

CEHA Bulletin

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The Education and Training of Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) in the United Kingdom

by Peter Wright, Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner, Lancashire – UK.



Peter Wright, CEHP

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

In order to become an Environmental Health Practitioner in the UK a student must obtain the Certificate or Registration from

the Environmental Health Registration Board (EHRB).

To obtain that certificate student EHPs need to successfully complete three elements:

1. The academic qualification - an accredited degree (BSc or MSc)
2. Successful completion of an Experiential Learning Portfolio (ELP)
3. Successful completion of a Professional Examination and a practical food examination

Student membership in the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) is free during the period of the course of study.

THE ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

Currently the following establishments are accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health for delivering the 2003 core curriculum.

Undergraduate courses (BSc) are accredited at:

- University of Salford
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Nottingham Trent University
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- University of the West of England
- Middlesex University
- Truro College (Foundation degree)
- University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
- University of Ulster

- University of Northumbria
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Weston College (Foundation degree)

Postgraduate Courses (MSc) are accredited at:

- University of Birmingham
- University of the West of England
- University of Derby
- Kings College London
- Leeds Metropolitan University

Most undergraduate students will complete their course of academic study over a period of three academic years. Most postgraduate students complete their studies over a period of two academic years. However, there are some 'variations on the theme' and it is possible for some students to complete in a shorter period whilst others may take up to five years following a part time route.

In many cases, running alongside, or within, the academic course will be a period of work-based learning.

The traditional 'integrated' (BSc) route consists of two academic years at university, a third year spent on work based experiential learning, and a final (fourth) academic year.

THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PORTFOLIO (ELP)

All students are required, by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health to successfully complete an Experiential Learning Portfolio prior to entry to the Professional Examinations.

The ELP requires students to have been involved in a series of 'interventions' (grouped into five areas – Food, Health & Safety, Environmental Protection, Housing, Health Protection and Development) and to

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



George Nakamura
2007-2008
CEHA President

Dear CEHA Members,

In my previous presidential message I asked you to step up and join TEAM CEHA's efforts to make our professional organization and our profession

"The BEST WE CAN BE!" Our latest membership numbers indicate that we are moving in the right direction. One of the key areas that I feel our professional organization needs to address is our workforce development. The "baby boomers" that have provided most of the current environmental health staffing and leadership, especially at senior and supervisor levels, are retiring at alarming rates, and subsequent recruiting efforts to fill their shoes have generally not been very successful. Rob Blake, the current National Environmental Health Association President has made it one of his primary Presidential goals to market the Environmental Health profession from an "invisible" to a "visible" profession. The movie "Larry the Cable Guy, Health Inspector" provided our profession with some notoriety last year and also an opportunity to set the public record straight on who we are and what we do. The spinach outbreaks and other food safety related headlines have also provided additional marketing opportunities to further educate the public and are having a positive result in that more students are entering the environmental health profession. One of my main goals this year is to place CEHA in a strategic position to better serve its membership in order to advance and promote our profession. I hope that CEHA history will record this year as one of building new solid foundations for the next generation of environmental health professionals.

CEHA will continue to coordinate with the new Department of Public Health registration staff, the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health, and statewide environmental health undergraduate programs to ensure that the workforce development and recruitment of the next generation of environmental health professionals will be a smooth transition. My address to the CCDEH annual

conference in September will afford CEHA an opportunity to strengthen the mutual coordination between CEHA and CCDEH to further provide advancement of the profession, especially in areas such as continuing education, recruitment and retention. I will emphasize the need for our seasoned veterans and newcomers to rekindle and share "a passion for our profession".

There are many successful environmental health professionals that share a passion for their profession. During my nearly forty years of environmental health service, I found that passion is everything and that many times I realized that an environmental health professional must be nearly borderline fanatical about our chosen profession. Often when a career change opportunity would become available, I remained in environmental health because of the passion for environmental health that developed during my undergraduate days at the UCLA School of Public Health. The legendary Mr. Charles Senn and Dr. Amer-El-Ahraf ignited the professional passion that is still ongoing into my retirement years. The difference in how one engages as a communicator and as a leader is directly related to finding something you are passionate about. If you love what you do, you will eagerly share your environmental health experience with boundless enthusiasm especially in mentoring students or new environmental health staff. Passion is not teachable and it is not something you necessarily verbalize, but it shows. Passion cannot be created, but active participation in organizations such as CEHA can help to encourage and develop professional energy. Donald Trump once said: "Without passion, you have no energy –and without energy, you have nothing." Whether you are presenting a food safety certification lecture or conducting another routine inspection, your audience wants to be in the presence of someone with energy, a person who greets their clients with a smile and an abundance of enthusiasm. Passion is not something that you have to talk about. People can feel it. When I was managing environmental health staff, I was passionate about creating a workplace that treated staff with dignity and respect. Aretha Franklin was correct - R-E-S-P-E-C-T! Passion is also the foundation of effective communication. Dig deep to discover your core purpose and once you connect with it, use it as fuel to build a rapport with your

audience. Every environmental health specialist has room to increase their "passion quotient" that is the level of passion you exhibit as an environmental health professional. The higher your "passion quotient", the more likely that you are able to connect and communicate with your environmental health clients.

CEHA and I are looking forward to hearing from you, because what you can do for CEHA is mutually reciprocal with what CEHA can do for you. I hope that each current and each new member can accept our vision for CEHA as the premiere voice for environmental health in this state. We must keep our eyes on the horizon, always looking for new and innovative ways to improve our profession, our association, and ourselves. I hope we can agree that each CEHA member will make a proactive and ongoing commitment to participate and help to progressively implement positive change in our professional practice as well as our organization. A new generation of environmental health professionals is emerging and there needs to be a smooth and successful transition to sustain and grow the profession. CEHA has made great strides in gaining RESPECT for the profession and we must continue to move forward as a TEAM. Each local CEHA chapter has local events and activities and the CEHA Update is scheduled for early October so attend and participate. Let CEHA help you to reignite your professional passion and professional RESPECT will surely follow. 🍀

George



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document their learning experience. This is much more than 'been and seen' and demands that students not only gain experience in the various interventions, but also that they reflect upon the learning experience and question the reasons why a particular intervention is necessary. They will also examine the manner of invention and assess whether a different approach could have resulted in a more acceptable result.

In addition to undertaking the 'technical' experience (e.g. in relation to the contamination of food or investigation of accidents), students are also required to demonstrate their development of 14 different skills across the full range of interventions.

The completed portfolio is assessed by CIEH appointed assessors and the broad criteria used in the assessment is to determine whether, by demonstrating experience and learning, the student has been 'set on the road to competence.'

WORK BASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Work Based Experiential Learning can take place in any organisation provided that it has an Environmental Health component. There is no maximum or minimum period of work based learning.

It is, however, likely that most students will undertake their work based learning in a public sector organisation (normally a UK local authority) and that a period of around 9 to 12 months will be the average time required for completion of the ELP.

Whilst many local authorities have the capability of providing facilities for training across all intervention areas, there are several local authorities that do not. Local authorities lacking a range of industrial, commercial or residential properties or particular practices and activities, will need to make arrangements with nearby local authorities or other appropriate organisations in order for 'their' students to obtain suitable experience.

Similarly many authorities welcome students from other employers into their areas to study a particular process or activity (e.g. Multi-Occupancy Housing).

On completion of their ELP students submit their work for assessment by the CIEH.

The basic role of the assessor is to decide, following certain criteria, whether or not the student has been 'set on the road to competence.'

THE PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION

The Professional Examination, which may only be undertaken following successful assessment of the ELP and of the course of academic study, comprises two elements – a Professional Interview and a Case Study Examination, both being assessed by examiners appointed by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

The Professional Interview is based on a set of scenarios. It requires the student to: determine priorities and justify reasons for such determination; show a professional attitude and approach, determine an appropriate course of action or intervention, identify others with whom the student would work within the scenario and understand the wider actual or potential public health impacts.

