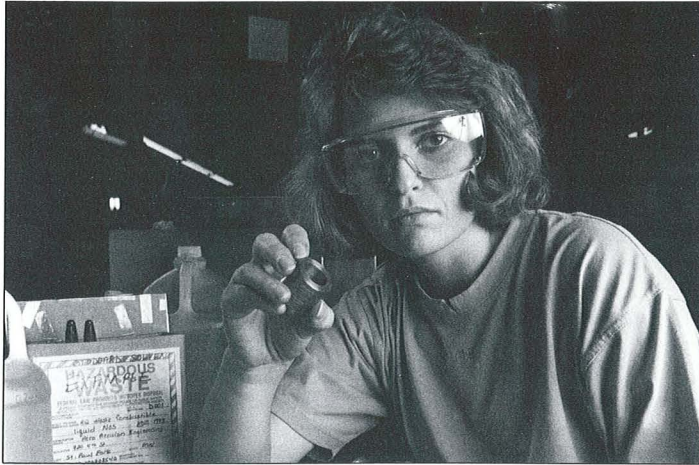


# Challenge

University of Minnesota

Fall 1989

## MnTAP Helps Businesses Watch Their Wastelines



MnTAP intern Debra Taylor helped St. Paul Park-based Aero Precision Engineering, Inc., eliminate the need for a hazardous solvent by developing an alternative water-based cleaning system for small metal parts.

In the years since Love Canal made "hazardous wastes" a household phrase, state and federal agencies have developed necessarily intricate guidelines for businesses to follow in handling such materials. The challenge of charting a course through the resulting regulatory maze is not one to bring megacorporations, with their cadre of consultants and staff experts, to their knees. But for small-business owners, hazardous wastes can—figuratively, at least—generate one mean headache.

Recognizing the need to help the little guy, the Minnesota legislature in 1984 established the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) in the School of Public Health's Division of Environmental and Occupational Health as a source of non-regulatory technical and research assistance for small and medium-size generators of hazardous and nonhazardous in-

dustrial wastes. Since then, thousands of businesses in the state have found in MnTAP a ready and willing—not to mention free—partner in solving waste management problems.

### One on One

"Minnesota generally is known as being fairly progressive in environmental areas, including waste management," says MnTAP Director Cindy McComas. "We find that most people want to do it the right way."

However, that "right way" is not always obvious. So MnTAP fills the gap between the best of intentions and the lack of technical know-how, helping small companies improve waste management, reduce the amount of waste they produce, and find alternatives to land disposal.

As a first line of contact, business owners are encouraged to call the MnTAP office, where

technical staff are on hand to answer a variety of questions: "Who can transport this waste for me?" "Where should it go?" "Is there a different product I could use in my manufacturing process to cut down on the hazardous wastes I produce?"

Most answers are at the fingertips of at least one of MnTAP's six staff members, whose backgrounds range from technical communication to civil engineering. If the problem is too complex to be handled over the phone, however, MnTAP staff go right to the business, where they can provide one-on-one advice. MnTAP gets about 100 calls a month, McComas says. Perhaps one in 10 will result in a site visit.

### Waste Not, Want Not

MnTAP technical experts are more than willing to help businesses find the right disposal methods, but their hearts really lie with seeking alternatives to producing waste in the first place. As McComas says, "Now that you know how to dispose of this waste, how do you work on reducing its production for the future?"

Fortunately, she notes, waste reduction is becoming a more common goal among businesses. "A larger percent of the calls now are more sophisticated, looking at waste reduction instead of disposal. Callers have a vision of what they want to do with their waste."

In addition to providing case-by-case assistance, MnTAP also serves as an information clearinghouse. McComas and her staff provide written materials, referrals, seminars, and presentations, helping business

owners find their way through the sometimes mind-boggling maze of facts and regulations.

"Our objective is to try to provide people with information or give them a specific referral so they don't have to hunt around state agencies," she says. "If we don't handle [the problem], we try to give them a specific direction."

### The Bottom Line

A hallmark of MnTAP's innovative partnership with small industry is its intern program, which goes a step beyond the site visits to provide extended assistance in developing and implementing waste management plans. The program pairs businesses with technically oriented students in a summer-long partnership that focuses on a specific waste reduction project.

