Where Everybody Knows Your Name

Making your way in the world today takes everything you’ve got. Taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot. Wouldn’t you like to get away? Be glad, there’s one place in the world. Where everybody knows your name and they’re always glad you came. You want to go where people know, people are all the same. You want to go where everybody knows your name.

Excerpt from the theme song of “Cheers,” a popular sitcom that aired during 1982–1993 Written by Gary Portnoy and Judy Hart

As my term as your president comes to a close, it has provided an opportunity for reflection on the friendships, partnerships, and bonds that have been developed or strengthened because of our organization. Thinking about the lyrics to this song brings to mind the gathering of friends in a familiar and welcoming venue. The setting was a neighborhood pub in Boston called “Cheers.” In my view, NEHA is a lot like Cheers: a gathering of friends in a familiar and welcoming venue where our common ground provides the basis for improving ourselves and collectively seeking ways to enhance and protect the communities where we live, work, and recreate.

Before I say “cheers” to you, I would like to share a few thoughts and updates to let you know what we are doing to better serve our members.

NEHA is the home base, the go-to place, and the welcoming venue for environmental health professionals.

Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian (REHS/RS) Credential

NEHA’s REHS/RS credential is our premier credential and it represents technical competency for environmental health practitioners. It includes an array of program disciplines, such as food protection, air quality, drinking water quality, recreational health, disaster preparedness/emergency response, and land use, to name a few. This July, NEHA will begin offering a newly revised REHS/RS exam. And it will be offered at our upcoming Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition in Las Vegas! Congratulations and many thanks to the NEHA staff and a team of subject-matter experts for updating the exam.

Approximately 23 states require an REHS credential and approximately 18 states have reciprocity with NEHA’s REHS/RS credential. As agencies seek ways to increase their candidate pools, simplify their recruiting efforts, and keep salary expenses down, this combination can translate to the whittling away at the demand for our credential. As this occurs, either our members or environmental health agencies will approach NEHA to lend support in the fight to uphold the REHS/RS credential. At our annual spring board of directors’ meeting, I appointed an ad hoc committee to draft a position paper that will officially proclaim support for the REHS/RS credential. This affirmation document can then be used by the membership and jurisdictions when working to preserve our premier credential for environmental health practitioners.

For additional information regarding NEHA’s REHS/RS credentialing program, official positions, and strategic directions, visit our Web site at www.neha.org.

Sustainability in Environmental Health

In 2010, the board approved a white paper entitled, “The Role of Sustainability in Environmental Health.” This team effort was led by Technical Advisor Tom Gonzales of Colorado. The team worked for two years to develop our annual Sustainability Award and our white paper. Education and advocacy in the area of food protection are in line with NEHA’s strategic directions; therefore, I have asked the team to reconvene to closely examine the food section of the document. As we have witnessed a movement to promote locally grown and manufactured foods, it is important for NEHA to consider food protection and security within these initiatives (e.g., farmers’ markets, urban farming/urban...
Best Practices Review

In 2013, the board of directors decided to search for a consultant to complete a best practices review for our association. NEHA is encountering many of the same challenges public and private-sector organizations are facing—generational change, fewer grant funding opportunities, and decreased travel budgets for our members. The board thought it was a good time to reexamine the way NEHA does business to ensure that it continues to be the leadership organization for our members and for the environmental health profession. We continually seek innovative methods for delivering our services. Our e-Learning opportunities, virtual conference options, and traveling educational workshops are perfect examples of NEHA’s efforts to deliver quality education to environmental health practitioners. A best practices review is intended to identify additional innovative methods for delivering our products and services.

78th Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

On July 7–10, 2014, NEHA will join with the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) to cohost our premier educational event in Las Vegas, Nevada. We are honored to have the opportunity to partner with IFEH colleagues from around the world. The program agenda and the ceremonies are ready to launch in just a few short weeks. We have an educational program that will feature guest presenters from around the world, poster sessions, award and scholarship presentations, a student mentorship program, and a virtual conference option. I look forward to seeing you there as we welcome IFEH members.

Cheers!

Cheers to the many volunteers and staff who work countless hours to make our organization run successfully. I offer my sincere gratitude to my husband Rick for his support and for being by my side throughout the year. To the board of directors, technical advisors, each one of our volunteers, and all of the staff (see pages 54 and 55), I thank you for your creativity, commitment, and perseverance. When members attend a conference, participate in a workshop, take an e-Learning course, receive the JEH or E-News, or visit NEHA’s social media sites, they are experiencing the result of your magical hands and bright and creative minds. I truly appreciate that your motivation is focused on giving back to NEHA to represent our members and support the advancement of the environmental health professional.

Cheers and bravo to this magnificent cast for championing our great cause! NEHA is the home base, the go-to place, and the welcoming venue for environmental health professionals.

It has truly been an honor and a pleasure to serve you as president this year. Thank you for your friendship and for your support throughout the year.

[Signature]
enriqueza@comcast.net

When you’re ready to apply principles of sustainability.

You are ready for American Public University.

With more than 90 degrees to choose from, there’s almost no end to what you can learn. Pursue a respected Environmental Science degree or certificate online—at a cost that’s 20% less than the average in-state rates at public universities.*

Visit StudyatAPU.com/jeh

*College Board: Trends in College Pricing, 2013

We want to help you make an informed decision about the university that’s right for you. For more about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed each program, and other important information, visit www.apus.edu/disclosure.