

# The Alabama Environmentalist

## Alabama Environmental Health Association

an affiliate of the National Environmental Health Association

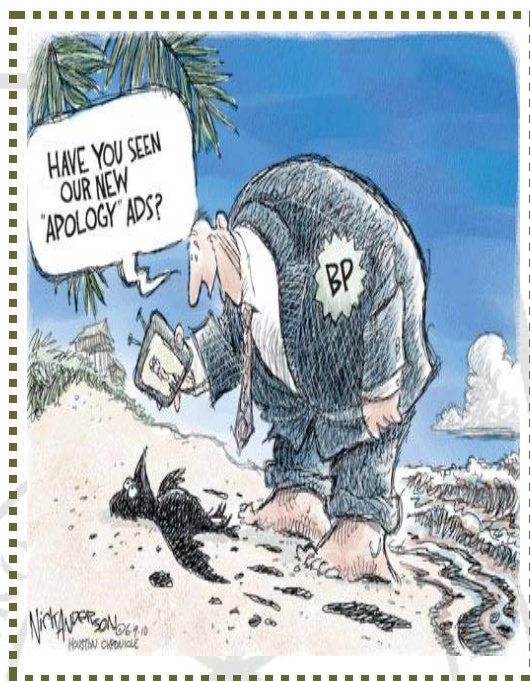
FALL 2010 NEWSLETTER

### Water Issues— Southwest Chapter

Emergency and disaster response have kept the environmentalists in the South West Chapter busy during the past several months. Water shortages in Clark and Wilcox Counties and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico have required us all to be flexible. It would be safe to say that most everyone in our chapter has been involved. Several environmentalists have been called upon to fill new roles. Others have filled familiar roles normally only used in short term responses like hurricanes. And the remaining environmentalists have stepped up to fill the voids left by those responding.

Who could have guessed that we would be delivering water to communities instead of inspecting the bottling process or that we would be training to sniff oysters for petroleum instead of looking for the harvest tags?

In January, the unusually cold weather with extended below freezing temperatures had a hand in creating some new roles for several of



our environmentalists. Public water systems servicing the Thomasville area in Clark County and Gees Bend area in Wilcox County lost pressure. Around 5000 homes, an entire school system and many businesses including food establishments were without water for several days.

Public health issues were obviously the main concern during the water shortage. Water was needed not only

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### BamaJam — Southeast Chapter

One of Alabama's newest music and arts festivals has quickly become a major attraction. Beginning in 2008 in a converted south Alabama peanut field, BamaJam has become a surprising success. The 2010 festival, held in early June, featured top name entertainers such as Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn, Ja-



Buddy Guy

mey Johnson, Jason Aldean, The Black Crowes and Kid Rock.

Along with these entertainers come massive crowds. Estimates of over 300,000 country music fans in attendance for the three day event; has reinforced this festival's growing popularity.

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#### THE ALABAMA ENVIRONMENTALIST

IS THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, INC. FOUNDED IN 1954, AEHA IS A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITHIN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. AEHA IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION. TO CONTACT THE EDITOR, PLEASE E-MAIL:

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PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE

**WWW.AEHA-  
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FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION REGARDING UPCOMING EVENTS WITH OUR ORGANIZATION

## The Midnight Float — East Central Chapter

It was spring race week at Talladega 2010. Several Environmentalists had been kicking around the idea of a post-race paddling trip down Choccolocco Creek, just south of the famed track. Two environmentalists, Trina Bryan and Russell Harry, decided it was go time and gained a soft approval from the leader of the group, supervisor, Mrs. Alita Chappell.

“Do you mind if we float and paddle a while after work on Thursday?” Trina asked. “I don’t care what yall do after hours; you can float all night but you better be here in the morning ready to work,” Mrs. Chappell replied.

### Float On!

Even after a long Thursday, Trina and Russell would not be derailed. They lost some daylight dealing with the logistics of the trip. Place Russell’s car at Hwy 77; load his boat onto Trina’s

truck; and get to Turners Mill Road. The two Environmentalists and their boats shoved off around 6 o’clock. According to Russell’s map, the trip was about 6 miles, but the water should move swiftly because of several “shoals” along the way. He opted not to take his cell phone, because clearly this would be a short trip. “We’ll be back



before dark... we don’t need any technology,” Russell, the experienced paddler, reassured Trina, and of course she trusted him.