According to McComas, the payoffs of the internship program have been tremendous for the company and student both. "The student is trained in waste management and is able to learn about industrial processes. For the company, there's environmental protection, cost savings, and increased awareness of waste management and waste reduction opportunities," she says.

"It's a good program," agrees Dick Desens, who contacted MnTAP for help in managing wastes from his Hutchinson metal-plating business several years ago. "What it did for me was to get a person on board for three months to assist in reducing wastes. By doing it, we realized \$200 to \$300 savings per month. The payback is very

*Continued on page 4*

# Institute Links Academics, Practitioners

We are in the midst of "a very exciting challenge and opportunity to respond" to a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Institute of Medicine report on the future of public health, Dean Robert Kane told participants at the nation's first Institute for Public Health Practice, held at the School on July 23-26.

The institute, which focused on leadership development, gaining political support, and dealing with public conflict, brought together leading public health practitioners, educators, and advanced graduate students representing 20 states and Canada.



*Kristine Gebbie, discussing the public health response to HIV infection.*

The report to which Kane referred, published last year by the NAS policy committee, asked professors in the field to study the "growing perception among the Institute of Medicine membership and others con-

cerned with the health of the public that this nation has lost sight of its public health goals."

The School developed the Institute for Public Health Practice specifically to address such concerns and to help practitioners exchange ideas and expand their spheres of influence. The format included lectures, case studies, simulations, and small-

group discussions focusing on the three topic areas. According to organizer Lee Stauffer (public health administration), "the response to our first collaboration was very positive." Planning for the next institute, tentatively scheduled for June 1990, already is under way.

*Amor Kramer*

## Students' Health-Access Paper Is Model for Nation

Two spring graduates of the School have played a key role in the development of a position paper on universal access to health services adopted recently by the Minnesota Public Health Association (MPHA).

The paper, "Universal Access to Efficient and Effective Basic Health Services," was researched, coordinated, and written in cooperation with an MPHA task force by public health administration students Barbara Eaton and Carol Solie as a joint master's degree proj-

ect. It is the cornerstone of an effort by the MPHA to assist in implementation of a health access plan for Minnesota and to push for a national health program. Since it was accepted by the MPHA at its 1989 annual meeting, the policy statement has received broad acclaim from public health leaders around the country.

The paper will serve as a reference point for MPHA efforts to evaluate and influence legislation ensuring access to basic health care services.

## Kane Named to Long-Term Care Chair

Robert L. Kane, dean of the School of Public Health, was named to the School's Endowed Chair in Long-Term Care, effective Sept. 1.

Kane's appointment to the position, the only one of its kind in the nation, is seen as a key move in solidifying the study of long-term care as an academic discipline and in reaffirming the School's reputation as a leader in the field of aging.

"Long-term care of the elderly is a research and teaching priority of the School. I am honored to be a part of Minnesota's tradition of excellence in that field," Kane says.

The chair was established in 1988 when \$1 million in contributions from the long-

term care community was matched by the Permanent University Fund as part of the Minnesota Campaign. It will provide an opportunity for practitioners and the University to work together in developing and testing new models of long-term care.

A search is under way for a new dean for the School. Kane will remain in the position through the 1989-90 academic year.

Kane has been dean of the School since August 1985. He previously had served as senior researcher in long-term care at the Rand Corporation and professor at the schools of public health and medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles.

## ISP Begins New Class

More than 100 health services administrators began Course I of the Independent Study Program (ISP) this past summer, bringing the total number of students in the three-course program to 220. The new students are enrolled in graduate programs in administration for nutrition, patient care, ambulatory care, and hospitals, with special interest groups in long-



*This year's Course I participants gathered at an International Health Night in July.*

term care and mental health.

ISP was established in the mid-1960s as an alternative to existing health administration

curricula. It gives administrators an opportunity to complete advanced studies in the field while remaining in their posi-

tions. Students begin the three one-year courses with a two-week session at the University, then continue their studies off campus during the remainder of the year. After completing the third year of study, ISPers are awarded a "credential" certifying their participation in the program. Credentials later may be applied toward master's degree work in a conventional program.

## Richard G. Bond Scholarship Awarded

Stephen Scott, a former Peace Corps volunteer who began his master's program in environmental health this fall, is the recipient of the first Richard G. Bond memorial scholarship.

