

Montana Environmental Health Association

MEHA President and President-Elect Attend NEHA Conference in Ohio

By Christine Hughes, R.S.

Christine Hughes, MEHA President, and Karen Solberg, MEHA President-Elect, attended the National Environmental Health Association's annual educational conference in Columbus, Ohio in June.

Many learning and networking opportunities were available at the conference. A couple of highlights of the conference were the Underwriters Laboratory event at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, where Columbus Zoo animals were displayed, and the Presidents Banquet at the close of the conference.

The economic state of our country and the effects that the economy has on our profession were incorporated into nearly every presentation at the conference. While there does not seem to be any magic bullet to combat the effect of the economy, it certainly was clear that our economic state has a great impact on public health and that what we do as professionals is not well understood by the public.

We learned that one way NEHA is attempting to educate the public regarding the importance of environmental health is to create a partnership with the Center for Priority Based Budgeting™. This is a program where local city governments facing budgetary shortfalls are aligning community resources with priority values to attain fiscal,

economic and environmental sustainability. Visit the NEHA Web site to learn more, or better yet, ask Nelson Fabian, NEHA Executive Director about the program at our fall conference.

Not only does NEHA work very hard at creating a great educational conference, but also at advocating for our profession. If you browse the NEHA website you will see that they offer a wide variety

of programs to enhance learning as well as enhancing our profession. You can find professional certification courses, e-learning opportunities, virtual conference attendance access, and resources for a wide array of environmental health topics.

Sometimes in our busy days, it is easy to forget to use NEHA as a resource. They are a great organization, with very approachable leaders who can be of value to each of us; we just need to remember to use the resource.

Should you have an opportunity to attend a NEHA conference, take the opportunity to do so. The value of learning about timely and relevant topics and meeting others from across the nation and the world is a great experience.

Christine Hughes is a registered sanitarian for Lake County. She currently serves as president of the Montana Environmental Health Association.



Christine Hughes and Karen Solberg take a break from a busy conference at the Audubon Center in Columbus,

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From the Editor

Greetings from my cluttered office in Ravalli County!

This issue is my maiden voyage as editor of our MEHA Newsletter. It came together as a result of submissions from a handful of dedicated Environmental Health Professionals in our region. I'm grateful to Christine, Karen, Joe, and Roy for taking the time to contribute articles.

Now that I've got my feet wet as an editor, I'm excited to build on the progress of former editors by continuing to try and improve the quality and content of this important means of communication. That being said, I encourage all of you to submit articles relevant to the dynamic field of environmental health.

Please take the time to contribute to the MEHA newsletter by emailing relevant articles to me at rdaniel@rc.mt.gov.

Thank you! *Rod Daniel, R.S.*

Cyanuric Acid is Not Appropriate for Indoor Pools

By Joe Martinez, CP-FS

Use of Cyanuric Acid in indoor pools is common with the ample supply of Tri-Chlor sanitizer puck tablets. Many suppliers just pull a bucket or two of hockey puck tablets and sell them to the pool operators without asking specific questions.

It's important to know that Cyanuric acid (CYA) should not be used with indoor pools! Research shows that the use of CYA in indoor pools has a negative effect on the chlorine's ability to properly disinfect. The higher your CYA levels the more chlorine is needed to have the same sanitizing effect as lower levels of chlorinated pool water without CYA.

Cyanuric Acid is intended to stabilize chlorine for pools in an outdoor setting. The CYA reacts with the sunlight and thereby allows the sanitizer to properly do its job of sanitizing. Cyanuric Acid is burned off by the sunlight, and, while in the water, CYA binds with free chlorine for stabilization. Without direct sunlight CYA continues to build up in the pool and ties up more and more free chlorine, keeping it from sanitizing. So you higher levels of chlorine are required to have the proper amount of true free chlorine to sanitize.

Cyanuric Acid also has a negative effect on plaster-sided indoor pools. The

CYA reacts with the plaster and slowly degrades it over time. The higher the levels of CYA the faster the degrading reaction occurs. When testing pool water, the test for free chlorine may show to be within tolerance, but if CYA is present, the amount of true free chlorine is dependent on the amount of CYA.

Puck-tablet-feeder-erosion systems are designed for use with specific types of tablets. One example is an erosion feeder designed for use with slow dissolving Tri-Chlor and Bromine tablets. Other types of puck tablets are Di-Chlor and Calcium Hypochlorite. Di-Chlor is used to initially bring levels of CYA up quickly in the pool water and then Tri-Chlor is used to maintain.

