDC/NCEH. NEHA congratulates all the student participants for their outstanding accomplishments.

The following undergraduates were honored for their research presentations: Brad Tweeten and Jeff Conner from Eastern Kentucky University, Amanda Glisson from East Carolina University, and Annie Jenott from Boise State University. The following graduate students were honored for their research presentations: Heather Bost from the University of Washington and Aimee Pragle from Oregon State University.

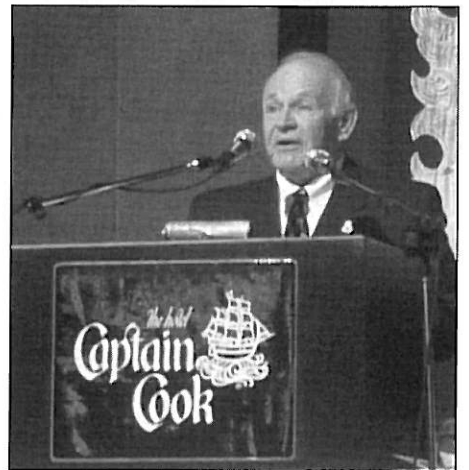
Plaques also were awarded to the students who were selected to present their research at the student poster presentation: Nicola Josephs from the University of Washington, Logan Freeman from Boise State University, and Amanda Brown from Eastern Kentucky University.

Walter F. Snyder Award

Kevan Lawlor, president of NSF International, presented the Walter F. Snyder award to Peter Thornton, environmental administrator with the Volusia County Public Health Department in Florida. Before Mr. Thornton spoke, one of his colleagues, Chuck Luther, said a few words in his honor. Thornton, Mr. Luther said, is a great mentor and an inspiration to work with: "Pete enjoys coming to work, credits his staff for all the work, and uses technology to advance the environmental health profession while making it cost-effective." When Thornton, a past NEHA president (1996-1997), accepted the award, he said that he felt very honored to receive it, but that he often does not feel he has lived up to the honor and second-guessed whether he was doing all he could. He credited his staff (thus bearing out Luther's description) for making him look good. Thornton then offered every environmental health professional some very challenging questions to think about:



Executive Director Nelson Fabian, Executive Coordinator Tabby Bernardo, and Research & Development Manager Larry Marcum accepted the "Certificate of Family" from Immediate Past President Douglas Ebelherr on behalf of the NEHA staff.



2004 Walter S. Mangold recipient Dr. Daryl E. Rowe.

1. If you did not exist, would you be missed—not by family and friends, but by those you regulate, legislators, and your staff?
2. Is your fundamental job to regulate? Or is it to prevent disease and injury of environmental origin?
3. Every year for the past 30 years there has been an emerging or re-emerging pathogen—are you ready for next year's pathogen?
4. Terrorism has enormous public health consequences—are you and your staff prepared? Or will you leave the response to non-public-health agencies?

Thornton thanked his staff again, the Florida Environmental Health Association, NEHA, and NSF for the honor he was receiving.

Please see the story detailing Peter Thornton's career achievements on page 57.

Sabbatical Exchange

Troy L. Ritter, environmental health specialist with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, received the Sabbatical Exchange

2004 Walter S. Mangold Award Recipient

Daryl Rowe

R.E.H.S./R.S., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.



NEHA is proud to present the 2004 Walter S. Mangold Award, its highest honor, to Dr. Daryl E. Rowe.

Dr. Rowe has devoted over 38 years to public service and has made a lasting contribution to the environmental health profession as a practitioner and academician. He began his career as a registered sanitarian with the Athens City-County Health Department in 1966, and, in 1972, he entered academia at Cleveland State University in Ohio as an assistant professor and director of the environmental health program. In his present position as biosafety officer for the University of Georgia (UGA), he is responsible for select-agent programs, training of personnel, consultation with researchers, monitoring of research activities that use biohazardous agents, and biosecurity development for laboratories. Rowe is also an adjunct professor with the Department of Environmental Health Science/Environmental Safety Division at UGA.

In addition to his responsibilities at UGA, Rowe regularly assists students with the development of their internship projects and serves as an invaluable mentor and role model. According to Dr. Marsha C. Black, UGA associate professor and undergraduate coordinator,

Daryl has a true passion for the environmental health field and an unmatched gift for teaching and mentoring students in ways that truly illu-

minate the field and its myriad of opportunities. He has ... mentored many ... students, giving them "hands-on experience" in environmental health by working on special projects for the Environmental Safety Division or by shadowing him on the job.

"It was this 'hands-on' training that solidified my dream of becoming an environmental health professional," recalls Andrea Wheeler, environmental health specialist III at the Gordon County Health Department.

Katie Noonan, environmental health specialist at the Alaska Native Medical Center, expresses the feelings of many of Rowe's former students: "Dr. Rowe is a man of outstanding character who is an inspiration to his students. He shows a genuine interest in his students, provides them with expert guidance and advice, and celebrates their successes."

Rowe is not only a highly respected advocate for environmental and public health, but also an expert in the field of biosafety. According to Mark L. Demyanek, director of administration and compliance, and Betsey E. Neely, associate vice chancellor of legal affairs both with the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG),

He is universally respected throughout our system of 34 colleges and universities as the "go-to person" when it comes to biological safety issues. Dr. Rowe also has served with distinction as a top advisor to the Board of Regents of USG on matters of biosafety and homeland security. In this capacity, he has helped interpret complex regulatory matters, develop new guidelines, and implement new procedures related to biosafety for the benefit of over 250,000 students and 36,000 faculty and staff within USG.

Throughout his career, Rowe has been an active member and leader in many state and national organizations. He has been a member of NEHA since 1966 and has served as a technical section chair for several committees. Rowe is a diplomate member of the American Academy of Sanitarians and a charter member of the American

Biological Safety Association, and he has participated in the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council as chair of the undergraduate curriculum committee. In addition, he is an active member of the Georgia Environmental Health Association (GEHA) and served as its president from 2001-2002. Under his leadership, GEHA produced a video titled *Environmental Health: The Invisible Profession* to illustrate the importance of the profession to boards of health, city and county commissioners, and state legislators.

Rowe has been recognized as an outstanding teacher of environmental health at three major universities. Much of this recognition is due to his development of environmental health curriculum, handbooks, student scholarship funds, and numerous publications. He has a remarkable passion for the profession and works tirelessly for the benefit of others. In the words of Joe Beck, professor of environmental health sciences at Eastern Kentucky University, "I continue to view him as the best of our profession, one who never says no to a request for assistance, one who continues to practice the highest compassion and ethics, and I am proud to call him my friend and mentor."