The endowed scholarship, which will be given annually to a student in the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health, was established earlier this year by Betty W. Bond. It honors her late husband, a long-time SPH faculty member and world-renowned environmental health educator and practitioner, by enabling promising students to pursue an education in the field.

"It's a very generous gesture," says division head Ian Greaves. "We're grateful to have these funds available to help support outstanding students in the coming year."

Scott, a long-time Minnesota resident, earned a bachelor of science degree in biology from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., in 1979 and is completing a master's degree in education. His career goals

focus on hazardous waste control and risk assessment in the field of environmental health. In addition to his Peace Corps experience, he has worked for Volunteers of America and for General Mills as a research technician.

Richard Bond was a pioneer in environmental health education. He taught in the School from 1962 until his retirement in 1979, directing the Program in Environmental Health for 11 of those years. He also organized and served as the first director of the University of Minnesota's Department of Environmental Health and Safety.

Candidates for the award should have an interest in a general environmental health program, be interested in the application of knowledge for the health and welfare of others, be a full-time student in the division, and have experience in environmental health or a related field.

## Recruitment Begins for Innovative Pregnancy Outcome Study

The search is on for 1,000 Twin Cities-area women interested in participating in a new SPH-based study of how maternal health and nutrition before conception affect the health of newborns. The women, who must be planning to have their first child in the next several years, will have "a unique opportunity to help improve the outcomes of pregnancy," says Judith Brown, principal investigator in the National Institutes of Health-sponsored research.

The study, named the "Diana Project" after the Roman goddess of fertility, was developed in response to the United States' relatively high rate of what Brown terms "poor outcomes"—incidences of infant death and low birth weight. It will follow aspects of women's health from before they become pregnant through the births of their children, and it will attempt to correlate the infants' health with such factors as maternal stress levels, drug use, body fat content, physical activity, smoking, vitamin and mineral supplement use, weight, and infections. In addition to Brown, the research team in-

cludes SPH epidemiologists John Potter and David Jacobs, and Richard Kopher and Mary Jo Rourke at Group Health, Inc., a Twin Cities-based health maintenance organization.

"We have a real dismal infant mortality rate and a high incidence of low birth weight in the United States, and the statistics are getting worse," Brown says. "The United States is 19th among 25 industrialized countries in infant mortality. We're hoping that through this research we can help reduce these rates."

A number of studies of maternal nutrition and health during pregnancy have attempted to pinpoint the causes of poor outcomes, but, according to Brown, this is the first one to look at women before pregnancy and follow them through to the birth of their children.

The subjects will all be women who have never been pregnant and who are members of Group Health. Recruitment for the study began this fall and will continue for two years. Women who are interested in participating in the study may contact Diane Eggen (623-8529) or Gerrie Barosso (624-7146).

## Alumni Society Update

The SPH Alumni Society board of directors held its first meeting of the 1989-90 year in June. This year's board members are Dora May Coleman (president), Marsha Studer (past president), Johnelle Foley (secretary-treasurer), Judith Brown, Mary Lou Christensen, Richard Huset, Brian Osberg, Deborah Plumb, Angie Smith, Esther Tatley, and Patricia Tschida. Ex officio members are Dean Robert Kane, Associate Dean James Boen, Minnesota Alumni Association (MAA) staff



*Dora May Coleman*

representative Paula Sanders, and MAA executive director Margaret Carlson.

Coleman, the group's president, notes that "the society has

a broad mission: to promote excellence in SPH programs, to be of service to its alumni and students, and to advance the development of public health. Each year we have developed goals and objectives to accomplish this mission. This year we will be working on several programs.

"One is student relations, where an ongoing mentor program matches public health students with professionals in the field. The program provides career guidance and better pre-

pares the student for employment.

"A second is curriculum. One study, which included a survey of SPH graduates, has been completed. The preliminary data were reported at an International Forum of Environmental Health Faculty at the National Environmental Health Association's meeting in Seattle in June. It was received as one of the better studies in this country. Copies of the survey results are available from the dean's office.