The Case Study examination is a full day examination. It is intervention based and covers at least two different intervention areas (e.g. Housing and Food Safety).

Success!!

Once all those elements are successfully achieved the EHRB will issue the Certificate or Registration!! And you're an EHP!!

Ah, but we haven't really finished there!!

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Voting Members of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, (which students then become, but lose their 'free' status), are required to undertake a minimum of 20 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per year and to provide evidence, if required, of that CPD. There are many ways of obtaining CPD, but in general members will continue to attend training events, seminars, etc., and also deliver or help to deliver training to other professionals.

ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (APD)

Graduate members can then choose to progress further within the profession by undertaking the Assessment of Professional Development, this being the gateway to Chartered status.

Part 1 of the APD consists of the submission of a Case Study or Case Studies in which the candidate is required to demonstrate the following seven skills –

Investigative, Interpretive, Analytical, Communication, Educative, Organisational and Attitudinal. Assessment of the Case Study (ies) is undertaken by two assessors appointed by the CIEH.

Following successful completion of Part 1, the member may then elect to undertake Part 2 APD, which involves the submission of a presentation and a portfolio. The following five attributes must be demonstrated by the applicant :

1. A depth of understanding of their particular area of expertise
2. An appreciation of the context within which they deliver their expertise
3. An understanding of their wider role as an environmental health practitioner in contributing to public health
4. Excellent presentation and verbal communication skills
5. A professional approach to their work as an environmental health practitioner.

Successful completion of Part 2 APD (and five years post qualification experience) will entitle the member to obtain the status of Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner.

Chartered status is a quality standard for EHPs. Those who have achieved it are seen as exemplars and ambassadors for the environmental health profession. 🐦

Peter Wright is a Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner in the UK. He qualified many years ago and has worked for five different local authorities in the UK before taking early retirement in 1997. Since retiring from the last local authority, he has been involved in a number of environmental health issues, mostly around the education of EHPs. He is an assessor, examiner, and moderator for the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). Peter also runs a series of workshops for students and training officers, manages a student mentoring system and visits students in universities.

Peter was the 2000 AES delegate from the North Western Centre of CIEH. He was also a speaker at the IFEH Conference (7th World Congress on Environmental Health and the 51st AES) in 2002 in San Diego. For those who were there and remember, he was the doctor of 1854!

If you wish to obtain further details Peter can be contacted at p.n.wright@btinternet.com

REHS PROGRAM NEWS

Continuing Education Regulations



The proposed regulations for continuing education are currently being reviewed by the Health and Human Services Agency. A public comment period will be scheduled after the regulation package has been approved by the Department of Finance and the Office of Administrative Law. We will keep you informed on the progress of the regulation package through the California



Margaret Blood,
Environmental Health
Registration Program
Administrator

Environmental Health Association's CEHA Bulletin and the CDPH web page. As the continuing education regulations are refined through the review process, we are developing a draft implementation plan in order to have the stakeholders identified and the goals and objectives clear.

BIENNIAL FEE INCREASE

As of July 1, 2007 biennial renewal fees increased to \$175. The fee increase will be used to fund the administration of a continuing education program including database tracking of continuing education units; developing acceptable procedures for auditing continuing education providers and courses, developing web based provider and course information, and developing a mechanism to evaluate complaints against providers. In successive years the increased revenues will be used to cover existing program expenses that are currently under-funded. The Registration Program has not raised fees since 1990 which has resulted in a chronic revenue shortfall. This fee increase, along with increases in the application fee and the exam fee, will bring revenues in line with expected program expenditures and stabilize program revenues.

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

CDPH has reviewed and approved Environmental Health degree programs for four of the five existing environmental health university programs. Graduates from these programs (Option V) are eligible to take the REHS exam immediately upon graduation.

CSU, Northridge	3-year approval granted October 2004
CSU, San Bernardino	3-year approval granted April 2004, update under review
Loma Linda University	3-year approval granted April 2005
CSU, Fresno	3-year approval granted May 2006
UCLA	Scheduled for review this year.

Options III and IV allow the graduate to reduce the training and experience required prior to taking the REHS exam from 18 or 12 months to 9 or 6 months. CSU, Chico was approved by the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee last fall under the provisions of California Health and Safety Code Section 106635, Option III. CSU, Fullerton and Cal State Los Angeles also have approved programs in Option III and Option IV.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR REGISTRATION

CDHS maintains a database of REHS applicants that meet the minimum education requirements. These applicants have received their certification letter and are eligible to work as trainees. We can provide their mailing labels, sorted by zip code or alphabetical, for a fee of \$50. Currently we have over 1200 individuals in this database.

REHS program staff participated in the CEHA Annual Educational Symposium in Sacramento by staffing the Department's booth and helping to organize and promote the Student Forum. The Forum was well attended by students from CSU, Fresno as well as other interested students and trainees.

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee met in conjunction with the CEHA-AES, April 24th in Sacramento. The Committee's function is to make recommendations to the department with respect to the establishment of rules and regulations necessary to ensure the proper administration of the environmental health specialist registration program. Interested persons are always welcome to attend these meetings and approved minutes are posted on the REHS web site. For information on upcoming meetings call or e-mail Margaret Blood at (916) 552-9991, mblood@cdph.ca.gov.

WEB SITE LISTING OF ACTIVE REHS

Only REHS who are both current and active are listed on the REHS web site of active REHS. Retired or suspended REHS are not included on this listing. The most recent list was posted in August. The list includes the name, REHS # and expiration date. The list will be removed on 12/31/2007 and reposted after February 1, 2008.

TRAINING COORDINATOR MEETINGS

Training Coordinator meetings are facilitated by CDPH two or three times a year. Currently the group is developing a comprehensive outline of the information important to the practice of Environmental Health. The process involves using the knowledge and skill statements, developed during the job analysis, as a starting point and expanding on them until a complete description of the program responsibilities emerges. Outlines for the Food and Consumer Protection Program; Inspections & Investigations; Recreational Health; Basic Science and Drinking Water are complete. This fall Housing & Institutions and Vector Control will be examined.

EXAM QUESTION WRITING OPPORTUNITY

The REHS exam is continually updated by adding new questions and revising existing ones. A group of experienced REHS (Subject Matter Experts) were convened in May 2007 in Ontario, CA for two days to write new test questions

primarily with regard to Cal Code. Panels will be held again in the spring of 2008, if you would like to participate submit your resume to:

California Department of Public Health
Environmental Health Specialist
Registration Program
Subject Matter Expert Panel
MS 7404
P.O. Box 997377
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Since November 2006, the southern REHS exam has been held at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). The new location has strengthened our relationship with CSUN, which has the largest environmental health student population. The northern location remains CDPH headquarters in Sacramento.

REHS STATISTICS AS OF AUGUST 2007

Active and current REHS	3190
Retired REHS	411
Suspended REHS*	161
Total	3762

*suspended for failure to pay registration fees.

New REHS in 2007 (included in active REHS)	73
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NEW CLERICAL ASSISTANCE AT THE REHS DESK

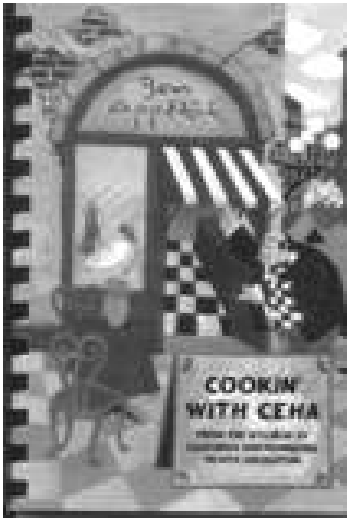
Please join us in welcoming Angie Medina to the Registration Program. Angie has worked for the State of California for many years and brings a

wealth of knowledge and skills. She can be reached at (916) 449-5662 and will be happy to answer your questions regarding the program.