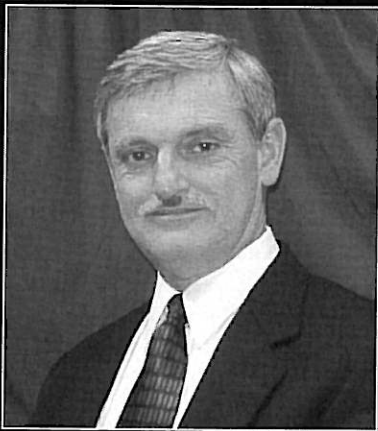
As expressed by Jeffrey D. Owens at Georgia State University,

His contributions to the field of environmental and public health are numerous, but his purpose is distinct—to educate and help others. In that purpose his accomplishments and achievements cannot be measured by an award; however, to honor Dr. Rowe with the Mangold Award for his lifetime of service to the professional community would clearly be the most appropriate way to demonstrate our deep appreciation for what he has given us.

It's both a privilege and an honor for NEHA to present this award to Dr. Daryl E. Rowe, a man who exemplifies both the spirit and the ideals of the late Walter S. Mangold.

2004 Walter F. Snyder Award Recipient

Peter D. Thornton
M.P.H., R. S.



"'Make yourself indispensable' is likely to be the epitaph of Peter D. Thornton," writes a long-time colleague and friend. For 32 years, this environmental health professional has taught participative management, encouraging staff, at all levels, to take ownership in problems and develop innovative solutions.

"Do not perform inspections just for the sake of performing inspections—make a real difference in somebody's quality of life!" This statement, often heard by Mr. Thornton's colleagues, provides a quick glimpse into the character and dedication of a man committed to environmental health as subscribed to by the award's namesake, Walter F. Snyder.

Thornton prepared for his career in environmental health in Binghamton, New York, receiving an associate's degree in applied science from Broome Community College. Then he moved on to Ferris State University, in Big Rapids, Michigan, where he earned his bachelor of science degree in 1972. Degree in hand, he accepted the position of water pollution control specialist with the city of Gainesville in Georgia. It was a stepping stone to the Florida Department of Health Rehabilitative Services (HRS) with the Broward County Health Department in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

As an inspector, investigator, and surveyor of food service facilities, sewage disposal systems, water supplies, solid waste collection, and institutional establishments, Thornton knew environmental health was his forte. He was granted educational leave with pay by the state of Florida to attend graduate school at the University of Michigan School of Public Health in Ann Arbor, Michigan, receiving his masters of public health degree in 1976.

Thornton returned to the Florida Department of HRS at the Broward County Health Department, where he advanced through the ranks of supervisor, project manager, industrial hygienist, and assistant director. He has never accepted mediocre performance by his staff; a colleague and friend remarked, "His continuing success is not only because he is a visionary, but also because he is a motivator of his employees.... He empowers his staff and encourages them to believe in themselves. Although the nature of the environmentalist's work is primarily regulatory, each person has the ability and opportunity to educate, motivate, and encourage people to do the right thing for their community and their environment."

In 1985, Thornton was recruited by the Florida Department of Health/Volusia County Health Department (VCHD) to administer a total comprehensive environmental health program in Volusia County (population 410,000).

Thornton accepted the position and the new challenge with enthusiasm and hit the ground running. He introduced Total Quality Management/Participative Management to VCHD and developed and organized a Graphic Design Team in environmental health to produce interactive computer-based training modules. The team's first effort produced a now nationally marketed and recognized Computer Based Training (CBT) CD for onsite sewage treatment disposal systems. Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention purchased a copy of the team's Swimming Pool and Spa Training CD for every local health department in the United States. The private pool industry uses this CD to train its employees.

Thornton's prodigious and prudent use of computers in environmental health applications has made VCHD one of the premier environmental health programs in the state of Florida. He has developed the department's GIS system and introduced pocket computer systems that combine GIS, inspections, emergency management, and groundwater protection into a concise but powerful application.

His leadership also introduced cross-functional, cross-trained teams to investigate community health conditions, involving both local leaders and the medical community to promote healthy living and lifestyles to Volusia's citizens. The overall goal is to create an action plan that will significantly improve health and living conditions for citizens.

Thornton's concern for—and willingness to reach out to—the community and his profession has led him to make the following contributions to the field of environmental health:

- He has been an active member of the Florida Environmental Health Association (FEHA), serving as vice president in 1986, president elect in 1987, and president in 1988, and as editor of the *Florida Journal of Environmental Health*.
- He has been an active member of NEHA, serving on its board of directors in 1988 and stepping through its ranks to become president in 1996–1997. One of only three FEHA members in the past 50 years to attain such distinction, he was awarded life membership in both FEHA and NEHA in 1998.
- He served as chairman and editor of the National Conference of Local Environmental Health Administrators from 1993 to 1995.
- He was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve on the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC) in 1998.

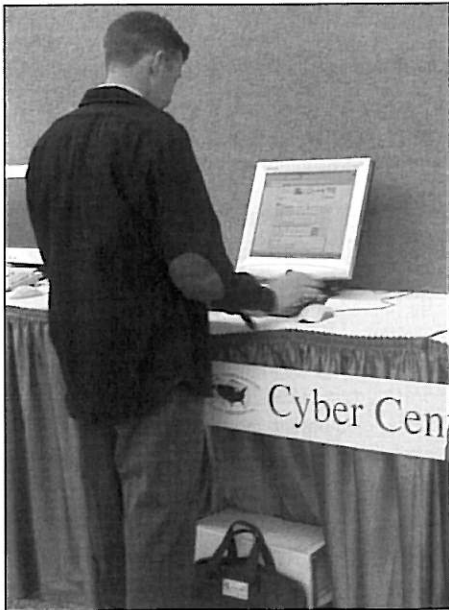
Well known in his profession, Thornton is frequently called on as a keynote speaker or presenter. In the past decade he has given more than 30 presentations throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. He has authored numerous articles—for, among others, the FEHA and NEHA journals, the *NCLEHA Newsletter*, the *New Zealand Journal of Environmental Health*, and the *Environmental News Digest*.