I have found it important to test for CYA on indoor pools because they may be using a Sodium Hypochlorite or a Calcium Hypochlorite sanitizer but may unknowingly be using a Tri -Chlor shock treatment. Inspector Pool test kits can really help you see some things that may not have been noticed with a simple test kit.

Good luck and happy swimming this summer!

Joe Martinez is a Certified Professional in Food Safety for the Wyoming Dept. of Agriculture

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Mary Lou Gilman Retires

After more than two decades as an environmental health professional, Mary Lou Gilman retired from Missoula City-County Health Department on June 15, 2011.

Gilman began working for the health department in 1988, in health promotion. She coordinated Missoula Clicks, which worked to increase seatbelt use and led the community effort for KEYS, keep every youngster safe. Prior to that, she volunteered on both the AIDS task force and the Traffic Safety task force.

In 1990 Gilman hired was hired by Environmental Health to develop a program to create public awareness about the vulnerability of Missoula's sole source aquifer. A year later, she became an Environmental Health Specialist and was immediately put in charge of the food program.

She took the food program to new heights, formalizing plan review, teaching food safety classes and creating a quarterly newsletter for food establishments. She has been in charge of the water lab, and worked in the lab for many years.

Gilman created a Web presence for Environmental Health in the

late 1990s, and to her credit, Missoula was among the first environmental health offices in Montana to have a Web page. Over the years she's led the health department's indoor exposure efforts, and has supplied mold information to hundreds of Missoula citizens.

A supreme researcher, Gilman wrote excellent septic permits, did subdivision review, and performed thousands of licensed establishment inspections.

Throughout her time at the health department, according to Shannon Therriault, Gilman has shown great initiative and has always been willing to take on projects. She is a leader, a mentor and a friend to all with whom she has worked.

"Mary Lou is a quintessential public health professional," Therriault said. "She cares about people, about the environment and the integrity of the rules. She's been a driving force in this department for a long time, and will be missed!"

With the love of her life at her side, Mary Lou says she will be "reinventing" herself in Butte, America, in their new home at 4816 Hutch Dr. She hopes to have many visitors!



Mary Lou Gilman

"Mary Lou is a quintessential public health professional. She cares about people, about the environment and the integrity of the rules."

Have a special project?

Mary Lou Gilman is available for contract. She can be reached at irishmlg@live.com.

NEHA Region 3 Report

By Roy Kroeger

Your NEHA Board of Directors met just prior to this year's Annual Education Conference in Columbus, OH, with a very ambitious agenda. We had to take several additional hours to complete all the topics of discussion!

Some of the items included (1) updating the investment strategy for the association, (2) discussing funding strategies for the Global EH Fund, (3) planning for future AECs, (4) reviewing the status of a new International Code Council Swimming Pool Code, (5) discussing e-voting policy for special elections, and (6) discussing NEHA affiliate regions and possible changes to them. I have provided more details on some of the things happening in your national association below.

2011 AEC in Columbus

NEHA has just wrapped up the 75th Annual Education Conference and Exhibit in Columbus Ohio. The conference drew around 900 actual participants and about 100 more "virtual attendees." In addition, we saw more exhibitors than in previous years.

Highlights of this year's conference included a trip to and dinner at the Audubon Society and the chance to see and pet some baby animals from the world famous Columbus Zoo! Par-

ticipants were also invited to attend the "Back to the Future with Mr. Spock" skit put on by NEHA Staff that showed what inspections might look like in the future.

I encourage everyone who was unable to attend the AEC in person to sign up for and participate in the virtual platform; there are about 24 of the sessions on video with slides available. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available to those viewing the virtual conference. Keep in mind that the June 28 - 30, 2012, conference will be on the beach in San Diego, CA -- a definite don't-want-to-miss event!

NEHA Board approves Sustainability White Paper

Given the growing interest nationwide in sustainability, NEHA assembled a committee to identify the association's role in furthering the move toward more sustainable resource use. The charges for this committee were: (1) develop resources for regulators, (2) develop resources for the general public, and (3) identify and document how sustainability is connected with environmental health.

The goal of this report was to address the above charges, and provide information on the relationship between sustainability and environ-

mental health. This report discusses environmental health's role in several topics regarding sustainability including energy, water use, agriculture, waste management, urban design, built environment, and climate change.

Many thanks go out to Tom Gonzales and his committee, for all their hard work. The recently adopted report will be available to all environmental health professionals in the very near future. Keep a look out for it.