If you have any questions regarding registration or renewals, please contact Margaret Blood at (916) 552-9991 or Angie Medina (916) 449-5662. 📧



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Get your copy of "Cooking with CEHA"

This awesome Nu Yoark Tymes #1 best selling cook book contains special recipes from the great chefs of CEHA (You might be amazed who they are)

- **Not sure what to make for dinner?**
- **Want to make that perfect meal for that special someone?**
- **Tired of eating frozen thermonuclear reincarnated food imposters that leave you unsatisfied?**

The recipes in this cook book are fast, easy, and mouth watering delicious. There are also wonderful informational pages with tips and "how to" explanations that will make your friends and family think you are the next Wolfgang Puck or Julia Child!

"Cooking With CEHA" is being offered at a special low price of \$10.00 (S&H extra) for a limited time. All proceeds go towards the CEHA Education and Development Fund.

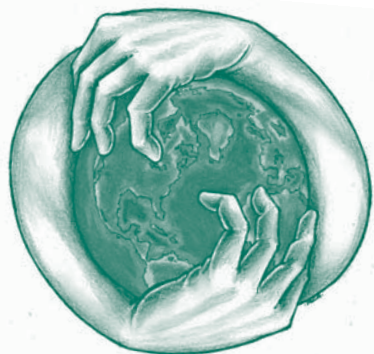
Contact your Chapter President to purchase this exceptional cookbook. You may also order copies from Tracey Ford by contacting her at tford@co.riverside.ca.us or calling (760) 863-7000.

If you were only allowed to keep one cook book in your home, this is the one you would want.

The Art of Environmental Health

by Larry Gordon, M.S., M.P.H., D.H.L.

Adapted from a presentation at the September 20, 2007 CCDEH Conference



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IS IN YOUR HANDS

Most practitioners feel more secure practicing the science of environmental health than they do in practicing in the equally important art of environmental health.

Within a short time after being hired as an entrance grade sanitarian, I began questioning the traditional pattern of organizing, staffing and delivering environmental health services at the state and local levels.

There were many visionary professionals who served as my mentors. Some were sanitarians, a few were public health physicians, but most were engineers. I vividly recall fruitful conversations with National Sanitation Foundation Executive Director Walter Snyder. Philadelphia Public Health Engineer and Environmental Health Director Walt Purdom provoked many of my emerging concepts. Public Health Service Sanitarian Director Dick Clapp imparted memorable wit and wisdom as I participated with him in teaching CDC environmental health courses in at least a dozen states. University of North Carolina School of Public Health Sanitary Engineer Professor Emil Chanlett impressed me with observations such as "Environmental health has been left half way between leprosy and the quarantine station." Several mentors were visionary environmental health "giants" in California. I learned immensely from my discussions with Sanitarian icons Walter Mangold and University of Californian Sanitarian Professor Harry Bliss. I was privileged to communicate frequently with Los Angeles Sanitary Engineer Director and subsequently UCLA Professor Charlie Senn. I was enthralled by the compelling oratory of California State Sanitary Engineer Frank

Stead. And, the excellent research of Dr. Lester Breslow of the UCLA School of Public Health continues to provide a beacon for many EH efforts throughout our nation and the world. Each of the foregoing practitioners had one invaluable characteristic in common, a vision.

LESSONS FROM MY MENTORS THAT INFLUENCED MY CAREER

- I learned that we must collectively understand that organizations, programs, problems and public expectations are not static and that change will continue
- I observed that most environmental health practitioners tend to resist changes rather than lead the way to changes in programs, organizations and personnel, thus abdicating responsibility and leaving the unclaimed environmental health problems for others to claim
- I found that every community and state has many "health agencies," while only one is actually titled a "health department"
- I recognized that environmental health may be effectively served by agencies separate from health care such as state and local EPAs
- I determined that environmental health professionals should seek key leadership roles in all environmental health agencies at all levels, whatever their organizational titles
- I found that most EHPs have limited vision regarding the scope and benefits of their field of practice. Many feel it begins and ends in health departments
- I recognized long ago that environmental health services are dependent on public and political support, and that practitioners must consistently communicate with policy makers to ensure understanding and support for environmental health
- I observed that pollution problems must be addressed on a progressive multiple goal basis, considering not only the health impact, but also the impact on agriculture, recreation, wildlife, ecology, environmental quality and economics. When health departments do not address such relevant problems, other agencies are eager to assume the entire program
- I learned to develop new organizational models to better serve the public, and

learned that environmental health practitioners must lead in striving for changes in programs, priorities and organizational patterns rather than waiting for someone else to lead

- I found that there are no glass ceilings for qualified environmental health practitioners desiring to accept responsibility and lead
- I concluded there is virtue in being able to change your mind, and that experience, education, initiative, vision and the courage to question the status quo and think and practice outside box bring novel perspectives that generate constructive ideas.
- I repeatedly observed that only dead fish move with the current
- And finally, I learned that those who look only to the past or to the present will most certainly miss the future

THE SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The scope and complexity of environmental health have expanded from the era of sanitation and biological insults to include chemical insults, radiation, land use, global environmental health, and ecological issues among others.

The terminology "environmental health" also embraces environmental protection. The two terms have been utilized to denote programs based on organizational settings rather than logical or definable differences in programs, missions or goals. Distinctions are largely artificial, and have led to organizational confusion, turf competition, programmatic gaps and overlaps, and separation of closely related activities that share the common goal of protecting the environment and human health.

One may define narrowly, or define broadly. One may embrace the field, build bridges and construct castles, or divide the field, lay bricks and build walls. Innumerable definitions have been proposed, but most such definitions merely reflect the scope of the agency involved rather than embracing the field of practice. The "Report of the Committee on the Future of Environmental Health" included the definition that is most commonly used.

Environmental health is the art and science of protecting against environmental factors that may adversely impact human

health or the ecological balances essential to long term human health and environmental quality. Such factors include, but are not limited to: air, food and water contaminants; radiation; toxic chemicals; wastes; disease vectors; safety hazards; and habitat alterations.

We must recognize that not every environmental health agency can be involved in the comprehensive field of practice. Program scope will depend on the existence and nature of environmental health problems, legislative authorization, public and political support, the type of economy, geographic features, climactic factors, population numbers and density, and quantity and quality of staff among other factors.

Environmental health practice is based on risk assessment, risk communication and risk management applied to one or more environmental health problems.

SERVICE DELIVERY ORGANIZATIONS

Numerous organizations at all levels of the public and private sectors deliver environmental health services. A few of the principal federal environmental health agencies include: Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, various U.S. Public Health Service organizations, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Energy Department, and Agriculture Department.

In general, state environmental health agencies are apt to have responsibility for administering water pollution control, air pollution control, solid waste management, public water supplies, meat inspection, occupational health and safety, pesticide regulation, and radiation protection.

The majority of local environmental health responsibilities remain the responsibility of health departments. Many local governments have assigned certain environmental health functions to agencies such as public works, housing, planning, councils of government, solid waste management, and special purpose districts and authorities. Agencies other than local health departments are playing an increasing role in air pollution control, noise pollution control, water pollution control, groundwater contamination, industrial discharges, accidental spills, fish and shellfish sanitation, drinking water contamination, brownfields clean-up and redevelopment, hazardous materials control, leaking fuel storage tanks, hazardous waste sites, and pollution prevention.

IN ORDER FOR THE PRACTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TO EMBRACE AND BUILD UPON ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS, PRACTITIONERS MUST ENSURE:

1. A Vision

The best way to predict the future is to invent it, and that requires a vision. Vision statements I have reviewed from scores of agencies vary from no concept, through a useless utterance such as "Healthy People in Healthy Communities," to a few thoughtful statements. Some acknowledge only a fragment of the tantalizing rainbow-like spectrum of a vision. This remarkable variation is due to lack of a common understanding of the potential, the benefits, and the scope of the field of practice, as well as a paucity of imagination on the part of many individuals in policy roles.

