



WSEHA Newsletter

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Winter 2011



Be Sure to Send in Your Ballot

By Kerri Wagner, Executive Secretary

As most of you may already know, changes to WSEHA's Constitution and Bylaws are being proposed. Regular, Associate and Emeritus members will need to vote by ballot, which were mailed the week of February 7, 2011. Ballots must be received at the WSEHA office by Friday, March 11, 2011 in order to be counted.

To view the proposed changes, please go to www.wseha.org and follow the links on our homepage. These changes were discussed at WSEHA's Membership Meeting at Snohomish Health District on December 15, 2010. A vote of WSEHA's membership is needed to approve these changes and are taking place now by regular mail.

Announcing...



The Thirty Fourth Annual WASHINGTON STATE SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CONFERENCE

See page 5 for more details!

Children's Environmental Health Trainings – Stay tuned!

WSEHA is working with the Children's Environmental Health Working Group of Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Washington (CHE-WA) to bring trainings on children's environmental health issues later in 2011.

All 5 regions of the Washington State Environmental Health Association are now being represented! See who filled the Central and Southwest Regional Vice President Positions on page 4.

Like pictures? See a picture of WSEHA's Board on Page 8!

Read about
Washington's First
Online Food Worker
Card on page 7

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Next Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, April 29, 2011

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Manuscripts for publication must be type-written and submitted via e-mail to kerri@wseha.org, 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 Geoffrey Crofoot



Let me start off this article by thanking the Washington State Environmental Health Association (WSEHA) Board for a year's worth of very hard work. The Board has championed WSEHA's charge to provide education to our members in the face of trying economic times. The Board has responded to low volunteering rates by donating significant time and contributing amazing effort towards hosting low-cost, regional training, increasing membership and effecting needed organizational changes. As they say in Italy, Salute! – Meaning: health, well being.

This year, the Board has the good fortune of having full representation from all the regions. James Rivard joins the Board from the Central Region. Mike Vinatieri, a name you may recall, has elected to join us representing the Southwest region. Thanks and welcome.

Kerri Wagner, who is responsible for the smooth and precision inner workings of WSEHA reminds me that I have yet to report on my attendance to the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Annual Education Conference (AEC) that was held in 2010 in Albuquerque New Mexico. As you might expect, NEHA puts on a national-scale event that is, at the very least, a spectacle.

For those of you who remember WSEHA's AEC, the format of the NEHA AEC was similar. A typical day at the NEHA AEC included several one hour presentations in a morning session, followed by a speaker during lunch and finally a few more presentations in an afternoon session. The topics at the national level were surprisingly similar to topics we face here in Washington. It buoyed me to know that EH folks in Ohio are struggling with some of the same issues surrounding construction and demolition waste recycling and disposal. Surprise! Across the nation, people want clean water to drink, fresh food to eat, pure air to breathe and healthy soils to live on.

As the President of WSEHA, my perspective was somewhat different than it might have been if I were just attending. I noted that, organizationally, other affiliates were and are struggling with the very same issues that WSEHA faces. Two primary issues are low funding of EH activities and low participation in professional organizations. I suspect that the two aren't necessarily independent of one another. It seems that when less people do more work for the same money (or less money considering that flat funding generally means declining buying power) there is less time, energy and willingness to participate with professional organizations affiliated with work. That said, WSEHA recognizes that we exist in a funding challenged environment and has responded with training options that don't require expenditures for lodging and limit travel costs. It is WSEHA's intent to keep providing educational opportunities even if we aren't able to host an AEC-type event. Through our on-going, local efforts, it is our hope that we can positively impact participation.

"This year, the Board has the good fortune of having full representation from all the regions."