Thornton's dedication also has brought him well-earned recognition. His list of awards includes the 2001 Charlie Rhodes Award (FEHA); Outstanding Environmental Health Professional (FEHA); Excellence in Environmental Health (NACCHO); the Davis Productivity Award (Florida Tax-Watch, Inc., & Winn Dixie Stores); and the 1995 Billy G. Tennant Meritorious Award (FEHA).

Mr. Thornton and his wife of 27 years, Tekla, reside in Deland, where they have raised four children: Charles, Michael, Aaron, and Ailissa.

The president of FEHA states, "I have no reservation about his [Pete's] worthiness to receive this award.... He is a pillar of strength in support of professionals in environmental health...an inspiration for generations to come by continually finding new ways and new technologies to achieve greater efficiency and ease in our field."

For his integrity and his compassion—for his profession, his state, his fellow men—it is indeed an honor and pleasure to present to Peter D. Thornton the 2004 Walter F. Snyder Award for achievement in attaining environmental quality.



One of the AEC's convenient attractions, the Cyber Center, offered attendees the chance to take a break and check their e-mail.

Award to study in Canada. He will take the opportunity to establish professional relationships with Canadian environmental health professionals and to improve service delivery in both regions.

Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award

The Samuel J. Crumbine Award is a prestigious national award given annually to a local food protection agency that demonstrates excellence and continual improvement in a comprehensive food protection program, that has unsurpassed achievement in providing outstanding food protection services to its community, and that is held in high esteem by the public health community. The award is named in honor of Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine (1862–1954), a sanitarian-physician and public health pioneer who was renowned for his innovative methods of improving public health protection.

This year, the Public Health Department of Fort Worth, Texas, received the Crumbine Award for its creativity in utilizing the limited funding available to its food protection program. "The jury was very impressed with Fort Worth's ability to identify the challenges to its program and to come up with innovative ways in which to meet them—particularly under the budget constraints that many departments are faced with today," explained Pete Giesen of Olmsted County, Minnesota, Public Health Services and chair of the 2004 jury.

Tony Miller accepted the award on behalf of the Fort Worth Public Health Department and thanked his sanitarians, staff, and the Texas Environmental Health Association for all their work and for submitting the application.

Past Presidents Award

Each year, the Past Presidents group, comprising former NEHA presidents, recognizes a NEHA member for outstanding achievement. Gary Coleman presented this year's Past Presidents Award to Steve Jenkins, health director of Summit County Public Health, Park City, Utah, who played a significant role on the 2002 Olympic Committee.

Presidential Citations

Presidential Citations are special awards given to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to NEHA during the president's term of office. President Doug Ebelherr presented Presidential Citations to Paul K. Chase, Karen Hoffman Bender, Mary Myszka, James Michael Phillips, Peter Schade, and Chris Tofteburg.

Davis Calvin Wagner Award

The American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) presented its highest award, the 2004 Davis Calvin Wagner Award, to Diplomat Gary E. Coleman. The Davis Calvin Wagner Award and honorarium are given each year as recognition of outstanding professional work, accomplishments, and contributions to environmental and public health. The award was presented to Mr. Coleman (a NEHA past president) at the AAS and U.S. PHS Honor Award Reception, and he was recognized for his "notable accomplishments in the environmental health profession over a long and distinguished career." Coleman, who is currently employed as a program manager for the Food Safety Program at Underwriters Laboratories (UL), received a plaque and an honorarium. The award is particularly meaningful since recipients are nominated and selected on the basis of recommendations from their peers in the profession.

Educational Activities

At the core of every AEC & Exhibition is the educational program. A tremendous amount of effort goes into ensuring that educational sessions are current, relevant, and thought provoking. Prior to the conference, countless hours are spent talking to numerous NEHA members about their particular careers and educational needs. The educational sessions

are then created to meet and address the needs and issues that have been identified through this process.

Given the diversity of the educational sessions offered at the AEC & Exhibition, attendees had a wide variety of environmental health topics to choose from and could tailor the AEC & Exhibition to their educational needs. Topics included

- ambient air quality,
- children's environmental health,
- drinking-water quality,
- emerging pathogens,
- environmental health in schools,
- environmental health leadership development,
- environmental health research,
- food safety and protection,
- general environmental health,
- geographic information systems (GIS),
- hazardous materials and toxic substances,
- indoor air quality,
- injury prevention/occupational health,
- institutional environmental health,
- onsite wastewater systems,
- solid waste,
- swimming pools/recreational waters,
- terrorism and all-hazards preparedness,
- vector control and zoonotic diseases, and
- water pollution.

The unique and wondrous setting of this year's conference was reflected in the numerous presentations made by environmental health professionals living and working in Alaska. Attendees had the opportunity, for instance, to learn about the history and way of life of the Koyukon Athabascan tribe from Audrey Armstrong. Ms. Armstrong generously raffled off one of her handcrafted baskets to those attending at her session. Some of the other Alaskan topics covered were botulism, the unique challenges of solid-waste management, the problem of ensuring drinking-water quality in isolated communities, zoonotic diseases in Alaska, environmental contaminants in Alaskan traditional foods, drowning prevention, and differences between working in Alaska and the lower 48 states.

A new educational session was introduced at this year's conference: Children's Environmental Health. The session sought to raise awareness of children's unique vulnerability to adverse health effects from environmental hazards. It also gave attendees information on how to implement children's programs into traditional environmental health. This session was complemented by the return of last year's new session, Environmental Health

in Schools. Both sessions represent NEHA's commitment to the important subject of children's environmental health.

Making a first-ever appearance at an AEC & Exhibition was this year's Poster Session. With so many relevant and interesting abstracts submitted for the conference, there just was not enough presentation time to accommodate every excellent abstract. The Poster Session was created to allow more individuals the opportunity to present their information. The room was crowded for the duration of the session, with attendees taking advantage of this unique educational and networking opportunity. Attendees were able to interact directly with the presenters, both parties sharing their information and experiences. The 24 posters represented a broad environmental health spectrum: food safety and protection, hand-washing, body art, workforce development, GIS, air pollution, swimming pools and recreational waters, chemical and biological terrorism, food security, and terrorism response.

Adding to the educational and Alaskan experience of the AEC & Exhibition were special tours that attendees could participate in to get hands-on practical experience. Tours included visits to the Eklutna Water Treatment Facility, the Anchorage Public Health Laboratory, the Municipality of Anchorage Emergency Operation Center, and a demonstration by the 103rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team.

