

# Sanitarian

February, 1981

# newsletter



## New President

A new package of insurance benefits is the primary goal of the new president of WVAS, but an important secondary goal is that legislation sponsored by WVAS be approved this year.

Paul Saunders, R.S., President, WVAS, says he is optimistic that WVAS sponsored legislation will go through the West Virginia legislature this year if each sanitarian speaks personally with his legislative representative. "I can support all of the bills we are introducing before the legislature this year," says Saunders.

"I would like to see an insurance package for sanitarians for eye, and particularly, dental coverage offered at the county level," added Mr. Saunders. He explained that sanitarians need this insurance for two basic reasons; namely, (1) to compensate for medical services not presently

covered on the existing health insurance plans offered to sanitarians, and, (2) to compete for future candidates (for sanitarian positions) we might otherwise not have.

In addition, President Saunders believes that one of the most important needs in environmental health is a West Virginia "handbook of operations" for registered sanitarians in the state. "Especially in the smaller counties in this state," he said, "a guide of operations outside the Training Center is needed." Saunders explained that often new sanitarians in small counties must function as sanitarians for months without the benefit of the Training Center (which holds class twice a year) or on-the-job-training (available in larger counties). A manual of operations could help bridge this gap.



Paul Saunders



## Pickett Resigns

George Pickett

The man who worked some minor miracles for West Virginia sanitarians has resigned as State Health Director. George Pickett, M.D., M.P.H., will be leaving West Virginia for a teaching position created for him at the University of Alabama.

Pickett, generally known best for his sagacious manner, quickly became a friend of environmental health and the sanitarian when he assumed his position as State Health Director four years ago. He contributed to the following accomplishments of sanitarians during his term:

-Sanitarians revised Compensation Plan under Civil Service. This resulted in increased salary levels and more lateral and upper mobility on the job ladder.

-Created the Environmental Health Task Force and Local/State Liason Committee to improve communication between the state and local level and to expedite the delivery of environmental health services.

-Supported the passage of the Sanitarian Registration Act during a year of sunset legislation.

-Recognized the sanitarian as an integral part of the public health team.

## Task Force

After an intense course of study, the Environmental Health Services Review Task Force compiled a comprehensive report complete with an implementation strategy designed to improve the delivery of local sanitation and environmental health services throughout West Virginia. The Task Force believes that the recommendations contained in the report are practical, workable and have the potential to solve many long standing problems. The Task Force deemed flexibility of organization of prime importance and promises that most of the recommendations for change incorporate the necessary flexibility and can be accomplished with minimal disruption. Moreover, the group believes that this report accurately reflects the concerns of the local health departments and that the recommendations contained in the report have the support of most local sanitarians.

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Task Force finds nothing inherently wrong with the present organizational structure of the Office of Environmental Health Services. Indeed, with relative minor modifications, it is believed that the present structure can be an effective vehicle for delivery of services.
2. The Task Force believes that problems should be solved as close to the source as possible. Local problems should be solved, where possible, at

the local level. If assistance is needed, or if the problem transcends local boundaries, then District or State involvement should be sought.

3. The Task Force notes that there is a long standing schism within various units of Environmental Health Services, particularly state/local and engineer/sanitarian conflicts which, in some cases, have severely limited effectiveness. This has been partly due to individual personalities, poor communications and differing perceptions of roles and responsibilities.
4. The Task Force considers training to be a major weakness at all levels; state, district and local. Virtually every member of the group identified training as a major weakness and recommended increased emphasis.
5. The Task Force notes that lack of staff continuity at all levels is a major problem. Inability to retain or replace key personnel often overloads the remaining staff and creates program, service and leadership vacuums.
6. The Task Force notes that long range planning at all levels is virtually nonexistent. Shorter range (annual) program planning is more prevalent but is haphazard and primarily numbers oriented.
7. The Task Force recommends that the Office of Environmental Health

(Continued on page 4)

# How to be a Success

by Larry Yochum

Note: The following article is reprinted from *West Virginia Alumni Magazine*, Fall 1980, pp. 26-27.

Over the decades when you have been growing up—the sixties and seventies—America has witnessed a period of booming economic growth. I say this despite the uncertain economic picture we now face. Most people have come to expect as rights some things that in the past we had only hoped for. Such things as income security, quality health care, and support in old age. Today these are considered to be entitlements. Everyone expects to reach these goals.

