

OEHA Journal

News for Oregon Environmental Health Professionals

August
2003

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President's Message

Fowler, Kauffman Honored For 30-Year EH Careers

The passage of time, along with uncertainty surrounding pension benefits, has recently led a larger than usual number of Environmental Health professionals to opt out of the workaday world.

Two of those retirees, Ken Kauffman and Joe Fowler, represent sixty years of service to the Association and the professions of Environmental Health. Because of their contributions, they were accorded the Association's highest honors at the Annual Education Conference this year. Ken received the "Vern Reiersen Meritorious Service" award, and Joe received the "Sanitarian of the Year" award.

Both Joe and Ken saw tremendous changes in the course of their careers, and both demonstrated the ability to change as their chosen fields evolved.

Joe's emphasis at the start of his career was vector control, but saw that field fall victim to the erosion of general fund dollars and disappear. His experience in that program proved useful in the last year as mosquito control suddenly became a hot topic again.

Working in Salem, he saw all too closely how the political process can impact the practice of EH. Joe was in-

involved in debates on issues across the range of Environmental Health practice.

A commitment to excellence reflected in the Marion County EH staff's



Joe Fowler

consistent participation in OEHA is perhaps the best tribute to this dedicated individual.

Ken Kauffman began his career in environmental health with the Lincoln Co HD in '73, working primarily in the on-site program.

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Ken Kaufman (cont. from page 1)

He left in '75 to join the Health Division's Rec and Housing program, and in '77 he was assigned the staff role in the newly formed Enforcement Section, where he worked to develop enforcement actions across the drinking water, food protection, shellfish, pools and spas, rec and housing, furniture and bedding and vector control programs, which at that time, were all in one section at the Division.

Ken became the manager of the Food Program until '82 when he was assigned to the newly formed Institutional Sanitation program, acting as an environmental health consultant/liaison with schools, prisons and other governmental agencies.

When the state created the Chronic Disease Surveillance program in '85, Ken took a key role as he developed expertise in toxicology and risk assessment, and spearheaded development of what is now the Clandestine Drug Lab program. Finding a real niche (and a glaring public health need) in toxicology, Ken was able to employ his love of chemistry in doing some of the early groundwork in establishing protocols for our mercury-in-fish advisories, setting criteria for a broad range of programs such as wastewater re-use projects, indoor air quality, and ozone in public pools.

Because of his broad experience and strong research skills, he became the "go to guy" for state and local health department staff on any number of environmental issues, often representing the Division in inter-agency workgroups developing standards for new and emerging subject matter.

Ken's encyclopedic methodology was legendary. By the time he retired he had accumulated 11 full cabinets with files on every topic he had encountered over the course of his career. These were a valuable source of history and insight on complex issues that Ken was always willing to share with others...asking only that they return the files when they were done!

Ken took his work in public health seriously and had little tolerance for policy based on politics rather than science. He was always a passionate advocate for standards that were protective and for challenging the public health establishment to step up to the highest standards to which they were called.

He was twice honored by his colleagues as Sanitarian of the Year and is considered by his peers as the most competent, credible source of technical information.

Ken retired in Jan of '03 and continued on in a temporary capacity until June when he retired from state service to his farm in Canby. We're sure he'll continue on with his love of crossword puzzles and we want him to know how much he meant to our profession and how much he'll be missed.

(Thanks go to Ron Hall for the recap of Ken's career)

Talk to me @ OEHANEWS@msn.com



Over the next year the OEHA newsletter will become merged into the association website. The goal is to save money and paper by bringing the newsletter to most members through the website. Members will be notified by email when new newsletters are posted. While the newsletter editor and webmaster work to complete this project, we need to begin accumulating a list of email addresses. We

prefer to have home email addresses, with work addresses the second option. Printing and postage to get a hard copy of each newsletter out to OEHA members costs hundreds of dollars, so the association stands to save a significant amount of money by making this switch. Send us your email addresses, as well as comments on the newsletter and website to: OEHANEWS@msn.com

New OEHA Officer Slate Announced

James Mack began his two-year term as OEHA President April 23 at the Annual Education Conference banquet at Mt. Bachelor Village Resort. Mike Christman of Hood River County moves into the post of President-Elect and will become president in 2005.

