Mark Cappello of Bennington, VT
First NEHES Engineer of the Year Helps Position Society for the Future

His New England colleagues call the first recipient of a new Society award a model health care professional who has played a critical part in revitalizing NEHES.

"Mark Cappello has been a prime mover in the facilities management profession in the Northeast from the beginning of his career," said Mark English of Hartford (CT) Hospital, a member of the Nomination Committee. "His contributions not only to his employers but also to NEHES have been innovative and a model of leadership."

"He did some reorganizing as NEHES president, and we had excellent programs under him," said Jeff Thomas of Mercy Hospital (Portland, ME), a Nomination Committee member.

"It was clear that Mark, in his work and contributions to the Society, touched so many people," said Tom Whittaker, committee chair. "He was the committee's unanimous choice."

Mark Cappello was the driving force behind important bylaws changes which: 1) opened NEHES membership to several professional categories and reversed a membership decline; 2) converted the NEHES vice president position to president-elect, ensuring greater succession continuity and enhancing the role of the second-in-command; and 3) changed how dues are collected.

As a member of ASHE's Membership and Chapter Relations Committee, he helped improve NEHES' relationship with ASHE. He started the annual retreat tradition for board members, where they set goals for the coming year. He enhanced the newsletter, and he and other board members strengthened NEHES' ties with the Connecticut Hospital Engineers Society, resulting in a very successful Fall Seminar 1996 organized by CHES.

And, Mark willingly assumed the NEHES presidency almost six months early due to an unexpected vacancy.

A workaholic (by his own admission) who put family life on hold while building his career, Mark is the Director of Engineering at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (Bennington). "I thought it was great that my peers would have thought that much of me and my performance," he said.

A member and past president of both NEHES and VHEES (Vermont Health Care Engineering Society), Mark attends most of their meetings. "I get back 10-fold what I put in. You're away the better part of one day a month for a NEHES meeting, but you may come back with a solution to a problem that could have taken you weeks. You're really networking when you're on a board with an extremely high caliber of individual."

Mark and his wife, Lisa, and their two-month-old daughter, Elizabeth, live in Bennington.

Bob Loranger Wins Election as ASHE President-Elect

On January 1, Bob Loranger begins a one-year term as ASHE president-elect, then he becomes ASHE president a year later.

But if anyone thinks he'll take a rest after that — guess again! It will be Bob's turn to lead NEHES as president in the year 2000.

As ASHE president-elect, Bob will serve on the board of directors, preside with the ASHE president over board meetings, assist the president in all his duties, visit ASHE chapters, attend ASHE committee meetings, and assemble committee members for the following year.

"I'll also be trying to keep my job," Bob said. He is Director of Facilities for New England Medical Center (Boston), continued on page 2

Kurt Peterson to Take Top NEHES Job

Kurt Peterson won't become president until January 1, but he's already thinking of ways to get more members to attend educational programs without great expense and travel time.

"I have asked how many have teleconferencing capabilities, and quite a few do," said Kurt, Construction Manager at Cooley Dickinson Hospital (Northampton, MA). "If they don't have it, they know facilities nearby where they could go. If we could save the expense of rooms, meals, and time, I'd like to use it for some of our programs."

Kurt is looking forward to the NEHES board's annual retreat in December, when officers and committee chair set new goals.

One of his charges to all members is to return questionnaires seeking ideas for educational programs.

"It's very difficult for us as an educational society to provide education if they don't let us know what they need," he said.

Tom Whittaker is the new president-elect. Formerly at Baystate Medical Center (Springfield, MA), he is seeking employment in health care. Bob Loranger, Director of Facilities at New England Medical Center (Boston, MA), and ASHE president-elect, continues as secretary.

Dick Harris, Director of Facilities at North Country Hospital (Newport, VT), is the new treasurer. "I'm honored to receive the confidence of the group in this elected position. I'm hoping to return this confidence by providing leadership in these times of uncertainties in health care."
President’s Comments

NEHES Members are Friends as Well as Colleagues

In January, my term as president of NEHES will end. As most presidents do near the end of their term, I also have been reflecting on the successes and failures of my time as president. I have tried to understand what it is that NEHES does that makes me want to be a member and hold an office.

Of course, there is the opportunity to grow professionally and to be recognized both in the organization and at my facility. However, when weighing all the benefits of being a member and office holder of NEHES, I believe the greatest advantage is the opportunity to meet and make lasting friends with people who have similar problems, backgrounds, and lifestyles.

