

EPA Alumni Association News

February 2011 Issue: 3

Misty Water

Greetings!

It was fun on December 2nd looking back over 40 years and thinking about what all of us had accomplished in that period of years. No one of us could have imagined in 1970 the degree to which environmental stewardship would have become so ingrained in our culture or the magnitude of the regulatory effort that has been required to get us to where we are today. And of course, those were only the FIRST 40 years.

Your Board of Directors has been busy working with EPA on how our two organizations might work together in the future to provide opportunities for EPA alumni to lend a hand to the Agency in areas of our expertise. Mentoring has been the primary focus, but already we have helped EPA run a panel discussion on "Life After EPA" for prospective EPA retirees.

We are beginning to plan for our next Annual Meeting, hopefully sometime in May or June. Stay tuned.

We will be holding elections for the Association Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting. If you are interested in serving, please [click here](#) and send a short bio and statement of interest to me.
Many thanks,

Chuck Elkins, Executive Director



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Membership Continues to Grow

We have now reached almost 700 members! A list of Alums who have joined the Association since September 2011 appears

Photo of Lee Thomas

Lee Thomas Remembers

Recently I had the chance to talk with Lee Thomas about his six-year tenure at the Agency. Lee served as Administrator from February 1985 to January 1989 at a critical time for the Agency. Before taking the helm, Lee was Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and had been with FEMA before that. When he left EPA Lee became CEO of an engineering firm, then joined Georgia Pacific, managing its environmental and engineering programs before becoming President and COO. He joined the Board of Rayonier Corporation, a forest products company, and has been its CEO since March 2007. Bob Wayland, Editor

Lee, would you tell our members about your arrival at EPA?

The White House called me one afternoon soon after Rita Lavelle departed EPA, and asked me to go to the Agency as Acting Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response. EPA had been on the front page of the papers for weeks and, as Associate Director and Acting Deputy of FEMA, I had met Anne Burford while chairing the Times Beach Task Force. I arrived at the agency a few days after the phone call. I went to the Administrator's Office and was told that she wasn't expected in until after 10. I found my way to the AA's Office, above the Safeway, and introduced myself to the Office Directors, John Skinner, Bill Hedeman, and Gene Lucero. My briefings began immediately and I remember Gene warned me that at EPA I would have to make a lot of decisions and most of them would make many people unhappy.

Later, I met the Administrator who seemed somewhat surprised to see me. She told me that she didn't need any help and suggested I return to FEMA. I said I'd be happy to if the White House would call me and tell me that's what they wanted. Obviously, that didn't happen and less than a month later the White House announced Anne Burford's resignation. Lee Verstandig had been detailed to EPA at the same time I was as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs. When Anne Burford left, Lee became Acting Administrator and I became Acting Deputy Administrator in addition to my OSWER role. He told me he had longstanding vacation plans for the following week, so I would be Acting Administrator. So, a month after I reported to EPA I was Acting Administrator, Acting Deputy Administrator, Acting AA for OSWER as well as Acting FEMA Deputy and FEMA Associate Director. Jack McGraw, who fortunately I had managed to recruit from FEMA as my deputy in OSWER, commented that it was one of those rare times when I could send a memo from me, through me, to me!

I was impressed with the ability and dedication of the EPA staff and that impression was only strengthened in my six years at EPA. I was very fortunate, along with the rest of the Agency, when Bill Ruckelshaus returned as Administrator. He assembled an excellent team, with Al Alm as Deputy, Jim Barnes as General Counsel, Milton Russell as AA for Policy, Jack Moore as AA for Pesticides and Toxics, Bernie Goldstein as AA for ORD, and Howard Messner as AA for Administration.

below.

Please forward this email to EPA Alums you know who have not yet joined the Association. They can become members by [clicking here](#).

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The Association is supported by voluntary contributions. If you have not given, or gave a year or more ago, please consider donating now. Funds on hand will not be adequate to meet our projected 2011 operating expenses.

[Click Here to Donate Now.](#)

If you prefer to send a check rather than donating online, please make it out to EPA Alumni Association and mail it to:  
EPA Alumni Association  
28 Chester River Beach  
Road Grasonville, MD 21638

Thank You!