Rounding out the educational opportunities at the AEC & Exhibition were several pre-conference workshops:

- "Epi-Ready" Foodborne Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Training,
- From Fear to Fantastic—Presentation Skills for the Trainer in Us All, and
- the *Food Safe Schools Action Guide* Workshop.

Review courses and exams were held for the Certified Food Safety Professional (C.F.S.P.) and Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (R.E.H.S./R.S.) credentials. Attendees also were able to attend the undergraduate and graduate student research presentations for insight into what future environmental health professionals are studying.

NEHA extends a special thank-you to the 2003–2004 technical section chairs, who were instrumental in the development of the educational sessions at the AEC & Exhibition. The hard work and dedication of the following technical section chairs are greatly appreciated:

- Air and Land—Alicia Enriquez, R.E.H.S.;
- Drinking Water Quality/Water Pollution—Robert Vincent;
- Emerging Pathogens/Vector Control and Zoonotic Diseases—Brenda Faw, R.E.H.S.;
- Environmental Health Leadership Development—Holly Coleman, R.S.;
- Environmental Health Research—Darryl B. Barnett, Dr.P.H., M.P.H., R.S., D.A.A.S.;
- Food Safety and Protection—George Nakamura, R.E.H.S., M.P.A., D.A.A.S., and Michèle Samarya-Timm, M.A., R.E.H.S., C.H.E.S.;
- General Environmental Health—Karen Hoffman Bender, R.E.H.S., R.D.;
- Hazardous Materials and Toxic Substances—Welford C. Roberts, Ph.D., R.S., R.E.H.S., D.A.A.S., and CAPT John A. Steward, R.E.H.S., M.P.H.;
- Institutional Environmental Health—Welford C. Roberts, Ph.D., R.S., R.E.H.S., D.A.A.S.;
- Injury Prevention/Occupational Health—Daniel Holcomb;
- Onsite Wastewater—Anthony Smithson, M.S., R.S.; and
- Terrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness—Thomas J. Butts, M.Sc., R.E.H.S., R.H.S.P., and Barry W. Moore, R.E.H.S.

Exhibition

If you needed to find a sink with its own water supply, software to help you track disease outbreaks, or the latest from CDC, there was only one place to be—the exhibition hall! Nonprofit and governmental agencies were supplying those who walked by their booths with all of their latest information, while companies that provide products and services essential in all areas of environmental health were demonstrating these tools to their clients and potential customers.

Candy was in evidence down every aisle, and the Providence Convention and Visitor's Bureau gave those who stopped by foam red lobsters and maps to get them interested in coming to next year's AEC & Exhibition. NEHA's Bookstore enticed many attendees to spend some of their hard-earned money on expanding their professional knowledge. And at the Handwashing for Life exhibit, participants scrubbed their way to perfect hand hygiene in the exciting handwashing contest. Suzanne Grubbs of the Volusia County Health Department in Florida came in first, and Daneen Farrow-Collier of CDC and Brenda Faw of the El Dorado County Environmental Management Division in California tied for second place.

Sponsors of NEHA's 2004 AEC & Exhibition

The organizations listed below supported NEHA's 2004 AEC & Exhibition as sponsors, making many valuable aspects of the conference possible. NEHA thanks its financial sponsors for their generous contributions.

Tier II (\$15,000–\$30,000)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention/National Center for Environmental Health

Tier III (\$5,000–\$15,000)

Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Tier IV (\$2,000–\$5,000)

Mars Air Doors
National Drinking Water Clearinghouse

Tier V (\$500–\$2,000)

American Academy of Sanitarians

Not only was the exhibition an opportunity for conference attendees to learn and meet with vendors, but dropping their entry tickets for the door prize drawing also gave them the chance to win one of four door prizes. From the many hundreds of entries in the drawing, four lucky people were selected as winners. Duane Stausbury of the Ohio Environmental Health Association won the first prize, a Canon digital camera. Denise Uyemura of the Hawaii Department of Health won the \$200 Eddie Bauer gift certificate that was given for second place. A \$125 American Express gift cheque was third prize, and the winner was Larry Taylor of our host city, who works at the Municipality of Anchorage. The final prize went to Holger Sass of Ogden, Utah, who won a \$75 Barnes & Noble gift certificate.

Nine exhibitors made donations to make the door prizes possible. Our thanks go to the following companies for making this fun part of the conference possible: Bio-Microbics, Inc.; Bord Na Mona; Decagon Devices, Inc.; Health Space Integrated Solutions, Ltd.; Lifewater Engineering Company; the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals; the National Restaurant Association; Same Day Distributing, Inc.; and TAP Series.

The Exhibit Hall Grand Opening Party featured a carving station, mini-Mexican foods, and artichoke dip to entice attendees into forgetting their “low-carb” or other diets in this beautifully presented hors d’oeuvres buffet. Lively greetings were heard as old friends saw each other for the first time in many months, and the casual atmosphere of the evening made doing business fun.

By the time the exhibit hall closed, lots of business cards had been exchanged. Once again, the exhibition brought together two groups of people who need each other—those who use products and information, and those who provide them.

