

NEHA NEWS

Note of Thanks to Departing Board Members

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is fortunate to have members who are willing to volunteer their time and energy to NEHA through positions within its board of directors and on committees and work groups, as well as serve as subject matter experts, trainers, and peer reviewers. We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the dedication, hard work, and efforts of three members of NEHA's board of directors on the occasion of their departure from the board: Immediate Past-President Vince Radke, Region 1 Vice-President Matthew Reighter, and Region 5 Vice-President Tom Vyles.



Immediate Past-President Vince Radke leaves the board after 5 years of dedicated service and leadership. Radke states, "I have tried to be a good steward for the members of NEHA and for the NEHA staff and board of directors. I will let the members, staff, and board be the judge if I was a good steward or not." He has been a member of NEHA since 1980 and will continue to be a member to

improve the health and well-being of people in our communities. In the coming year, Radke will serve as the president of the NEHA past presidents affiliate.

"I have had the privilege to serve the people in environmental health and public health at the local, state, tribal, territorial, federal, and international levels," Radke explains. He has served as president of the National Capital Area Environmental Health Association (NCAEHA) and the Virginia Environmental Health Association. He also served as a NEHA technical advisor in the areas of food safety and emergency preparedness and response.

Radke has been recognized and awarded numerous times for his hard work, dedication, and passion for the profession. He received the Order of the Bifurcated Needle from the World Health Organization in 1980 for his work in the 1970s on the global smallpox eradication program. He was honored twice in 1998 and 1999 with the Jerrold M. Michael Award from NCAEHA. Radke was the recipient of the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services for his work during Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. He was awarded the Distinguished Service and Professional Achievement Award from the Environmental Section of the American Public Health Association. In 2011 he received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Bronze Medal Award. In 2013 he received both the Walter F. Snyder Award from NSF International and NEHA and the NEHA Past Presidents Award. And in 2015, Radke was honored to receive the Excellence in Leadership Award from the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I was able to accomplish what I did because I had good people along the journey," reflects Radke. "Therefore, I leave you with a quote I used when I started my NEHA presidency. It is an old African proverb: If you wish to go quickly, go alone. If you wish to go far, go together."



Region 1 Vice-President Matthew Reighter leaves the board after 3 years of dedicated service and leadership. Over the past 2 years, he served as chair of the Global Engagement and Strategy Committee. In addition, he served as a committee member for the Affiliate Engagement, Credentialing, and Nominations and Elections committees.

Reighter worked as an environmental health specialist for more than 8 years in California prior to taking a role with Starbucks as a quality assurance manager. In this position he was responsible for the regulatory compliance and safety of new beverage innovation projects. Currently, he manages a small team that is responsible for the implementation and sustainment of continuous improvement initiatives within Starbucks' product quality assurance department. While working in California, he served 6 years on the California Environmental Health Association (CEHA) board of directors and served as president from 2015–2016. He was also on the board for the Southern Chapter of CEHA.

"Serving on NEHA's board has given me the opportunity to broaden my environmental health network while allowing me to give back to a profession that more often than not isn't given the credit it deserves," states Reighter. "It's a bittersweet end to nearly 12 years of service to the environmental health profession between my stints with NEHA and CEHA. I wouldn't change a thing and even though I'm stepping away from a board position, that service will never end. The connections and friendships I have been able to cultivate over that time are irreplaceable and the experiences have helped me develop into the professional I am today. I highly recommend that environmental health professionals who are looking for ways to support the profession or to take the next steps in their careers consider getting involved with an environmental health association at the local, state, or national level."



Region 5 Vice-President Tom Vyles leaves the board after 3 years of dedicated service and leadership. He is presently the environmental health manager with the Town of Flower Mound in Texas. The town is a medium-sized municipality in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Most of Vyles other outside work involves recreational water stan-

dards. He is currently on the Council of Public Health Consultants with NSF International and is the NSF Standard 50 chairperson. He is also a member of the Council for the Model Aquatic Health Code and the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance's Recreational Water Standards Committee.

"Serving on the NEHA board of directors was a big career highlight," reflects Vyles. "It gave me an opportunity to work with and meet some fantastic people. I will miss traveling around my region to various conferences and meeting new people."

NEPHIP Goes Remote During COVID-19 Pandemic

By Christine Ortiz Gumina, MPH (ppd@neha.org)

NEHA administers the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) that is supported by a cooperative agreement (CDC-RFAOT18-1802) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. NEPHIP's objective is to encourage environmental health students, through a 10-week in-person travel internship, to consider careers at local, state, or tribal environmental public health departments following graduation. Through this internship program, students are exposed to the exciting career opportunities, benefits, and challenges of working with environmental public health agencies throughout the U.S.

Students who apply must be from a National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC)-accredited environmental health academic program. Selected students receive a base stipend to cover expenses with an additional relocation stipend available to support costs if the student relocates for the internship. NEHA's role in NEPHIP is to help build new relationships between accredited environmental health academic programs and local, state, and tribal environmental public health departments.

To be considered as a host, health departments or environmental health programs must meet several different criteria that include:

- providing opportunities for student interns to experience multiple environmental health programs and activities throughout the internship,
- providing short-term work and experiences with other governmental health agencies, and
- identifying and assisting the student in completing an independent project that focuses on solving a current or future environmental health problem.

Students enrolled at EHAC-accredited environmental health academic programs who are junior or senior undergraduates or graduates are eligible for this program. The criteria for students are the submission of an unofficial transcript with at least 1 year of environmental health intensive courses with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in environmental health coursework, two essay responses prompted by NEHA, and a letter of recommendation from an academic staff member from their currently enrolled program.