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Eighteen months later when Bill decided to return to the private sector he told me he would recommend that the President appoint me Administrator. By then I knew EPA was a place that made a real and positive difference in people's lives and I was honored to have Bill's confidence and to be nominated by the President.

[Click Here to Continue](#)

Seminar: Life After EPA

Earlier this month a panel of alums shared their widely differing experiences since retiring from the Agency with a group of about fifty EPA employees at headquarters. Other employees called in on some twenty phone lines, so close to a hundred people participated. Alums

Darlene Harrod, Spencer Duffy, Dev Barnes, Win Porter, and Chuck Elkins talked about studying, pursuing music, employment as consultants and a variety of volunteer activities that have kept them busy in their post-EPA lives and took questions from current employees. Darlene Scott of EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention and Nancy Allison of the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response organized the seminar on behalf of EPA. The evaluation forms returned by participants showed they thought the session was very useful and more may be held in the future. We also created a webcast so those who weren't able to participate real-time have the option to listen at a time convenient for them. You can hear it by [clicking here](#).

Spencer Duffy

Spencer Duffy

Flash Mentoring

The Emerging Leaders Network (ELN) is an organization formed by EPA employees who want to develop the skills, insights and networks to allow them to build satisfying careers and contribute to the Agency. They are using an unusual and potentially exhilarating technique to tap the expertise of people who have been proven successes in their EPA careers. The Association is participating.

[Click Here to Continue](#)

What's in Your Profile?

Photo of Wine
Bottle and Grapes

A Good Bottle of Wine?

We aren't learned wine connoisseurs, but we do enjoy a glass of the grape from time to time. As I was browsing profiles of new members with whom I had worked, I caught up with Region 10 Wetlander Bill Riley's post-EPA activities. He's begun a small [winery](#) on Washington's Vashon Island! That prompted me to wonder how many other wine makers might be found in the ranks of our Association. When I searched the hundreds of profiles of our members for the keyword "wine" only ten names were returned -- including two other winemakers. I suspect there are quite a few more among us who are making, collecting, or seriously enjoying wine. But if that interest is not included in your profile, other afficianados can't click over to ask about your most recent production or a great "find" you've made.

Many of our members have posted bare bones profiles - their last EPA job, a current street address and email. Some may be concerned about privacy or personal security - a valid consideration in the era of identity theft, spoofing, etc. Rest assured, however, that only members of the Association can access our web site and member data. But more complete profiles can really be useful, and fun. I greatly enjoyed Martha Prothro's extensive profile -- its been a long time since we worked together and after joining recently she provided a very interesting update.

I've also considered organizing some kind of sailing raft-up of Association members on the Chesapeake Bay, since I know several sailors in the region who have joined the Association. I'm pretty sure the small number of "hits" on the search for "sailing" doesn't represent the full universe of sailors in our ranks ... but it does represent all those who reflected this activity in the "interests" section of their profiles. So sailors, winemakers, jewelry artists, potters, world travellers, model train enthusiasts and linguists please supplement your EPAA-AA profiles!

To return briefly to the subject of wine: Most of you probably don't immediately think of Virginia as a top wine producing state, or a state producing top wines. It is both. Virginia has been producing some award-winning wines for several years now. Thomas Jefferson was one of the earliest vintners in the British Colonies.

Recently Susan helped organize a wine dinner to benefit the YMCA youth programs in our community. [Barboursville Vineyards](#), not far from Charlottesville, supplied the wine and it was outstanding. Remarkably, there are now several wineries near us on the

Northern Neck: [Athena](#), near the banks of the Great Wicomico River, [Vault Field](#) in Kinsale, and [Ingleside](#) closer to Fredericksburg. Let us know if you plan a trip to Virginia wine country, we'll share some local lore and offer you a glass of pinot grigio and a view of the Rappahannock river! - B.W.

Yamada Leads JAVA

EPA-AA Board Member and former EPA Deputy General Counsel Gerald Yamada was recently elected President of the Japanese American Veterans Association. JAVA was started by Japanese American veterans who served in World War II. Today veterans who served in every war from WWII to Iraq and Afghanistan are JAVA's Board.

New Members Since September 2010

Image of List of New Members

Susan and Bob Wayland, Newsletter Editors

EPA Alumni Association

P.S. If you would rather not receive these newsletters, please email us at newsletter@EPAalumni.org rather than using the other tools available in this newsletter.

