



Sanitarian newsletter

August 1981

Sanitation As A Way Of Life by Richard Wallace

In a day when the average worker is only concerned about putting in his twenty years and then retiring, it is remarkable to consider that one of our fellow sanitarians has remained on the job for the past 42 years. John B. Wallace, a Sanitarian and Acting Administrator of the Marshall County Health Department, began his career as a sanitarian in May 1940.

Wallace was born, raised and schooled in Morgantown, WV. He was graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from West Virginia University in May 1933. Upon graduation, John worked as a "teller" at the First National Bank in Morgantown. After seven years of "inside work," he decided he wanted something that offered more freedom. His brother-in-law, Herbert Martin, a milk sanitarian with the Monongalia County Health Department, suggested that Wallace apply for a position with the WV State Health Department.

John applied. He was interviewed by J. Burchinal "Big Daddy" Baker. He was hired at the starting salary of \$125 per month.

Wallace recalls that the Sanitarian Training School, under the direction of Dr.



John Wallace, R.S.

E. G. McGovern and Gilbert Kelso, Chemist, was held in Morgantown. Training included the general classroom work and lectures; however, more emphasis was placed on "field experience" than present day training classes emphasize. Also, Wallace remembers that health officers, nurses and sanitarians were collectively involved in training experiences. They worked closely together in finding solutions to public health problems and became knowledgeable of each other's roles in dealing with problems.

Upon completion of training, John received his first assignment to the Marion County Health Department. He replaced E. J. Powell who was leaving to pursue a Master's Degree. His stay in Marion County was brief—only about a month. He was transferred to the Wetzel-Tyler Health Department where he worked the next three years. His assignment in Wetzel-

Tyler was general sanitation; however, the milk sanitation program, consisting of 2 plants and 54 dairies, consumed most of his time.

Unlike today's more modern dairies, with their bulk tanks and cleaning-in-place milking systems, dairies at that time featured can milk. Each can had to be sampled by the Sanitarian and the samples delivered to the laboratory in Charleston.

In November 1943, John moved his family to Moundsville to fill a vacancy at the Marshall County Health Department.

In the area of food sanitation, the concept of food handlers training was being promoted across the state. Wallace and Glen Fortney journeyed to Columbus, Ohio, to attend one of the first training sessions for health officials in food handler training techniques. The class was conducted by a representative of the Texas State Health Department. Unlike the present system of food handler training, State Personnel conducted food handler training sessions with the County Sanitarian making the "necessary arrangements" within his county. Eugene Powell, Ed Carroll and "Woody" Marshall were the State Sanitarians in charge of this program.

Rapid changes in public health were taking place which demanded an ever increasing portion of a sanitarian's time: "Out houses" and hand pump water wells were being replaced with septic tanks and "indoor plumbing."

The horse-drawn garbage wagon was being replaced with covered trucks and open dumps were giving way to incinerators and land fills. The large milk sanitation program in Marshall County also kept John busy. Although only one plant,

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New Director Sets Priorities

Robert Wheeler, Director, Office of Environmental Health Services, told West Virginia Sanitarians at the Mid-Year Meeting held in May at Cedar Lakes that Environmental management is the first priority in improving public health. He stressed that Sanitarians are the "front lines, the image-makers, all things at all times—technicians, witnesses, decision-makers." Wheeler listed the following among his immediate goals:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Environmental Health Services Task Force Report.
2. Devise techniques and procedural methods in programs. This includes the development of procedural manuals.
3. Continue the state/local liason group. His aim is to promote improved communications through the on-going review of obstacles.
4. Carry out selected pilot programs.

The Director offered his willingness to work with local sanitarians by revealing that he plans to visit each county health department in the very near future to discuss, evaluate and review problem areas and offer possible solutions.

Election Of Officers

The election of officers to the Executive Council of WVAS will be conducted at 3 o'clock p.m. during the Annual Business Meeting at the West Virginia Public Health Association Conference on Wednesday, September 16, 1981.

Candidates for Vice President are Richard Wallace, R.S., Marshall County Health Department, and Stan Mills, R.S., Cabell-Huntington Health Department.

John Cooper, R.S., Jefferson County Health Department, and Russ Rader, Engineer, Region III, are running for the position of Member-at-Large.

The election time was changed from 1:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to allow more time for distant travelers and those late in paying their 1981 WVAS membership a "last chance" to get themselves together before the election. Only "paid up" members are eligible to vote.