How important is it to have good friends? People who support you in some of the most troubling times in your life. I mean times when you lose a job, when you experience a family breakup, or when you lose someone you love very deeply. I have experienced a terrible loss in my life and consider myself to have been so lucky to have had my wonderful friends at NEHES.

It was during those times when we worked very hard together planning a seminar or retreat, or the times when we had disagreements and disagreements during board meetings, or on the occasions when we really got to know each other when dining out or riding to meetings together.

These are the activities of NEHES which build wonderful and dear friends. In my opinion, this is the best thing that being a member of NEHES can provide.

The future of NEHES is very bright. I believe that as we begin to involve more New York engineers in our mailings and activities, we will get stronger and be able to provide many more services to our membership.

The future also looks good because I know those engineers elected to vital roles on the board are full of ideas and energy and will keep us moving forward. It is my hope that each of you will assist the board and our organization, for together nothing can stop our progress.

As I leave office, I want to say thanks to all my friends and let you know that if there is ever anything I can do either individually or professionally to help you, all you need to do is ask. God bless you all and keep working to support your organization. It is very special because each of you makes it that way.

Don Garrison

ASHE President-Elect

continued from page 1

supervising 80 employees in Maintenance, Construction, Planning and Design, Biomedical Engineering, and Environmental Health.

Bob has been a member of ASHE for 10 years, and served two terms as Region 1 representative, bringing regional concerns to the board and returning ASHE news to New England.

ASHE membership, he said, helped him make the transition from the power industry, where he designed and built nuclear and fossil fuel power plants, to health care. “I knew nothing of health care’s codes and standards, all of which I got from my engineering associates.”

NEHES membership “has provided the critical local relationships with fellow engineers who have had the answers to every problem I’ve run into,” said Bob, currently NEHES secretary. “I return the favor as often as I can.”

Working nights and weekends to further his education, he has an associate’s degree, a bachelor’s in industrial and mechanical engineering, a professional engineering license in five New England states, and an MBA with a specialty in public health.

He and his wife, Linda, live in Melrose, MA.

Liaison Update

News from NEHES’ Region 1 ASHE Representative

By Jack Gosselin

Vice President of Facilities

Day Kimball Hospital

Putnam, CT

Due to the realignment of ASHE regions, the State of New York will join Region 1 as of January 1, 1998. There are a number of active chapters in the state and I look forward to taking part in the various chapter events. Recently, I have contacted a number of chapter leaders in New York in hopes of giving any type of support ASHE may be able to provide. The opportunities that exist for networking and joint educational forums between New England and New York are many, and I look forward to helping with this effort. I would appreciate hearing from any chapters that I may not be aware of in New York, and would like to receive any input regarding the interaction of the expanded Region 1 of ASHE.

Mr. Carl Budde, ASHE past president, and Dr. Alfred Buck, JCAHO executive vice president, have continued their efforts to streamline the building inspection process, eliminating multiple onsite tours, repetitive reports on corrections, and different interpretations of the same set of codes and standards. To this end, a letter has been sent to Secretary Donna Shalala requesting that HCFA cooperate in the effort to use survey results from one regulatory agency to satisfy another’s requirements, and to expedite the administration to move forward to adopt the most recent edition of the Life Safety Code. HCFA is still utilizing the 1985 edition. Mr. Budde has been asked by JCAHO to serve another year on the CHS committee along with Tim Peglow and Doug Erickson.

I would like to congratulate Bob Loranger, PE, on his recent election as president-elect of ASHE. We should be proud to have our 1999 ASHE president come from Region 1, and I personally look forward to working with Bob on the board in the future.

ASHE’s Facilities Engineering Improvement Tool is under review and will be available soon. The Clinical Engineering/Improvement Tool has been well received with more than 50 modules sold.
Technology Update

Is this the “Ultimate Risk Management Task of the Century?”
Becoming Year 2000 Compliant: Take the Dire Warnings Seriously!

Along with traditional celebrations, the Year 2000 may bring equipment and business failures, lawsuits, and even patient deaths — if not detected in time.

Computer programmers have known for years that anything embedded with computer chips — not just computers — might fail or make critical processing and calculation errors if it computes years in two, not four, digits. The year 2000 would then become 00, or 1900.

Patient monitors, cardiographs, lab results, air quality for operating rooms, care plans, patient scheduling, blood and medical supplies, lines, business office procedures, building maintenance, and much more could be affected.

Is the Year 2000 Millennium Bug “the ultimate risk management task of the century,” “prudent paranoia,” or even “vendor hype”? Whatever their personal feelings are, a quick survey of NEHES members shows that all have a plan to deal with the potential problem.

