New Brunswick Brings Home Awards

St. John’s, NL – A total of 3 national awards were brought home by New Brunswick delegates to the 74th annual educational conference of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors held in St. John’s this July.

Among the award recipients were Mark Allen (Life Member Award), Tamela Carroll (Presidents Award) and the New Brunswick Department of Health (Alexander Officer Award). Pictured below are Tamela Carroll accepting her Presidents Award and Scott MacLean accepting the Alexander Officer Award on behalf of the Department of Health.

Submit your photos and stories

If you have photos and stories to share submit them to any member of your branch executive. The newsletter is published twice per year.

National President Elected at AGM

St. John’s, NL - Adam Grant was elected CIPHI’s national president at the Annual General Meeting held in St John’s on July 21. Adam takes over the presidency from Claudia Kurzak who served in the position since 2004.

Adam has been serving CIPHI since 2002 when he became active in the Ontario Branch executive. In 2006 he was elected Branch President and during his tenure on the National Executive Council has been project lead for the national database project and the creation of the national salary survey. Congratulations Adam on your election.

In addition to the election of national president a number of important motions were passed at the AGM. Thirteen motions for administrative changes to CIPHI’s constitution were passed, paving the way for CIPHI to move forward with continued work necessary to implement mandatory membership and continuing education of its members.

Attendees to the AGM also ratified the appointment of two new National Executive Council representatives to the Board of Certification: Nina van der Pluijm (NB Branch) and Eric Serwotka (ON Branch) will begin serving on the BOC immediately. Nina and Eric replace outgoing NEC reps Ken Cross and Richard Taki.
Media Recognizes Work of PHI’s
Nina van der Pluijm

Moncton – It was January and things seemed relatively under control in the world of Public Health Inspection in New Brunswick. I was sitting at my desk wondering why the Environmental Public Health week didn’t get much media coverage. Why is it so difficult for us to promote the wonderful profession of Public Health Inspection?

We were going about doing the normal things we always do and out of nowhere, 4 continuous days of media coverage. Top stories on the 6 o’clock news to the front page of newspapers; ATV, CBC, Global, Times& Transcript, Société Radio Canada, all of which is “good, good, good for Public Health Inspection”! Wow this is wonderful news!

On January 16th, Public Health Inspectors followed-up on a complaint of a mice infested grocery store. The first inspector on-site called me and said: “I think it’s going to take a few of us”. Row after row, shelf after shelf, under equipment, back storage rooms, basement food court, the entire facility had to be inspected to determine the extent of the infestation. Dumpster after dumpster was filled with food that was deemed potentially contaminated. By mid evening, as I get ready to leave the site with the group of inspectors I look back and see an empty produce section, an empty bakery section, and rows of cereals, flour, sugar, chocolate chips, chocolate bars, chocolate boxes, etc. all gone into dumpsters, with many more items such as canned goods waiting to be cleaned and sanitized properly.

The following day the Department of Health issued a press release and scheduled a media scrum. The main message given by the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) was “throw out any produce and bake goods, inspect all other food item, if there are no holes, wash it down and keep it”. Of course with food service reports now available online, the media is looking for others that are closed or are in a “red” zone.

Headlines and top stories read “grocery store closes after health officials find droppings”, “Metro eateries face health reprimands” and the list goes on, every one wanted to know what was happening. The stories all spoke well of the public access to the inspection reports and to the hard work of PHIs.

This triggered many more calls and reports to the Public Health office with complaints of other establishments. As we did follow-ups, one more license was revoked by the MOH. Again the media picked up on this and other establishments that were in the “red” zone. Details of infractions listed by Inspectors appeared as a front page story, the editorial was speaking of PHIs and their work.

By Friday, PHIs doing follow-up on complaints or re-inspections for eating establishment were saying “everyone is cleaning and sanitizing and complying like never before” nobody wanting names in the media. The media wants to know “how do you determine how often you do inspections, what type of follow-ups do you do, how do you determine risk, what are the steps once a license is revoked?” The Department decided once again to prepare a media scrum and this time the message was “it’s still safe to eat out and foods from grocery store are safe”.

Saturday morning I woke up anxious to see if the media got our message straight. I headed to the corner store for a copy of the Times & Transcript and front page headlines stated “It’s still safe to dine out” as I read on they fully describe the work of PHIs and the food inspection system in N.B. All I could think was “way to go media, talk about a wonderful way to get the public know just how important PHIs are to our communities”.

Job well done to all involved that week!
NB Public Health Inspector Teaching in Doha, Qatar

Living in the Middle East for Gary Hunt is such a great experience that he never would have imagined so when working back in New Brunswick.