Rosencrance Commended

James Rosencrance, Chief Chemist, Environmental Health Services Laboratory, WV State Health Department, received a special letter of commendation from the American Public Health Association, American Water Works Association and the Water Pollution Control Federation for his significant contribution to the preparation of the 15th Edition of *Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater*.

This volume was praised by the sponsoring organizations as "the finest and most" (Continued on page 4)

Editorial Comment

Every Sanitarian Should Know That . .

HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION—A CHALLENGE TO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

by Robert Parkins, R.S.

The above headline was the theme of this year's conference of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), held in Phoenix, June 26-July 2, 1981.

Those words, though, should mean more to West Virginia Sanitarians than just being a theme title or a headline for a column. The theme reflects the essence of our field and our responsibility for promoting human health and environmental quality.

With foregone knowledge, I am going to parrot some recent words on the above topic by Amer El-Ahraf, president of NEHA. In doing so, we Sanitarians may want to bear in mind that we are, in 1981, at the 100 year point in public health. A preview of our next 100 years may be evidenced.

As we were reminded at the Mid-Year Meeting by our new Environmental Health Services Director, Bob Wheeler, our history of environmental control has been one of basic disease prevention through sanitation measures and complementary immunization.

The future of environmental health, however, will involve considerably more sophisticated information and technical skills, ranging from chemical technology to philosophical spheres of influence for preserving wellness. More broadly, it must include by definition—as defined by the World Health Organization—the words "physical, mental, social and environmental well-being."

In order to understand the philosophical, technological and political challenges to the future of environmental health, we must examine them in the context of philosophical changes in attitude that have

developed following our first 100 years of public health in West Virginia as well as in the nation.

The chemical revolution in this country, and its toxicological impact on West Virginia Sanitarians, as alluded to in my last column in this newsletter, must be faced squarely. Hazardous wastes and their contamination of food, water and people will be the focus of responsible environmental health programs. The chemical and medical communities have led the way to date in technological advancements for both pollution and for treatment. It is time for environmental health technicians to fall in line. And, particularly in West Virginia, we haven't yet (in my opinion).

The environmental dangers of the future are rooted in the indiscriminate toxic waste disposal techniques of today and the impacts of countermeasures enforced by environmental health personnel.

An example of this "catch-up" story is evidenced by information I provided at a seminar at the University of Charleston entitled "Heavy Metals in Food, Water and Sewage Sludge Used For Agricultural Purposes." The essence of the information was that heavy metals are taken up by plants for food and this discovery is just now a field of study in this country. Simply put, we don't know the extent of heavy metal uptake by plants. Furthermore, very little is known what effect, if any, is had on human health when such a food source is utilized.

This demonstrates that traditional environmental health areas cannot escape the impact of the chemical revolution. Further evidence is the increase in water-borne diseases since 1970; chemical poisoning accounted for 12% of these outbreaks. Let us not forget ureaformaldehyde foam, a once popular insulating material, which

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Espirit De Corps

Esprit de corps, or camaraderie, is the life blood of any organization. It is what unites each member to the group. It has little to do with septic tank savoir faire or technical competence. Without it, we become a bunch of hairnet-happy septic-tank-crazy public servants. With it, we are anything we wish to be (in addition to the above): musicians, sports enthusiasts, wild 'n crazy guys, scholars, etc.—the list goes on and on.

As Sanitarians, we must often lead "double lives." Many of those we struggle with in the ongoing battle of protecting the public from itself rarely receive the chance to exercise being a "real" person among his/her peers. The result is often devastating: a sense of failure may result which could lead to leaving the profession or, worse yet, the development of an over-inflated ego which may result in further alienation of the public from its "guardians."

Of course, the answer is that strength is found in numbers! And what a better way to find strength in numbers than to congregate the forces for a psychological time-out and practice being a person again—eat, drink, laugh, get crazy, or whatever suits you (except sleep—it's the only thing that's impossible)—let your hair down—at a perfectly safe place (where no one back home knows you) with your own fellow Sanitarians. Where else but the West Virginia Public Health Conference, September 16, 17 and 18, 1981 at the Gateway Motel, Route 60, Barboursville, WV.

A well-balanced educational program with featured speakers on 100 years of public health in West Virginia as well as awards presentations and election of officers to WVAS will also be presented. There will be plenty of "shop talk" for sanitation addicts. Something for everyone! Don't miss it!

Freedom Of Information

In 1977 the West Virginia legislature passed a Freedom of Information Act that provided for full and complete disclosure of information regarding the "affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees." Certain items which will be discussed later in this article are expressly exempted from disclosure.