“Nobody really knows what the true impact of this will be,” said Mary Kay Boudewyns, Director of Business Systems for Fletcher Allen Health Care (Burlington, VT). “It may even be a non-event, but we cannot take the risk of doing due diligence. We’re doing an inventory of everything that could be affected, getting input from vendors, developing a strategy, and prioritizing what to test.”

Dick Vargo and his staff have already discovered that maintenance and work order software won’t function in the year 2000. The vendor will have a new release this summer, said Dick, Director of Engineering Services at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (Hanover, NH). “Some of the vendors haven’t thought about this at all, but some are on the ball. We have put in dummy dates on some of our equipment and systems, and some haven’t had a problem.”

Edmund Lydon, Facilities Director at Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital (Plattsburgh, NY), said, “It has been frustrating, there’s not a lot of information out there. We called some vendors, and their response was poor or they didn’t return the call. We’re sending letters to all of them.”

CVPH contracts make vendors responsible for compliance. “We can’t 100 percent ensure it, but we have grounds to litigate.”

“We expect a serious problem with preventative maintenance systems,” said Jack McCarthy, Project Manager and Engineering Consultant, Hospital for Special Care (New Britain, CT). “We are very fortunate that we got into computers late. Almost all of ours are compliant, and most programs are being updated.”

Steve Marnis, Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Boston) network engineer, said the Washington office is preparing a list of all building service vendors, to be reviewed by New England facilities.

“Our central office will then send letters to all manufacturers to see what are they doing regarding compliance. It’s a massive task. I believe this is manageable, but I hope I don’t eat my words.”

Hartford (CT) Hospital has hired a consulting firm, said Mark English, Director of Engineering. “We are identifying every system or device to determine: 1) Is it subject to the y2k problem, as we call it? 2) Is the vendor or manufacturer taking steps to correct that problem, if it is subject to it, and, if they are not, we are incorporating those items into the purview of the consulting firm. So far, we have not discovered much in the way of y2k issues in our own department, excluding personal computers.”

Members Advise...

- Take the issue seriously.
- Involve all areas of your institution in the planning.
- Hire additional consultants or staff before prices skyrocket.
- Inventory equipment and systems.
- Prioritize how, what, and when equipment and systems will be tested. Begin with anything affecting patient care.
- Replace home-grown programming with vendor systems, if possible, and if there is time to test new systems before the year 2000.
- Work with vendors. Seek upgrades and other solutions to the problem. Request, in writing, what each is doing to become compliant.
- Don’t necessarily believe what vendors tell you. Test as much as possible.
- Word all contracts so that vendors are legally responsible for compliance.
- Discuss the problem with other healthcare professionals via ASHEnet or some other Worldwide Web site.
- Compliance may be costly. You may need system or equipment upgrades, even entire new systems or equipment.

NEHES Thanks Vendors

The $66,000 raised by Fall Seminar was due in part to innovative Gold and Silver sponsors — Rhode Island organizers sold. NEHES thanks the Gold Sponsors ($2,000 each):

- Gilbane
- Honeywell
- Landis & Staefa
- Otis Elevator
- Select Energy
- Simplex
- Sprague Energy

and the many Silver Sponsors ($1,000 each):

- DiGiorgio Associates, Inc.
- Duct & Vent Cleaning of America, Inc.
- Environmental Risk Limited
- Envirotech
- Grainger
- Graybar
- Hilti, Inc.
- National Electrical Testing & Service, Inc.
- Northeast Door Corp.
- Providence-Southern
- Russ Electric
- Stanley Magic Door Corp.
- Technology in Medicine, Inc.
- Thyssen Elevator
- Waste Management

NEHES Dues Won’t Change

NEHES board members have voted to keep annual dues at $25, a 10-year-old rate. Dues notices will go out in January.

Board members at the NEHES annual meeting also approved a bylaws change extending the amount of time for collection of delinquent dues, according to Mark Cappello, Steering and By-laws Committee co-chair.

Memberships delinquent beyond the extended deadline of April 1, 1998 will be dropped.
Chapter in the Spotlight

Middlemac Engineers
Society Works to Broaden Membership Base

The 17 members of Massachusetts' Middlemac Engineers Society have expanded membership recruiting to include managers of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

“They are becoming accredited the same as hospitals are,” said Charles Feeney, Middlemac Engineers Society president and Director of Engineering at Lawrence Memorial Hospital (Medford).

