



# WEHA Newsletter

Issue III

August 2006

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## *President's Message*

The year is going by very quickly and everyone has been scrambling to complete their environmental health duties all summer. The job sometimes goes unrecognized, but realize the importance that each and everyone of you do each day to protect the citizens of Wyoming. All of you deserve a great big "kudos" for your efforts and dedication to the field of environmental health.

Fall is soon approaching and so is our Annual Educational Conference in Saratoga the week of September 12 -14, 2006. All of you should have received the AEC brochure by now. This year's conference will be smaller and more quaint, jointly with the Wyoming Food Safety Coalition. However, as you look through the brochure, you'll notice that an excellent conference has been planned with quality speakers and tours. Be sure you are registered by September 1, 2006. The cost of \$125 covers all but one meal throughout the conference. And don't forget to bring a silent auction item to enter. Proceeds go to help finance next year's conference.

This year is an election year, so be sure to think of potential candidates for the WEHA Board including positions of President, President-Elect, Treasurer, and Secretary. Elections will be held during a luncheon at the AEC. As my presidency winds down for my term, I want to thank all of you for being such a terrific group to work with each day. I have really enjoyed serving on the Board. Thank you for allowing me to serve as President the past two years. I welcome the next President to take charge and will assist him/her as needed. Please help me in making this transaction for the new President with ease.

Be sure to attend the awards banquet on Wednesday night of the conference. This is the time and place to recognize a member for special accomplishments in the field of environmental health. Possible awards may include "Outstanding Environmental Health Specialist Award", Author Williamson Award", and "Donkey Tail Award."

I hope to see all of you at the AEC.

### **In This Issue:**

Origins at the Ivory Cellar.....	Page 2
WEHA Announcements.....	3
Wastewater & Aquifer Protection Revisited.....	4
Jerry Olson retirement photos.....	4
"Yes" by John Drinnon.....	4&5
Upcoming Training's.....	5
Hand Sanitizer Article and links.....	6
WEHA membership Application.....	7
Sustaining Members.....	8

## *Origins at the Ivory Cellar*

Kenneth Blehm, Colorado State University

Ever get the feeling that dragging your tired body out of bed on a workday morning is more trouble than it is worth? Ever get the feeling that the tasks of today are going to be another sorry repeat of yesterday? Ever wonder if it is all worthwhile?

If you have taken a personal inventory and discovered that your feelings of fatigue, listlessness and lack of motivation are not due to seasonal allergies, birth of a new child, or a recently pubescent teen living in your house; maybe, it is time for you need to take a serious professional inventory of your life.

I think that all of us - at different points in our careers - get the feeling that you are walking on a treadmill and that the scenery is not particularly beautiful. You wonder if this is "all there is to look forward to" for the rest of your life. You wonder if the next decades are going to be as long as they appear right now.

How do you break out of a cycle like this? How do you get a new perspective or a new direction? How can you seriously and objectively evaluate your life - while you are in the middle of it - and get reliable information to discover just "what is troubling you, Bunkie"? Well, sometimes we need a little help from our friends. But just who are those friends?

All of us have had a chuckle at the expense of someone who has undertaken to correct an environmental health problem without the necessary knowledge or tools to solve it. The creative but non-functional modifications to ISD systems, office ventilation systems, or asbestos problems we have seen show us the value of professional expertise. We have all lamented "IF ONLY they would have come to talk with me before they undertook this project, they could have saved so much time, frustration, and money".

Maybe we need to adopt the same strategy in examining our career options and get a professional to help us.