This article will discuss some of the provisions of the act as they might affect the sanitarian.

In general, the rule is that a record is available for viewing and copying by anyone with any interest, and the exception is a record that is not available. The custodian of official records, who will usually be the Health Officer or one designated by him, must furnish a reasonable opportunity to inspect and copy any public records, although the department can make reasonable rules to regulate inspection and copying. These rules might include the naming of the custodian of the records, where the work can be done, and the charge for copying.

When a charge for information or copying is received, the department must respond within five days, not including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, by doing one of three things.

The first of these is simply to produce the records for inspection or copying as requested. If it is impractical to produce the information immediately, the person making the request can be advised which and where the information can be inspected and copied. This is the second possible response, and might be given where the agency must search the files to locate the information requested or where the agency is only giving out part of the file. The third response is to deny the request, listing five written reasons for the denial. The Freedom of Information Act lists a number of types of information which are exempt from disclosure.

Some of these exemptions which might be applicable to the sanitarian include:

1. **Trade Secrets.** This information might include the composition of a food product or an innovative procedure to treat water or waste water. In these cases, the information given to the agency would not probably be public so as to be available to a competitor.
2. **Test question, scoring keys and the like;** for example, the Septic Tank Installer test, or Water or Sewage Treatment Plant Operators tests.
3. **Information of a Personal Nature.** Personal files or medical files are not subject to disclosure if public disclosure would create an unreasonable invasion of privacy, unless the public interest requires disclosure. This doesn't prevent an individual from inspecting and copying his own file.
4. **Records of Law Enforcement Agencies.** In the 1980 case of State vs.

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"100 Years" is Theme

"100 Years in Public Health" is the theme of the West Virginia Public Health Association Conference set for September 16, 17 and 18, 1981, at the Gateway Motel, Route 60, Barbersville, WV (just outside Huntington).

Featured speakers include Godfrey Hockbaum, Ph.D., Director of Health Education Section, University of North Carolina, who is a fore-front speaker on marketing public health in the 80's. Other topics include presentations on Heavy Metals and Chemical Dumps in their relation to the ever increasing problem of water pollution. On the lighter and more personal side is an account of the "History of WV Sanitarians" during this first 100 years of public health in West Virginia. Business meetings, elections and award presentations are also on the agenda.

A copy of the schedule has already been drawn up and it is expected that these will be mailed out shortly.

Every Sanitarian

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was implicated in a number of disease outbreaks resulting in a collection of physiological anomalies.

At the county health department level in West Virginia, many studies need to be done involving the total environmental health picture. A case in point involved the water supply in a city in Roane County this past year: Attention was drawn to a former waste disposal area where it was suspected that quantities of chromium, lead or other heavy metals were leaching out into a stream serving a city water supply. Collection of water samples quelled the fears of those involved in the study—they were negative. However, what course of action should the investigators have taken should they have been faced with positive results? And what long term environmental health problems would they have been expected to cope with?

It is generally agreed upon by medical personnel that high levels of sodium in the diet aggravates hypertension. When the Sanitarian staff at the Roane County Health Department leaned that Roane County has the third highest hypertension rate among its citizenry in the state, they looked to water supplies as a possible contributing factor. The results: a significant proportion of private water supplies sampled revealed very high sodium levels. Thus, the incidence of hypertension in Roane County may have an environmental basis.

Deficiencies of chemicals in the environment may also pose environmental problems. Roane County had also reported a very high incidence of dental decay. The problem: inadequate fluoride concentration in both public and private water supplies.

The list goes on and on. Can we close our eyes to the potential dangers havoeked by aerial spraying or herbicides? Should we become involved in community inquiries into fluoridation of drinking water supplies?

Summarily, while our Sanitarian staff could have only "kept their heads buried in

New Law May Help In Rabies Control

During the past legislative session, Article 20 of Chapter 19 of the *West Virginia Code* was amended to specifically require any person who owns or harbors a dog, which bites any other person, to confine and quarantine the dog for a period of fourteen days for rabies observation. This applies whether or not the dog is licensed. If the person controlling the dog fails to properly confine the animal, the humane officer, dog warden, or sheriff can

cause the animal to be placed in the custody and care of a licensed veterinarian at the owner's expense.

It appears that this law gives the Sanitarian a way to settle cases where the dog's "owner" is uncooperative. The sheriff, dog warden, or humane officer can be called upon to pick up the dog (probably with the Sanitarian's help). This law can be found in 19-20-9a of the *West Virginia Code*.

