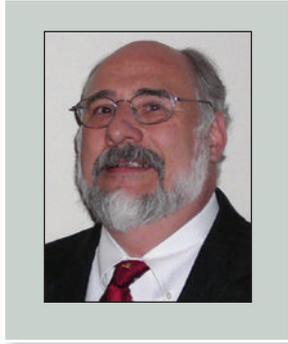


## ▶ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Bob Custard,  
REHS, CP-FS

Charles Kettering once said, “The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.” We dread change because we fear that we will lose what is familiar and comfortable. Our tendency is to cling to the certainty of the present rather than to reach out and grasp a promising, but uncertain, future.

When I think of change, I visualize my grandson playing on monkey bars. If he is hesitant when he starts, his arms grow tired and he has difficulty reaching the next rung. In contrast, when he starts boldly, he has momentum to swing himself towards the next rung and he develops a rhythm of letting go of one bar and reaching for the next one. His success lies in letting go. Without letting go, he loses momentum and he can't reach forward very far.

NEHA is changing. In the last several years we have intentionally let go of some of our familiar and comfortable ways and have reached for new ways to serve our members. For example, NEHA has accomplished the following:

- Published the *Journal of Environmental Health* in an electronic format. Now about 75% of our renewing members receive the *Journal* only electronically. This supports NEHA's sustainability efforts and helps keep NEHA dues low.
- Created a new membership category—International Members. This was made economically possible by our new digital *Journal* and recognizes the global nature of environmental health.
- Transformed NEHA's Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition section

## Imagining the New NEHA

*I would like you  
to join with me  
in imagining the  
new NEHA.*

chairs into “technical advisors” that now serve as year-round subject-matter experts for NEHA.

- Enhanced the NEHA *E-News* that brings time-sensitive information to our members more quickly than our *Journal* can.
- Downsized the NEHA bookstore. Although NEHA will continue to sell the training materials and study guides that we author or that are recommended references for our credentials, we will stop selling many books authored by others. Frankly, we can't compete with Amazon and other online booksellers that can deliver books to your doorstep faster and cheaper than NEHA can.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as your NEHA president for the next year. It is an exciting time of change. As your president, I would like to focus on six primary objectives for the coming year. They are as follows:

1. Expansion of NEHA's capacity to use the Internet to distribute publications and information, to provide distance learning, and to link environmental health professionals via social media. NEHA needs to fully embrace the digital age.

2. Expansion of NEHA's influence in Washington, DC, as an advocate for environmental health and the environmental health profession. NEHA needs to be at the table whenever and wherever environmental health policy is being discussed. We need to actively partner with other organizations with similar goals. Eventually I hope that NEHA will have a satellite office in the Washington, DC, area.
3. Expansion of NEHA's international presence. As chikungunya, dengue fever, and Ebola have shown us, few environmental health issues are geographically limited. It is increasingly important that NEHA be globally engaged on issues of international importance.
4. Engage and mentor the next generation of environmental health professionals. As the baby boom generation retires, a huge leadership transition is occurring in environmental health. NEHA should actively seek to develop and mentor young environmental health leaders.
5. Engage NEHA affiliates and support them in becoming strong state and local advocates for environmental health. NEHA long ago recognized that it did not have the resources to research and weigh in on every state or local environmental health issue. NEHA should play a bigger role, however, in encouraging the growth of healthy affiliates and in providing them with position papers and materials documenting the value of environmental health so that they can effectively address state and local environmental health issues.

6. Engage NEHA members in imagining the new, member-centered NEHA. Members are more than just NEHA's customers. They are stakeholders that deserve (and should expect) a return on their investment in NEHA.

Over the coming months you will see a number of new initiatives based on the feedback we have already received from NEHA members. In particular, watch for the following:

- A new and improved NEHA Web site.
- Revision of our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws to shorten NEHA's election process for second vice president.
- A new document outlining NEHA's vision, mission, and core values.
- An updated document outlining NEHA's strategic directions.
- More frequent position papers on cutting edge environmental health issues.
- A NEHA annual report to our stakeholders.

J.K. Rowling once said, "We do not need magic to change the world. We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already. We have the power to imagine better." Together with our new Executive Director Dr. David Dyjack, I want to engage NEHA's members more than ever before. I would like you to join with me in imagining the new NEHA—a NEHA with increasing momentum reaching boldly for a member-centered future.

Specifically, I invite you to participate in one or more of the following opportunities to share your vision of the new NEHA:

- The Town Hall Assembly at the AEC (all members).

### Brief Biographical Sketch—Bob Custard, NEHA President

Bob Custard, NEHA's new president, has served on the NEHA board of directors for the past 12 years. For the past year he has chaired NEHA's bylaws and finance committees. Bob has been a frequent speaker on food safety, environmental health program management, and the history of environmental health at NEHA's annual educational conferences.

Bob is passionate about mentoring emerging environmental health leaders. Recently he created Environmental Health Leadership Partners, a consulting firm specializing in environmental health leadership development and management.

Until last December, Bob served as an environmental health professional at the state and local levels in Virginia. For the 13 years prior to his retirement from the Virginia Department of Health, Bob was the Environmental Health Manager for the City of Alexandria. Before that, Bob coordinated Virginia's statewide environmental health training program for 10 years.

Bob has made six trips to Africa to assist various charitable organizations with drinking water issues. In 2010, Bob and his wife, Rosalind, a public health laboratory scientist, formed Global Environmental Health Partnerships in order to leverage their work in the developing world.

- An electronic survey that will come out with the July NEHA *E-News* (all members).
  - Engage your regional vice president via e-mail or at the AEC or at an affiliate conference (all members).
  - The Council of Delegates meeting at the AEC (affiliate presidents).
  - An electronic survey of affiliate presidents (affiliate presidents).
  - The meeting of the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) at the AEC (academics).
  - The annual meeting of the American Academy of Sanitarians at the AEC (academy members).
  - The annual meeting of the Past Presidents Affiliate at the AEC (past presidents).
- NEHA is your association. Boldly imagine the new NEHA and take the time to share that vision with NEHA's leadership. 🌍

*Bob Custard*

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