Along the way, we have come to share expectations. Some are:

—We want rising incomes and other economic gains that come from real growth.

—We expect healthier and more enjoyable surroundings. Cleaner air, purer water, preservation of the natural environment. We expect these things along with economic gains.

—We expect an improving quality of life in personal terms. We want fulfillment with less hassle.

—We expect institutions—whether they be business, government, universities or the family—to be more responsive to our individual needs and desires.

—We want to participate in institutional decisions that affect us. We want to be communicated with honestly and openly, to be treated fairly, and have our interests fully considered.

Certainly these are reasonable expectations and to be desired. I hope you all find them in your future.

I am going to use the word “success” often in the next few minutes. It’s important to define success. I hope you won’t be surprised to learn that I can’t define success for you. Each of you must develop your own definition. Clearly, success means different things to different people. To some of you, it may mean making money. To others, peace of mind. To others, recognition. To others, security. To others, the ability to contribute. To others, the ability to effect change.

Success is what you say it is. I hope, however, that what I’m about to say will help no matter what definition you apply to success. I don’t presume to know the formula that will guarantee to move swift toward accomplishing your goals.

In my career, I have observed some characteristics of successful people and—on the opposite side of the coin—some characteristics of unsuccessful people. While this list is certainly no original with me, I hope it will be helpful to you. Specifically, I am talking about how to be a success, how to be productive in solving the kinds of problems that people encounter. That’s where the excitement, fun, and fulfillment come in.

Let me start with the ability to accept bad news. I believe that a successful person must be able to accept bad news. If he can’t handle bad news, a person will soon find that he isn’t hearing any—and the negative developments will never come to his attention. There is no way a person can contribute to a decision if he doesn’t know where the problems exist. Put another way, if you behave in such a way as to shut off unfavorable information, correct decisions are almost impossible to reach.

Next, the ability to develop a tolerance for bad news. How do you do that? That’s tougher to explain. The best I can offer is that you simply must train yourself to create an atmosphere where unfavorable news is acceptable. For openers, you don’t behead the messenger when he brings you word of an unfortunate development.

Another—the ability to avoid creating an atmosphere fraught with fear or anger. People who are frightened or angry don’t function effectively. There is no room for fear and anger in a wholesome—and therefore successful—environment. Nothing is accomplished through fear or anger.

Some more—the ability to listen. It’s a recognized truth that you’re not learning anything when your mouth is open. By listening, I don’t just mean that you hear the words being spoken. You need to get behind the words and ask: What is he really trying to tell me? Why is he telling me this? What can I do to make sure we make the right decision based on this information?

The ability to level with others. Be clear. Be concise. And, above all, be straight. Get rid of ambiguity. Tell it like it is. Make sure that you are understood. Ask for the message to be repeated. Get feedback. In this way, you can eliminate a lot of uncertainty.

Just a couple more. The ability to do what you say you will do. Make good on promises. There isn’t a person in this audience who hasn’t had the unhappy experience of someone not doing what he said he would do. When people rely on you, you cannot afford to disappoint them. If you women honorees will forgive me, I urge all of you to be men of your word.

The ability to recognize differences among people. Treat everyone equally, but remember that doesn’t necessarily mean that you treat everybody the same. People react to different stimuli. Know this and act accordingly.

What I’ve suggested so far is that you incorporate in your life the following abilities: accept bad news, create a tolerance for it, avoid anger and fear, listen, be straight in your dealings with others, make good on your promises, recognize individual differences among people.

(Continued on page 3)

# Nuisance Complaints Revisited

David Brissell, J.D., Attorney General’s Office, has presented the following legal ramifications of nuisance complaints:

1. Confidentiality of the person making the complaint:
  - a. Before making the investigation, take reasonable precautions to protect the identity of the complainant. Once the case goes to court, the confidentiality of the complainant can no longer be secured. A person has the right to confront his accuser.
  - b. Once the person has been put under notice, whether it be legal or administrative action, confidentiality ends. This is also true of an oral order.
  - c. Anonymous complaints are not good for much; can’t show reasons to make investigations.
  - d. Persons making a complaint are not guaranteed confidentiality, although some sanitarians are telling the person that their name won’t be revealed.
2. It is difficult to document a complaint unless there is a written record of such complaint. This can be done by having the complainant sign a complaint card, by sending a written signed letter or, if by telephone, by writing down the nature of the complaint, time, date, and name of person receiving the complaint call.
3. Private property—Probable cause permits the sanitarian to enter onto private property to investigate a complaint. If refused entrance, the sanitarian can obtain a search warrant for the complaint investigation.
4. Producing evidence against self—Doesn’t mean that a person can’t have his sewer system dyed to detect evidence of illegal sewage disposal. A search warrant can be obtained to dye a sewer system, but one must have a good reason for such action.
5. Once the system is dyed, then it is up to the courts to determine if evidence is admissible in court.
6. Suits—To obtain a search warrant, one needs probable cause. You are not required to find what you are searching for. Suits against sanitarians under such conditions are very unlikely.
7. If you have written authorization from the health officer to act in his behalf, then a copy of such authorization should be kept in the files.
8. State relayed complaints—Local sanitarians can proceed with the

(Continued on page 4)

## New State H. D. Head Named

Dr. Luther Hansbarger, medical director of the Monroe County Health Center, was appointed as state health department director by Gov. Jay Rockefeller earlier this month.

The appointment, effective February 2, will fill the vacancy caused by Dr. George Pickett's resignation last November.

Hansbarger, a Welch native, is a resident of Gap Mills in Monroe County. Prior to his present position, Hansbarger worked a National Health Service Corps family practice physician in Monroe County from 1972 to 1977.

He also held the posts of director of ambulatory pediatrics and director of the pediatric nurse clinician program at Metropolitan General Hospital in Cleveland.

Hansbarger was also associate professor of community medicine and pediatrics at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Hansbarger also served six years as a Navy doctor, filling the position of head of the pediatric division of the Portsmouth, New Haven Naval Hospital and director of the newborn service at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

Dr. Hansbarger is a graduate of Duke University and the Medical College of Virginia.

## Leg. Update

After much deliberation by the WVAS legislative committee, the following environmental health bills will be presented before the West Virginia Legislature this term:

1. Food Bill.  
Sponsors—Senator Nelson, Cabell County and Delegate Weese, Mason County.  
Contact Howard Pyle, Cabell-Huntington Health Department for further information.
2. Milk Bill.  
Sponsors—Senator Palumbo and Delegate Knight, Kanawha County.  
Contact Charles Saber and Bob Allen, Kanawha County Health Department for further information.
3. House Condemnation Bill.  
Sponsors—Senator Lacy Wright

Contact John Vandell, McDowell County Health Department or Jim Woodford, Monongalia County Health Department for further information.

4. Moratorium Bill (dealing with nuisances).  
Sponsor—Senator William Moreland, Monongalia County.  
Contact Jim Woodford, Monongalia County Health Department for further information.
5. Rabies Bills.  
Sponsors—Orton Jones, Senator and Robert Harmon, Delegate.  
Contact Norman Moore, Mineral County Health Department or Dr. Seekford, Kanawha County Health Department for further information.

## Success . . .

(Continued from page 2)

Finally—and in my book, the most important ability—learn how to make decisions. Based on your experiences so far, you already know how matters can be discussed and discussed and discussed some more. At the end, all too often, decisions remain unmade.

Making decisions is what you are supposed to do. Don't shy away from decisions. Gather evidence, sift through the alternatives, make up your mind, and carry it out. Learn how to decide.

Now I don't mean to pretend that this list is all-inclusive. But these are some of the principles embraced by successful people I have known. As you move along in life, I suggest that you try them. But the greatest commandment of all is—work hard. That's the surest ticket to success.

I'd like to leave with you a thought expressed by historian Barbara Tuchman. She once wrote that the human element always foils the doomsayers and always manages to generate a coping mechanism for mankind's problems.

## Every Sanitarian in the State Should Know That

by Robert Parkens, R.S.

After an abbreviated absence from the document you are holding in your hand I have chosen reluctantly to provide a column in this newsletter to my fellow sanitarians. Speaking of beginnings is somewhere between doubtful and nebulous, but I will say that this and future columns will apply to the West Virginia sanitarian and his line of work, will be positive and negative, no doubt, but at least, it will be provocative. Let's begin:

—Every R.S. in the state needs more training in toxicology, ranging from heavy metals found in their own localities which present potential or real problems to knowing the real effects of the Love Canal incident—both to human health and to the political environment.

