



# Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter

Volume 44, No 1.

Spring 2008

## “And the Rains Came” Lewis County’s Flood of December 2007

Lewis County is still reeling from a devastating flood in early December caused by up to 20 inches of rainfall onto a reported one and half feet of accumulated snow in the hills. The rushing water caused landslides, removed bridges, and destroyed many residences in the path of the enlarged Chehalis River.

The inundation of development and infrastructure has placed a great burden on Public Health in general and Environmental Health in particular. Water supply, sewage treatment, hazardous materials identification and disposal and solid waste management are a few of the issues the Lewis County Environmental Health continues to deal with.



Chandler Road Bridge in Chehalis River

### ***Solid Waste Handling Issues:***

Lewis County offered no-cost disposal for solid waste resulting from flood damage. Within three days the solid waste utility was dealing with a solid waste flow from 3 to 6 times the normal rate. On Thursday December 6, the utility ran out of train boxes and the tipping floor at the transfer station was filled to capacity. By quitting time most of the turn-around area was covered with solid waste.

### ***Emergency Dump Sites Provided:***

The following day the solid waste utility opened a previously closed drop box location and named two emergency solid waste storage dumps in county owned gravel pits. The pits are conveniently located near the flood devastated areas and the flow of solid waste began immediately.

In most cases a house that is flooded with water laden with silt, bacteria, sewage, manure, petroleum, hazardous chemicals and farm chemicals and fertilizer, must be shoveled out scrubbed and decontaminated prior to removing the gypsum wallboard and insulation.



LC Central Transfer Station

Teams of volunteers crawled under hundreds of homes to remove the soaked and filthy insulation. Other volunteers assisted in removing sheetrock and insulation from within homes. All of this material contributed to the ever-increasing solid waste stream.

*(Article continued on page 8 )*

**Washington State  
Environmental Health Association, Inc.**

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Website: [www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org)  
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**WSEHA Newsletter**

Sent newsletter submittals to **Kathy Kondakjian**  
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Joe Graham, Awards & Nominations  
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**Publications Chair Needed -  
Typing Optional!**

WSEHA is seeking someone to fill the position of Publications Chair. If you are interested but feel producing the newsletter would take too much of your time, Kathy Kondakjian has agreed to be the editor and produce the newsletter for WSEHA if no one else volunteers to do it. Chairing the Publications Committee would then consist mainly of soliciting articles, and working with Kathy to finalize the newsletter. If you are interested, please contact Ned Therien at (360) 236-4103.

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**Next Newsletter**

**Deadline:**

**Monday, July 31, 2008**

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter which is printed quarterly. Manuscripts for publication must be typewritten and submitted via e-mail, or on a computer disk mailed to WSEHA at the address above. Membership in WSEHA is not required for acceptance of articles in the newsletter.

Opinions expressed in articles published in the WSEHA newsletter should not be accepted necessarily as statements of policy or opinions of WSEHA.

# President's Message

By Ned Therien

## An Update to the Membership



WSEHA President Ned Therien is a Public Health Analyst for the Washington State Board of Health.

### Thanks Mike!

For my first column as President, I want to thank Mike Vinatieri for his long and dedicated service to WSEHA. His two and a half years as President set a record that I respect, but do not intend to break or repeat. What is even more remarkable is that Mike has been willing to be an active Immediate Past President during this year. His somewhat irascible nature has been forged during a long career fighting the good fight for environmental health. I very much appreciate his advice during my term as President.

### WSEHA Membership

I remember 20 (even 10) years ago WSEHA being a lively volunteer organization with a membership that included a large percentage of the environmental health professionals in the state. I am sorry to report that membership in WSEHA has severely declined in recent years. I have heard that is because people now see work in environmental health to be just a job, not a profession. This might reflect the pressure from employers to have staff spend more time on specific job-related tasks with little regard for professional associations and training to develop more broad-based professionals. As public health budgets shrink, more work has to be done by fewer employees. Another reason might be that everyone is just so busy working, commuting, and trying to get a little personal time that they cannot make any time for a professional association. Maybe environmental health practitioners have moved on to other professional associations. Whatever the reasons, WSEHA is much diminished.