“We have a lot to offer them, and they have a lot to offer us. We're putting in transitional care units in our facilities, and these managers can bring expertise to us. Each member hopes to bring in one new member.”

Most members, Charles said, are Directors or Managers of Engineering or Maintenance. The chapter, called Middlemac because of its location in the middle of the Merrimack Valley region, has met since the early 1950s. Due to mergers, closings, and sales, the original membership of 20-25 institutions is now down to 10.

Members gather monthly at each other's facilities, and dues aren't charged. Twice a year, selected vendors present an educational program.

Charles joined the chapter 12 years ago, and NEHES, 10 years ago. “I hoped to use the chapter as a resource for information, a chance to meet my peers. This group is community-hospital-based. You can find someone else with the same problems, instead of reinventing the wheel. We've also been able to join together to get bargains on service contracts and purchasing.”

Seminar Speakers Help

Fall Seminar 1997 brought together 70 engineers, 26 spouses, 65 vendors, and some of the most inspirational speakers attendees say they have ever heard.

Most well received — but with very different messages — were Gary Yamamoto, motivational speaker; William Kreykes, president and CEO of Lifespan; and ASHE President Joe Howard.

Joe talked about keeping healthcare organizations strong:
- Keep your organization slim and trim.
- Don't let staffing exceed what is necessary.
- Constantly try to perform tasks more efficiently.
- Make staff more efficient with training, coaching, and empowerment.
- Spend the budget as if it were your own money.
- Set and achieve meaningful goals.
- Know your customers; satisfy their needs.
- Continually let the organization know the value you provide. Tell your management what a great job you are doing before the 're-engineering' consultant comes.

Gary Yamamoto helped members understand resistance to change, motivating others, and developing new visions — personally, professionally, and for their organization.

William Kreykes stepped back "20 years in time" when he left the mid-West and its well-developed system of healthcare networks to establish Lifespan. "He gave us a picture of where healthcare is going in the future," Ken Soschia, South County Hospital (Wakefield), said.

Co-chairs were Jim Gilmore, Newport Hospital, and Bob Okerholm, St. Elizabeth Home (Providence). Ken handled program; Ed Rudgegar, registration; and Peter Graft, golf. "Fall Seminar was a culmination of our chapter's first year in re-existence," Jim said. "Our members all played a very supportive and active role."

Ninety-two golfers played in the tournament.

Jeff Thomas (left) and Robert Lord attend as many NEHES seminars as they can.

Teleconferencing NEHES style — Don Garrison takes Joe Mona's Membership Committee report by telephone.

“Perfect” is how members and vendors who golfed found the Newport Country Club setting.

Bob Okerholm was a co-chair of the Fall Seminar committee.

Jim Gilmore (left), Seminar co-chair, greets ASHE President Joe Howard.
Bob LeBlanc of Rutland, VT
Chapter Member Fills Officer Vacancy on Short Notice

As often happens, NEHES members can be counted on to fill unexpected officer vacancies in the Society or in their chapter.
That happened last year when the Vermont Health Care Engineering Society found itself without a secretary and treasurer after Lindsay Carroll took a job in West Virginia. When officers asked Bob LeBlanc to fill the slot and go through the chairs to president, he agreed.
"On very short notice, Bob took over the position and has done an excellent job," said Dick Harris, newly-elected VHES chair and Director of Facilities at North Country Hospital (Newport).

Bob LeBlanc

Jack McCarthy of Connecticut Engineer of the Year Led Chapter Growth

When the Connecticut Hospital Engineers Society needed revitalizing, Jack McCarthy "stepped up to the plate." "Jack took the presidency, got the bylaws re-organized to open up membership to new entities, and did a bang-up job," said CHES president Steve Carbery, Director of Facilities Management at Greenwich Hospital. "Of all the nominations we received, Jack's stood out."

Those efforts have earned Jack the group's Engineer of the Year award — only the second time CHES has given such an award.

Now the Project Manager and Engineering Consultant for the Hospital for Special Care (New Britain), Jack joined the 200-bed facility six years ago. Before beginning a 25-year career in health care, he worked in manufacturing and at the Wilmingtom (DE) Medical Center.

He downplays his efforts for CHES. "The whole rejuvenation started in 1996 with the effort we put into running the Fall Seminar. We have a very good core of volunteers."

He joined CHES and NEHES "for the networking, for the basic information that goes back and forth. You can trade data, get to know people on a personal basis. The more senior members in particular are very helpful."

Jack and his wife, Geri, live in Portland, CT. They have five children and eight grandchildren, and enjoy sailing.