The trip got off to a great start, the water flowed nicely; they talked about how peaceful it was to be on the water, in the fresh air. Soon, the fast moving creek

became a flat, and lake-like. Trina’s boat was not designed to cut through such water and their progress slowed dramatically. In the fading spring light, Trina asked, “How much further you think Mr. Russell?” Russell was already worried about this very thing. He estimated about another hour before dark, and knew they weren’t even close. “Not too much further and we’ll be home free... the water should pick back up at Jackson Shoals,” he stated calmly, hiding his concern. “We probably need to pick up the pace a bit.”

Miles of paddling later, it was now dark and they still weren’t even half way there. “It’s just around *this* corner,” Russell would say. Around more corners they went, only to see what looked like another 10 miles of flat water. At about 8 o’clock they

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## Northern Chapter Update

- A Lawrence County man has been charged with stalking and impersonating a public servant. He apparently went to someone’s home posing as an ADPH employee and stated he was there to collect a water sample. He then told the woman he could help her get a job with the state, he talked the woman into allowing him to give her a ride in his car. He proceeded to take the woman to his house in Cullman County, where he tried to lure her into his bedroom.

- Another individual claiming to be an ADPH employee called numerous restaurants in Madison County stating that they would be by at a scheduled time to do an inspection. Restaurant operators contacted Cheryl Edge and she assured them that the inspections were not pre-scheduled and that no one from the department had made the calls. Yet another individual posing as one of us, who would have thought?

- RV parks seem to be popping up around both Smith

and Guntersville Lake, thus keeping Marshall, Cullman and Winston County busy with onsite issues.

- In the Shoals Area, a bat tested positive for the rabies virus.

- In Winston County, the first town (Haleyville) has passed the “wet” vote. The ordinance should be ready by October.

- Winfred Cotton has just had his appendix removed and is doing fine.



### EHTER Press Release — West Central Chapter

Environmentalists Haskey Bryant, Angie Wilkerson, and Lisa Holland, from Jefferson County Department of Health, recently completed Homeland Security training at the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), located in Anniston, Alabama. The CDP is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and is the only federally-chartered Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) training

facility in the nation.

The CDP provides federally funded, interdisciplinary training for emergency responders in Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) across the United States and the U.S. Territories, for 10 response disciplines: Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Service, Fire Service, Governmental Administrative, Hazardous Materials, Healthcare, Law Enforcement, Public Health, Public Safety Communications, and Public Works.

Responders participating in CDP resident and non-resident training courses are selected from the nation's 11 million emergency responders. The training endures that responders gain critical skills and confidence to be better prepared to effectively respond to local incidents or potential WMD incidents.

Information about CDP training programs can be found at <http://cdp.dhs.gov>.



#### Mission of the Alabama Environmental Health Association:

“Providing continuing education to enhance skills while promoting high standards, professionalism, and cooperation among government, industry, and academia in environmentally related areas.”



#### AEC SURVEY—CHANCE FOR PRIZES

That's right!! The chapter with the most responses to this survey will have a drawing for 3 gift cards at \$15 each at their next chapter meeting!!

You can type this link into your browser or go to the AEHA web site and click on the link.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/32QBPKP>

The survey is open until October 1, 2010

## Water Issues—continued from page 1

for consumption but also for sanitary reasons including flushing toilets. ADPH staff coordinated with local EMAs, public officials, volunteer fire departments and the National Guard to provide water to the public. Environmentalists delivered, setup, and oversaw the operation of water purification units. They collected and transported water samples. Others made arrangements for both the donation of potable water from a processor and the distribution to the community.

Throughout the shortage and when pressure was restored, environmentalists performed the very familiar task of visiting each food establishment to assure safe practices were being followed. A few weeks following the shortage, several environmentalists participated in a comprehensive door to door survey of the effected areas.

The response effort required by the oil spill in the Gulf has involved many layers and required extreme flexibility by the entire department. The large number and varied disciplines of staff needed along with the length of time of the response has been unprecedented. The health department has been responding for 24 hours a day, seven days a week,



for over three months. As of this writing, the well head is capped but only time will tell how long the public health scaled back response will continue.

Environmentalists have played key parts in all layers of the response. These layers include the national response, the state response, and the local response. The national response, called Unified Command (UC), is coordinated by the Coast Guard and BP. The unified command in Mobile is much larger than the one stood up following Hurricane Katrina and operates 24/7. It is definitely ICS (incident command system) to the max!

Several environmentalists have rotated as the leader of the Public Health Unit (PHU) in the Planning Section of the UC. The PHU is made up of an official from each Gulf state health department, an FDA official, and a CDC appointed toxicologist. The purpose of the unit is to coordinate a consistent public health re-

# Fall 2010 Newsletter

## BamaJam—Continued from page 1

BamaJam presents many challenges for local public health officials, according to Public Health Environmental Supervisor Wanda Cotter with the Coffee County Health Department. "I would say that the greatest obstacle with this huge event is to have the food vendors ready for inspection and permitting prior to the beginning of the 3-day event. The gates open at noon on Thursday and every year we begin permitting on Wednesday morning. We will still have vendors every year that have not been permitted by the time the gates are opened." The Coffee County Health Department permitted 37 food vendors during the 2008 event. In 2009 the number of food vendors increased to 53. For 2010 the number of food vendors decreased to 31.