I see my work in environmental health as more than a job. It is my profession. I want to promote my profession. Active participation in WSEHA is a way for me to do that. Of course, membership in the National Environmental Health Association and other

public health professional associations also does that. However, WSEHA fills a special niche for the environmental health practitioners of Washington.

Let me know your ideas for making WSEHA more relevant to your needs, encourage greater membership, and better promote the profession. The WSEHA board of directors came up with a small idea of distributing a lanyard to each member with WSEHA lettering. We hope that if members wear these in their offices to hold their entry badges, we can promote the association. If your membership is current, you should be receiving one in the mail in about June.

### Annual Educational Conference

The major mission of WSEHA has been to provide training opportunities in environmental health. Training events take a lot of effort to organize. The more speakers and topics that are included, the more complex the task. A committee of volunteers works for about nine months to put together a WSEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC). Until the 2003 AEC, a volunteer did this coordination. Having been the last volunteer coordinator, I can tell you it was a time-consuming task. From 2003 through 2006, WSEHA has paid a coordinator (Kathy Kondakjian) to organize our AEC. Even with the paid coordinator, volunteers are needed to help plan, recruit speakers, persuade exhibitors to participate, moderate sessions, put together conference packets, register attendees at the conference, and provide audio-visual support.

In 2007, WSEHA teamed up with the Washington State Public Health Association (WSPHA) for the Joint Conference on Health (JCH). It was held during October in Yakima. Because of the great work of volunteers from WSEHA, along with the support of WSPHA for this trial partnership, the 2007 JCH had as much environmental health content as any past conference of WSEHA alone. (Special thanks to Tom Kunesh and Dick Pedlar.)

...Continued on page 6

## **Register Now for the NEHA Annual Education Conference in Tucson!**

**Design** your conference experience to meet your educational needs and **choose** how you want your education delivered at the National Environmental Health Association's 2008 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition in Tucson, Arizona, June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>.

Choose sessions from **The Lecture Hall** (featured at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa) - a rich learning environment where you can select from over 130+ educational sessions with experts covering hot topics and the entire spectrum of environmental health. AND/OR, select sessions from **The Learning Laboratory** (featured at the Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort) where you will take part in interactive sessions with experts and where you will also participate as the expert by sharing your knowledge. Design your educational experience to include sessions from one campus or choose an itinerary that encompasses both the Lecture Hall and Learning Laboratory.

Wondering how this all works? To start planning your 2008 AEC & Exhibition experience, visit [neha.org](http://neha.org). Check out the cool graphical representation of the conference campuses and schedules of activities at the Lecture Hall, Learning Laboratory, and on the shuttles.

## **Welcome New Members!**

WSEHA would like to recognize and welcome their newest members to the organization. Thank you for your support.

**Erica Martell, EHS**  
Island County Public Health

**Jesse Maupin, Student Asst.,**  
The Evergreen State College

If you would like to join our team of dedicated environmental health professionals, complete the membership form on the back of the newsletter or visit the website at [www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org).

### **Interested in being part of the WSEHA Board?**

Positions are open for:

- Central Regional Vice President
- Southwest Regional Vice President
- Policy & Legislative Committee Chair
- Publications Chair

If you are interested in any of these positions please contact Ned Theerien at [ned.therien@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ned.therien@doh.wa.gov) or call (360) 236-4103



## **Pool Operator's Manual**

### **A Guide for Safe and Healthy Operation of Swimming and Spa Pools**

Manuals are available to Washington State residents for \$25 or \$20 when purchasing a quantity of 10 or more. WSEHA members rate is \$20 per manual.

Please make check payable to WSEHA and mail to: 4617 - 144th Place SE, Snohomish, WA 98296-6916..



