

September 13, 2022

"Here's to the ones that we got"

Ready Nation: People for most months share some of the highest readership stats of any NEMA newsletter, something that you should be proud of. Because much like this association, it involves the **best aspect of NEMA - our people**. The members that bring their character, smarts, and generous time to make this association the best for state emergency management. This month we are taking a look back to remember a few of our wonderful and dedicated **NEMA People!**



The other day, an incredible quote came to attention: **"We must stop to listening speed."** Listening is where the learning happens. Listening speed is where the fun begins. . .

September 2016 is the timeline where this fun began, although NEMA had been publishing Meet a Member now titled People prior to (and will continue). These were the times where **James Joseph (Tidal Basin) threw shade on Andrew Velasquez, III's** 2010 – 2016 hairstyle with a quick follow up complement to liking his 2016 hairstyle better. That was all good fun and maybe brave for us to follow through with the production. Fortunately, we followed with **Wendy Smith-Reeve's** (NEMA Past President) issue that put us back to a more professional sound. We learned how incredibly intelligent **Sam Ladich** (NV Counsel) is with the heart of gold to choose public service, "I am 'all in' when it comes to emergency management/homeland security and look to be more effective in my role as legal counsel for the State of Nevada." Those that are "all in," no matter their role, are the ones that stand the test of time adding quality to emergency management.

The Smithsonian Institute having an emergency management program is fascinating, and yet it was every day for **Eric Gentry** (Smithsonian's Assoc. Director of EM). One would have thought that he would win best photo as he took a selfie with a Vought F4U-1D Corsair (think of all the Aces flying in WWII) behind him; but that was until **Bryan Fisher** (AK) used the picture from the NEMA Annual Forum in Savannah, GA, when he and his wife dressed as pirates! If we used the readership statics, **Bryan currently stands as the most opened email for People news blast – to date.**

Many stories of the great outdoors came out as treasure troves when you speak with **A.J. Gary (AR), Erica Bornemann (VT), Lynn Budd (WY), Greg Engle (WS), Tina Titze (SD), and Steve Solomon (Life Science Logistics)**. Not to mention those who have since left their positions for the next chapters. "Watch this" coming from a Michigander is always geared towards a great laugh, just ask **Chris Kelenske**.

Emergency managers love their music. There is **Mike Sprayberry's** (NEMA Past President) eclectic selection that probably is still played on volume loud. When you hear Counting Crows, you should think of **Shandi Treloar** (EM Partners). **Dave Fogerson's** (NV) favorite hit is *Loose Yourself* by Eminem. We learned through **Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim's** interview that NM DHSEM has a playlist on Spotify! Yigal Bar-Av (AECOM) has the kiddos talk to Alexa for their playlist in his hosted backyard BBQs.

Sports is another fun subject. **Sima Merick** (OH) has a charming way of loving the MAC conference and The Ohio State University – Alum and family ties v. living in Ohio. **Jeremy Slinker** (KY) runs marathons for fun. **John Benson** (IA) is an Iowa State Cyclone football fan. **Russ Strickland** (MD) likes the Ravens, although his 'go to' Tennessee whiskey is still, no scratch that, will always be in question. Shout out to **Cris McCombs** (Hagerty) and her love of all that is Boston! Fenway, her lovely dog, would be happy to tell you about it during your next call with Cris. **Curtis Brown** (I-DIEM) smartly would not choose between his alums – he appreciates his experiences at Radford, Virginia Tech, and VCU. If the three universities ever get in a squabble over who to claim Curtis, maybe **Delila Bruno** (MT) could have them play paper, rock, scissors to end the argument.

The tributes to EMAC were ultimate pieces of wonder. Hearing the work of states helping states completely motivates the helper in anyone. The tribute to **Leon Shaifer, the 'Grandfather of EMAC'**. **Angee Morgan** (KS) and **Jonathan York's** (KS) epic piece walking you through the incredible achievements of EMAC. **Delila Bruno** (MT) and **Jake Ganieany** (MT) followed up with the excellent behind the scenes look to what it means to be a National Coordinating State. The late **Cecil Whaley** (TN) shared rich EMAC history as he was present when EMAC was before EMAC and only a concept, to seeing its full potential. A beautiful culmination showing the strong reputation of EMAC, what other time does family come together rapidly to help one another than during a disaster.

And then there were the travels. Both **Dawn Brantley** (MA) and **Luke Meyers** (HI) took trips across the country, but the experience may not have been the same – Dawn trucking around 6 kids, age range from 5 – 16; while Luke and his wife did it before getting married. **Mike Willis** (CO) looks forward to going back to Slovenia. **Alicia Tate-Nadeau** (IL) enjoyed one of the best dinners in Iraq. **Brad Richy** (ID) claimed the Great Wall of China is the highlight from all his travels around the world.

The one offs were also incredible adventures, when we would bring in groups of people to share their thoughts. The NEMA Past Presidents were well represented between **Ellen Gordon, Jim Mullen, and Dave Maxwell**. A Different Kind of Lead was monumental to have such incredible leaders all filed into a room to humor us with our questions of curiosity. Dedicated Through Academics brought home amazing staff like **Joshua Kelly** (DE) and **Autumn Stout** (SD) as they worked full time and were adjunct professors. The PA/IA Subcommittee received a well-deserved spot with their lead **Laura Adcock** (OH). How Our People Take Care of Their People was a timely piece to share best practices of how the EM teams were holding up in the middle of the COVID-19 response. The Holiday Cheer edition in December 2020 was so special as our committee chairs shared their personal traditions.

The one thing in common with all the interviews is the pride each leader has of their teams and what they do, day-in-and-day-out, in good times and those times of challenge. No matter the person or the subject, you always learn something from someone. The connection to help is what makes emergency management so magical. That is what we mean when we say **#NEMAFamily**.

What you do matters. Not only in your response to policy but to you as a person. And NEMA is always here, to take the pause, to ensure we are at listening speed.

What Will Matter?

by Michael Josephson

Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.
There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days.
All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten
will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.
It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations
and jealousies will finally disappear.

So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do lists will expire.
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.
It won't matter where you came from
or what side of the tracks you lived on at the end.

It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.
Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter?
How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought
but what you built, not what you got but what you gave.
What will matter is not your success
but your significance.
What will matter is not what you learned
but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity,
compassion, courage, or sacrifice
that enriched, empowered or encouraged others
to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence
but your character.
What will matter is not how many people you knew,
but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories
but the memories that live in those who loved you.
What will matter is how long you will be remembered,
by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.
Choose to live a life that matters.

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