NEHA Food Safety Work

As many of you know the Food Safety System in our country has been undergoing major changes, even before the FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act). NEHA is committed to playing a large role in these changes through the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP). The PFP was established by the FDA with its partners (CDC & DOA) in 2008 at the 50 State Workshop and was given the ultimate task of creating a completely integrated food safety system for the country at the 2010 50 State Workshop.

NEHA has also been playing a major role in the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) and the FDA Rapid Response Team (RRT) Program.

The cooperative agreement between the FDA Food Protection (RRT)

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and Program Infrastructure Improvement Prototype Project is designed to strengthen state food program infrastructure and to develop capabilities for responding to potential threats to the food/feed supply, from farm to fork. The RRT project engages partners throughout the food safety system, including state departments of agriculture, health, and emergency; FDA field offices; laboratories; local health departments; and other federal partners and national initiatives to identify, implement, and share best practices in emergency response (using Incident Command System (ICS) concepts) for food/feed incidents.

Industry-Foodborne Illness Investigation Training

With the success of NEHA's Epi-Ready Team Training workshop, NEHA is currently in the final course development phase of the Industry-Foodborne Illness Investigation Training (I-FIIT). The purpose of the I-FIIT is for industry to establish and implement control measures based on model practices that rapidly and effectively prevent further transmission of illness in response to a foodborne disease incident. This will be accomplished by bringing together retail food service representatives, government food safety officials and other involved personnel to improve foodborne disease outbreak response by identifying

industry and regulatory roles and responsibilities during a foodborne disease incident.

NEHA has worked closely with Kroger Company (King Soopers/City Market/Loaf & Jug) in the development of this training program and has several other well known companies expressing an interest to participate in the training.

NEHA launched this training opportunity at the Columbus AEC as a pre-conference workshop.

Center for Priority Based Budgeting

Communities across America today are struggling to develop meaningful and fiscally prudent budgets under financial pressures previously unknown in modern times. Within the Entrepreneurial Zone at NEHA, a new program is emerging that offers its services to help local governments address budget shortfall concerns. The Center for Priority Based Budgeting™ proudly offers its research and advisory services to help local government organizations address their fiscal realities both in the short term (Fiscal Health) and long term (Fiscal Wellness) through a new and creative process that is actively being implemented across the country. The Center for Priority Based Budgeting has developed the Fiscal Health and Wellness© process to help cities and

counties find the answers to the most relevant questions of the day:

- How do we "stop the bleeding"?
- How can our organization "spend within its means"?
- How do we allocate scarce resources to top priority programs?
- How can we link the budget with our strategic goals/objectives and with performance measures?
- How does our organization head down a path of long term financial sustainability?

For more information on this program see the NEHA Web site and click on "Center for Priority Based Budgeting"

Credential information

This fall NEHA will be updating both the and also relate the credential to current policies and codes.

Study guides are now available for either credential in both book and online versions. Take a look at the NEHA Web site for more information.

Roy Kroeger is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist and supervisor for the Cheyenne/Laramie County, Wyo., Health Department. He currently serves as Regional Vice President for Region 3 of the National Environmental Health Association.

For more information on this program see the NEHA Web site and click on "Center for Priority Based Budgeting"

The joint conference will take place in Billings, September 12, 13 and 14.

2011 Fall Conference- A Premiere Public Health Event in the Works

by Christine Hughes, R.S.

Great learning opportunities are in store for this fall's joint Montana Environmental Health Association and Montana Public Health Association conference in Billings, September 12 through 14, 2011. The joint planning committee has been working hard to recruit presenters, prepare slide shows and finalize logistics for the conference. We think you're going to like it!

MEHA will kick off the conference with a Monday afternoon of subdivision review and updates from Montana DEQ. A social mixer will follow on Monday evening. This will be a great opportunity to re-connect with co-workers, meet new folks in the public and environmental health fields, and reflect on an eventful weather year in Montana.

Five tracks of learning sessions will be held each day for the remaining two days of the conference, featuring a wide variety of options. Topics include wastewater, food safety, public health law, professional devel-

opment, legislative advocacy, and water quality.

Members of MEHA and MPHA have lined up some outstanding speakers this year, including Nelson Fabian, NEHA Executive Director; Dave Ludwig, MPH, R.S., NEHA Region 2 Vice President; Jill Kreuger, Staff Attorney, Public Health Law Center of Minnesota; and Julie Benson-Rosston, M.A., Communications Consultant/Instructor for the Collaboration Institute of Helena, MT.