The internships typically start in early June with students traveling to various locations around the country including Alaska, Florida, Rhode Island, and Texas, to name a few. In early March 2020 it became clear that the current COVID-19 pandemic would possibly affect the summer 2020 NEPHIP student program. Health departments were struggling to respond and were overwhelmed. Universities and colleges were closing their doors to protect staff and students. NEPHIP's lead project coordinator, Christine Ortiz Gumina, leveraged partnerships between the selected host health departments, directors of environmental health programs, and EHAC Director Leslie Mitchell to come together to provide a robust remote internship that would allow students to continue to work with remote capable health departments throughout the summer.

At the time of writing, the internships are still underway and we look forward to sharing student experiences and assessing how the remote internships were perceived by the students and the host health departments. Please check out www.neha.org/professional-development/students/internships for the latest information on this program.

NEHA History Project

In early 2020, then NEHA President Dr. Priscilla Oliver appointed a committee to study and review the rich history of NEHA, as well as that of the environmental health field. This committee, working in collaboration with NEHA Historian Dick Pantages, is comprised of luminaries within the environmental health profession and includes NEHA members, past presidents, and others. Dr. Leon Vinci serves as the chairperson for the committee. In light of the many advances and new innovations that have occurred in environmental health over recent decades, Dr. Oliver felt it important to establish a think tank to examine where we have been and what we have accomplished, which will position our profession to look to the future.

"It was my goal as NEHA president to create and maintain a culture of 'One NEHA' in our professional organization," stated Dr. Oliver. "Upon going to the 2019 annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I met Dr. Jay Glasser. He gave me a marketing leaflet on the APHA History Project. He inspired me to create the NEHA History Project. I was attracted to an all-inclusive web-based platform for all of NEHA and the possibility of including all states and affiliates. Little did I know there was a great need to pull the fragments of our history together and to involve the distinguished history makers of our profession. We are fully engaged in this endeavor and have organized well. Dr. Vinci has been a great chairperson in developing and maintaining the group and keeping us on target. The 'One NEHA' is being achieved."

This unique committee is charged with making the important history of NEHA and environmental health available to all members of the association, as well as other practitioners, students, and the general public. The members of the committee come from many different areas of the U.S. and represent a variety of environmental health

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professions. The committee includes distinguished individuals from academia such as Dr. Jack Hatlen and Dr. Herman Koren. Several NEHA past presidents serve on the committee, including Bob Custard, Diane Eastman, Dr. Amer El-Ahraf, Dr. Carolyn Harvey, Harry Grenawitzke, Dr. Priscilla Oliver, Vince Radke, and Chris Wiant. NEHA past presidents Dick Pantages and Dr. Welford Roberts serve on the committee as NEHA historian and assistant historian, respectively. Retired RADM Webb Young represents the uniformed services and Drs. Robert Powitz and Leon Vinci represent the private sector. Rounding out the committee in an ex officio capacity are NEHA President Sandra Long, NEHA First Vice-President Dr. Gary Brown, NEHA Executive Director Dr. David Dyjack, NEHA *Journal of Environmental Health* Managing Editor Kristen Ruby-Cisneros, and NEHA Executive Assistant Lindsy Darnell. “I am so proud to have such a distinguished collection of current and past NEHA leaders from across the country working on this project,” commented Dr. Oliver.

The NEHA History Project Committee convened and began deliberations in March 2020. To date, accomplishments include gathering data and historical documents, assembling older tools-of-the-trade, collecting historical artifacts, and reviewing records. Using the previously published *Environmental Health 1937–1987, Fifty Years of Professional Development With the National Association of Sanitarians/*

National Environmental Health Association (affectionately referred to as the “Green Book”), a work plan has been established to compile a similar written document. The committee worked to digitalize the Green Book as not many copies are in circulation and it can now be accessed online at www.neha.org/sites/default/files/flipping_book/environmental-health-1937-1987/index.html.

Other products and innovations planned by the committee include the establishment of an electronic platform for easy information access and a home location for a collection of historical artifacts. Dr. Oliver has also invited all NEHA affiliates to participate in and contribute to the project. Innovations from the field, changes in environmental health practice, and the vital role of the affiliates over the years are areas of additional importance that the committee will address. “Environmental health history is your history,” stated Dr. Vinci. “We are writing our own history.”

By approval of the NEHA board on July 14, 2020, the NEHA History Project Committee was renamed the NEHA History Project Task Force. All forms of input, ideas, and history are welcome and we invite you to share that with the task force. Also, we encourage individuals to reach out if they are interested in joining the task force. For more information, please contact Dr. Vinci at lfv6@aol.com. 🐾

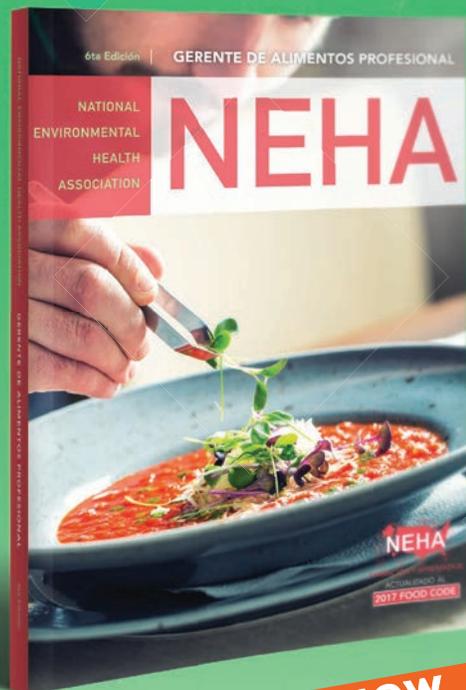
Updated to the 2017 FDA Food Code

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