Silent Auction

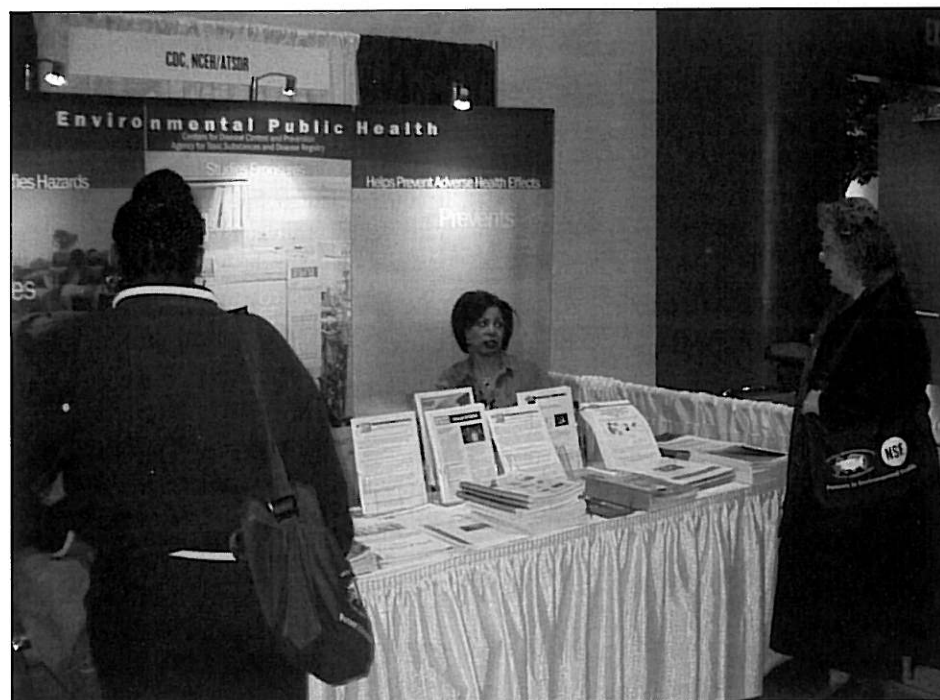
During a very busy AEC & Exhibition, participants still made time to find their way to the item-filled auction booth in the exhibit hall to place their bids on the many items offered by affiliates, members, exhibitors, and friends of NEHA. Items ranged from the artistic, the tasty, the decorative, and the fun to the practical, the educational, the relaxing, and the downright useful. The result: auction earnings of \$3,576, which will be used to help offset speakers’ expenses at the 2005 AEC & Exhibition in Providence, Rhode Island.

Despite the competing attractions of Anchorage, we were grateful to the many who chose instead to do their shopping at the silent auction, thereby supporting future AEC & Exhibition endeavors.

The highest bids, as usual, were made for NEHA’s offer of four nights and registration at the Providence AEC & Exhibition; Jackie Rayburn was a very determined winner. Sports was another winner, with a Bronco football and mug from Colorado and University of Connecticut sporting apparel receiving a lot of bidding. Two tickets for a UL-sponsored train ride went for \$165. Competition also was keen for the Hewlett Packard Photo Printer from the Industry Affiliate, which a determined Steve Asay took home, along with a Sony CD Walkman donated by



Action in the exhibit hall: USDA’s Agricultural Research Service and National Agricultural Library booth attracted many visitors.



The booth staffed by CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health/ATSDR offered attendees a number of useful resources.

the National Conference of Environmental Health Administrators (NCEHA).

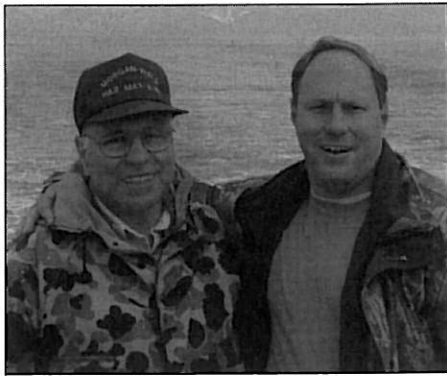
Glo Germ, a regular exhibitor that was not able to participate this year, still sent along its auction items, helping NEHA raise \$100. And for those who feel they have to find a different auction item to donate each year, please note that Handwashing for Life con-

tributed its special talking toilet for the third consecutive year, again earning NEHA the value of the item, \$20.

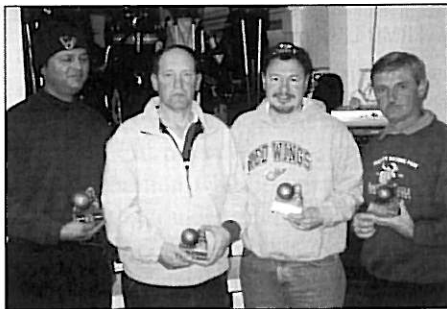
Whether they won or lost, all bidders were immersed in the spirit of the competition, and NEHA thanks all the participants—members, affiliates, exhibitors, and friends—for their support and enthusiasm during the auction.

2004 AEC Exhibitors

- Access Business Group, LLC**
www.accessbusinessgroup.com
- Alaska Environmental Health Association**
www.aeha.net
- American Academy of Sanitarians**
www.sanitarians.org
- Anchorage Tank & Welding, Inc.**
www.anchoragetank.com
- Arch Chemicals**
www.archchemicals.com
- Archangel Corp**
www.antiterrorconsultants.org
- Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs**
www.aehap.org
- Association of Public Health Laboratories**
www.aphl.org
- Association of Schools of Public Health**
www.asph.org
- Bio-Microbics, Inc.**
www.biomicrobics.com
- Bord Na Mona/Puraflo**
www.bnm-us.com
- CDC Public Response Service**
www.ashastd.org
- CDC, NCEH/ATSDR**
www.cdc.gov
- CDC, NCEH/EHHE**
www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehhe
- Cooper Atkins Corporation**
www.cooper-atkins.com
- Decade Software Company, LLC**
www.decadesoftware.com
- Decagon Devices, Inc.**
www.decagon.com
- Ecolab, Inc.**
www.ecolab.com
- Eljen Corp.**
www.eljen.com
- EPA, Indoor Environments Division**
www.epa.gov/iaq/
- ESRI**
www.esri.com
- FDA, Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition**
www.cfsan.fda.gov
- FDA/ORAU & DFSR**
www.fda.gov/ora/fed_state/defa
- FoodHandler, Inc.**
www.foodhandler.com
- FoodSafety.Com, Division of Vivid Learning Systems**
www.foodsafety.com
- Fralo PlasTech**
www.fraloplastech.com
- Geoflow, Inc.**
www.geoflow.com
- GSC Mobile Solutions**
www.gscmobilesolutions.com
- Hancor, Inc.**
www.hancor.com
- Handwashing for Life**
www.handwashingforlife.com
- HealthSpace Integrated Solutions Ltd.**
www.healthspace.ca
- Indoor Environment Connections Newspaper**
www.ieconnections.com
- Infiltrator Systems, Inc.**
www.infiltratorsystems.com
- Intertek Testing Services**
www.intertek-etlsemko.com
- Island Press**
www.islandpress.org
- Kairak, Inc.**
www.kairak.com
- Kirkwood Community College**
www.hmtri.org
- LearnSomething, Inc.**
www.learnsomething.com
- Lifewater Engineering Company**
www.lifewaterengineering.com
- MicroBiologics, Inc.**
www.microbiologics.com
- National Association of County and City Health Officials**
www.naccho.org
- National Association of Local Boards of Health**
www.nalboh.org
- National Drinking Water Clearing House**
www.ndwc.wvu.edu
- National Library of Medicine**
www.sis.nlm.nih.gov
- National Registry of Food Safety Professionals**
www.nrfsp.com
- National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation**
www.nraef.org
- National Safety Council**
www.nsc.org
- National Swimming Pool Foundation**
www.nspf.org
- NEHA Training LLC**
www.nehatraining.com
- NSF International**
www.nsf.org
- On Site Sanitation, Inc./Sani Sink**
www.onsitesanitation.com
- PGI/Chicopee**
oupinc.com
- Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau**
www.providencecvb.com
- Raven Biological Laboratories, Inc.**
www.ravenlabs.com
- RING Industrial Group/Ezflow Systems**
www.ringindustrial.com
- RMD Instruments, LLC**
www.RMD-LPA1.com
- Same Day Dist., Inc.**
www.same-day.com
- San Jamar**
www.sanjamar.com
- Sensir Technologies**
www.sensir.com
- Shat-R-Shield, Inc.**
www.shat-r-shield.com
- Steton Technology Group, Inc.**
www.steton.com
- TAP Series**
www.tapseries.com
- TEC Technologies, Inc.**
www.tectechnologies.com
- The Steritech Group, Inc.**
www.steritech.com
- Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.**
www.ul.com
- University of Findlay**
www.seem.findlay.edu
- U.S. Public Health Service**
www.usphs.gov
- University of Michigan, Dept. of EH Sciences, SPH**
www.sph.umich.edu/ehs/
- University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Program in ENPH**
www.uwec.edu/ah/enph
- USA CHPPM-Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD**
chppm-www.apgea.army.mil
- USDA, Food Safety and Inspection**
www.fsis.usda.gov
- USDA/ARS/NAL/Food Safety**
www.nal.usda.gov/fsrio
- Water Quality & Health Council**
www.c3.org
- Zoeller Pump Company**
www.zoeller.com



