

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### WHICH WAY AMCA?

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It seems most appropriate for the American Mosquito Control Association to observe and even draw upon the spirit of our nation's Bicentennial celebration; and what more appropriate place to do so than Boston where responsible revolution began and has continued more or less down to the present . . . today "rocking" along on a busing controversy.

Twenty years ago (10% of the Bicentennial span) I had the privilege of serving this Association as its president. Almost 20 years previous to that, I began my pro-

fessional career in vector control after emerging from the then quiet and peaceful University of California at Berkeley, appropriately motivated by Herms and Gray. And approximately 20 years earlier twin brother, Bob, and I first saw the light of day. Since Bob turned 60 last year (and is retiring in 2 months) you can readily deduce that our (my) lifetime to date amounts to nearly one-third of the entire Bicentennial period. Accordingly, our country has really only existed for the span of 3 lifetimes. Incredible, isn't it,

how much has happened during so relatively short a period of history, particularly within the last decade?

Looking back upon mosquito control as it was 40 years, even 20 years ago, I admit to both astonishment and chagrin over the change between then and now. The technological principles remain largely the same, but the practices have become distressingly complicated today, simply because government has gone goofy trying to regulate everybody and everything. It used to be possible, even expected, that technically competent professionals should make administrative and operational decisions relating to all aspects of a vector control program. In recent years, however, we have experienced an intrusion of attorneys, fiscal types and other efficiency oriented "facilitators" who have preempted the roles of career professionals in government. Peculiar it is that such a travesty should come about, since institutions of higher learning have developed career training to meet the technical needs of public service and civil service systems have taken great pains to qualify the most meritorious candidates to fulfill the demanding technical requirements of vector control programs.

Many years ago, a conservationist was regarded as a well-intentioned, more or less abstract naturalist who was entitled to passive respect, but was rarely taken too seriously. However, this was before the wide-swath spinoff from Rachel Carson which has led to the environment becoming big game for politicians and a discovery area for self-appointed "ecologists," both public and private. Today everyone even remotely concerned is nosing into the act. Environmental groups of all kinds have sprung up, representing "consumer" interest in pollution prevention. Some appear to be open-minded to facts; others, largely led by "legal beagles," began with a posture of knowing it all and show no willingness to recognize that any new facts might come into existence. Certainly the public at large must be hopelessly confused as to what is fact and fiction; as to what is essential government

activity; and, what is simply nonsense.

Our federal government began the environmental pollution prevention pandemonium by superimposing an Environmental Protection Agency upon its traditional Departments of Agriculture, Health (Education, & Welfare), and Interior preempting many of their understandable roles, preempting a number of state functions (the most important being pesticide regulation) and generally creating nationwide confusion which endures to the present day. The easiest, and I might add, the most costly way in government is to create a new agency to seek to cope with a complex problem. Of course, what is health still remains health, what is agricultural remains just that, and what is conservational continues to be the same. Needless to say, states and local governments have parroted the "Great Uncle" and a patchwork of resemblant cross-over agencies is unfolding across the nation. A similar impact happened in the area of occupational health and safety. The next thrust came in legislation promulgated by various federal and state resource agencies featuring stringent restrictions upon any modification of the environment and characterized by involved permit requirements. The product of these many environmental protection manifestations has been regulation upon regulation to the extent that state and local vector control programs have been snarled, obstructed and impeded in performing their traditional programs as required.

By now you may well be wondering what the foregoing has to do with the title of this presentation. Simply this, our Association has a membership consisting of many hundreds of highly competent ecologists who have been quietly practicing this science many years before the word "ecology" became so popularly abused. The practice of mosquito and related vector control has long required and received discerning judgment by program professionals in the balanced use of physical, biological and chemical technology to achieve a depressed level of target species tolerable to the public served. Vector-

borne disease has also been effectively suppressed where adequate control programs exist. Our programs represent the highest kind of ecological significance since they directly serve human ecology. Yet, at no time in the course of development of environmental protection legislation has our Association, or any significant number of its members, been invited to provide input in helping to build the environmental program which vitally affects all of us in safeguarding human health and comfort. Mosquito and other vector control have been largely ignored, or at best subordinated, in the establishment of over-all environmental protection priorities. Fish, wildlife and endangered species have a more prominent identity in the present scheme of things than do people.