15th Annual Joint Conference on Health  
October 6 - 8, 2008

### ***“Health Equity: Global and Local Challenges”***

WSPHA is currently accepting abstracts for this year’s Joint Conference on Health. If you are interested in submitting an abstract you can access the on-line submittal from from either the WSEHA or WSPHA websites.

Go to: [www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org) and click on “AEC Information” or go to: [www.wpha.org](http://www.wpha.org) and click on “Joint Conference on Health”

The deadline for submitting abstracts has been extended to Friday, May 16th.

If you have any questions regarding submission of an abstract for the Joint Conference please contact Kathy Kondakjian at (425) 338-0830 or [kathy@wseha.org](mailto:kathy@wseha.org).

### **Sponsors and Exhibitors**

Information on sponsoring the Joint Conference or registering as an exhibitor can also be found at the links located above. Space is limited for exhibitors so register early. The fee is \$450 for commercial/government/state/county agencies and \$300 for non-profits (academic and non-profit 501c3 status). Sponsoring a break at the Joint Conference is \$250. See website for details.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

*By Steve Garrett*

**Reisner, Marc. Cadillac Desert. Penguin Books, New York, 1993.**

A very well written, detailed and documented history of water use and misuse in the American West. The book describes dwindling water resources and the bureaucratic incompetence that makes it happen. A “must read” for anyone who believes that a continuing and adequate supply of clean water is necessary for future generations.

**Alibek, Ken. Biohazard. Dell Publishing, New York, 2000.**

A stark, terrifying and incredible account of the spectacular breakthroughs in biological warfare by the Soviet Union in the 1980s and early 1990s. Written by a Russian defector who was a high official in the bioweapons program he describes. The book is an eye-opening reading experience.

**Miller, Judith; Engelberg, Stephen; and Broad, William. Germs. Simon and Schuster, 2001.**

*Investigative Journalism*. The book is a very interesting and informative report about bioweapons development by the Soviet Union and the US-CIA. The book is well written and well documented. Similar information is available in a video produced by “Nova” and presented several years ago by the Discovery Channel.

**Johnson, Steven. The Ghost Map. Riverhead Books, New York, 2007.**

A very good historical account and comment on the Broad Street cholera epidemic in London in 1854. The book describes the efforts of Dr. John Snow to determine the origin of the outbreak, and is documentation of his very early attempt at epidemiology. Described is Dr. Snow’s frustration at taking on the Board of Health and their belief that “miasma” is the cause of cholera. Read the book and discover how Dr. Snow applied logic and the unheard of principles of epidemiology to determine that the source of the cholera outbreak was the Broad Street Pump.

## Students Receive WSEHA Professional Awards at 2007 Joint Conference on Health

Two WSEHA awards, Rookie of the Year and John P. Nordin Outstanding Sanitarian, were handed out at the 2007 Joint Conference on Health. The purpose of the Rookie of the Year award is to give recognition to a new member of the environmental health profession who:

- Has earned the respect of his/her peers for outstanding service in the promotion of, and contribution to, the environmental health profession;
- Does his/her job well, taking responsibilities seriously and continually strives for excellence;
- Shows commitment to the environmental health profession by giving of his/her ideas and efforts;
- Goes beyond what is expected; and
- Contributes to the advancement of the environmental health profession and everything the job and title represents.

The Nominations and Awards Committee awarded the 2007 WSEHA Rookie of the Year to Cezanne Murphy-Levesque. Cezanne works in the Food Safety and Living Environment Program in Lewis County. Tony Barrett, Cezanne's supervisor, stated "I have received numerous comments from the 'regulated community' praising her thoroughness and the way she works to assure that people understand the reason for the regulations as well as what they must do to comply." In addition to the many examples Tony gave of Cezanne's exemplary service, several of Cezanne's co-workers at Lewis County, including the Health Department Director, also gave her a glowing recommendation. Congratulations, Cezanne.