We are particularly lucky to have excellent career resources available to us through our state college and university systems. Many of us are alumni of local schools and can access great services at no charge. Many more of us live in communities where the university or college system is available to us at a FRACTION of the cost of some fee-for-service entity that does the same thing. The computer links to some of the major career centers to help us are:

Colorado State	<a href="http://career.stuser.colostate.edu/">http://career.stuser.colostate.edu/</a>
University of Colorado	<a href="http://www.colorado.edu/careerservices/">http://www.colorado.edu/careerservices/</a>
Univ of Northern Colorado	<a href="http://www.unco.edu/careers/">http://www.unco.edu/careers/</a>
University of Denver	<a href="http://www.du.edu/career/">http://www.du.edu/career/</a>
Colorado School of Mines	<a href="http://www.mines.edu/stu_life/career/">http://www.mines.edu/stu_life/career/</a>
University of Wyoming	<a href="http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/CACS/">http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/CACS/</a>
Metropolitan State	<a href="http://www.mscd.edu/~career/">http://www.mscd.edu/~career/</a>
Univ of Southern Colorado	<a href="http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/careercenter/">http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/careercenter/</a>
Mesa State	<a href="http://www.mesastate.edu/sl/acc/Recruiters/index.htm">http://www.mesastate.edu/sl/acc/Recruiters/index.htm</a>

Just like when we help folks solve environmental problems, a career professional can help us focus, evaluate, examine and decide. They can help us to determine if we need a new direction, a new approach to an existing job, or perhaps a new job. They can help us ask some important questions that we cannot seem to articulate with the restraints of our point of view or our occupational outlook. They can suggest some reading, some things to do, some folks to see, some actions to take -- all of which help to lift that feeling of a heavy heart that started today.

Sometimes career "pros" can help us discover that the forest of impenetrable despair in which we stand is really the same wonderfully lush forest we sought when we started our careers. It is just that we are looking at the dark spots and seeing bottomless pits rather than a shady respite from a hot sun.

We might even decide that the forest we are in is still the same place that we want to be. We just needed to look at the trees as scenery and beauty and not as obstacles.

As always I welcome your comments and discussion. Please write me care of WEHA newsletter or email me at [ken.blehm@colostate.edu](mailto:ken.blehm@colostate.edu).

# WEHA Announcements

## **Thank You WEHA Membership**

By: Sherry Maston

I would like to personally thank the entire WEHA membership for your warm thoughts, prayers, gifts and beautiful bouquet of flowers for when I was injured on July 2, 2006. My accident has left me laid up for a few months but should be able to attend the AEC to see each of you. Your words of encouragement have helped me through my recovery and I appreciate your caring. Several colleagues have been pitching in to cover my area so that environmental health work continues. I am deeply in your debt. Your compassion has moved me and helped me with keeping my spirits up in this difficult time. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

## Wyoming Department of Agriculture Position's Update:

- Vacancy in Riverton has been filled.
- Rory McManus is back and covering Albany & Laramie Counties - Welcome Back!!

## **WEHA minutes available at:**

<http://www.wehaonline.net>

## **Delegate Thanks Membership for NEHA Support**

I would like to thank the Members of WEHA for allowing me to represent you at the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual NEHA Education Conference and Exhibit in San Antonio.

I found the conference to be very beneficial. Beyond the Keynote presentation dealing with Pandemic Flu, attendees got to choose between at least 17 different tracks or topics. Breakout sessions included topics ranging from bio-terrorism, GIS, food safety, to on-site wastewater and many more.

If the excellent speakers and educational tracks were not enough to keep you going, the exhibit hall included well over 100 vendors with incredible new products and technologies to help us all do our jobs better and more efficiently, the vendors also bought everyone Ice Cream.

Upon the conclusion of the conference I represented WEHA as the official delegate at the Council of Delegates meeting. Many topics were discussed at the meeting including position papers on HR 4167 (National Food Uniformity Act), Pandemic Flu, Reauthorization of the Public Health Preparedness Act and the Healthy Places Act of 2006. A report was also presented on NEHA credentials changes from the Executive Director on future changes, including revamping the CFSP to alleviate states concerns that the credential is being used to hire environmental health employees without four year degrees. Information was also presented from Loma Linda University to try and get more high school grads to enter Environmental Health Programs across the country so as to build a stronger future workforce.

