



NEWSLETTER

International Federation of Environmental Health

October 2010 Edition

WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER EDITION OF THE IFEH NEWSLETTER

The 11th World Congress on Environmental Health took place at the beginning of September in the Westin Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver, Canada. The Congress was a resounding success due, in no small part, to the magnificent efforts of Domenic Losito and his Congress Organising Committee, on behalf of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI). Congratulations to them and to everyone else who played a part in this successful event.

The Congress took place over five days, four within the Congress venue and one day was set aside for technical visits. The motto of the Congress was 'Educate, Innovate, Advocate' and on each of the four days set aside for papers, the day started with a keynote speaker. On the first day, after the opening ceremony, Dr Dave Williams, a medical doctor, Canadian astronaut, and scuba diver spoke on the theme 'Educate'. He has seen earth from unique perspectives, both high in space and deep underwater. He spoke about the importance of the effects of human habitation, the history of the human condition and our approach to planetary stewardship. On the second day the keynote, using the theme 'Innovate', was delivered by Larry Beasley, a world-renowned community planner, who addressed Healthy Built Environments. The speaker played a leading role in transforming the City of Vancouver's downtown area into a vibrant, liveable urban community. I had pleasure in chairing the third keynote session which was on the theme 'Advocate' and was addressed by Dr Samantha Nutt, a medical doctor and public health specialist with more than 13 years experience of working in war zones. Committed to peace, human rights and social justice her ambition is to help war-affected women and children. She has worked in some of the world's most violent flashpoints with War Child Canada (www.warchild.ca), the United Nations and non-governmental organisations around the world.

On the final day, prior to the closing ceremony, the keynote speaker was Ashleigh McIvor, Olympic Gold Medallist at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics who spoke about the challenges she faced leading up to the Winter Olympics. In addition to these excellent keynote addresses over a hundred papers were delivered over the four days by contributors from all around the world.

IFEH Council and Annual General Meeting

The IFEH Council meeting and AGM took place on Saturday and Sunday, 4 and 5 September 2010 in the Congress venue, the Westin Bayshore Hotel. As usual the first part of the Council meeting was set aside for presentations by Member Organisations present and one of the recurring themes from presenters was the current financial problems facing the world economies, and the effect of this on the environmental health service. A letter to me from the President of the California Environmental Health Association extending best wishes for a successful congress I think summed up the current situation. 'We all must struggle to perform our charge in the face of budget cuts, and already limited resources. All Environmental Health Professionals have to become proficient in doing more with less. When we do our jobs too well, the reward is that no one notices. When people no longer feel threatened by disease and nuisance, they tend to forget the efforts required in their control'.

The Council discussed a paper from the Honorary Treasurer concerning annual subscriptions. At present organisations based in countries where the Gross Domestic Product per capita is below US\$ 8,500 the annual subscription is GB£40. Currently 32% of members pay 88% of the subscription income and it is therefore crucial that once a member recognises that their country's GDP rises above the threshold that they pay the appropriate subscription. Currently this is GB£0.36 per individual member, so an organisation with 200 members would pay GB£72 annually. The current policy for subscriptions was endorsed by the Council. It was also agreed that all members would return annually to the Honorary Treasurer a note of their member numbers.



Some representatives who attended the recent AGM

The Annual General Meeting elected Robert Bradbury (CIPHI) to the position of IFEH President and Peter Davey, representing Environmental Health Australia, is the new President Elect, following his success in the recent ballot for this position. Congratulations to Robert and Peter. Ray Ellard, Steve Cooper, Hadrian Bonello and Henning Hansen continue as Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Editor and Honorary Webmaster respectively. The outgoing President, Bernard Forteath (REHIS), was elected to the vacant post of Honorary Public Relations Officer.

REHIS International Essay Competition

The winner of the REHIS International Essay Competition, mentioned in the July Newsletter, is Ms Claudette Parker-Allotey from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Claudette is a final year undergraduate student at Concordia University College of Alberta on the Environmental Health After-Degree programme. Claudette was presented with a cheque for £500.00 and a personalised certificate by Rod House, President of REHIS, at the World Congress. Her submission will be published in the winter edition of the REHIS Journal Environmental Health Scotland.

12th World Congress on Environmental Health

Yes I know the 11th World Congress has just ended and now I am mentioning the next one! But as everyone who has been involved in a congress organising committee will tell you, the earlier you prepare the more successful the final event will be. During the Vancouver Congress a presentation was made by colleagues from the Lithuanian Union of Hygienists and Epidemiologists concerning the 12th World Congress on Environmental Health which is due to take place in Vilnius from the 21st – 27th May 2012. The theme of this congress will be 'New Technologies, Healthy Human Being and Environment'. The deadline for abstract submissions is the 30 November 2011. More information can be obtained from the Congress website www.ifeh2012.org which will be available in the near future.