Thanks to MPHA, an on-line brochure outlining the conference and all it has to offer will soon be available for viewing on the MEHA and MPHA Web sites. The two groups look forward to a premier public health conference and the future collaboration it will bring. Registration will soon be open. We hope to see you in Billings this fall!

Christine Hughes is a registered sanitarian for Lake County. She currently serves as president of the Montana Environmental Health Association.

Thanks again for being a Silver Sponsor at our Fall Conference!



Haz Waste Days a Hit in Anaconda!

by Karen Solberg, R.S.

After a wildly successful collection event in 2010, Anaconda/Deer Lodge County entered into a 3-year contract with Clean Harbors Environmental to perform our annual household hazardous waste/e-waste collection event. I am very much looking forward to NOT having to go through the entire bid process for 3 years!

The 2011 event was held on May 14th at the Class III Landfill site -- about the only venue in our county with good access, a locking gate and supervision. We applied for and received a permit through the DEQ Solid Waste Management Section to conduct the event at this location. The waste items were collected here and transported by Clean Harbors to appropriate facilities for recycling, proper disposal or incineration.

Last year we literally had to turn people

away on the last day because we received so much waste, so we were surprised that folks brought just as much waste to this year's event. Clean Harbors has promised to "never underestimate Anaconda again!" Two semi-loads of HHW and e-waste left the county for the second year in a row!

Anaconda/Deer Lodge County has had a long standing "Community Clean-up Days" event, so people are already in the mindset of spring cleaning. We purposely planned for the HHW/E-waste event to be the weekend prior to the Clean-up Days in order for people to properly dispose of hazardous waste before the annual Clean-up Days. There were, of course, people who missed the haz/waste event and complained, but most of them were willing to hold onto their hazardous waste for another year. No disposal of e-waste or HHW is allowed during "general"

cleanup.

The biggest challenge to an event like this was finding volunteers to assist with unloading cars and directing traffic. Volunteers help to keep costs down. We only had about seven volunteers this year and did we ever work hard!

I believe that the success of this event lies in good advertising and the fact that the event is FREE. Well, OK...the free factor is major! Anaconda/Deer Lodge County is fortunate to have a healthy solid waste fund and a CEO with a background in hazardous waste disposal which helps to make this event a priority.

Karen Solberg is a Registered Sanitarian serving Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Granite and Powell counties. She is also president-elect of the Montana Environmental Health Association.

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Got MEHA?

Dress your best and support MEHA at the same time!

T-shirts and Hats with the MEHA logo are on sale for \$10 each.

Contact Christine Hughes at chughes@lakemt.gov, or Crystal Nuno at crystal.nun@riverstonehealth.org for details.



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*We're on the
Web
mehaweb.org*



The Montana Environmental Health Association (MEHA) is a nonprofit group of professionals who work to protect public health in ways that are related to our everyday environment. Many of our members work in the fields of food safety, public accommodations, drinking water protection, wastewater treatment, air quality, solid waste disposal and public health complaints.

Our membership is comprised of a variety of professions including registered sanitarians also known as environmental health specialists.

We are an affiliate of the [National Environmental Health Association \(NEHA\)](#)

Our mission is to maintain and improve the standards of performance of professionals in the field of Environmental Health in Montana through education and outreach.

SepticNET Wastewater Treatment Technology Receives MT DEQ Approval

SepticNET, Inc., a spinoff of Water & Environmental Technologies (WET), recently received regulatory approval for its SepticNET™ advanced wastewater treatment technology. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality has approved the SepticNET™ system as a Level 2 treatment system for individual home and small community wastewater uses.

Research and development on the SepticNET™ system began more than four years ago in response to elevated nitrate concentrations in the south Butte Valley due to septic systems. WET conducted extensive testing and monitoring of different treatment technologies to reduce nutrients and other chemicals from septic tank effluent. With assistance from a grant from the Montana Board of Research and Commercialization Technology, WET built and in-

stalled six full-scale treatment systems in the Butte valley.

The SepticNET™ system is a patent-pending treatment process that represents a significant improvement over existing Level 2 systems by reducing nitrogen concentrations below regulatory trigger levels. As a result, there is no mixing zone requirement for systems using the SepticNET™. The modular system can also be designed to remove phosphorus, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals.

WET began production and sale of SepticNET™ in 2011. For more information on the SepticNET™ system, please contact Steve Anderson or Dave Erickson at 782-5220.