The Outstanding Sanitarian Award recognizes a WSEHA member who

- Has earned the respect of his/her peers for outstanding service in the promotion of, and contribution to, the environmental health profession;
- Does his/her job well, taking responsibilities seriously and continuously striving for excellence;
- Shows a commitment to the environmental health profession by giving of his/her ideas and efforts;
- Leads, by example, his/her fellow professionals to go beyond just what is expected; and
- Contributes to the advancement of the environmental health professional and everything the job and title represents.

Chuck Treser, a senior lecturer in Environmental Health in the University of Washington's School of Public Health and Community Medicine, was awarded this year's Outstanding Sanitarian Award. In one of the letters of

support for Chuck's nomination, an Environmental Health Professional who has worked many years with Chuck described him as "a mentor, and a protector. He is an experienced adviser and supporter who provides advice and watches over his students. He is a counselor, a guide and essentially... a guru to generations of men and women working in environmental health across our state and across the country." One of Chuck's current students refers to him as "the face of environmental public health at the UW." It is a pleasure to add Chuck Treser's name to the list of former Outstanding Sanitarian award winners.

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### *President's Corner continued from Page 3...*

The 2007 JCH presented a tremendous opportunity to hear current topics in environmental health, as well as get some cross exposure to issues of interest to a broad spectrum of public health professionals. **It was a great conference for environmental health!** Unfortunately, attendance by environmental health practitioners was only about 2/3 that of the 2006 WSEHA AEC. It is unclear why environmental health practitioners stayed away. Was it the time of year, lack of interest in the agenda, the way the agenda was organized, reluctance to mix with other public health professionals, poor marketing, location, or lack of employer support? Please let me or Kathy Kondakjian know what you think.

WSEHA is partnering with WSPHA again in 2008 for an October JCH in Yakima. We want to make sure that there are plenty of environmental health presentations on the agenda. Abstracts are due in mid May. Follow the link from the WSEHA web site to the WSPHA web site for more information. We are well along in planning, but need more help. Please consider volunteering to help organize and conduct the annual conference this year. For instance, we need moderators for environmental health sessions and Richard Pedlar can use more help with the audio-visual set up. Contact Kathy if you are interested.

There will be a pre-conference workshop again this year on Sunday, October 5, regarding community environmental health assessment. It will not be a repeat of last year, but more of an extension from last year's workshop. We are planning some fun things too. We will have movie nights with documentaries on the theme of health equity. There will be WSPHA's fundraiser called the wine and cheese party. Also, the WSEHA International Health Committee will have another silent auction to raise money for an environmental health project somewhere in the world. (Contact the WSEHA Secretary, Ross Lytle, if you wish to donate an item for the silent auction.)

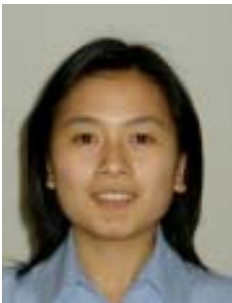
*Ned Therien, WSEHA President*

## FROM THE IVORY TOWER

### An Update from the University of Washington Undergraduate Environmental Health Program

By Chuck Treser, MPH, DAAS  
Undergraduate Program Advisor

At this Fall's annual meeting I had the distinct pleasure of presenting WSEHA's Cind M. Treser Memorial Student Scholarships to two deserving UW students. WSEHA established its student scholarship program in order to demonstrate, in a tangible way, its commitment to promoting the entry of young, talented individuals into the field of Environmental Health practice. This year's recipients were Ms. Anh-Thu Le and Mr. Abebe Aberra, both from the Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences. Both Abebe and Anh-Thu completed an internship with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department this past summer where they were hired as temporary employees to carry out the recreational waters program. They gained valuable experience working as EH Specialists inspecting swimming pools and other facilities around Pierce County..