We should envision communities in which:

- Problems are measured and defined prior to designing and implementing programs
- Environmental health is based on sound risk assessment and epidemiology, as well as the primacy of prevention
- Environmental health practitioners have the capacity to effectively address community environmental health problems
- Practitioners, the public, the media, and public policy makers constantly travel broad two-way environmental health communication bridges
- Public and private sector officials seek the input of environmental health practitioners prior to developing policy and taking actions that impact environmental health

Only when environmental health practitioners and community leaders embrace the foregoing as important components of a vision for environmental health, will there be a development of policy, goals, objectives, program design and priorities to achieve the vision. Developing and pursuing such a dream is a continuing and evolving journey rather than a destination.

Developing and pursuing a comprehensive vision for environmental health helps market the benefits of environmental health and ensures the support of policy makers. As an important part of a comprehensive vision, practitioners must recognize that environmental health contributes

substantially not only to reducing disease and disability, and restraining health care costs, but also to a better quality of life with fewer social problems in communities that have great vitality and productivity.

2. Leadership

When a leader and a dreamer work hand in hand, or better still, when the dreamer is also a leader, significant achievements can be made. Many outstanding environmental health leaders consistently exhibit the capacity to earn the recognition and respect of their peers as well as the public and elected officials. Many others are content to simply complain.

Here are a few traits and practices of scores of outstanding environmental health leaders:

- They constantly pursue a coherent vision that provides a platform on which to base and market their mission, their goals, their objectives, their programs and their policy recommendations
- They have the confidence to apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities
- They stand up for their beliefs, they practice persistence and resilience, and they accept the fact that if you want a place in the sun you have to expect a few blisters
- They engage in controversial issues as appropriate and realize that trying to please everyone is a key to failure
- They understand and impact the political process rather than viewing it with disdain
- They lead in developing public policy rather than following
- They consistently market the comprehensive benefits of environmental health
- They routinely utilize the complex array of public information possibilities to ensure support
- They think outside the box, and are willing to be out of step with their peers
- And they understand that support must be developed the old fashioned way. They earn it!

Effective environmental health leadership is complex, frequently controversial, and invariably the result of individual capacity and initiative. Many of our great environmental health leaders have been dedicated individuals who achieved eminence not because they had the right

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Personal Safety

by Darryl C.F. Wong, REHS



Darryl C.F. Wong, REHS

You look at your wall clock; it's 0800 sharp. Everything is on schedule. Today is a big day. It might get ugly, but you know your training and experience will not fail you. Two

new heavy-duty AA batteries are locked and loaded into your trusty Mag Lite. You sheathe your old friend on your right belt loop for a quick draw. You check, and recheck, your LayZ2000 HaughtKalt thermocouple. This German-engineered bad boy can pinpoint the temperature from minus 685 degrees F to 1460 degrees F in less than 0.036 nanoseconds, with a degree of error of .00072. It has infrared and ultraviolet laser beams for those special occasions when you are vastly outnumbered on the buffet line. You carry the PlazTique compartment clipboard that can hold up to 50 OIRs (Official Inspection Reports), as well as several (VCD) forms in a side slot. The polymer shell is light weight, but it can fully stop a well ripened tomato hurled at you from across the length of a double-hooded cook line. You take another look at the clock, then at your watch. Both are perfectly synchronized. The time is 0830, time enough to get a quick briefing from your superiors about today's objective.

Wang's Fu Yu 2 has a reputation that spans several generations among your peers, past and present. The facility is known for filthy fetid conditions, employees with poor personal hygiene, and callous non-compliance. The operator of the facility is notorious for being rude, abrasive, and possibly dangerous. Your supervisor tells you of a time when he closed Wang's and then had to go back 5 times for re-inspections before allowing the facility to reopen. He tells you how the place is always in total chaos and how they now fear him. You look over to the senior food specialist, who's broken away from his computer game and is gleefully ready to relive his many encounters with the "Great Wang". He tells you how to search and destroy those strange little rice cakes sitting out in the open. He recounts every pound of shrimp, beef, pork, and chicken that was "targeted and dispatched" on the spot. With a smirk, he tells you it won't be like a trip to Disneyland.

It's 0900 and you're burning daylight. You "square away" your gear inside your vehicle, check map coordinates of the target site, switch the ignition on, and launch with moderate velocity from the parking lot. Cal Code is your co-pilot. It takes roughly 30 minutes to get a visual sight of your target. There it is, the jade green monstrosity of a pagoda. It's three stories high, and has two full size banquet rooms that can hold over 500 insurgents each, a 24 hour buffet line, a back delivery docking area that doubles as a food preparation area, and a very small, tight kitchen with poor lighting and hardly any ventilation. As you ease into final approach, you gently stroke your Mag Lite, knowing your favorite weapon will be put to its ultimate test in a few minutes. You stop for a moment and secure your area before advancing. A last minute gear check is in order; then a quick test of the ink quality from your time tested black medium point Bic pen and a back up pen is applied to an old CEHA Bulletin. Time to rock and roll!

The march up the flight of stairs to the grand archway is quick and methodical. You notice that the paint on the pillars is of a pale chalky greenish color and peeling, owing to years of weathering and neglect. The great doors to the complex are easily breached with a single push of an arm. As you enter, you are greeted by a young female guard who asks how many for lunch. You politely and professionally state none and that you would like to speak to the person in charge of this facility. You scan the area with your hawk-like vision and start to notice the dingy film that coats the ceiling, walls, and floors in the dining area. A light swipe of your finger over the areas of the podium tells you that the vapors from the kitchen have been seeping out. It's an ominous sign of a serious hood-ventilation problem. You can see the dreaded buffet line in a distance through one of the great banquet rooms. There are several indigenous persons scraping and digging in extra large deep pans of food spread 5 tables long. Everything is laid out flat on the tables. No heated chaffing dishes, no ice beds, no sneeze guards in place. Your "recon" is paying off. The commander of the facility, Mr. Wang, as he is known by the locals finally comes out with his smiling aide. He greets you with a smile and asks how many. You politely and professionally introduce yourself and state that you are here to conduct a food borne illness investigation. You ask if he

would like to step in the back so that you can discuss the specifics about the complaint. Mr. Wang appears to not hear you and harshly speaks to his now frowning aide, who instantly disappears into the back. You have no idea what was said, but you can already hear commotion and yelling from behind the first barrier to the kitchen.

The smile is gone. Beady dark eyes glare at you from small slits in Mr. Wang's face. Again you try to persuade Mr. Wang to move to the back, away from the patrons. He seems unwilling to move. In broken English he asks, "Why you come harass me? I run good business! I pay taxes! My place clean! You go now!" OK, the enemy is starting to dig in. No surrender flag this time. You look Mr. Wang squarely in his eyes and state that you have received multiple complaints about temperature, odor, and strange taste of the food prepared at this location. In addition, 96 persons, all unrelated and from different groups, had become ill from dining here within the last 48 hours. This time Mr. Wang tries to change battlefield tactics and goes into the poor financial state of his regime. He tells you that business has been very slow; that he cannot make money on a \$2 plate of fried rice. He says he has many bills to pay; the permits keep going up in price; his great grandmother died, he is an old and sick man. You tell Mr. Wang that you are sorry to hear things have not been going well for him. Now you switch battle tactics and tell Mr. Wang that you would like to do an inspection to determine if the FBI (Food Borne Incident) is an abnormality, and that his cooperation will be noted on the report.

It's 0945. Mr. Wang has stalled you at the outer perimeter of his stronghold for 15 minutes. This adversary is a calculating foe. He's had many wars on this field, and he's very cunning as a result of his battle experience. Where is that aide that went into the back? What orders was she given by her general? What kind of ambush is being set up for you? Keep your cool; stay frosty. You need to complete your mission. Don't get caught up with his "psy ops" tactics. The first objective is to push forward and take and hold the nerve center of this compound, the kitchen.

Rather than dig in and have a stand off in the front trenches, you invite Mr. Wang to follow you into his keep. Instinctively you push open the right side of double

swinging doors to the kitchen, noting the greasy sticky feel now on your right hand. Mr. Wang is keeping up along side of you, and looking uneasy. You stop and look around at the scenario before you. You've entered into the apocalypse!

