

# VEHA Bulletin-Spring 2021



## Message from the President - Jessica Stewart

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Happy spring! 2021 has been cold and fairly snowy & icy, which means you can find my family and myself in hibernation outside of work, coming out only for food. I'm daydreaming about the coming months warmth, greenery, and outdoor adventures that can be experienced without frozen fingers or toes.

This is my first message since becoming the new president back in the fall. I am so grateful for our very talented and helpful VEHA board. They constantly impress me with their dedication to serving you all and creating quality educational and professional growth opportunities. I'm honored to get the chance to work with each of them.

I'd also like to thank our members for the chance to serve you as the president. This is quite a privilege and I hope to serve you all well. We have some exciting goals and ideas currently on the table to focus on and I want to share what 2021 is shaping up to look like for VEHA.

One of the goals we're hoping to achieve this year is to virtually host our fall conference in conjunction with the Interstate Environmental Health Seminar (IEHS). For the first time ever, VEHA plans to co-host a conference with the regional IEHS on October 28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>. Typically the IEHS hosts an annual, multi-day seminar sponsored by Environmental Health Associations from the member states of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. It is normally held in a different state each year as it rotates between the member states. By virtually hosting our fall conference in conjunction with the IEHS member states, we will be able to draw regional speakers in the environmental health field including from several levels of government and industry. I believe our fall conference has the potential to be a uniquely excellent opportunity to see a "bigger picture" of the happenings in environmental health at this regional level and to network with environmental health specialists and industry leaders from areas outside of Virginia. We hope you all will be able to take advantage of this special fall conference opportunity!

The board is equally excited to offer more CEU's and networking this spring with our virtual Onsite and Food Safety Education Days. While we look forward to the time whenever we can safely meet in-person for these conferences, this virtual platform gives us the chance to provide members with a wider array of speakers and topics, so I do hope you will attend one or both days. Mark your calendars: The Onsite Education Day will be May 12<sup>th</sup> and the Food Safety Education Day will be June 10<sup>th</sup>. We will be sending e-mailed updates/registration info soon for both days. Also, please check out our website for additional information:

<https://veha32.wildapricot.org/> . These education days should be yet another good opportunity for growth!

Finally, I would like to welcome your feedback on what VEHA could do better or differently. Please, e-mail us at [board@virginiaeha.org](mailto:board@virginiaeha.org) with any ideas or suggestions. We appreciate our members support and want to make VEHA a solid resource for you. I look forward to seeing many of you virtually this spring! Enjoy the upcoming spring weather.

## VP of Programs - Tammy Faulkner

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The Spring 2021 program is being proposed as a historical review of the early alternative onsite sewage disposal system products to where we are today. At this time, 2 months out (May 12<sup>th</sup> conference date), the agenda is still a work in progress. If you have a relationship with a manufacturer representative that would like a forum to make a presentation, send them my way. Or if you would like to make a presentation about a product's evolution and use, I can find a place on the agenda for your presentation.

For the Food Safety Education Day (June 10th), I still have an idea that I would like to make happen. The idea is a panel, or "Open Mike" opportunity, for ethnic restaurant owners to discuss the challenges they have preparing their dishes and/or running a restaurant while meeting regulatory requirements. If you have an ethnic restaurant in your responsibility area, ask if they would like to participate in our Zoom educational conference. The idea would be to convey information they found challenging as an ethnic restaurant owner under our regulations and policies and how the challenges were resolved. Having regulators and customers on the same page would go a long way to bringing success on both sides of the isle. Some areas of the state have a concentration of ethnic communities that may be migrating to other cities, so let's be prepared to make a smooth transition for those coming changes and hear from established restaurant owners. I hope meeting via Zoom would not significantly impact daily operation of their facility.

E-mail information to [board@virginiaeha.org](mailto:board@virginiaeha.org) for follow up. Thank you for your support.