Swedish Association celebrates its 90th Birthday

The Swedish Association of Environmental Health Professionals (Yrkesföreningen Miljö och Hälsa, YMH) was founded in 1920 and celebrates ninety years in existence during 2010. The jubilee was celebrated during the bi-annual conference in Gothenburg in June. The attendance was good as YMH offered two interesting days in the city where the Association was first set up. The programme - which of course could only cover parts of the vast environmental health area - were wind power, sustainable communications skills, medicines and the environment, housing and health care premises, food control revision and much more. The conference was held in co-operation with Gothenburg University and the City of Gothenburg. YMH's new chairperson for 2010-2012 is Jan-Eric Bäck.



Worker deaths in Britain fall to record low

New figures released recently reveal that the number of people killed at work in Britain fell last year to a record low. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has released the provisional data, which shows that 151 workers were killed between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010 compared to 178 deaths in the previous year and an average number over the last 5 years of 220 deaths per year. Large falls have been recorded in some of the other historically most dangerous industries in Britain: 41 fatal injuries to construction workers were recorded - a rate of 2.0 deaths per 100,000 workers, compared to an average of 66 deaths in the past five years and a fall from the 52 deaths (and rate of 2.4) recorded in 2008/09. Forty two fatal injuries to services workers were recorded, a rate of 0.2 deaths per 100,000, compared to an average of 72 deaths in the past five years and a fall from the 62 deaths (and rate of 0.3) recorded in 2008/09. Twenty four fatal injuries to manufacturing workers were recorded, a rate of 0.9 deaths per 100,000, compared to an average of 38 deaths in the past five years and a fall from 33 deaths (and rate of 1.1) in 2008/09. The new figures show that compared with the latest data available for the four other leading industrial nations in Europe - Germany, France, Spain and Italy - Great Britain has, for more than the last six years, had the lowest rate of fatal injuries.

Caning for Singapore graffiti

A Swiss man pleaded guilty earlier this year to spray painting graffiti on a Singapore subway car. The man pleaded guilty to one count each of vandalism and trespassing for breaking into a train depot and drawing graffiti on a subway car on May 16. Prosecutors dropped a second vandalism charge but submitted it to the judge for consideration when sentencing. Vandalism in Singapore carries a fine of up to \$1,437 or up to three years in jail, in addition to three to eight strokes of a cane. Singapore reiterated a ban on the sale of chewing gum this year and announced a crackdown on littering. Clearly this policy is a success because Singapore is one of the cleanest cities in the world.

Twining and member exchange opportunities

Mention was made in the last Newsletter that two years ago the IFEH Council decided to set up an exchange program. The aim of this initiative is to allow individual members the opportunity to see how environmental health is delivered elsewhere in the world. We decided that each member organisation should appoint a national coordinator or contact point, to take care of applications from their own members as well as applications from potential visitors. During the recently held Council meeting I was asked to remind members of this initiative. Jan Homma jhomma@chello.nl and Steen Fogde fogde@mail.dk urge all Member Organisations to nominate a national coordinator as soon as possible. This information will be placed on the Federation website for those who are interested in gaining experience in another country.



New membership groups

Members are again reminded about the two new membership groups in the Federation, Individual Membership and Affiliated Membership. Individual membership is open to individuals who will either be a member of a Member Organisation of the Federation or possess a degree or relevant post graduate qualification, and be involved in the field of environmental health. In all cases applicants will require to satisfy a Membership Panel (President, President Elect, Honorary Secretary, and Honorary Treasurer) that they are suitable for membership of the Federation. Although no voting privileges are accorded to this class of membership Individual Members are encouraged to become involved in Federation and Regional Group activities. Individual Members will be allowed to use the designatory letters M IFEH. Readers are encouraged to consider taking out membership and an application form can be found on the IFEH website. Affiliated Organisation membership is open to a private company interested in environment and health and support the aims and objectives of the Federation. Applicants will require to satisfy a Membership Panel (President, President Elect, Honorary Secretary, and Honorary Treasurer) that they are suitable to become members of the Federation. The Federation Council at its recent meeting in Vancouver asked that all Member Organisations try to recruit at least one member during the next year.

Help keep us up to date.

During the recent ballot for the position of President-Elect the Honorary Secretary experienced difficulties in contacting members due to the information that we hold centrally being out of date. This added considerably to his workload while conducting the ballot. The lack of up to date information concerning changes that take place within Member Organisations seriously affects the operation of the Federation. It is essential that we know who the IFEH representative is from your organisation, also the name of the Chairman/President and Secretary together with contact details. All the information is placed on the website and we know that this is a source of information for many agencies. So please check your entry on the website and let us know of any changes as soon as possible.

Finally the next edition of the Newsletter will be published in January 2011. If you have any news for the Newsletter from your organisation please send it to me by the first week in December. My thanks go to Ingrid Horner, Andrew Forteath and Henning Hansen who have assisted in the production of this issue.