Twelve months of intensive training with the best of the best, over a decade of inspections in the worst barrio, and having earned the distinguished Statewide Standard certificate and Core Cal Code instructor title could not prepare you for the ghoulish hell you just deployed into. The area is dimly lit, the one working fluorescent light tube is coated in a dark brown slime and flickers constantly. Steam billows satanically from various sources all around you. It's hot and sticky; the air is suffocating from the foul aromas of cooked and uncooked foods. The walls are a darkened yellow gray. The brown stained floors show white skid marks from something dragged unwillingly. Whole chickens hang by their heads from a medieval rack, blood dripping off their feet into the full dish sink below. A man in front of you is chopping unwashed lettuce on a blood spattered pine board, a large pile of freshly chopped pork sits ominously on the table among the heads of cabbages. In the corner you spy a floor sink that is actively flowing. You can barely detect bits of paper in the flowing current from this human engineered artesian well. Several large cardboard boxes sit soaking in the rich bog, the words Oliver and Oscar's Oysters is stenciled on the tops and sides. Every inch of counter space is covered with raw meats, vegetables, boxes, cans, and pans of cooked foods. A trickle of sweat runs down the back of your neck. Your senses are overwhelmed. Your legs feel like Jell-O on springs. You can't feel your arms. You can't move. Everything is spinning. Fear is consuming you. The battle is over before it even started. Everything is starting to get dark.

Mr. Wang has been studying you. He's picked up on your hesitation. His eyes are darting everywhere, sending unspoken commands to his troops in the room. He'll be moving in for the kill soon. He'll have you writing, "Unable to Verify Complaint" on your OIR. No! Not without a fight. Clark Kent has just changed! Years of training and experience take over. You're a lean mean inspecting machine. You can recite Cal Code forwards and backwards, and in 3 different languages. You are the law, and the law is god. Your right index finger releases the safety latch on your Mag holster. You turn right and drop low as you bear your light on a six-legged creature

crawling up the side of the outdated Jackson dish machine. The wide clear beam slices the acrid air and illuminates the squad of adult cockroaches fanned out in a lazy "W" formation on the wall behind the stove. Instinctively, your left arm extends out with the infrared thermometer pistol gripped in you hand; its red laser beam targeting the multiple overfilled pans and trays of food on the table to your left flank. You read off the numbers aloud as you zero in on each intimidating mound; 98, 100, 85, 89, 62, 77, 75. The numbers are unrelenting. People are running all over the place screaming something that sounds like "dew lay". Are they saying "to late"? Then your sixth sense tells you that an even greater danger is lurking ever so near. You slowly turn around and come face to face with the mother of all "FBI" possibilities. Cold sweat trickles down your spine.

It sits there mocking you, daring you to go hand-to-hand combat with it. Alone, by itself, it is a force to be reckoned with. At arms length is a single pan of uncooked meatloaf waiting to be reborn into the full nightmare that only the CDC could appreciate. You look at Mr. Wang and ask, "How long has that tray been awaiting deployment to the oven". He shrugs and smugly says, "jus come out refrigerator". A quick back hand touch tells you that this sleeping giant of gastro intestinal agony has been laying in wait for over 8 hours. Even the flies buzzing you stay clear of this evil. Without missing a beat, you unwind the probe of your thermocouple and thrust with all your might into the heart of the crimson-brown behemoth. It does not move. It takes your attack with the greatest of insults, your sterilized probe is now coated with white grease and brown bits of its flesh. You turn to Mr. Wang and sternly say, "98.7 degrees F" as you show him the red LED on your thermocouple.

Mr. Wang is neither smiling nor paying much attention to you. He seems to be lost in the heat of battle. You know the next command you give will be the coup de gras. You know Mr. Wang has fought this battle many times over and lost each one. You take out a VCD form and load it onto the clipboard to start the meticulous list of foods in your final assault. You are shocked and awed at the gross weight in pounds of food to be destroyed. You'll have bragging rights commensurate with those of your superiors back in the office. It will be a hero's welcome when you return to base. You hand Mr. Wang the list to sign. He puts on an old pair of greasy smudged wire rimmed glasses and goes over the death sentence. His eyes get wider and wider as he

reads line after line. He takes off his glasses abruptly and squints at you. He's turning red. He tells you he's sick of all the inspectors that come in here and cause trouble. There are years of animosity in his voice. He accuses you of trying to get points with that boss that used to come here. Everyone who has come in here has made trouble. He tells you that he has a big lunch party in the banquet room and that you are going to ruin his business. Then he tries a final defensive tactic, and asks if you can come back tomorrow. He promises to have everything clean. He pleads, almost crying on your OIR. You explain to him that you are only doing your job and that you cannot turn your back on such an eminent health hazard to the public.

Mr. Wang's mood is somber now. He is shaking his head and muttering no, no, no. You are ready to end this campaign and declare victory. You think to yourself about many lives you probably saved today. As you put the finishing touches on the battle scarred, grease stained OIR, you see something you missed. Back on the loading/ delivery/ illegal food preparation dock area sits a huge Hin Jan shipping container. It's rusted and appears to be dripping water into accumulating puddles on the ground. You decide to walk over and "recon" the site. It's pad locked and you notice a power cord leading into it. You ask Mr. Wang what's this all about. He says it is nothing, just left by some truck driver. You touch the door and it feels cool and vibrating to the touch. You ask Mr. Wang to open the container. He again says it's nothing and he doesn't have a key. To Mr. Wang's horror, and your luck, one of his henchmen comes up to unlock the lock. Mr. Wang yells violently at his lackey, but it's too late. You motion to have the lock opened by the fearful servant. You wonder if this is the storage area for FMDs (Foods of Mass Diseases). This will definitely earn you the coveted "Distinguished Thermometer" award. The door creaks open. You hop in and say aloud, "Well, well, well, what have we here?" as you scan the dark frozen land of the dead. Suddenly you hear the doors slam closed. It's cold and dark. You fumble in the dark to unleash your trusty Mag Lite. It's spent; you drained the batteries on the final assault in the kitchen. The distinctive click of the lock tells you that you're sealed in. The metal shipping container jams your cell phone. You're trapped. Your pulse and breathing rates dramatically increase. You can only hear your heart pounding. Panic sets in. Yelling is of no use in the insulated frozen tomb. The bad guys win. Game over.

Field inspectors routinely put their lives on the line each day, and may not even realize this. Whether it's driving in bad weather or traffic, responding to a substandard housing complaint in a gang infested neighborhood, or inspecting a septic system in a crowded and confusing dustbowl with very large trucks and backhoes racing to and fro, there is always some danger to be aware of. It is our job to ensure the health and safety of the public, despite the hazards we must encounter. But, safety should come first and foremost. Do you remember the inspectors who were gunned down in cold blood at that meat packing plant in San Leandro (just south of Oakland)?

February 16, 2005

OAKLAND — Self-proclaimed "sausage king" Stuart Alexander was sentenced to death Tuesday for killing three meat inspectors five years ago.

Alexander, 43, was convicted in October of three counts of first-degree murder for the 2000 shooting deaths of two federal inspectors and one state inspector at his Santos Linguisa factory in San Leandro.

A jury Dec. 14 called for his execution, and Alameda County Superior Court Judge Vernon Nakahara upheld the verdict. The case will automatically be appealed.

Alexander fatally shot Jean Hillery, 56; Bill Shaline, 57; and Tom Quadros, 52. He then fired at and chased a fourth inspector, Earl Willis, for several blocks. (Judge sentences 'sausage king' to death, ASSOCIATED PRESS 8:20 p.m. February 15, 2005. <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/state/20050215-2020-ca-sausagefactoryshooting.html> 7-16-07.

Editor's note: Stuart Alexander was found dead in his death row cell at San Quentin on December 27, 2005.

How about the inspector, whose home address was made available to her assailant by checking her vehicle license plate through the DMV?

In West Virginia, an inspector had hot oil splashed on him during an inspection. The owner claims that this inspector approached him in a threatening manner.