## VP of Professional Advancement - Leon Vinci

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As Vice President of Professional Advancement for VEHA, I attend the monthly VEHA conference call meetings with fellow board members to discuss business and the ongoing success of the organization. As we labor through Covid-19 during the last year, we continued to develop our numerous VEHA educational conferences and meetings, while we all keep being safe and work together.

As always, I encourage fellow environmental health professionals and students to become members of the VEHA organization and take advantage of the trainings and the awards that will be helpful for current and future endeavors. Further, our members should visit the VEHA website to gather an increased understanding of the great opportunities available through the Association.

**VEHA Educational Scholarship:** Each spring VEHA solicits undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in an environmental Health program or a program related to environmental health to submit their applications for the annual VEHA Educational Scholarship. This scholarship is currently funded at \$500.00 and is awarded to the most qualified applicant(s) at the Spring Educational Conference. Application deadline is March 31. To apply, visit [VEHA's Scholarships-Awards page](#).

**Certificates of Merit:** Every NEHA state affiliate is invited to designate an individual and/or a team of its members to receive a Certificate of Merit, thereby nationally recognizing one of their own for outstanding contributions to the profession of environmental health. Recipients are recognized during NEHA's Annual Education Conference awards program and in the Journal of Environmental Health. This is an opportunity for

special recognition of one of our own members in front of a national audience. **Nominations must be received by May 30.** To apply, visit [VEHA's Scholarships-Awards page](#).

**Environmental Health Professional of the Year:** The nominee for the Environmental Health (EH) Professional of the Year award must be an EH Professional currently engaged in the practice of Environmental Health who has made outstanding contributions to the EH Profession, and the EH Programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Nominees must be current VEHA members and should exemplify the values, quality of work, and ethical integrity held in high regard by the EH profession. Sponsors who make the nomination must also be current VEHA members. This award is presented each year at VEHA's Fall Educational Conference. **To nominate a deserving EH Professional, submit your nomination form by September 30.** The nomination form can be found on [VEHA's Scholarships-Awards page](#).

**A. Clark Slaymaker Award:** A. Clark Slaymaker was a Virginia Department of Health employee from 1943 to 1970. He ended his career as the EH Manager (then called Chief Sanitarian) in Alexandria, Virginia. In 1966 he won NEHA's prestigious Walter S. Mangold award, the **ONLY** VDH employee ever to do so. This award was created to recognize an individual, association, corporation, or organization that is not actively engaged in the field of environmental health but has made outstanding contributions and supported the EH Profession and the EH programs in VA. The individual(s) who wish to submit a nomination for this award must be a current member of VEHA however, it is not necessary for the nominee to be a member. **The deadline for nomination is September 30.** The nomination form can be found on [VEHA's Scholarships-Awards page](#).

## Secretary - Bryant Wooden

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Throughout the past few years, it has been a great experience to serve as the VEHA Vice President of Professional Advancement. I have had an opportunity to participate in the monthly VEHA board meeting conference calls, attend VEHA conferences, and assist with VEHA Scholarships and Awards. I have now transitioned to my current role on the VEHA board as the Secretary. This is a great new opportunity as I look forward to carrying out the activities and duties of the VEHA Secretary. Also, as we all continue to push through this COVID Pandemic, let's focus on staying safe, healthy, and to help out in any safe way that each of us can.

## VEHA News & Save the Dates

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**VEHA Spring Onsite Education Day – May 12, 2021.** Register and get more information by visiting the [VEHA Events page](#).

**VEHA Spring Onsite Education Day – June 10, 2021.** Register and get more information by visiting the [VEHA Events page](#).

### **NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) Conference Three-Part Virtual Series**

April 20-21, 2021

June 1-2, 2021

July 14-15, 2021

<https://www.neha.org/neha-2021-annual-educational-conference-aec-exhibition-three-part-virtual-series>

**VEHA Fall Education Conference/Interstate Environmental Health Seminar (IEHS) –** October 28-29, 2021. VEHA is hosting the IEHS in conjunction with the annual Fall Education Conference. There will be speakers from many states covering all aspects of Environmental Health. Registration is available on the [VEHA Events page](#).