—Every R.S. in the state should know that the West Virginia Public Health Association Board of Directors in November 1980 voted to request that Gov. Rockefeller request of the legislature an increase in local health service budgets from the present \$3.4 million over the next four years to \$7.7 million. The proposal, unanimously approved, is intended to provide adequate sanitarian, nursing and administrative capabilities to county health departments, in whatever form necessary, to simply carry out already West Virginia Code-mandated services and regulatory activities. The effort is to

counter-balance the 30 years of benign neglect of the legislature of the local health delivery system in West Virginia, folks.

—Every R. S. in the state should know that our state environmental health program is not up to snuff compared to adjoining states, but is progressing nicely at the county level, as far as I can surmise. Much can be said on that topic, but I will simply summarize with the following statements: George Pickett accomplished some minor miracles for sanitarians before his untimely departure; especially with pay raises and promotion of professionalism. Less is more (California Governor Jerry Brown's philosophy) has shown itself to be a truism generally at the state environmental health level; and the amount and quality of issues being introduced for legislation this year regarding environmental health, shows a very healthy respect for the need for an improved environmental health program in West Virginia.

—Every R.S. in the state should know that the West Virginia Public Health Association Board of Directors is well represented by the sanitarians section who promote the best interests of sanitarians, and that all of us should be a member or that organization. The sanitarians on the Board of Directors include Jim Woodford (President-Elect, WVPHA, 1983), Jim Sheets (Board Member), Ron Forren

(Board Member), Earl Kurre (WVPHA Past President), Paul Saunders (Section Chairman), and myself (WVPHA President-Elect, 1981). The Board is also comprised of county health officers who have the interests of sanitarians at heart. Other Board Members represent the various sectional and state and other interests of the department. One of the priorities of the group is to include more behavioral health membership. I support that strategy. The group is sponsoring legislation for public and environmental health issues this year, as in the past, and is now a shining light for public health in the state.

—Every R. S. in the state should know that the West Virginia Public Health Officers Association, in addition to WVPHA, has sent letters to Gov. Rockefeller offering assistance in selecting the next State Director of Health. These two groups have responded in a time of need, and their assistance is well-heeled in terms of the needs of public health in West Virginia.

—Every R. S. in the state should know that if you have public water supplies that are not flouridated, that you and your health officer and your county board of health have not done your jobs well in the name of public health. Many supplies, unfortunately, have not been flouridated as a result of apathy or strung-out political

(Continued on page 4)

**Task Force. . .**

(Continued from page 1)

Services remain together as a unit. The group strongly believes that services provided by the engineering, sanitation, laboratory and other technical programs are so closely interrelated that administrative separation would be counterproductive.

8. The Task Force recommends the following organization structure for the Office of Environmental Health Services:
9. The Task Force recommends that a *Manual of Recommended Procedures* be developed for use by all Environmental Health Services personnel.
10. The Task Force strongly recommends that a career development program be initiated and aimed at recruiting, training and retaining qualified personnel who are field and people oriented.
11. District personnel should be less specialized, where possible, and have some knowledge of all EHS fields.
12. Regular staff meetings should be mandated on both inter and intra program levels.
13. The use of committees for continuing review and recommendations should be continued and expanded.
14. A complaint clearinghouse should be established to assure proper referral and follow-ups.
15. A detailed assessment of state/local service needs and capabilities should be made with particular emphasis placed upon local needs.
16. The position of Director, Environmental Health Services, should be filled as soon as possible.
17. General Orientation Classes (both inter and cross discipline) should be provided for all Environmental Health Services personnel.

**Every R. S. . .**

(Continued from page 3)

philosophies. In most localities, as we found here in Spencer, the public simply did not know that its water was not flouridated, and told us to our surprise! As a sanitarian, propose this matter to your health officer and board of health if you have even a single supply in your county that is not flouridated. If you need assistance, call me and I will provide the story from eventful beginning to successful end if you confront opposition. Flouridate your water supplies for the Children.