Another national issue that holds true here in Washington is the aging sanitarian. It just so happens that EH work is generally pretty decent work for a variety of reasons. It also happens that people who do EH work tend to stay on the job for a long time. The result is that a large chunk of folks in the EH field have come to, or are coming to the end of their illustrious careers. The impact is that the number of EH people leaving the profession exceeds the number of people replacing them. Now, that may certainly have some positive future wage impacts, but I advise vigilance in another area. Our profession must ensure that replacements are hired to the same high standards specified by the Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarians (WSBRS) or NEHA registration. This brings us back to participation; to stay strong on hiring replacement issues, requires active membership in all age categories and across all disciplines. WSEHA is attempting to stay strong by cultivating relationships and partnerships with our universities in an effort to increase student (future EH professional) participation. WSEHA is also seeking to engage our older, perhaps retired members, (see the proposed changes in our constitution and by-laws) and invites folks who are no longer on the job to sit on a committee or more.

Continued on page 9...

Introducing our New (and One Returning) Board Members...

James Rivard, Central Regional Vice President



Before coming to the Kittitas Valley, I grew up in the Lower Yakima Valley and worked many harvest seasons in Hop fields testing and collecting samples for one of the largest hop growers in the world and spent some time employed by the Department of Energy in Richland working on various projects. I first came to Ellensburg to attend college at Central Washington University to complete a degree in science and teaching. I started working for Kittitas County Public Health in the Spring of 2007 and at that time I just needed a job to help support myself while finishing my graduate studies. Six months later and after working full-time during the day and completing my chemistry research at night, I thankfully finished my degree.

Prior to my employment at Kittitas County, I did not really know anything about public health. That didn't seem to matter as I was offered the job and in my mind Kittitas County was just looking for a reasonable person with a science background to perform on-site sewage and solid waste inspections during the height of the housing boom. Needless to say, since then I have never stopped learning about the importance of public health and how much of an impact that it can have on our community. One of my favorite things that I have come to love about working in local public health are the stories that occur from: failed septic systems, to restaurant closures, to an outbreak at a spa; the stories are all different and have lessons to learn and remember to teach others the importance of public health and why what we do is so important.

Michael Vinatieri, Southwest Regional Vice President

With the departure of Tom Gonzales, the southwest region is without a regional vice president. Since Tom was my replacement as resource protection manager in Clark County, I have offered to replace Tom in the region. We wish Tom the best in his new position as Environmental Health Director in Colorado (Arizona?). Washington has lost a real influence in Environmental Health.

I am currently semi-retired. I do some consulting work for the Washington Counties Risk Pool in investigating septic system claims and making settlement recommendations. I have served on the WSEHA Board for 10 of the last 12 years. I have served as association president for 26 months and rotated off the Board at the conclusion of my term as immediate past president in 2008. I have held the office of president of WSEHA, Washington State Public Health Association, California Conference of Environmental Health Directors and the local Kiwanis Club. I have served on the Washington State Health Department's Technical Review Committee (TRC-Septic Regulations) and have spent almost 40 years in Environmental Health programs. I was the Environmental Health Director for 13 years in Sonoma County, California and 7 years for Lewis County, WA. I spent the last 6 years as Resource Protection Manager in Clark County working with my close friend, Lou Doolley.



I hope my years of E.H. and Public Health experience will help provide technical and historical information to the executive board as it makes decisions on issues and sets policies for WSEHA.

I can be reached at (360) 748-0378 if you want to share your thoughts and suggestions.



The Thirty Fourth Annual WASHINGTON STATE SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CONFERENCE

April 25, 2011

Benton Franklin Health District
Training Room
7102 W Okanogan PI
Kennewick, WA 98336

May 10, 2011

Clover Park Technical College
Building 3 Rotunda
4500 Steilacoom Blvd SW
Lakewood, WA 98499-4098

The Washington State Environmental Health Association, in cooperation with your local health jurisdiction, is pleased to announce the 34rd Annual Swimming Pool and Spa Conference. We encourage everyone who operates a pool or spa to participate in this informative conference.

Conference Sessions 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Registration 8:15 a.m. - 8:55 a.m.

AGENDA:

Swimming Pool and Spa Chemistry

Come to our most popular session! It covers pH, disinfection, alkalinity, hardness, TDS and corrosion control with a brief section on pool testing.