Nominations from the floor at the annual business meeting filled two of the other three vacant officer positions. Eric Christianson of the Lincoln County Health Dept. accepted nomination to the post of Vice-President, Angela Scott becomes the new Secretary, replacing Cindy Robinson.

The Northwest Region position remains unfilled while an interested OEHA member is recruited.

After completing the Association's first two-year president's term, Dave Bussen retains his seat on the Board of Directors as the Past President. Caroline Gross remains the Treasurer, and Russ Hanson (Eastern), Terry Westfall (Southwest) and Carolyn Snowberger (Mid-Willamette) continue their terms as regional directors.

In other action at the general membership meeting, the revised OEHA Constitution and By-Laws (lots of work by James Mack), which were mailed out to all members earlier this year, were unanimously adopted.

The membership also unanimously voted to increase the amount budgeted for the donation to Public Health International to \$500.

Crook County Hosts Regional Training Sept.17-18

Cleaning up extensive gasoline leaks from the soil under the city of Prineville will be one of the topics explored during an OEHA-sponsored training scheduled for September 17 and 18. The training is being hosted by the OEHA Eastern Region at the Crook County Extension Office Conference Room.

Other items on the agenda include a CDC webcast on integrated pest management, OSHA issues in licensed facilities and a West Nile Virus up-

date. On the evening of the 17th, attendees are invited to a BBQ and horseshoes affair at the Schwab South campground along the Crooked River (DEET optional).

Due to limited space, registration is limited to 30 people, with OEHA members given preference. For more information and to register for the conference, contact Russ Hanson of Crook County Environmental Health at (541) 447-8155.

Scholarship Auction Nets \$970, More to Come!

Generous bidders added nearly one thousand dollars to the OEHA Scholarship fund in the highlight of the AEC, the scholarship auction. With long-time auctioneer Dave Couch unable to attend, Matt Jaqua did the best he could to encourage people to support tomorrow's EH professionals.

A late addition to the list of auction items will easily push the total for this year

into four figures. Rick Hallmark of Coos County has rounded up 18 holes of golf for two the world famous Bandon Dunes Golf Course.

The auction for this fantastic item will take place online, on the OEHA website (go to www.OregonEHA.org to place your bid). Bids will be posted on a chat line, and the bidding will close on Sept. 15.



Message from the President

As I take the reign of the Presidency, OEHA I do so with great humility and desire to move this organization forward as a steward of environmental health practices and principles. In that vein, I like to acknowledge the contribution, dedication, and commitment our past president(s) has made to the field of environmental health in Oregon.

To the Board members, members of OEHA, colleagues and friends of OEHA, I am truly grateful for this opportunity to assist in leading

“We tend to sustain those belief systems...with the hope that, if sustained, such belief systems will treat us well in the future.”

this organization into the 21st Century and beyond.

As we know, these are truly times that will test our souls as professionals engaged in the practice of environmental health. Oregon is undergoing dramatic and to many individuals,

draconian measures to address severe economic, social, and political issues facing the state. Since the events of September 11, 2001, the war in Afghanistan & now Iraq our individual and collective worldviews on a national level, and the subsequent effect felt at the state and local level has immeasurably affected our belief systems. In an editorial published in the Round Table titled "September 11 & Beyond" the author puts forth four main lessons he believe has emerged on the world stage emanating from these events.

1. These events brought home to Americans that they were highly vulnerable even in newly capacious definitions of security.

2. These events was extremely damaging on the short run to the self-confidence politically as well as in economic terms.

3. These events force the International, national, state and local establishments to recognize and understand that causes of tension, violence and terrorism such as poverty, fanaticism, overpopulation, environmental degradation, arms & drug trafficking must all be dealt with a sustained application, skill and patience and that there is no quick fix.