In attempting to analyze why this should be the case, I can only conclude that the American Mosquito Control Association is not well enough known, or is too restricted in its scope to be considered eligible to speak for the comprehensive field dealing with the control of animals of public health significance. Yet, the total effort in mosquito control is drastically greater than all other public health vector control activities combined. In this regard, I have frequently been asked, "How can an association deal only with mosquitoes?" We understand the breadth of our favorite subject and can answer this, but I doubt that the public, the Congress, or government officials at large will ever come to identify mosquito control alone as the appropriate voice of vector control as it relates to human ecology.

Let us critically examine our Association as to what it is and what it might be. We have evolved since 1944 from a core of mosquito control workers on the Atlantic Coast to now number over 3,000 diverse members largely in the northern part of the Western Hemisphere, but extending on a scattered basis to the far reaches of the world. Yes, it is presently a fine Association, but it is really only reaching adolescence when compared with a human being. Its maturity could bring about a new dimension and perspective

which can represent its existing members even more adequately and attract many others to the fold.

I am annually impressed with the resolve and dedication of each Association president. He performs his function to the best of his ability, but deep down inside I daresay (having been through it), he leaves office with only a limited sense of accomplishment; even more so he has a feeling of frustration over what couldn't be accomplished within the present structure and pattern of functioning of our Association. The vice president annually becomes submerged in organizing the program for the upcoming conference. The president-elect, having given birth to the previous year's program, relaxes and recovers until his administration goes into effect the following year. The regional directors, for the most part, wait for things to happen, which rarely do. Certain of the committees make small to moderate waves during the year. Our very capable editor, Dr. Bickley, and his staff produce commendable issues of *Mosquito News* every quarter of the year. Occasionally a new technical publication comes into existence. The Board of Directors and some of the committee chairmen meet in an intensive session the day before each annual conference and again at the close of each conference. A perfunctory business meeting of a couple of hours duration completes the normal protocol of the Association for the year. These remarks in no way suggest criticism of those doers within the Association who richly deserve praise. The simple fact is the Association can and should do much more if it is to realize its vital potential role as the respected and observed voice of mosquito and related vector control. It has become increasingly evident in recent years that outside organizations have much greater impact upon government than can possibly be accomplished by individuals within government. This Association can and should aim to realize this position of advantage.

Speaking of doers in the Association, our Executive Director, Thomas D. Mul-

hern, is certainly number one. Tommy Mulhern, since 1944 when the AMCA began, dedicated himself and has since devoted much of his time, his heart and soul to the cause. His office and what it might be for the benefit of the AMCA, are really what my presentation is all about. Tommy Mulhern (aided by a stenographer) represents the start of a greatly needed central office, which only lacks a program. The Association should function within and through its central office on a daily basis, planning for and representing the needs of the Association and its membership in prospect; regrettably much of our activity is performed in retrospect. This in no way suggests that there should be a diminution of officer, Board of Directors, committee or publications activity. A strong central office would use, increase and reinforce one and all. Perhaps the most vital service the central office of the AMCA should offer is helping to defend mosquito and other vector control agencies against suits brought by wild eyed "environmentalists" and other nefarious interests seeking to obstruct control programs. When judgments occur in the courts adverse to traditional and accepted control practices, the precedent effect can be extremely deleterious to all control agencies.

Most everyone in the Association I have spoken to agrees that an appropriate central office is in the future of the AMCA, but, of course, the conspicuous question inevitably raised is: how can it be funded? This question lies somewhat along the line of: which came first, the chicken or the egg? And this kind of circular questioning would postpone the action indefinitely. In fact, the creation of a real central office with its own program can in itself be the answer to the question. It takes staff and effort to raise funds and to secure them in the form of assured annual income.