Mary Lou Crowley to Retire from NEHES Work

When Mary Lou Crowley started helping her husband, John, with some of the volunteer work he did for NEHES back in 1974, she never dreamed that her association with the Society would go on for more than 20 years.

As the NEHES executive secretary for 10 of those years, Mary Lou has been the "anchor" and the "backbone" holding the Society together administratively.

Her job has included keeping membership records, preparing lists, labels, statistics, and reports; mailings, filing and maintaining historical documents, and attending board meetings.

She has done all this in her "free" time. Now, however, her job at Saints Memorial Medical Center (Lowell, MA) is more demanding, and she can't attend every NEHES meeting. Reluctantly, she will leave her NEHES job at the end of the year, a decision just as reluctantly accepted by the Society.

"She was a huge help to me during my tenure as president," said Mark Cappello, Director of Engineering, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (Bennington).

"She really knows the NEHES business inside and out," said Kurt Peterson, Construction Project Manager, Cooley Dickinson Hospital (Northampton, MA).

"She has always been willing and able to provide any level of support to several generations of board members," said Mark English, Director of Engineering, Hartford (CT) Hospital.

"She has provided the backbone to hold the organization up," added Tom Whittaker, NEHES treasurer, of Glastonbury, CT.

Mary Lou returned the compliments. "I've really enjoyed the NEHES work very much, and I've enjoyed meeting the people."

Joan Harrington to Take Over as Executive Secretary

Joan Harrington, an administrative assistant at New England Medical Center (Boston), officially begins work as the new NEHES Executive Secretary January 1.

Joan may be reached by phone, (617) 636-5253, or by fax (617) 636-8118. "She has lots of enthusiasm and the desire to help the Society," said Kurt Peterson, NEHES president-elect.
Visit the NEHES Web Site

Thanks to Steve Cutter, chairman of the NEHES Education Committee, the NEHES web site is an ever-developing reality.
Steve, Director of Engineering Services at Cheshire Medical Center (Keene, NH), has spent many volunteer hours creating the NEHES web site and home page, available at www.nehes.org, and is always working on further site enhancements. The site, he said, is "devoted to the promotion and mutual exchange of technical assistance, ideas, and experiences."

www.nehes.org

Plan Ahead and Be There, Too!
Fall Seminar 1998 to Take NEHES Members to Bermuda

Vendors, members, and educational presenters are making plans to participate in NEHES' first offshore Fall Seminar.

Fall Seminar 1998 will travel to Marriott's Castle Harbour resort in Bermuda November 8-12, 1998. It's the New Hampshire Society of Healthcare Engineers' turn to plan Fall Seminar and the group wanted to do "something different."

If they could keep the costs of Fall Seminar down, they reasoned, members could substitute an approximately 90-minute flight from Boston for a long car trip that many make to NEHES meetings.

And, to make the journey really worthwhile, the planners picked a five-star resort with ocean beaches, three pools, gourmet restaurants, a championship 18-hole golf course, and water sports.

"We have seen a huge vendor response," said Tom Humphrey, Director of Engineering at Monadnock Hospital (Peterborough). "What we really need now is excellent engineer participation. Everyone needs to talk to a colleague or friend, to make sure we're there."

To help members plan ahead, he listed Seminar costs:
- Plane fare: approximately $300 per person (as of September, 1997 - subject to change). Organizers will negotiate with airlines for the best rate and hope NEHES can subsidize part of the cost.
- Accommodations: $121 per night plus taxes and gratuities. Members will receive this reduced room rate up to three days before Fall Seminar and for seven days after the meeting ends.
- Seminar registration and two meals per day: $130 total.
- Golf tournament: $125 per person with cart.
- Spouses fees: activities and two meals per day, $200.

Steve Cutter, Director of Engineering Services at Cheshire Medical Center (Keene), is planning educational programs.

Registration materials will be mailed in January. Deposits and commitments must be made by early spring. Anyone not receiving information should call Mike Buxton, Healthsouth Rehab (Concord), (603) 226-9800.

Maine Engineers are Planning Spring Seminar

Spring Seminar, one of the two most important annual educational seminars for all members, will be held in March or April in as central a location as possible.

Jeff Thomas, president of the Maine Hospital Engineers Society, and his chapter are planning the one-day Seminar. It will not be held in conjunction with NEHA.

Watch mailings and future issues of the newsletter for more information.

Student Wins Scholarship

Jason Soares, a University of Rhode Island senior majoring in chemical engineering, received a $2,000 NEHES scholarship at Fall Seminar from members of the RIHES scholarship committee.