4. These events and its immediate aftermath challenged all optimistic theories and prophecies about globalization.

Whether we agree with these pronouncements or not, we must surely recognize that since September 11, 2001 our national, state and local belief systems has been tested as arbitrators of the great American ideal of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Belief systems are said to encompass various viewpoints of which most are articulated within the framework of self-view, world-view, past-view, present-view, and future-view belief systems.

Within environmental health, we have seen our belief systems tested in that approaches, mechanisms for improvement in system management has yielded little if any resolution to the perceived problem. We tend to sustain those belief systems that engages us to hold onto what we reasonably expected have treated us well in the past, with the

hope that if sustained, such belief systems will treat us well in the future.

Changing belief is a pervasive mental activity. Guy Politizer stated "changing belief occurs when the course of events does not meet the individual and collective expectations or when indisputable facts run counter to the individual and collective anticipation". Whenever a new piece of information contradicts a currently held belief, one has to modify their set of beliefs in order to restore consistency. In the case where it becomes necessary to give up a belief, some beliefs are less likely to be abandoned than others.

To deal effectively with 21st Century environmental health problems, whether as professionals, individual citizens, part of governmental or non-governmental organizations, we shall confront our belief systems. The ability to be taken seriously as environmental health professionals will depend in large part on our individual and collective desire to confront our belief systems as either relevant or no longer relevant as it pertains to protecting the citizens of Oregon against environmental factors that may adversely impact human health.

Whatever belief systems we employ as individual environmental health professionals or professionals involved in environmental health we should emphasize environmental and public health approaches. We should recognize the importance of stakeholder communication; we should be aware that there are scarce resources needed for infinite needs; we should secure resources for educational and training programs; we should provide a continuum of approaches for educating present and future environmental health professionals; we should build partnerships for education and training; we should establish partnerships for funding; we should develop interdisciplinary opportunities for all individuals engaged in

the practice of environmental health whether they are in or outside of government; we should engage other environmental health organizations in our endeavors; we should strengthen our academic infrastructure; we should develop economic measures to support and sustain our efforts; and we should assist in the implementation of laws that assure we have a workforce capable of implementing our efforts.

It is not likely, nor is it anticipated that during the next 2 years each of these objectives will be met. However, it shall be my goal as your President for the next 2 years to begin the march toward developing the infrastructure within OEHA that would allow for the implementation of these objectives. If your belief system is such that your desire

as an environmental health professional is to assist in developing your skills, your abilities, your knowledge and that of others in the profession, then OEHA is the only avenue in which you can attain that level of certainty.

Without the sustained support and active participation of **all** members of OEHA, all efforts, whether individual or collective will be for naught. We implore you to join us in the effort to move OEHA into the 21st Century.

Thank You

"we should provide a continuum of approaches for educating present and future EH professionals"



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When House Bill 3156 was introduced at the start of the 2003 Oregon Legislative Session, it threatened to drastically change the structure of the food safety system in Oregon. Thanks to the efforts of negotiators representing the state and county public health system, the version awaiting final approval in the State Senate will strengthen state oversight of county food safety programs, and keep as well as t heThe original version, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Kruse at the request of the Oregon Restaurant Association, would have moved responsibility for all restaurant licensing and inspections to the state.

As this edition of the newsletter goes to press, HB 2325, which replaces the term “Registered Sanitarian” with “Registered Environmental Health Specialist” awaits the governor’s signature. This is a housekeeping measure that changes the terminology used in ORS 700. This Health Licensing Office submitted this legislation, with the support of the Sanitarian Registration Board, to make Oregon’s terminology conform with national standards.

Oregon State University Health and Human Performance Chair Anna Harding announced in March that the school will discontinue the Bachelor of Science degree program in Environmental Health and Safety. State budget cuts, along with declining enrollment in the program, led to the decision.

Students currently in the Environmental Health program will be able to obtain their degrees, but a number of EH classes will be phased out over the next two years. With the elimination of the undergraduate program, the focus of the EH&S program at OSU will shift to advanced degrees.

While the shift in emphasis to Masters and Doctoral program may produce greater opportunities for professionals interested in furthering their education, the concern for many people is finding qualified people to fill entry level Environmental Health positions.