The California Association of Code Enforcement (CACE) completed a study-survey in 2005 that included many incidents of attacks and hostilities towards enforcement agents, including Environmental Health Specialists, who were in the process of doing their jobs.

Do you know what that graffiti on the walls and buildings means? Is it just someone scrawling his/her name for fame, or are you trespassing onto the turf of one of

the thousands of deadly gangs unknown to you? Can you tell if an operator of a facility is a quiet kind person or a psychopath waiting for the right moment to play surgeon with you? Unless you can read minds, you will always be in harm's way.

Personal Safety classes are very informative and useful tools that may provide some degree of safety and security to our profession. Most local agencies have speakers willing to give talks for free, provided that you supply the room. Speakers from various agencies include: Mental Health, Gang Task Force, Drug Enforcement, and Animal Control. Their information is invaluable and may mean the difference in your survival in a bad situation.

As individuals, we go about our business in different ways. Methods of approaching a situation will ultimately be determined by your experience, manner, decisiveness, and even knowing the culture of the area in your district. We are empowered by City, County, State, and Federal laws that are black and white. However, it is how we impart these laws in the world of color that will determine the outcome of compliance. It may be hard to admit, but we too can be the "last straw on the camel's back". I'd like to end this article by quoting an old favorite TV character's line, "Hey, let's be careful out there." 🐪

Darryl Wong, Just An Inspector Out There

Board Highlights, August 8, 2007

by Julie DeGraw, REHS 2007-2009 CEHA Secretary



- The CEHA Board of Directors provided NEHA with input and is considering forming an ad-hoc committee to investigate the possibility of working with NEHA to host an Annual Education Conference in California in 2012.
- The Board amended the bylaws to include a definition of a lifetime membership.
- Donna Vilalta was formally approved as the new Liquid Waste Technical Section chair.
- The Board approved a proposed budget for the 2008 AES, which will be held in San Diego.
- The Board considered, and then withdrew from, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with a contractor, Your Training Place.com. The contractor proposed to enter into an agreement with CEHA to develop training material that would be hosted online that would potentially help CEHA members meet future training requirements. Your Training Place.com demonstrated the proposed website. The Board ultimately proposed to form an ad-hoc committee to work on contractual details and investigate ways to avoid a conflict of interest.

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pedigrees or belonged to the right organizations, but because they had the vision, the information and the leadership. Environmental health practitioners have a solid record of achievement in a wide spectrum of roles in a variety of public, private and academic organizations. Most leadership positions do not offer career protection beyond the ability of an individual to earn the continuing respect and support of peers, subordinates, the public, the media and elected officials.

3. Positive Public Relations

Public relations must rank high among the activities of any agency. An environmental health program will not achieve optimal results in the absence of good public relations.

Public relations are nothing less than the sum total of all the conditions, attitudes, impressions, and opinions that constitute the relationships between the public and the agency. Public relations reflect everything an agency does — the manner in which a visitor or a caller is greeted, office appearance, office behavior, the manner in which employees dress, staff competence, the quality of public information, the quality of educational material and correspondence, ability to speak interestingly about services, and skill in answering criticism and sharing news about the activities of the agency. The public relations program will be most successful when all personnel understand its importance and participate freely. Friendly and favorable media are vital factors in creating public interest and good will, and in establishing a climate in which an agency can be most effective. Because positive public information can be so rewarding, proper media relations are especially important. Getting and staying in the news is not the easiest part of the public information program, but it is well worth the effort for the effect is cumulative. A single "break" in the media will not bring the public to your doors. Remember, too, that one unfavorable story or unhappy event will not ruin an agency's reputation. Public impressions are built over a long period of time. Many environmental health practitioners have been suspicious of the media and afraid to be open and work with them. This results in a negative type of public information program, as the media may not gather any news about the agency unless it is bad news.

A few other suggestions:

- Encourage numerous personnel to be involved in the public information program because this will lead to more interesting

articles, more stories, more human interest, and better public relations

- Build and promote the department instead of an individual
- Understand that reporters prefer to write their own stories and receive information directly
- Everything in an official agency should be open to the media unless specifically legally prohibited
- Make frequent contact with reporters covering your agency or functions
- Develop a calendar or timely seasonal information items for the media
- Have coffee with reporters, and tell them of your needs and problems as well as your successes
- For major issues, request a conference with news editors to gain editorial understanding and support

Do such things routinely and develop sound media relationships rather than expecting immediate support during an unforeseen emergency.

Environmental health is the public's business, and will not be properly understood or supported in the absence of continuing information to the media, target groups, citizen groups, professional groups, elected officials, and other agencies involved in the field of environmental health.

I cringe when I hear about the "invisible profession." If a program or agency is "invisible," practitioners should re-evaluate their own attitudes and efforts. The fault is invariably with the messengers rather than the messages. For years, my various agencies were extremely visible. We had TV, radio and print media messages emanating from a variety of departmental personnel several times weekly. Environmental health is of profound interest to the public. Blaming the media is a feeble excuse. Factors involved in a paucity of visibility include:

- Organizational settings that preclude support, understanding, emphasis and visibility for environmental health
- Organizational policies that discourage environmental health personnel from practicing good public information
- Practitioners not understanding and marketing the comprehensive benefits of environmental health

- And, practitioner inability to articulate and pursue a comprehensive vision of environmental health

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Make a difference by being informed, getting involved and promoting environmental health actions and policies in the absence of statutory authority. Successful EH practitioners make opportunities, reactive practitioners get second best. Many improvements can be made in the absence of specific statutory authority. I developed an Urban Renewal Program, and a Low Rent Leased Housing Program. I was involved in improving solid waste activities, municipal public works activities, and made recommendations regarding safety measures. I made recommendation regarding land use, transportation methodologies, and energy production and alternatives. I ordered all cleaning establishments to have warning labels on, or perforations in, all plastic garment bags. I conducted a survey of all diagnostic x-ray machines to reduce exposure to employees and patients, and rid my jurisdiction of all shoe fitting fluoroscopes that were exposing clients and employees to harmful amounts of radiation. I even made recommendations about, irradiation of foods and radioactive fallout. No one ever questioned such involvement.

- Take advantage of the fact that environmental health is widely considered to be an entitlement
- Lead rather than simply respond in recommending environmental health organizational and programmatic changes
- Compete for leadership roles in the complex spectrum of public and private agencies delivering environmental health services
- Fully cooperate with the media and keep the public advised regarding environmental health problems and accomplishments
- Prioritize and design programs based on sound epidemiology and public health risk assessment

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Environmental health will continue to change as a result of various societal, economic, political, and population pressures, as well as supply and demand factors.

The trend to organizationally diversify environmental health programs will continue in response to the priority of environmental health, the demands of environmental advocates, and the trend for many health departments to become significantly involved in health care to the detriment of environmental health priorities. Additionally, most health departments find it difficult to deal with the ecological and global aspects of environmental health. Another factor is the ever increasing priority and complexity of environmental health problems and programs.

Environmental health has arrived. Environmental health has developed its own constituency. Environmental health is demanded by the public and is widely considered to be an entitlement.

Environmental health will continue to increase in complexity, and the public will increasingly expect and demand effective programs. Demographic changes, resource development and consumption, product

and materials manufacturing and utilization, wastes, global environmental deterioration, technological development, international terrorism, changing patterns of land use, population pressures, transportation methodologies, resource development and utilization, and continuing organizational diversification of environmental health services will create unanticipated challenges. Environmental health will continue to be basic to the health of the public and the quality of our environment. Environmental health problems, programs and service delivery organizations will evolve in ways that are unforeseen. Anticipating and embracing appropriate components of environmental health will ensure a bright future for those who opt to lead. Embracing opportunities and making difficult decisions will further protect public health and the environment.