Spas, Wading Pools, and Recirculating Spray Features

Discuss health and safety issues unique to these types of facilities and maintenance issues.

Pool Equipment Operation Pumps, Motors, and Filters

Explore the operation and maintenance of your mechanical room equipment, pool components and seasonal care.

Pool Inspection Process and Assessment

How health departments view pool facilities. A walk through the inspection process. What is being reviewed and key elements of concern.

Registration Fee: \$50.00 per person. This fee includes a *Pool Operator's Manual*

Special Note to WSEHA members: \$40.00 (This is not advertised to the general public because by far most of the conference attendees are not WSEHA members. Membership is verified during the registration process.)

To Register:

Complete the registration form found on our website at www.wseha.org/2011plregform.pdf and send with payment to WSEHA, 103 Sea Pines Lane, Bellingham, WA 98229 OR Fax the form with complete billing information to (360) 738-8949.

Course Content Questions:

Gary Fraser	Olympia	(360) 236-3073
Rick Dawson	Kennewick	(509) 460-4205
Dave DeLong	Tacoma	(253) 798-6499

Registration Questions:

Kerri Wagner (360) 738-8946

UW Student EH Association Starts Community Outreach

By Kendra Broadwater and Tiana Nizamic

With Winter Quarter coming into full gear at the University of Washington, so did the commitment of SEHA (Student Environmental Health Association) to start participating in community activities related to environmental health.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Many college and high school students dedicate their time during the national holiday to volunteering with local organizations. For the past two years, SEHA has spent Martin Luther King Jr. Day working with the *Friends of the Cedar River Watershed* on habitat restoration. Eight association members removed invasive ivy near the McAleer Creek in Lake Forest Park with the hopes of protecting the surrounding forest. The cold January day was also filled with other student groups and families hoping to do their part and learn about the regional water supply. To increase awareness and gain familiarity with environmental health proceedings, they also collected samples from the creek and conducted basic water quality tests (which will later be sent to labs for professional analysis).



Markas Grove, Anna Fretheim, and Tiana Nizamic (from left to right) are removing invasive ivy from surrounding trees near McAleer Creek.



Anna Fretheim and Christina Tolley (from left to right) are taking a short break from volunteering in Lake Forest Park.

King County Metro Bus Stop Mural. Throughout the remainder of the quarter, SEHA members will be completing a mural for a bus stop in the University District through King County's Metro Bus Shelter Mural Program. The applications having already been accepted, they have started the unique design and construction process. The students are hoping to promote awareness of the field of environmental health and the undergraduate program at the University of Washington through their artwork. The mural should be up on 43rd and University Way NE by April 2011.

(Continued of page 10)

Washington's First Online Food Worker Card

In January 2011, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department became the first county in Washington to offer their food worker card class online. The class is currently offered to only Pierce County residents, but will be available to other counties in the future. It's already very popular: in the first month we issued more than 2,300 cards online, about 66 percent of the total number of food worker cards that month.

Although the number of food workers using the traditional instructor-led classes has decreased, instructor-led and kiosk options will not be eliminated in Pierce County. Oregon found that about 70% of food workers use their online training program, and there is still demand for other methods. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department remains committed to providing food worker card trainings that are accessible to all residents of Pierce County, including special needs classes, classes for those who are computer challenged, and classes in the community.

Background

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department has held food worker classes taught by inspectors since the 1950's. Currently six inspector-taught food worker classes are offered per week at the Health Department, each with a capacity of 135 people. In addition, we provide six to eight community classes annually with up to 350 attendees and 92 food worker card classes at businesses, schools, and nonprofit agencies throughout Pierce County.

In 2003, the Health Department received an FDA grant to develop a kiosk computer software education and testing program for food worker cards. In 2005 the program was completed and kiosks put in the lobby. Currently 9,000 food workers are educated on six stand-alone kiosks each year in Pierce County. The kiosk food worker program is also in use in several other Washington counties as well.