What are the potential sources of income? The following offer live possibilities:

1. Sustaining members—the wide vari-

ety of manufacturers, jobbers and sellers of equipment, materials and services pertaining to mosquito and other vector control have barely begun to be reached. An aggressive recruitment program, coordinated with the Regional Directors and the hemisphere-wide control agencies should develop a substantial commitment of funds.

2. Subscribing members—Administrative and technical information released can be periodically developed as memoranda of value to state, regional and local vector control agencies to attract participating membership subscriptions. This would include standards, legislative reviews, procedures, interpretations, critiques and miscellaneous informational releases. Several hundred sustaining members are prospective.

3. General membership—A broader base of members would be sought within the scope of public health vector control, at first Western Hemisphere-wide and eventually worldwide. I have long considered this Association as the logical voluntary complement of the World Health Organization. Its objective might well be that of improving human ecology through addressing worldwide vector-borne disease and discomfort associated with diverse obnoxious and hazardous animals. Membership in our Association might well become attractive to every politician, administrator, professional and technician associated directly or indirectly with environmental health activities throughout the world. It is conceivable that support of such a global undertaking might even be forthcoming from the World Health Organization. The first step should be to seek to interest the Pan American Health Organization in helping to sponsor the Association. A Spanish edition of *Mosquito News* and other releases with a special section dealing with PAHO activities might help to motivate such support.

4. Grants for performing vital public

- services remain to be sought from various foundations. Overhead costs are allowable and expected in performing the committed activities. It is even possible that funding might be received with no strings attached because of the value to the public of the Association's program.
5. Consultation—the central staff and selected members could perform consulting services to nations, states, counties, districts, cities and any other interested organizations and groups seeking advice or information pertaining to mosquito and other vector control, including biological, engineering, legal, administrative, evaluative and expert witness services.
  6. Educational media—Brochures, training materials, periodicals, releases, slides, movies, and selected reports could be developed and issued for sale to contracting agencies, organizations or groups. *Mosquito News* might well become a monthly issue produced within a central office.
  7. Placement services—The Association might well become a clearing house for openings in vector control programs on a worldwide basis. Such a service would be of great value to both employer and employee and accordingly to the Association.
  8. Develop examinations—Civil service systems at all levels need responsible questions and answers for examinations in the broad field of vector control. The recent trend toward certification and licensing would appear to afford further opportunities in this area.
  9. Evaluation—Perform scientific tests and other evaluative services to determine the veracity of claims on labels and performance of vector control products.

10. Perform environmental impact investigations and reports for vector control clients.

There are undoubtedly other sources of income which would become apparent once the central office got to prospecting. Most important, is to get started. Returning to Tommy Mulhern—while he has always been a dynamo, characterized by a normal 60-hour work week when only 40 were required, he's no longer a "spring rooster." Putting the matter bluntly, Tommy is carrying the emerging program load of the Association almost single handedly. As a starter, he should be furnished a capable young understudy to help him develop what I have previously referred to as the Association program. Such a person would become the logical individual to build upon in the future, having absorbed the invaluable background and wisdom of Tommy Mulhern. Gradually additions can be made as fiscal capability permits. Needless to say, Tommy Mulhern deserves top consideration by the Association once income flow is assured.

Some of you may wonder if this presentation was aided by rose-colored glasses. I assure you that only conventional bifocals, prescribed a couple of years ago, reinforced these convictions I have accumulated as a result of observing our Association evolve over the past 30 years. My recommendation is for the AMCA to undertake a responsible revolution of its own to take needed steps to become the unquestioned voice of mosquito and other vector control, first within the Western Hemisphere and ultimately, the world. The alternative is to continue to drift, only to realize that one day all of the major decisions regarding our field of endeavor will have been made by others—to our disadvantage. We have a choice. WHICH WAY AMCA?