Gary Hague (right) and father Darland Hague enjoyed the deep-sea fishing trip.



NEHA's 17th Annual Golf Tournament winners: Chirag Bhatt, Randy Layton, Mike Krecek, and Peter Thornton.



Team America at the golf tournament: Harry Grenawitzke, Steven Schmidt, Robert Galvan, and Steven Jenkins.

Networking and Social Events

Deep-Sea Fishing Trip

One morning began early for 50 people with ocean spray in their faces as they dreamed of the trophy halibut they were about to reel in. Larry Yates caught the largest fish of the day, which, although it wasn't a record breaker, weighed in at 80 pounds. The pristine waters and crisp mountains impressed the group. Mary Myszka from Wisconsin echoed everyone's sentiments: "It was beautiful." Seeing the whales and porpoises that were fishing the same waters made the trip truly special.

Golf Tournament

The Palmer Golf Course was the only golf course open in Alaska, and it presented players with a wild and rugged golf adventure—especially in the areas without grass! Despite challenging obstacles, it proved to be a very exciting game. The tournament winners were Peter Thornton of Florida, Mike Krecek of Michigan, Randy Layton of Washington state, and Chirag Bhatt of Texas. This "fearsome foursome" team hit six under par, winning by one stroke.

Networking Luncheon

The networking luncheon was a smashing success that lasted two hours and satiated the appetites of hundreds. Those who attended dined on a delicious buffet that included chicken and fresh salmon while tying up loose ends with colleagues or making new business contacts.

UL-Sponsored Train Ride

One of the most anticipated events at the AEC & Exhibition was the UL-sponsored train ride down the coast of the Cook Inlet. Five hundred people were able to enjoy the beautiful scenery of rivers, waterfalls, mudflats, and mountains. Those with sharp eyes caught glimpses of the white Dall sheep precariously walking the rocky ridges high above the train tracks. After dark, the karaoke car was the place to see AEC attendees and staff show off their singing talent and dancing abilities.

President's Banquet

Everyone always looks forward to the capstone and final event of the AEC & Exhibition, the glamorous President's Banquet. As guests and their dates were massing outside the banquet hall anticipating the first glimpse inside the room, staff put the finishing touches on the tables. The doors opened, and the huge hall was instantly filled with sequins, shawls, and smiles. After a delicious fresh-halibut dinner, King Island Alaska natives performed a number of unique songs and dances written by their village elders. AEC attendees were invited to join the dancing during one song, and many were happy to participate. While not quite as graceful as the native Alaskans, the attendees were just as enthusiastic about the dance.

This year Daryl E. Rowe was honored with the association's highest honor, the Walter S. Mangold Award. Much of Dr. Rowe's family was in attendance and beaming with pride as

he graciously accepted the award and spoke about his long, esteemed career.

Outgoing President Doug Ebelherr passed the gavel to newly elected President Jim Balsamo and expressed his gratitude to the members for all that they had done for him personally and professionally during his presidential term. Many of Mr. Ebelherr's goals were met this year, including the establishment of the *NEHA Presidential Newsletter* and a Washington, D.C., representative. Mr. Balsamo pledged to continue the diligent and progressive legacy set forth by those before him. Increased student involvement topped Balsamo's list of objectives, followed by resolution of the R.E.H.S./R.S. credentialing issue, on which NEHA staff are already vigorously at work. Balsamo ended by reciting a heartfelt poem that he wrote as he flew into Anchorage and reflected on life, our planet, and our role as environmental health professionals.

Association Business

At the AEC & Exhibition, important business meetings of all kind take place. Two of the most important are the business meetings of the NEHA Board of Directors and its Council of Delegates (which includes NEHA's board as well as the presidents of all of NEHA's affiliates). Just as important is the General Assembly, which gives members an opportunity to provide suggestions and ask questions of the NEHA Board of Directors, as well as hear firsthand what is occurring within the association. The summary below presents the highlights from each of these meetings.

Board of Directors Meeting

- President Doug Ebelherr expressed his appreciation to the entire board for its support during a very successful year for the association.
- The board is proceeding with plans to archive many of Walter Mangold's historical materials. Dr. Mangold's son has contacted NEHA and has made his father's collection available to the association.
- The board expressed an interest in re-examining ways in which NEHA could become more of a resource to students.
- A working group of the board was appointed to finalize a strategy that would guide the association in pursuit of its international goals.
- The board voted to proceed with the development of an award manual for the Snyder Award. The manual is to be developed by the award's two sponsors, NEHA and NSF.