In 2009, we began reducing the number of community classes offered due to budget reductions and the need to save staff time. This resulted in classes at the Health Department often reaching capacity, which frustrated those who were turned away. Currently our access to additional classroom space is limited and cannot be expanded. Parking is almost non-existent for class attendees.

In September 2009 and March 2010, we conducted informal surveys of food workers taking classes at the Health Department to find out if participants would use an online food worker class.

First survey results: about half of the 879 class participants offered the survey returned it, with over 90% stating they would take the training online.

Second survey results: almost 70% of the 489 class participants offered the survey returned it, with over 80% stating they would take the training online.

Almost all of the 50 participants who did not live in Pierce County indicated that they would complete the training online.

These surveys confirmed that it would be worth investing time and money on developing an online food worker card process

In May 2010, the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health approved the online food worker card training project. A contract with Caiman Consulting was awarded to modify the existing kiosk food worker card training software to allow food workers to take the training and obtain the food worker card online. This online food worker card training software provides 30 minutes of interactive training and a secure method for testing. We contacted Washington State DOH in June 2010 and incorporated several of their recommendations and addressed their concerns.

(Continued on page 10)

News from NEHA

From Kristen Ruby, Project Specialist – Research and Publications, National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

In keeping with its mission “to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all,” NEHA is updating its research on the effect of continued economic downturn on environmental health programs and the communities they serve. The initial survey was conducted in the fall of 2009. We are now seeking further input in order to compare impacts in 2009 with current impacts. The survey will close on **February 28th**, so there is still plenty of time for people to provide feedback. The survey link is:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BPW9AXCTE/>.

And, as an added incentive, all survey participants will be entered into a drawing for a **free**, full registration to NEHA’s 75th Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition, June 18–20, 2011, in Columbus, Ohio.

Thanks in advance for assisting us in getting this survey out to a larger audience. Survey data will eventually be made available through NEHA’s Web site.

NEHA Annual Educational Conference



The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) [AEC](#) is so much more than a conference. It is the nexus for environmental health (EH) training, education, networking, and advancement. It is the national event environmental health professionals – like you – attend to acquire practical and real-world information and expertise, and to network with colleagues from across the country. It is also the EH event that provides a return on investment (ROI) because you’ll leave the NEHA AEC trained, motivated, inspired, and

empowered to further advance your organization, yourself, and the EH profession!

Visit neha2011aec.org for more information about the NEHA AEC, June 18-20, 2011 in Columbus, OH. [Register to attend](#) the AEC in-person or virtually.



...Continued from page 3 - President's Message

Finally, as an affiliate, WSEHA has a responsibility to represent this region by sending a representative to the National AEC. As this will be my second year as the President of WSEHA, I plan on attending the 2011 NEHA AEC in Columbus, OHIO. Please read this as an incentive and encouragement to step up as the President Elect of WSEHA. This year, I'll be able to share the success WSEHA has had with maintaining membership rates and providing local education opportunities. It will be valuable to check in with our sister organizations and find out if others have had success with the WSEHA model. In the reverse, it's always valuable to hear the ideas and success of similar organizations and bring those lessons home.

Your WSEHA Board:



Pictured in the back row are Bruce Scherling (Past President), Michael Baker (Eastern Regional Vice President), Vikki Barthels (Secretary), Kerri Wagner (Executive Secretary), James Rivard (Central Regional Vice President), and Michael Vinatieri (Southwest Regional Vice President). Pictured in the front row are Anna Fretheim (Student Representative), Steve Garrett (Treasurer) and last, but certainly not least, Geoffrey Crofoot (President). Not pictured: Tom Kunesh (Northwest Regional Vice President) and Jodie Holdcroft (Olympic Regional Vice President).

Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarian Exams on Demand

By Ned Therien, WSBRS Secretary

The Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarians (WSBRS) was established as an independent professional credentialing organization in 1982 due to the repeals of Washington State's law requiring licensure for registered sanitarians. The RS remains a valuable credential and is required for professional advancement by many local health agencies. WSBRS was formed with the support of WSEHA. Historically, WSBRS has offered RS exams at WSEHA annual educational conferences (AEC). With the AEC not being held during the great recession, the WSBRS has switched to offering RS exams on demand to qualified applicants. This is dependent on the availability of an approved proctor for the exam. The locations with proctors are Everett, Bremerton, Olympia, Moses Lake, and Spokane. Please contact the WSBRS's Executive Secretary, Toni Plemel, at 425-377-1855 or wsbrs.secretary@gmail.com to submit a request. Prior approval of an applicant's education and professional experience is required before an exam will be scheduled. For additional information about qualifications required, please visit <http://www.wsbrs.org> and click on "Becoming a Registered Sanitarian."

...Continued from page 6 -UW Student EH Association Starts Community Outreach



Anh Tran and Kendra Broadwater (from left to right) are sanding panels for the bus shelter mural.

Upcoming events for SEHA include working in high schools on teaching food safety while advocating for careers in environmental health and putting together team-building hikes for the department.



Christina Tolley, Anh Tran, and Tiana Nizamic (from left to right) are choosing paint colors for the mural.

...Continued from page 7 - Washington's First Online Food Worker Card

In December 2010 we finished working out the “bugs” and tested the system. All tests passed and the food worker card class went live in January 2011.

Since going live, some interesting facts began to emerge. The online food worker card class was designed with a built-in user survey feature. So far 99% have stated they would retake the class online and refer the online class to a friend. The average age of the food worker taking the class online is 33.4 years old. The oldest person taking the class online was 89. Not surprising, roughly 53% of all online users were under 29 years old. 31% were between 30 and 49, and 16% were over age 50. The online food worker class is offered in multiple languages. 95 percent have taken the online class in English, with about 5% taking it in Spanish, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, or Mandarin.

Many other counties have expressed an interest in participating in the online class and supported developing the program for use in multiple counties: Chelan-Douglas, Clark, Jefferson, King, Lewis, Mason, Thurston, and Walla Walla are just a few. These counties and others will be going live online in the months of February, March and April 2011. If other counties are interested, contact Mike Davis at (253) 798-6464, mdavis@tpchd.org. For more information, go to www.tpchd.org.

Washington State Environmental Health Association (WSEHA)

Membership Application

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.

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

_____ **Regular Membership (\$50.00)**- Persons who are active in the field of environmental health or related educational activities, who have a bachelors degree from an accredited college or university.

_____ **Associated Membership (\$50.00)** - Persons who are active in the field of environmental health or related educational activities, but who do not meet the requirements of regular membership.

_____ **Student Membership (\$5.00)** - Persons who are working towards a bachelor or higher degree in sanitary science, public health, environmental health, or related academic field.

_____ **Subscribing Membership (\$20.00)** - Persons residing outside of the state of Washington whose principal membership benefit is receiving the WSEHA Newsletter and other generally distributed information.

_____ **Affiliate Membership (\$75.00)**- Professional or civic organizations which share the goals and objectives of WSEHA and wish to improve communications and coordination of mutual programs.

_____ **Sustaining Membership (\$75.00)** - Persons or organizations that are interested in supporting WSEHA and its goals and objectives.

_____ **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 25 years, including at least 6 years as a member of WSEHA, and who have retired because of age or disability.

First Name	MI	Last Name	Degree(s)
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Job Title	Agency/Organization
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Work Address	City	State/Zip
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Work Phone	Fax Number	E-mail (for newsletter and other WSEHA information)
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Home Address	City	State/Zip
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_____ Use as my primary mailing address: () Work () Home
Alternative E-mail

I have read and will abide by the WSEHA Code of Ethics found at <http://www.wseha.org/CodeofEthics.pdf>.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please make check payable to WSEHA and mail to: WSEHA, 103 Sea Pines Lane, Bellingham, WA 98229-9363. Memberships expire one year from the date issued and are non-transferable.