Once again, I want to thank WEHA for helping send me to San Antonio and letting me represent you at your national conference. I encourage anyone with the opportunity to attend in the future; Atlantic City, NJ will host the conference in June 2007

Roy Kroeger, REHS  
Cheyenne/Laramie Co Env. Health

# UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

## Cooperative Extension Service

Platte Co. Cooperative Extension

57 Antelope Gap Rd., Wheatland, WY 82201

(307) 322-3667 • fax (307) 322-4410 • <http://wyoming.com/~platteces/default.html>

For immediate release: August 1, 2006

Contact: YOUR NAME, TITLE, PHONE

Cleaning Up to Prepare Food: Can hand sanitizers do the job?

Getting ready to start dinner or to make your child's lunch or breakfast? It might seem logical that using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is a safe alternative to handwashing before you start. After all, these types of products (technically termed "hand antiseptics") are approved for use in health care settings. But also safe before food preparation? Not necessarily so—for at least 3 reasons.

First, the types of organisms (termed "pathogens") that cause food-borne illness tend to be different than those in health-care settings. Foodborne pathogens are transmitted primarily via the fecal-oral route, from contaminated hands to food items. Of the foodborne outbreaks in the U.S. in which the carrier is known, nearly 70% of those outbreaks are caused by Norovirus (sometimes termed "Norwalk-like virus"). Hand sanitizers or antiseptics are fairly effective against bacteria but less so against foodborne viruses.

Second, hand-to-food contact is common in food preparation. In food retail and food-service operations where hand antiseptics are used, all ingredients in those products must be approved as indirect food additives or as drugs. Although there are no similar legal restrictions that cover home settings, there are risks when home food preparers who use a hand sanitizer or antiseptic introduce substances that aren't safe to eat into food that they are handling.

Third, food preparers frequently have wet hands and hands contaminated with material high in protein. Scientific research raises questions about the effectiveness of alcohol on moist hands and on hands contaminated with material high in protein.

So what's recommended? Frequent and proper hand washing with warm soapy water is the best way to clean your hands before preparing food. Another good idea is to minimize hand-to-food contact. Even handwashing does not remove all pathogens on hands, especially if a person is ill, so when preparing foods that will not be cooked (or cooked further) before being eaten, whenever possible use a utensil instead of your hands.

The Wyoming Food Safety Coalition is committed to food safety education in the state of Wyoming. For additional information about food safety, please call your county University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service Educator, Department of Agriculture Consumer Health Specialist, or Department of Health Sanitarian.

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The University of Wyoming and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperate. The University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

Source: Suzy Pelican (UW Cooperative Extension Service) and Dean Finkenbinder (Wyo Dept. of Ag, Consumer Health Services), and the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~comm/handhyg.html>

\*\*\*\*[For related hand sanitizer information please visit the following links, they provide GREAT information on why hand washing must be done more frequently in food preparation settings as compared to health care/clinic settings](#) – (it is information that is very useful for food safety trainings!!)

\*\*\*\*

<http://www.colostate.edu/orgs/safefood/NEWSLTR/v8n3s06.html>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY732>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol12no03/05-0955.htm>



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## **Wastewater and Aquifer Protection Revisited**

by Gary M Hickman

The Laramie County Commissioners have formed a Citizen Task Force to revisit a 1983 Intergovernmental Agreement concerning a Federal Clean Water Act 201 Facilities Plan for the City of Cheyenne, South Side Water and Sewer District, Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities and Laramie County. The Task Force goal is to review and possibly modify the agreement to mitigate some of the impact which comes as a result of enforcement of the agreement. The Task Force will present its report to all of the above listed signatories to the original agreement for consideration.