Networking luncheon: AEC attendees took the opportunity to develop friendships, establish business contacts, and share ideas.



NEHA President James Balsamo.

- The board received a detailed report on the progress of NEHA Training LLC. It was reported that NEHA Training should end its current fiscal year operating at a profit.
- The executive director provided an update on the Anchorage AEC & Exhibition. Attendance numbers were projected to fall somewhere between those of the Minneapolis and the Reno AECs. Because of a discount given on the registration price, however, the AEC in Anchorage was projected to be less profitable than were previous AECs. It was noted, however, that by holding the AEC in Alaska, NEHA had given many of its members the opportunity of a lifetime.
- Progress on lining up a new credentialing test partner for the association was described. The board also committed to getting NEHA's main credentials and the study guides for them updated as soon as possible.
- Progress also was reported in the development of a new credential for professionals involved in onsite wastewater.
- The board affirmed its interest in having NEHA become more involved in the Conference for Food Protection since food safety is a major issue for many of NEHA's members.
- The board agreed to consider supporting several positions adopted by the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials. These positions will be studied, and final decisions will be made later in the year.
- The board agreed to make a financial contribution to the upcoming IFEH meeting.
- Special recognition and appreciation were expressed to departing board members Mary Myszka and Michael Phillips.

Council of Delegates Meeting

- The mail ballot results from the spring election were presented and confirmed. The results were as follows:
 - Rob Blake was elected as second vice president.
 - Pat Maloney was re-elected as Region 9 vice president.
 - Bette Packer was elected as Region 4 vice president.
 - Jim Dingman was elected as Region 6 vice president.
 - By the association's ascension process, with the membership's approval, Jim Balsamo became NEHA's president, Ron Grimes became NEHA's president elect, and Rick Collins became NEHA's first

vice president. Doug Ebelherr became NEHA's immediate past president.

— Finally, all articles of incorporation and bylaw changes were approved.

- Dick Pantages gave a presentation on behalf of his candidacy for the position of NEHA second vice president. Because no other candidates filed for election to this office, he will run unopposed in next spring's mail ballot election.
- As of this meeting, it was reported, the association earned \$3,526.99 from its silent auction this year. Proceeds from this event are used to support NEHA's speaker fund.
- It was announced that sites under consideration for the 2008 NEHA AEC & Exhibition included Boise, Omaha, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Reno, Tucson, Spokane, and Seattle.
- NEHA's new Government Affairs program also was explained. NEHA now has involvement in numerous agencies and programs, all with the purpose of promoting the interests of environmental health and the environmental health profession. In addition, the association has hired former NEHA board member Larry Yates to work in Washington, D.C., on behalf of this program.
- It was also announced that NEHA would be hosting the meeting of the IFEH governing council in Denver in September 2004. This announcement further demonstrates NEHA's commitment to becoming more involved in international environmental health issues.

- A special report was made to the council on behalf of NEHA Training. It was explained that this program provides quality and affordable education for food service managers in preparation for food manager certification. Affiliates were invited to become involved in this special program. The NEHA Training contact is Julie Muñoz, who can be reached at (303) 756-9090, extension 304, or at jmunoz@nehatraining.com.
- Affiliates were reminded that they are the source for nominations for NEHA's Mangold Award and the NEHA/NSF Snyder Award.
- Affiliates also were encouraged to take advantage of the educational opportunities that NEHA offers in areas such as indoor air quality, epidemiology, and terrorism and all-hazards preparedness. Special workshops can be set up in states interested in bringing such education to their environmental health practitioners.
- A preliminary report was given on the outcome of a survey probing the profession for a prevailing opinion on what professional name it wished for itself. NEHA RVP Brian Collins—who chairs the committee overseeing this project—reported that the survey could not find any strong views as to whether the professional title in environmental health should be environmental health specialist, registered sanitarian, or some other term. For that reason, he suggested, the final report should propose that NEHA retain its current policy, which is to offer both titles for anyone who passes the R.E.H.S./R.S. exam.
- Commemorating resolutions were passed by the council in honor of the 50th birthdays of NEHA's Maryland, Connecticut, and New Jersey affiliates.
- A blueprint outlining the steps that an affiliate can take to become more involved with legislative and regulatory bodies was presented and offered to each of NEHA's affiliates.
- Presentations on behalf of several special focus groups were made. This year's AEC & Exhibition focus groups concentrated on exploring the role of environmental health in the whole field of terrorism response and emergency preparedness. Results from this effort will ultimately be expressed in a special NEHA board position paper that will outline what NEHA believes that role to be. Subsequently, NEHA will advocate for that role.

General Assembly

Outgoing NEHA President Doug Ebelherr called the General Assembly to order, welcoming the audience and introducing the members of the executive board. Mr. Ebelherr stated that this meeting not only was an opportunity to provide suggestions and ask questions of the NEHA Board of Directors, but also was an opportunity for the second vice president nominee to give a presentation and have other nominees announce their nominations.

Ebelherr then gave a brief report on NEHA's strategic directions, which are to be differentiated from a strategic "plan" because they are living and flexible in response to changes in the world and the field of environmental health. The strategic directions are as follows:

- Strengthen NEHA's presence and visibility in the area of terrorism response by having strong relationships with the Department of Homeland Security and CDC. NEHA is researching and currently developing a position paper on the roles of environmental health professionals in terrorism response. These issues also have been subjects of focus groups.
- Strengthen the stature of the R.E.H.S./R.S. credential by encouraging more states to use NEHA's exam and credential and by establishing a more national, uniform standard for competence in environmental health, which would be the essence of the R.E.H.S./R.S. credential. Currently, NEHA is working with CDC to help promote the R.E.H.S./R.S. as the preferred credential.
- Strengthen NEHA financially and take advantage of financial opportunities. NEHA's growth is due to the services it provides. Its budget is growing, especially in grants, and products and services from grants benefit the membership.
- Increase the awareness and appreciation of environmental health and the environmental health profession, especially the role of the environmental health professional in terrorism preparedness and emergency response. NEHA now has a new program, Government Affairs, to make sure NEHA is well represented on national issues, and Larry Yates, our new Washington, D.C., representative, will help with this effort.
- Enhance the importance of NEHA's Web site as a fundamental aspect of its business by making the Web site more user-friendly for NEHA's members and customers and by considering new developments, including upgrading the site, creating a member's

only section, and giving members access to the NEHA database.