Larry Gordon has devoted considerably more than half a century to environmental health and other aspects of public health, including roles as a county sanitarian,

district sanitarian, state sanitarian, chief sanitarian in a municipal health department, founding director of a city-county environmental health department, Public Health Service consultant, Public Health Services Commissioned Officer, lecturer for CDC training courses, founding director of a state environmental agency, founding director of a state scientific laboratory system, president of the American Public Health Association, state cabinet secretary for health and environment, visiting professor of public administration, senior fellow of an institute for public policy, and adjunct professor of political science. He is one of 4 Diplomat Laureates of the American Academy of Sanitarians and recipient of numerous national professional awards, as well as an Honorary Doctorate.

Visit:

<http://www.ncleha.org/larrygordon/default.asp>
<http://hsc.unm.edu/library/spc/Gordon/biography.shtml>

International Committee Report

by Diane Eastman, Chair

As many of you recall, the CEHA International Committee, which is located in Mission Chapter, had another textbook donation drive. This one was for the fledgling Environmental Health program at the University in Lusaka, Zambia. The Mission Chapter stepped up and paid for most of the shipping costs. The books were shipped, and have been very gratefully received. The Zambia Institute of Environmental Health (ZIEH) is a member of the International Federation of Environmental Health, and it is through those contacts that we learned of the need for textbooks for the new library there. The thank you note sent by Allan Mbewe, President of ZIEH, is copied below.

The textbook collection has ended, and Mission Chapter, and those other contributing persons in CEHA have provided some valuable tools for future Environmental Health professionals.

Dear Diane,

I write on behalf of ZIEH to inform you and your Executive that the University has finally received the textbooks you kindly sourced for our new training programme in Environmental Health. As you are now aware that this training programme is like a new baby who is yet to crawl, stand, walk and run. Thus it demands for more teaching and learning materials if the university is to graduate a well trained Environmental Health Officer who are expected to come and make a difference in the field of work. This therefore creates pressure on our executive to continuously look for assistance from our cooperating partners in the desire to provide conducive learning environment for our students.

Diane, what you and your executive have done for us is absolutely wonderful and this message comes to warmly express our heartfelt thanks for your gesture. There is so much to thank you and your executive for the things you have done and understanding of our plight in sourcing training materials. There is so much to appreciate the thoughtfulness you have shown and this message holds more gratitude than words can convey.

On several occasions we have been wondering whether our executive is going to achieve set targets of sourcing required materials that would provide a conducive learning environment for our learners. However, with the presence of good professional friends in the world, we have no doubt that we are going to achieve it. My special thanks also go to all those who played a pivot role in ensuring successful mobilisation of the books. This includes brother Fordson who continued to think of the project he left home, brother this is the spirit of a true patriot. God bless all of you.

Best regards,

Allan Rabson Mbewe
 President ZIEH

CA Rural Health Perspective



*Doug Ames
2007-2008 CCDEH
President*

I thought it would be a good idea to let you know a little about me and my environmental health experience.

I began my environmental health career in 1973 as a trainee in the Riverside County

Department of Environmental Health. After a week or so of working with various staff members to get an idea of what to do and how to do it, I was given complaints to investigate. As I remember it, a lot of the complaints had to do with “dog droppings” – a good way to see some of what the profession had to offer.

Undeterred...I stuck with the 12 month trainee period and took the registration exam and was soon at work as an official “Sanitarian.” People would ask me, “What is that – a garbage collector?”

I was assigned an “area” in the city of Riverside and surrounding county where I learned how to inspect food facilities and pools – really well! I had several hundred of them. I do remember checking on a parcel of land that was having a septic system replaced, but since the building department was doing the permitting and inspection of the system, I had little involvement. That is not the case in rural counties where 60-70% of our work involves land use and development, and lots of septic system inspections.

In 1977, I accepted a job with the California Department of Health Services, Contract Counties Program, to be the lone Sanitarian in Lassen County in far NE California (look for Susanville). My wife and I grew up in Southern California and didn’t know if we could make the change to relative isolation. The best shopping was, and still is in Reno, Nevada, 85 miles to the south. However, when we drove back from the job interview into the brown wall of smog in the San Fernando Valley, we decided we could probably adjust to the changes.

My first year as “a rural” was one of high anxiety and a steep learning curve. I was not prepared to be “The Health Department” all by myself. I had to tell folks, “I’ll get right back to you on that!” and then make quick phone calls to others who had been in the business for awhile. I learned the codes for the full range of environmental health activities, both state and local, practically by heart. In the rural counties we always rely on each other to decide the best way to handle difficult situations; “How’d you handle that?” is a common question. I was eventually asked to supervise Contract Counties staff in Modoc and Sierra counties as well as Lassen County.

In rural counties the people are great and the job is one of unending variety. Any day you might inspect septic systems and well seals, pick up a dead (or live) bat for rabies testing, look at soil profiles and percolation test results for land divisions or development, take water samples, inspect food facilities, pools, and of course, check garbage or even a dog dropping complaint or two. I still do all of those things along with organized camp inspections, hazardous material programs, and whatever else is needed. Currently, I have a small, but great staff and only work in two counties, instead of three.

We are truly environmental health generalists in the rural counties and are, frankly, kind of proud of it. We can also be a bit “grouchy” about some of the laws that are passed. When people talk about such things as a “level playing field” in California, we know that doesn’t exist because the state is too varied in demographics, geology and hydrology, among other things. We also know the importance of the “economy of scale” and try to get people to remember rural counties can be quite remote and without the resources of more populated areas. We also have beautiful scenery to drive through (mostly), blue skies (a lot) and some of us get to play in the snow (great) and drive on the ice (bad).

One last thing about when I came to work for “Contract Counties”, my boss asked me if I’d had any bad experiences with city dogs. I told him about some of my more memorable encounters. He said, “You’ll find that country dogs are a lot friendlier, not so much stress as there is in the city to keep them worked up.” I’ve found that to be true.

Jobs in rural counties are some of the most interesting in the environmental

health field. Environmental health generalists make a difference everyday, and are often stretched to their full potential.

My hope is that I can represent environmental health this year to the satisfaction of all involved. I know that we face a lot of challenges in the future; that’s why the emphasis of the CCDEH Conference this year is “The Scope of Practice of Environmental Health” and will include a session on “Planning for a Changing Workforce.”

CEHA Awards and Scholarships



Summer is over and the the kids are back in school.

Now is the time to think about a colleague that deserves to be recognized for their hard work and contributions to CEHA and to Environmental Health.

Applications for CEHA Awards and Scholarships must be postmarked on or before January 18, 2008 Visit www.CEHA.org and the Awards & Scholarships link for application / nomination procedures.

Digital Photo Contest



Superior Chapter is hosting a digital photo contest with the theme "**Environmental Health at Work**". Entries are invited showing, entry to senior level environmental health specialists, in the field working to protect public health and the environment. Images will be judged on overall quality and relevance to the contest theme.

The deadline for the photo contest is: **5:00pm, Friday, November 30, 2007**. The top three entrants will be contacted by email by December 15th, 2007 with details on receiving the following prizes:

- Grand Prize - winner will receive a \$50 REI gift card
- First Place - winner receives a \$30 Chipotle gift card
- Second Place - winner receives a \$20 Starbucks gift card

Entries must be JPEG format images taken with a digital camera, or scanned JPEG images of photographs taken with a film camera. Both color and black-and-white images and images that have been digitally edited will also be accepted.