The Cheyenne/Laramie County Health Department Environmental Health Division is the agency which through the Laramie County Small Wastewater Facilities Regulations enforces the “201” agreement. The Division has been active in the committee, offering insight to and historical perspective of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

## **Farewell to Jerry Olson and Congratulations on his retirement!**



**Jerry Olson displaying retirement gifts**



**Jerry Olson having a good time at his party**

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**Yes**

Submitted by John Drinnon

Yes, we are a peculiar group of professionals and public health is not the most glamorous of occupations. The dreaded “health inspector” has all of the suspicion of a border guard yet, we know as much about human interaction than many social science professionals do. We do not inquire about why people do the things they do, we just intuitively know they will do it. And the principal idea that if any thing bad can happen... it will, has us on constant watch. Our purpose is to minimize that possibility and be alert to the inevitable break down in fundamental hygienic practices and scramble to minimize that impact. Norovirus- calicivirus- hepatitis- amoebiasis- hantavirus- west nile

virus- salmonellosis- shigellosis- pediculosis... and that's just an intro! but who does the public invariably call? Also the dog poop, bedbugs, trash, wastewater, animal, and of course the contentious neighbor calls are an addition to the repertoire of complaints that are forwarded to public health professionals daily and we have all the answers... right? And woe be the unfortunate sanitarian who explains that gloves are not a breach in the food service regulations to the caller who more often than not, was dissatisfied with the level of service he or she received at the food service establishment. It is a mystery that we do not seek counseling or go on a steady regime of mood altering medications more often. Yet there is dedication among public health professionals seen in few occupations. It's compelling as to why so many police officers firefighters and public health professionals (to include clinicians and nurses) labor on for years and manage to do so enthusiastically. Could it be that one in ten complaint where children or the elderly are in a desperately neglectful situation in need of environmental assessments so reliant by the court system, an explanation why we perform our duties? There is one thing certain as certainty can be, public health is responsible for more preventive medicine and promoting the general health and welfare of any society than any other profession, no exceptions. Potable water, adequate wastewater disposal, vector control and immunizations have done more to promote healthy communities and at minimal cost in terms of tax payer investment than other methods of health care delivery. The premise that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure could not be more accurately stated. I realize that we occasionally loose sight of that perspective but it doesn't take long for that realization to surface when dispatched to investigate a major gastrointestinal outbreak at a nursing home or daycare center. In conclusion, a quote from Sir William Osler (1849-1919) states "One of our first duties is to educate the masses, not take medicine" is an accurate testimonial. But we already know that.



## **UPCOMING TRAININGS:**

### **National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Associations's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**Denver, CO – Adams Mark Hotel**

**August 28-30, 2006**

**(visit [www.nowra.org](http://www.nowra.org) for more info.)**

### **2006 WEHA AEC**

**Saratoga, WY**

**September 19-21, 2006**

**(visit [www.wehaonline.net](http://www.wehaonline.net) for more info.)**

### **2006 CEHA AEC**

**Vail, CO**

**September 19-22, 2006**

**(visit [www.cehaweb.com](http://www.cehaweb.com) for more info.)**

### **NEHA/CDC Epi-Ready Team Training**

### **Pre-conference workshop for Food Safety Education Conference**

**Denver, CO - Adam's Mark Hotel**

**September 25-26, 2006**

### **USDA FSIS Food Safety Conference**

**Denver, CO – Adam's Mark Hotel**

**September 27-29, 2006**

**(visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/denver2006/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/denver2006/) for more info.)**

### **Upcoming CPO courses:**

**For information regarding location and dates of CPO courses in your area either go to [www.wehaonline.net](http://www.wehaonline.net), click on Events and take the link to upcoming CPO courses or go directly to [www.nspf.org/course.html](http://www.nspf.org/course.html).**

THANKS to our Sustaining Members!!

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Wyoming Environmental Health Association  
100 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82007

2006  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
WYOMING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Counties/Cities Assignment Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Duties/Specialty Areas: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a: Registered \_\_\_\_\_ Licensed \_\_\_\_\_ or Certified \_\_\_\_\_ Professional?

Are you a member of: NEHA \_\_\_\_\_ IAFP \_\_\_\_\_ Member of WEHA since: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues: \$100.00 Sustaining Membership  
\$10.00 Before March 31, 2006 or any new members  
\$15.00 April 1, 2006 or later.  
\$ 5.00 Student Membership

Please return completed applications with dues to: Joe Martinez, Treasurer  
315 N 9<sup>th</sup> St  
Thermopolis, WY 82443

**Please fill out forms completely.**