- Expand NEHA's educational opportunities and offerings by using satellite conferences, emphasizing quality as well as quantity of education, and establishing a speakers' bureau.
- Establish a stronger program for leadership development within the profession to help environmental health students become future leaders. CDC has helped NEHA with a leadership institute, the Emerging Leaders Program. NEHA is the premier association for environmental health professional leaders.
- Strengthen NEHA's niche in the international community and clarify what the association desires for international environmental health. NEHA works very closely with the Center for International Environmental Health and will be hosting the IFEH conference in Denver in September 2004.
- Create a capability for staying on top of emerging issues such as SARS, West Nile virus, and other emerging pathogens, as well as terrorism preparedness and emergency response issues. NEHA will use all available resources to provide information on these issues to its members.

Ebelherr then announced that the floor was opened to nominations; however, none were made. The candidate for second vice president, Dick Pantages, briefly stated his platform, which focused on NEHA's strategic directions, or strategic thinking, as mentioned above. He emphasized that NEHA needs to concentrate on "making the strategic directions great instead of being everything for everyone."

The floor was then opened for comments from the members and audience:

- Jim Harless from Tennessee, who has been a NEHA member most of his career, really appreciated what the board of directors and NEHA have done, but he wanted to share a concern. He understands the need and importance of terrorism response, but he is concerned about the focus on after-the-fact response and believes prevention, foreign policy, and strengthening of hospitals are the most important issues.
- Michèle Samarya-Timm of the Franklin Township Health Department in New Jersey thanked the board for choosing to have the 2007 AEC & Exhibition in Atlantic City, New Jersey. She went on to say that she is able to make a difference in envi-



The NEHA Board of Directors.



ronmental health through NEHA. She also suggested that NEHA focus more on educators and public/environmental health education specialists—by offering continuing-education credits for education specialists, for instance, and by encouraging health educators to attend the AEC & Exhibition. Ms. Samarya-Timm then asked when the speakers' bureau would be available and understood that Kristen Kuhar, NEHA's education coordinator, is working on it.

- Vince Radke of the Georgia Environmental Health Association and CDC suggested that NEHA consider providing a teleconference of the keynote address for those who cannot attend the AEC & Exhibition. He realized that there are technical and financial issues to be considered.
- An Alaska member thanked the board and NEHA for having the AEC & Exhibition in

Alaska. He also suggested people like him who write environmental health newsletters get together and meet at the AEC & Exhibition.

- Mary Myszka announced that her term on the board will be ending soon and strongly encouraged people—especially women—to volunteer to be on the board of directors. She went on to express how much she enjoyed being on the board and how much she will miss it.
- Before adjourning the meeting, outgoing President Doug Ebelherr encouraged the audience to support the sabbatical program, which provides an all-expenses-paid trip to study environmental health in Canada or the United Kingdom, and he encouraged everyone to go to the 2005 AEC & Exhibition in Providence, Rhode Island.

Conclusion

The 68th AEC & Exhibition in Alaska was definitely a success, with over 1,000 attendees and exhibitors, inspiring keynote presentations, a plethora of educational sessions to choose from, and networking and social activities to keep everyone busy—not to mention the incredible backdrop of wilderness just outside the door. This was a conference complete with educational and social activities, combined with beautiful scenery and intriguing native culture. NEHA's Immediate Past President Jim Dingman said it best: "For both the educational and social events, this is a conference that attendees will never forget."

We hope this report has provided you with a summary of the AEC & Exhibition, highlighted some important points, and given you a feel for what occurred in Alaska, especially if you were unable to attend the conference. Although a great deal of activity takes place at our conferences, it is really the education NEHA provides its members and customers all year long that achieves our mission of "advancing the environmental health and protection professional." NEHA staff want to hear from you about what you want from your profession and your association, which will inevitably make next year's AEC & Exhibition even better. We also hope you will take advantage of this opportunity and attend the AEC & Exhibition in Providence, Rhode Island, June 26–29, 2005.

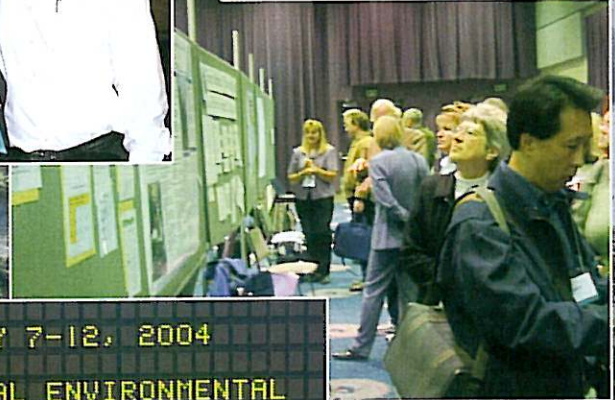
See you there! 🐻



The magnificent mountains of Alaska.

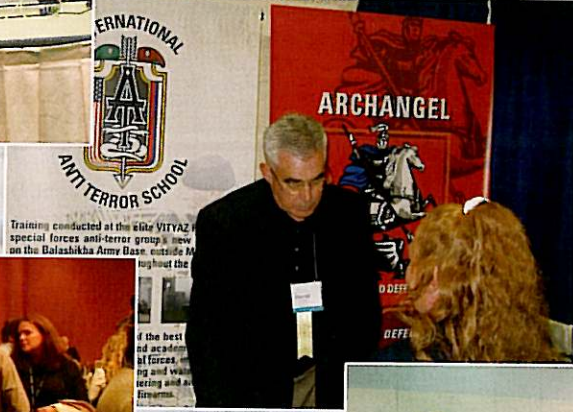
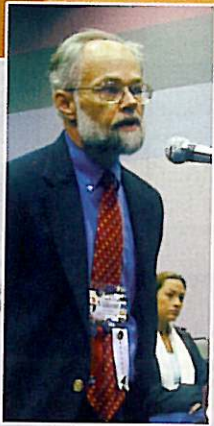
Photographs: Gary Hague, John Muñoz, Michele Samarya-Timm, and Julie Skolmowski.

2004 NEHA Annual Educational



MAY 7-12, 2004
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Conference & Exhibition



Training conducted at the elite VITYAZ special forces anti-terror group's base on the Balashikha Army Base, outside Moscow. The group has been active throughout the world.