**Anh-Thu Le.** Anh-Thu is a senior from Renton Washington who expects to receive her degree in June and find employment with a local or state public health agency, working as a health inspector and investigator. She writes:

*"Environmental Health is one of the many unique programs that the University of Washington has to offer in this state. I am really glad that I chose this major to become my life long career. This program not only provided me with great working experiences, but also the technical knowledge and skills to prepare me to service the community. As graduation is approaching, I look forward to have the opportunity to work with local health departments in promoting a healthy and safe community for our residents"*



**Abebe Aberra.** The second WSEHA Scholarship was awarded to Mr. Abebe Aberra, currently a senior from Ethiopia, now living in Seattle. Abebe is married and has a small child, and is deeply appreciative of the award as it has made it easier for him to stay in school and take care of his family at the same time.

*"As a student in the Environmental Health program at the University of Washington, I have gained a solid understanding of what environmental health is all about. I will graduate this coming spring, ready to serve the large community as an Environmental Health practitioner. Here, I would like to give a special thanks to Professors Charles & Chuck and also to my former supervisor David DeLong at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health department who have helped and played a great role in accomplishing my goal."*

One of our students was this year's recipient of the NSF Scholar Award – an award made annually by the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP), through a grant provided by the National Sanitation Foundation, (NSF International). This is a competitive scholarship open to any student in an accredited environmental health academic program in the United States.



**Kazuhiro Okumura.** Kazuhiro is a senior from Honolulu, currently living in Seattle. This past summer he completed an internship with Seattle Public Health/Seattle & King County in which he worked on a special project studying the use of toxic chemicals in the janitorial services industry. The purpose was to investigate the potential for replacing such cleaning agents with more human

and environmentally friendly compounds. The study was supported through the NSF scholarship. Kazuhiro was selected for this honor based on his academic record and the strength of his proposal. Kazuhiro expects to receive his degree in June. Reflecting back on his experience he states.

*"Being an Environmental Health major at the University of Washington has been a great experience for me. I was able to discover my passion and realized that I had the skills and qualities to succeed in this field. I have learned I will be an asset to many people through the knowledge and services I will be able to provide upon graduation. I currently plan on becoming a commissioned Environmental Health officer in the United States Public Health Service and work for CDC or ATSDR."*

The undergraduate program at the UW continues to grow. We currently have over 50 students enrolled in the major and are in the process of making it a competitive major. Until recently the program has been a minimum standard major, meaning that any student who met the minimum GPA and had completed the prerequisite courses, was automatically admitted. Becoming a competitive major means that we will be able to select the best students from the applicant pool. Limiting enrollment in the program to around 50 majors is necessary if we are to maintain the quality of our educational program without the influx of new resources. It is also facilitates ensuring that each of our student receives a quality internship, which is one of the program requirements.

Speaking of internships, it is that time of year again when we will be contacting you to see about placing one or more of our students with your agencies or organizations. But don't wait for my call. If you would like to have a student working with you this summer give me a call or email me at: [ctreser@u.washington.edu](mailto:ctreser@u.washington.edu).

Thank you all for your continuing support of Environmental Health education.

Best wishes  
Chuck Treser

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**“And the Rains Came”**  
**Lewis County’s Flood of December 2007**  
*...continued from front page*

Meanwhile the solid waste utility secured an agreement to receive double the number of train containers to help handle the monumental flow of solid waste to the Roosevelt landfill. With that accommodation the solid waste utility has been able to resume the normal but increased flow of waste, and all three emergency sites have since been closed. Drop boxes continue to be sited at the devastated areas on weekends for the convenience of property owners.

***Hazardous Waste Issues:***

The flood event washed away an unimaginable amount of material from both public and private property. When the water subsided, rubble could be seen along every waterway in the Chehalis Watershed.

Washington Department of Ecology, Spills Response approached Lewis County Environmental Health to set up a program to sweep the flooded area to identify and remove containers. Ecology and the Washington Conservation Corps have removed, and continue to remove hundreds of hazardous waste containers from 55-gallons to pint size.

Lewis County continues to recover from this devastating natural disaster, and the resilience of citizens and dedication of Lewis County employees is encouraging.