*Continued on page 4*

## FACULTY NEWS



Ian Greaves

• **Ian A. Greaves** was named associate professor and head of the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health in July. Before coming to Minnesota, Greaves served as acting director of the Harvard Educational Resource Center at the Harvard School of Public

Health. He also has worked with the University of New South Wales' Department of Medicine in Australia. His research interests focus on occupational lung diseases and the evaluation of new methods for respiratory epidemiology.

• **Arthur Leon**, professor in the Division of Epidemiology, was an invited participant at the 12th International Puijo Symposium in Kuopio, Finland, in July. In addition, he received an honor award in physiology at the meeting for his research on the relationship between exercise and coronary heart disease. Leon also was made an adjunct faculty member at the National Health University's Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va.

• **Epidemiology Professor Russell Luepker** was named president of the American Heart Association, Minnesota Affiliate, for 1989-90 at the affiliate's 42nd annual meeting in June. As president, Luepker will be the principal spokesperson for the organization in medical matters and in legislation.

• **James Neaton**, assistant professor, Division of Biostatistics, taught at the Third Advanced International Seminar on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention in Brussels, Belgium, this past summer. Participants in the seminar came from 25 countries.

• **Joan Patterson** joined the maternal and child health major (Division of Human Development and Nutrition) July 1 as assistant professor. Her interests focus on psychosocial issues related to chronic illness and handicapping conditions of children. Since receiving her doctorate in family social science at the University of Minnesota in 1983, Patterson has been associate director of the University's Family Stress and Coping Project and an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

## Alumni Society Continued from page 3

"Continuing education represents a third area of emphasis. The continuing-education program, new this year, will look at ways in which the School can provide programs where public health professionals can earn continuing-education credits or become certified in specific areas of public health.

"As for future directions, we examine the society's mission each year to be sure it is still viable and that it is indeed where we want to be, and then we develop a strategic plan for the board's operation.

"Finally, we are continuing to present prestigious awards. Since 1986, for example, the society has presented the Gaylord W. Anderson Public Health Alumni Award to an outstanding graduate of the School.

"If you have any ideas or suggestions in these areas or would like to work with us, let us know. Remember, any member of the society is welcome at board meetings. If you're not a member, we encourage you to join and become active. Membership is open to all graduates and former students who have completed 15 credits in the School of Public Health.

"We anticipate a busy year and would like to hear from all of you."

## IN MEMORIAM

• **Elmer A. Huset Jr.** (M.P.H., environmental health, 1947) died July 5, in Fridley, Minn. Formerly the general manager of the St. Paul Water Department, Huset also was chief engineer for the Minnesota Department of Health and served with the Army Corps of Engineers. A memorial fund has been established in his name at the School.

• **Harold J. Paulus**, professor emeritus in environmental health, died Aug. 14 in Minneapolis. Paulus was a well-respected and popular adviser and teacher specializing in the effects of air pollution. He joined the faculty in 1957 and retired in 1979.

## Gerontological Society to Meet in Minneapolis

The 1989 annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) will be held Nov. 17-22 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Minneapolis.

In conjunction with the meeting, two preconference workshops are being organized and cosponsored by the School's Minnesota Area Geriatric Education Center. "Long-Term Care: Making Good Decisions Under Stress" also is cosponsored by the American Geriatrics Society and the Long-Term Care Decisions Resource Center, which is part of SPH. "Faculty Seniority in Research Universities: Costs, Assets, and Opportunities" is cosponsored

primarily by the Association of American Universities, the GSA, and the University's Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, All-University Council on Aging, and Department of Educational Policy and Administration. Both workshops will be held Nov. 17. members. About 3,000 of them are expected to attend the annual meeting, which is being held in Minneapolis for the first time in two decades.

For more information on GSA or the annual program, contact Jeanne Bader, Box 197 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455; or call 612/624-3904.

## MnTap Continued from page 1

quick—and that's what a lot of small companies need."

Desens points out that not only does the company benefit and the intern gain valuable on-the-job experience, but in some cases, the solutions are transferable to other companies as well.

"It's a win-win setup for everybody," he says.

*MnTAP's advice is free to small and medium-size businesses in Minnesota. For information or assistance, call 625-4949 (Twin Cities) or 800/247-0015 (greater Minnesota).*

## CHALLENGE

Published by the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Box 197 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; telephone (612) 624-6669.

Robert L. Kane, M.D., dean.

Editor: Mary Hoff

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.