NEHA Awards WV

WV was recognized by the National Environmental Health Association as having received the greatest percentage of new NEHA members within its affiliate, WVAS, for the NEHA 1980-1981 membership drive.

the septic tank," we chose instead to focus on the "big picture"—to not only maintain food, water, sewage and other traditional programs, but also to deal effectively with the idea expressed in the headline of this column.

Incidentally, these "added" activities emphasizing the role of the environmental health program gained our program more "P-R" and political value than has most of our traditional environmental health programs (even though the latter must be emphasized adequately).

As El-Ahraf said recently, "Rather than re-trenchment, environmental health strategies for the 80's must emphasize the maintenance of the high level of community service and program expansion where needed."

That, I realize, is quite a challenge to the already over-worked, and in most cases, burned-out West Virginia Sanitarian. It is especially perplexing given the economic perplexities today—not to mention the lack of philosophical guidance for environmental health programs (generally). It is, though, a challenge which must be met in West Virginia Public Health during our next 100 years. With correct guidance and improved expertise, I believe, West Virginia Sanitarians can be "up" for the challenge.

The 1976 National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Act has given impetus to the basic mission and functions of environmental health. The flourishing of environmental protection agencies and legislation has resulted in an increased demand for environmental personnel and expansion of their functions. Yet, as with the broadened philosophy of health, many local and state programs have failed, or were not able to influence and take advantage of these changes. Furthermore, many have fallen victim to fragmentation of environmental administration. Against these odds, they face the need for expansion of services in an era of limitations. In West Virginia, we have landed smack in the middle of this dilemma. And county Sanitarians are now suffering the repercussions.

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Way of life

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Garvin's, was located within the county, the milk shed consisted of over 200 producer dairies spread over the tri-state area of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

It was not until the late 1950's that the county saw a "need" and hired another sanitarian to "help out." That man was Herman Robinson. Today, the staff has grown to four Sanitarian III's; each works an individual program area with John Wallace overseeing the department as a whole.

John is married to the former Mildred Cobun of Morgantown. They met while they were both employed at the First National Bank. Their 44 years of marriage has blessed them with three boys; namely, John, Jr., who is employed by the International Labor Organization and lives in Geneva, Switzerland; Richard, a Registered Sanitarian with the Marshall County Health Department; and James, a policeman with the city of Glen Dale. John and his wife have nine grandchildren.

John has always been active in community and professional affairs. He has been a member of the Moundsville Lions Club for 30 plus years, holding various offices, including President (1975) and Secretary-Treasurer (present). He is also involved in the Tri-State Sanitarian's Association and, of course, WVAS. During his children's growing years, he coached Little League Baseball, Youth Baseball and was an organizer of Cub Scouts as well as working with the Scouting programs in the town of Glen Dale.

When John finds time to relax, you can usually find him on the tennis court, still baffling his opponents with his high bobs and trick drop shots. He now prefers to engage in a game of doubles rather than singles, however.

When asked who the dominant figures in WV Public Health were over the last 42 years, John replied that he has met many fine individuals but few have "really" stood out in his mind as promoters and inspirers of Public Health. Among the few are "Big Daddy" Baker, Glen Fortney, Colonel "Bob" McCall, Jack Klem, Harry Gidley, Eddie Bright and John Millar.

It is good to know, with such a high turnover rate for sanitarians state-wide that we still have a few "old timers" who have dedicated themselves and most of their lives to the motto "Sanitation is a Way of Life."

Rosencrance

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authoritative work in the world in the area of analytical methods for water." Mr. Rosencrance was lauded as one of the "world's select experts" whose "dedicated and sincere contributions" aided *Standard Methods* in attaining and retaining this highest possible stature.

Standard Methods is used as a laboratory manual in water chemistry in this country. It has also been translated into Portuguese and is used in South America as well. Mr. Rosencrance wrote and evaluated the procedures for silver and assisted with the material for iron and manganese determinations.

Jim Rosencrance was born on the family farm at Huttonsville, West Virginia on March 31, 1924. He attended the public schools of Randolph County, including the one room Channell School with a pot-bellied stove, and graduated from Tygarts Valley High School at Mill Creek in May 1943. He was awarded a State Farmer's Degree by the State Department of Vocational Education for accomplishments in the field of agriculture.

In June of 1943, Jim was inducted into the U. S. Army. He completed medical basic training at Camp Barkley, Abilene, Texas, and was assigned to the First Cavalry Division Headquarters stationed in Brisbane, Australia. He saw active duty with the Division in battles of the Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, Admiralty Islands, Southern Philippines, Luzon, and was among the first troops to land in Tokyo, Japan, at the close of the War in the Pacific.