*Steven J. Garrett. RS*  
*Lewis County Public Health*



Meskill Drop box site awaiting additional boxes.



Drowned farm animals head for Roosevelt Landfill.

## FDA PACIFIC REGION RETAIL FOOD SEMINAR

Seattle, Washington  
August 12 – 14, 2008

The FDA Pacific Region, along with Washington State Department of Health, and Washington State Environmental Health Association is pleased to announce the 2008 Retail Food Seminar. The agenda for the seminar is being designed to provide the latest food safety information and ideas you can use to get the most from your food program. Seminar presentations will cover such topics as:

- Food Safety Innovations
- FDA Updates on Current Food Safety Issues
- Updates from the 2008 Conference for Food Protection
- State Food Program Managers Reports

Along with presenting up-to date technical information, this seminar will also provide an opportunity to interact with other food safety professionals from regulatory, industry and academia. We anticipate an excellent learning experience.

Registration: Mail or fax your registration form by July 11, 2008. Forms are available on the WSEHA website at [www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org). Click on Workshops & Conferences. The fee is \$100 for WSEHA members and \$110 for non-members.

Location: Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers

And Lodging: 1400 6th Avenue

Seattle, WA 98101

[www.Sheraton.com/seattle](http://www.Sheraton.com/seattle)

General Joe Graham

Questions : (360) 236-3305

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FDA Regional Food Specialists:

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## Washington State Environmental Health Association, Inc. Membership Application

The Washington State Environmental Health Association (WSEHA) is a nonprofit professional and educational organization. It was established in 1946 to provide a forum for dialogue and a vehicle for advanced training opportunities. WSEHA enhances individual and collective expertise, promotes professional growth, and revitalizes Environmental Health endeavors. The Association is enriched by the diversity of ideas and orientations of its members, who represent both the public and private sectors. For a copy of the WSEHA Code of Ethics, visit our website at [www.wseha.org](http://www.wseha.org) or Kathy Kondakjian at [kathy@wseha.org](mailto:kathy@wseha.org).

**Categories of Membership** *(please mark next to the category that applies).*

**Regular Membership** - Persons who are active in the field of environmental health or related educational activities, who have a minimum of a bachelors degree from an accredited college or university.

**Associated Membership** - Persons who are active in the field of environmental health or related activities, but who do not meet the minimum requirements of regular membership.

**Student Membership** - Persons who are working towards a bachelor or higher degree in sanitary science, public health, environmental health, or related academic field.

**Subscribing Members** - Persons residing outside of the state of Washington whose principal membership benefit is receipt of the WSEHA Newsletter and other generally distributed information.

**Affiliate Membership** - Professional or civic organizations which share the goals and objectives of WSEHA and wish to improve communications and coordination of mutual programs.

**Emeritus Membership** - May be awarded by the WSEHA Board of Directors to persons who have been active in the field of environmental health for at least twenty years, including at least five years as a member of WSEHA, and who have retired because of age or disability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 First M Last Degree(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title Agency/Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Address City State/Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Phone Fax Number Email Address *(for newsletter and other WSEHA information)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address City State/Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Alternative Email Address Use as my primary mailing address: ( ) Work ( ) Home

**Major Interest Areas: (Please circle all that apply)**

- |                                     |                     |                   |                      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Air Quality                         | Food Protection     | Hazardous Waste   | Housing              |
| Institutional                       | EH&S                | Land Use/Planning | Noise Pollution      |
| Occupational H&S                    | Radiological Health | Solid Waste       | Toxic Substances     |
| Recreational Facilities             | Vector Control      | Water Quality     | Wastewater           |
| General Public Health               | Administration      | Law & Process     | International Health |
| Bioterrorism/Emergency Preparedness |                     |                   |                      |

Please make check payable to WSEHA and mail to: WSEHA, 4617 - 144th Place SE, Snohomish, WA 98296. Memberships expire one year from the date issued.

I have read and agree to abide by the WSEHA Code of Ethics      Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_