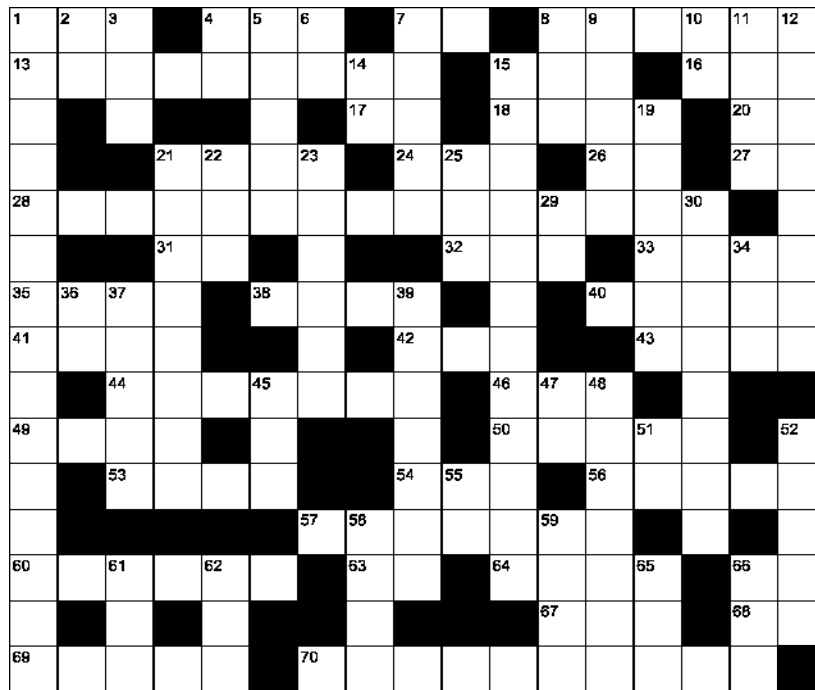
One image per entry, but you can enter as many times as you like. However, only one prize will be awarded per person. Minimum acceptable quality for JPEG images: 720 x 480 pixels; or 72 dpi. Attach your JPEG image to an email message with your contact info and submit to: Marcy Barnett at mbarn@surewest.net by November 30th, 2007.



Note: By entering the "Environmental Health at Work" contest, you give the contest's sponsor, CEHA's Superior Chapter, permission to use your photo and to allow your photo to be used by others to promote the Environmental Health profession. Images submitted on storage media will not be returned.

It's in the Water

By Sandi Donohue
sdonohue@csufresno.edu



ACROSS

- 1 Atlanta based hlth org.
- 4 Coffee holder
- 7 Gold (abbr.)
- 8 Motto
- 13 Type of drinking water filter
- 15 Ball holder
- 16 A picture of health? (abbr.)
- 17 San Diego's St..
- 18 Affirmative votes
- 20 Extra innings, say (abbr)
- 21 African nation
- 24 Lacuna
- 26 Pro. baseball div.
- 27 Portland locale
- 28 Problem resulting from chlorinating water
- 31 Mil. rank
- 32 Calendar units (abbr)
- 33 Landed
- 35 Fly alone
- 38 Flightless birds
- 40 Water disinfecting gas
- 41 Penniless
- 42 Little bit
- 43 Females in the meadow
- 44 Cyst-forming water pathogen found in Yosemite National Park
- 46 Dandy

- 49 Tack
- 50 Deadly African disease
- 53 Tidy
- 54 ID provider
- 56 Sounds
- 57 Dr. John Snow found this pathogen in London wells in 1854
- 60 Salt addition
- 63 A mantra
- 64 Gown
- 66 Book of Samuel abbr.
- 67 Lager
- 68 Type of engineer (abbr)
- 69 Communicators
- 70 Water pathogen that might get you "marching"

DOWN

- 1 "Secretive" cyst-forming water pathogen recently in the news
- 2 Public defender (abbr.)
- 3 Certified public accountant
- 4 Candlepower unit
- 5 All the _____ suspects
- 6 Daddy
- 7 Saying
- 8 Meet
- 9 Singer Rimes
- 10 Amer. auto maker

- 11 Buck ending
- 12 Dairies may contribute to this water contaminate
- 14 Raleigh locale
- 15 "Mary's" waterborne pathogen
- 19 Tawdry person
- 21 Oftentimes used to disinfect water
- 22 Cap
- 23 Cursed
- 25 Money provider
- 29 Like
- 30 Drinking water filter that takes its time
- 34 Chemical suffix
- 36 Prefix for -cyte or -cyst
- 37 Prepare to surf
- 39 Fame
- 45 Gnawer
- 47 Maternity dr.
- 48 _____ water: safe for drinking
- 51 Behold
- 52 Fish tank growth
- 55 Milliliter
- 58 Polish
- 59 Grizzled
- 61 Mom's partner
- 62 Heston's group
- 65 Moray
- 66 Ocean



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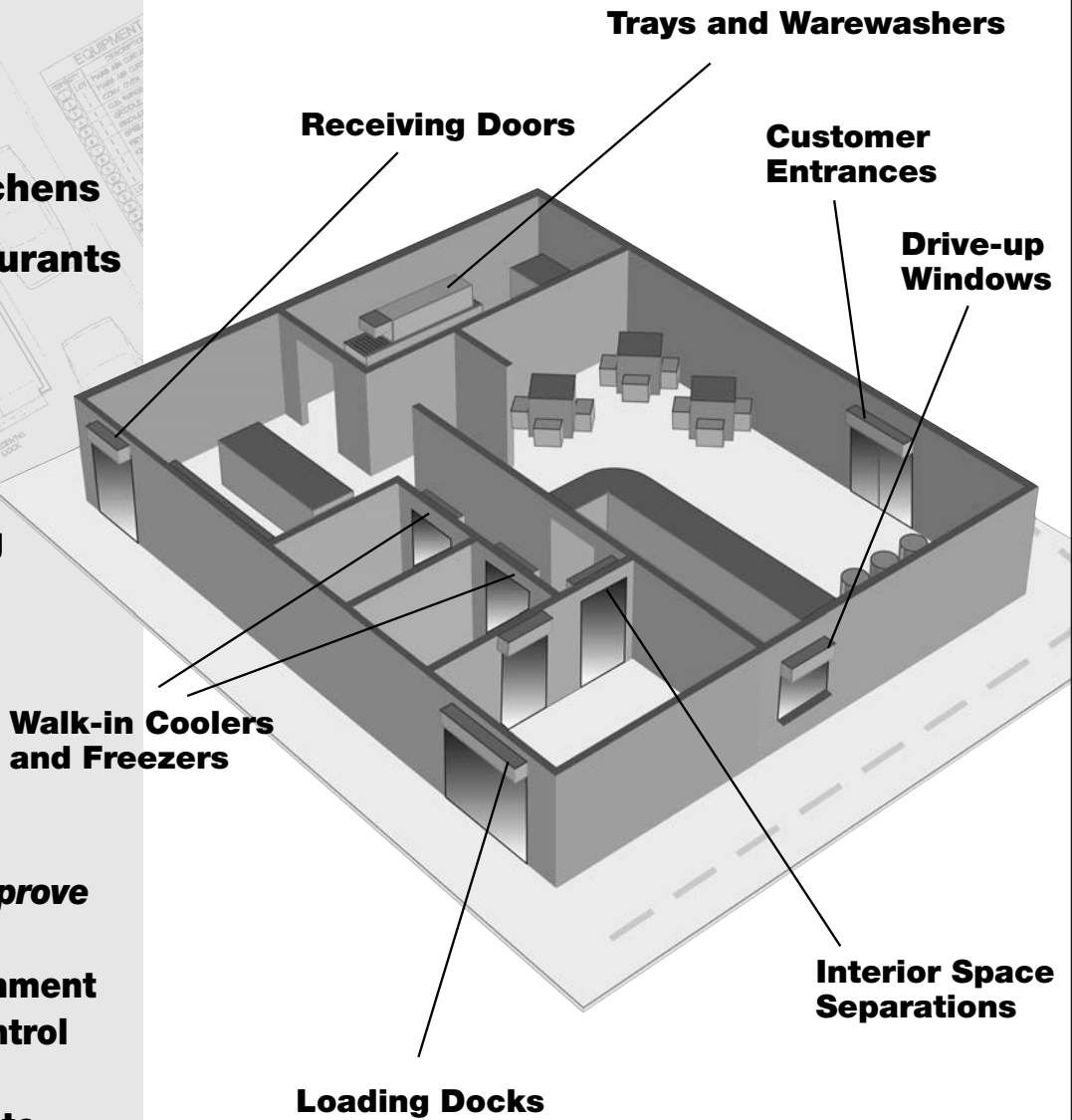
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It's in the Water

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