In addition to food, there are other public health concerns that must be addressed. Both solid waste and sewage disposal present unique challenges. "We have 15 approved onsite sewage systems at the site which are utilized for the campgrounds and a set of permanent showers with restrooms. In addition to those facilities, conventional portable toilets are placed throughout the event area and are serviced regularly by a pumper. In 2008, we had 250 portable toilets, but in 2009, the Sponsor chose to decrease that number to 225, and that was a nightmare! Needless to say, the number of portable toilets increased to 350 in 2010."

After the event, there are several days of cleanup before the site is transformed back to its natural state. Wanda Cotter says, "If you drive by this location at the corner of Highway

167 and Coffee County Road 156, just three miles north of the Coffee County Health Department, any time of the year other than the month prior to BamaJam, it appears to be a large field with some type of a "barn" on it. My 11 year old daughter still has difficulty believing that it is that busy and crowded one week, and empty the next!"

Festival Sponsors are already making preparations for BamaJam 2011, which they hope to be even bigger. If you would like to attend BamaJam, the event typically begins each year on the first Thursday in June. The festival's website is [www.bamajammusicfestival.com](http://www.bamajammusicfestival.com).

Written by Stacy L. Williamson  
with special thanks to Wanda Cotter



Become a member of our national organization—for more information go to [www.neha.org](http://www.neha.org)

## Claude Crabtree, Jr. 1936-2010

### Public Health Senior Environmentalist

I am not really sure where to begin paying homage to Claude Crabtree, Jr. There are many stories that either began with my father or ended with him, and I have no doubt he shared each one with many people. But this is how I remember him.

Born the son of a tenant farmer (for those that don't know, this is worse than share cropping) in the Appalachians of South-eastern Kentucky he was introduced to many hardships at an early age. After graduating from Pine Knot High School in 1956 he joined the Air Force. Now if you are doing the math, you will realize he was 20 years old when he graduated. In that region and during that time, there were demands placed on all the members of a family. My father and many of his peers, if they graduated, did so later due to the seasonal demands of farming. After an enlistment stationed in the Philippines with the Air Force, he was transferred to small base in Mobile, Alabama where he would complete his service and work as a civilian until 1965. Mobile quickly became his home. He married and started a family; but due to the pending closure of the Brookley AFB, he needed to secure a new job. With that in mind he applied for and was hired by the Mobile County Health Department as a maintenance man. This part is where his story gets good.

Now, in every life there is a pendulum point. A time in our lives when we are on the edge of what we are truly meant to be and do. This was his: In 1966 he was promoted to Environmental Health Specialist where he primarily worked in the Food Service Sanitation program. Now bear in mind this was 3 years before the FDA was administering sanitation programs, they were in uncharted waters and this was truly the "wild west" and, if Environmental Health was the Wild West in the 1960's, my dad thought he was Wyatt Earp. Throughout my childhood I was told stories of gallant battles with evil restaurateurs, meat market managers and food processors. As I grew older I came to realize, for the most part they were true. Being very zealous for his job, my father on several occasions was sent home for his battles. And like it is today, fighting is not an acceptable "rule enforcement" tool. Fortunately, he grew out of that and many people who knew him years later would have never dreamt he was capable of that behavior. But he managed to keep his cool for several more years.

One of the many traits that were passed from my grandfather to my father was the need to be a "rolling stone". He was always ready for a change. After talking with an Environmentalist in Baldwin County, he was convinced that the grass was indeed greener on the Stateside, so in the early 1970's, he applied for a job with State Public Health. His first assignment was as an Environmentalist covering multiple counties in South Alabama. He was based in Butler and worked; Conecuh, Loundes and Crenshaw to name a few. He worked 24/7; he was always on the job. As most families did, we enjoyed going for rides on weekend days. We would get ice cream, visit with friends or if we were lucky enough to pass by an illegal dump on a side road, we would rummage through them looking for names and addresses. This was an exciting time, at least for a young boy. It was days filled with dog heads in coolers, lots of mercury thermometers (*mercury was cool, but don't get caught breaking them*) and an occasional trip to a dairy (*if you got sent home from school and your dad still needed to inspect them*). We had a number of those "take your son to work" days. Ah, the "Good Ole Days" (*sarcasm*). My Dad truly had a special ability to take care of his work and his family at the same time.