Over a year ago, Gary accepted a teaching position with a world-class technology college in the State of Qatar. Gary has taken a three year leave of absence from his work and is teaching students courses in the Health Science Department, Environmental Health Program.

The College of the North Atlantic-Qatar originates from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and has been operating an English speaking and teaching facility in Doha, Qatar since 2002. The college students are from several countries in the area, however many of the students are Qatari’s. The College offers programs and courses that are conforming to Canadian and international standards in Business Studies, Engineering Technology, Health Sciences, Information Technology, and Industrial Trades.

“It took some time to become adjusted to the way of life in a foreign country and living in a desert. However, after a few months one settles down and becomes comfortable”, Gary says. “The College is very unique as they look after the instructor’s accommodations, transportation, and plan many of the social activities for staff at the College”. There are over 500 employees from all across Canada teaching and working at the Campus.

School week starts on Sunday and finishes on Thursday with the weekend being held on Friday and Saturday. “This is very hard to adjust to being from the Western world”. The weather must certainly be another adjustment as temperatures reach well over 50 C for several months of the year. Rain is a celebrated experience, usually lasting one month in January.

Gary explains that sand storms are difficult to travel in just like our snow storms in Canada and one often stays house bound during those times usually occurring during the months of February and March. The beaches are easy to enjoy the beautiful turquoise blue ocean, white sand and palm trees makes one feel they are in the Caribbean.

The students are very polite and eager to learn which makes the teaching easy and enjoyable. They wear their traditional dress to the college, females are normally completely covered even their faces are veiled with Shelah and they wear a long Abaia (long black dress). The male students wear traditional white thoub gowns and white head dress on their heads. “It was difficult at first teaching the female students when you could not see their faces and would have to follow the sound of their voice to identify them or their tone to interrupt their understanding of the topic being taught” Gary says.

Living in the Middle East may not be for everyone: however for Gary it is such an exciting and wonderful career opportunity. For more information on the College of the North Atlantic - Qatar project visit www.cna-qatar.com.
Annual Educational Conference Highlights

←Preparing for the annual general meeting

→NB members at the Presidents Banquet

←Outgoing national president Claudia Kurzak addresses BOC and NEC members

←Hike up Signal Hill

←NEC prepares for Presidents Banquet

→Incoming President Adam Grant shows off his Scottish heritage
President’s Message

Summer is here! I hope everyone is enjoying their holidays and making the most of the sun. If you are anything like me, you have lots of plans but not enough vacation days left to fit everything in.

Since our last newsletter I have made a significant career change. In May I left the Department of Health and all matters Public Health for a new position with the Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture. Now, instead of human health my main concern is fish health. I manage a team whose job it is to ensure the continued and sustainable development of the aquaculture industry in the Bay of Fundy. The work is interesting and a much welcome change of pace for me although I admit fully that I do miss public health. My worry is I’ll forget the “language” of public health! To keep my skills sharp I plan to remain active with the branch.

In June I was contacted by representatives with the Department of Health to provide feedback on the main issues facing the province with respect to the employment of Public Health Inspectors. I see this as a positive step for the profession in New Brunswick because this marks one of the first times the branch has been contacted as a professional body to provide comments to an employer.

Since most of our membership consists of employees with the Department of Health, I expected I would hear from many of you in response to my email soliciting your input. To my surprise, only 3 members submitted comments. The comments I did receive indicated the three main issues facing Public Health Inspectors are succession planning, lack of opportunity to advance and practicum training. Those issues have been forwarded as our branch response to the human resources officers at the Department of Health.

In other branch news I am proud to report that the branch was well represented at the Annual Educational Conference held this July in St. John’s, NL. 5 of our members were able to attend and 3 of the national awards given at the Awards Luncheon were awarded to New Brunswick (see page 1). I am hopeful that with all the important public health work being done in New Brunswick that in the future our members will be present as speakers. I encourage you all to consider submitting abstracts for the next conference to be held in Kannanaskis, Alberta. Check the CIPHI website for details.

Speaking of conferences, our branch educational conference will be held in Fredericton this October. Stay tuned for more details!

In May, long time member Mark Allen retired from his position as Executive Director of the Health Protection Branch, Department of Health. In addition to his many accomplishments with the Department of Health, Mark contributed greatly to CIPHI over the years, serving as president of the former Atlantic Branch. Mark was also active in developing formal relations with the National Environmental Health Association (USA) and the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH). Our congratulations on your retirement Mark. Now that CIPHI has you “for life”, we look forward to your continued involvement!

Until next time...

-Gary O’Toole
President, NB Branch

Visit the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health at www.ncceh.ca