—Every R. S. in the state will be provided with the opportunity of reading on the front page of what you are holding in your hand a story about our current WVAS President, Paul Saunders, R.S. Jackson County Health Department (you didn't think that would ever happen again, did you?). Paul and I went to school together in the 1960's, and in regard to that fact (another 60's product), Paul is a continuing positive product on behalf of WVAS. Paul is what I characterize as a "decent human being;" my definition of a person who represents well the first qualification of a West Virginia sanitarian. We are lucky to have Paul as president of

**Interstate Seminar Set**

Maryland hosts the Interstate Environmental Health Seminar this year, August 10-13, 1981, on the Westminster College campus at Western, Maryland. In addition to topical subjects in environmental health, the conference offers social activities which will include an evening crab feast.

Lodging costs promise to be reasonable: \$13.00 to \$14.00 per day—breakfast and lunch included! The registration fee is \$30.00. More detailed information on the seminar site, program and registration specifics will be distributed to local health departments at a later date.

**Complaints . . .**

(Continued from page 2)

complaint investigation since there is a written record of the complaint being received. It may be advisable to inform the complainant that it may not be possible to keep his name confidential.

9. Freedom of Information Act—Only exempts certain areas; for example, medical files, personnel files, trade secrets; other files are open for inspection.
  - a. A person doesn't have to tell why he wants to look in the files;
  - b. A request for looking in the files must be in writing and answered in five days;
  - c. Health departments can charge a reasonable fee for copying information from the files, but can only charge for what has been copied.
  - d. The applicant can be required to be specific in the type and amount of information requested.
  - e. Keep in mind that the health department cannot arbitrarily deny the request for information.

WVAS. Bob Allen (Kanawa-Chas. H.D.) and Sam Argento (Nicholas Co. H.D.) follow in similar veins.

Moving right along, then, in the future in this column you will be presented with and/or placated up front with ideas that are reasoned and ambient. As any regular, continuing chore, you will be faced with routine and redundant ideas. In the future, ideas to be explored will include:

—I don't know what the health effects are for this violation or your regulations (striking fear in the heart of sanitarians).

—Explain the toxicological effects of heavy metals to me that I have just ingested in your FDA approved candy, your USDA-SCS approved sewage sludge plants, or my health department approved water supply?

—And last but not least, "Will this (head in the septic tank) work when finished?"

To make sure that happens right off the bat, I will close this initial column with the words that hang on an inscribed plaque within a white pine wooden frame on a wall in my office in our new one-half million dollar health center:

"Regulate unto others  
As you would have them  
Regulate unto you."

Thank You.

**Tid Bits**

—Randy Moodispaugh, R.S., Harrison-Clarksburg Health Department, recently underwent two coronary by-pass operations at the Cleveland Clinic. He plans to return to work within two weeks. That's Incredible!

—Welcome back, Haywood Phillips! Mr. Phillips, all around sanitarian, is back on the force—this time in Harrison County.

—Larry Warner, Super Sanitarian, is off to the wild blue yonder. Big "Lare" will be graduating from OTS, USAF shortly.

—Allen Niederberger, R.S., formerly in Calhoun County, is now employed with DNR.

—Annie Williams, R.S., formerly with Monongalia and Taylor Counties, has resigned to pursue other interests.

—WELCOME, NEW SANITARIANS:  
Bruce Jenkins, Arthur Adams—Preston County Health Department.  
Kim Hagedorn—Upshur County Health Department  
Tim Fleming—Monongalia County Health Department

—JUST A REMINDER: WVAS membership dues of \$10.00 are due. Please remit to Treasurer, WVAS, Lee Thompson, Hardy County Health Department.

—There will be a Mid-Year meeting this spring. WVAS Executive Council is coordinating with the State Health Department for subject material and specific dates. More information will be submitted to local departments at a later date.

**Candidates Sought**

The Awards and Nominating Committees of the West Virginia Association of Sanitarians are again seeking worthy candidates upon whom to impart recognition for a job well done and/or to impose responsibility for a job in need of doing well.

The Awards Committee, headed by Norman Moore, R.S., and Lee Thompson, R.S., is accepting nominations for Special Awards in the area of environmental health. Anyone who has knowledge of a comrade or person who has made an outstanding contribution in this field is urged to write a brief resume of the nominee's contribution and submit it to the Awards Committee. Presentation of awards will be made at the 1981 State Health Conference.

The positions of Vice President and Board Member will be vacated at the end of this term. Nominations for these positions are now being accepted by the Nominating Committee of WVAS—Paul Saunders, Sam Argento and Bob Allen. Names of nominees will be posted in the next edition of WVAS Newsletter.