Jim enrolled at West Virginia in 1946 and was graduated with a bachelor's degree in pre-medicine and chemistry in 1950. Graduate studies were extended at West Virginia University and specialized study pursued in the field of sanitary chemistry at the Robert A. Taft Sanitary Engineering Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, and at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He is presently completing his Master of Science Degree requirements in Environmental Science at the graduate center of the University of Charleston.

Jim has completed 30 years of service with the state of West Virginia; the majority of that time with the State Department of Health. His present position with the State Health Department is that of Chief Chemist at the Environmental Health Services Laboratory in Charleston. However, Jim began his career with the Health Department as a local sanitarian in Logan County. He has served as a County Director for the Department of Welfare, part-time instructor of Chemistry at the Camden-Clark Hospital School of Nursing, head of the Municipal Waste Section, Water Resources Division, Department of Natural Resources, and for an interim period was the Administrative Director of the Charleston YMCA. He joined the State Health Department in 1957 as a Sanitary Chemist.

Jim Rosencrance is past president of the West Virginia Public Health Association, a member of the downtown Kiwanis Club, member of the Kiwanis Board of Directors,

New Editor Named

Ms. Nancy Haught, Registered Sanitarian, Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, has been named the editor of the "West Virginia Sanitarian Newsletter" effective September 1, 1981. Ms. Haught is filling the position vacated by editor Mary Chase who is resigning from that post to direct her energies to a pursuit in the study of law. Ms. Chase will continue her affiliation with the Monongalia County Health Department on a part-time basis while enrolled at the West Virginia University College of Law.

Announcement

The State Health Department in conjunction with the West Virginia Water Pollution Control Association and the American Water Works Association—West Section, will hold the following free one day seminars at the St. Albans Sanitary Board Building (adjacent to the sewage works) from 8:30 to 4:30:

Monday, October 19, 1981—Pump Workshop.

Tuesday, October 20, 1981—O & M gas chlorinators and hyperchlorite feed systems. In addition, safety mask usage, cylinder repair, test kit utilization and general chlorine principles will be presented.

Wednesday, October 21, 1981—Electric, Electrical Controls and Safety.

These classes are offered to upgrade the skills and/or knowledge relevant to wastewater and water personnel, engineers, sanitarians and swimming pool operators. All three seminars will be taught by specialists. They are offered in successive days to conserve energy and costs should any out-of-town participant wish to attend more than one seminar.

Anyone planning to attend should make application no later than October 10, 1981 to John Brown, Sewage Disposal Division, 1800 Washington Street, East, Charleston, WV. 25305, telephone number 348-0578.

and Interreligious Concerns at St. Marks United Methodist Church where he and his family are members and is a member of the Leonard Riggleman Bible Class. Jim's hobbies are gardening, yard work and music. He is an accomplished pianist and pipe organist and has served for several years as pianist for the Charleston Kiwanis Club and the Riggleman Bible Class at St. Mark's Church. Horseback riding is also a favorite pastime.

Every Sanitarian

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Minimally, going into the next 100 years in public and environmental health in West Virginia, we owe it to ourselves and those we serve to begin finding answers to the environmental challenges we face today and tomorrow. Even though we are used to the minimal here in public health, it really doesn't have to remain that way.

Freedom

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Haverty, the WV Supreme Court ruled that the government has a privilege to refuse to disclose the identity of an informant who has furnished information concerning a violation of the laws, unless the defendant's case would be jeopardized by nondisclosure. In deciding whether to require disclosure, the Court will decide whether the defendant's case will be jeopardized. The Court will also consider how important the privilege of the agency to refuse to disclose the identity of an informant is to its public duty. Haverty was a criminal case concerning the withholding of the name of an informant in a drug buy. The Court felt there was a strong public interest in protecting the identity of persons giving this type of information. In deciding whether to require disclosure of the identity of someone reporting a health violation, the Court would decide if a similar public interest was served by nondisclosure.

In considering whether to refuse to allow inspection or copying of any public record, the custodian of the record should, first of all, follow the advice of the department's legal representative as to whether the record falls within an exception to disclosure. The custodian should be prepared to advise the attorney of his reasons for desiring to withhold the record. If the decision is made to withhold the record, the person seeking it must file a suit to obtain it.

The Freedom of Information Act provides that a custodian who willfully violates the Act can be fined or imprisoned; however, a good faith belief that the record did not have to be disclosed should prevent conviction under the Act.

WV Sanitarian's NEWSLETTER
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