Family life becomes more of an influence in our lives the older we get. As with most, with an aging widowed mother and siblings far away, my Father left the Alabama Department of Public Health in 1979 (the Fob James years) for Kentucky. This was a very trying time. He tried countless times to get an Environmental Health job with either Kentucky Public Health or Tennessee Public Health but during that time nothing was available. After realizing his plight, in 1984, he returned to Alabama and the Alabama Department of Public Health. Taking a job with the Cullman County Health Department, where he retired in 2002 as a Public Health Senior Environmentalist.

Of all of the things my father did in his lifetime, his role as an Environmentalist was the one he was most proud. And through his pride in protecting the health of the public, I feel sure there are many that have benefited from his contributions.

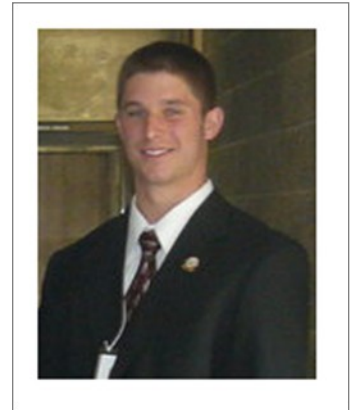


## 2010 AEHA Scholarship Winner

The scholarship winner for 2010 was Lucas Krueger. Lucas was the proud recipient awarded the **\$1000 AEHA Scholarship**. This is a one-time award, which is presented at the Alabama Environmental Health Association's annual meeting, it includes an honorary membership to AEHA, Inc. for one year.

Lucas is a student at Alabama A&M University studying with the Department of Food and Animal Sciences. Originally from Menomoneie, Wisconsin; Lucas wishes to start his career in the Dairy industry focusing on the conservation of resources and providing the public with wholesome and nutritious products. Congratulations Lucas for being this year's scholarship winner.

By Steven McDaniel



## 2010 Environmentalist of the Year Award Winner

The Alabama Environmental Health Association is now entering its 50th year, I am proud to present our 42<sup>nd</sup> Winner of the AEHA Environmentalist of the Year Award, Cyndi Tereszkieicz.

Cyndi started as a public health environmentalist in 1997 with the Houston County Health Department where she served for more than ten years before joining the area 10 Emergency Preparedness Team. Cyndi has been tagged by her peers with terms like selfless, tireless worker, go getter, self starter and always motivated. Throughout her career with ADPH Cyndi has developed and led training with the Health Department and the community. Cyndi's involvement with civic organizations and her church set her apart from many of us by her contributions to the community in which she lives. The letters of support for Cyndi not only told the story of who she was but confirmed that she exemplifies the criteria to be considered for this award and we thank her for that example.

The Environmentalist of the Year Award is the most prestigious achievement award for individuals working in Environmental Health with the Alabama Department of Public Health. To be recognized as one of our outstanding finalists again is an honor in itself.



*Visit the AEHA website under the Awards sites for past winners, nominees and award criteria*

### 2010 Ansel Mullins Award Winner

The Alabama Environmental Health Association established this award in 1983, to award those environmentalist that have shown to be self motivated, conscientious, intuitive and possessing a good attitude. I am proud to present our 29<sup>th</sup> Winner of the Ansel C. Mullins Award, Beverly M. Spivey.

Barbour County has truly been lucky to have such a public servant as Beverly. Active in her church, community, and being the self motivated conscientious employee she is tailored herself as a nominee deserving of this award.

Ansel C. Mullins represents an outstanding leader in public health, this award in honor of the father of the Alabama Environmental Health Association.

*Visit the AEHA website under the Awards sites for past winners, nominees and award criteria*



### Midnight Float—continued from page 2

heard what sounded like Niagara Falls, Russell left a weary and worried Trina behind to scout it out. Russell wished he had some of that technology with him, like a flashlight, Niagara Falls was way more intimidating in the dark. As they approached the falls, they noticed a flicker of light, it almost looked like a small flashlight... perhaps a fisherman! "HELP! HELP! HELP! SOMEBODY HELP US!" Trina screamed, amid the roar of the water. As the hopeful pair got closer to the light, they were devastated to learn that it was only a burning ember. There was a huge logjam at the waterfall; someone had been trying to burn the debris.

It was at that low moment that Trina began to say things like "air rescue," "leave me," "go on for help" and "just save yourself Mr. Russell". There they were; a 5 foot waterfall, no portage, no shoes, no light, fast water, jagged rocks...Not good. Trina raised her arms to the moon-lit heavens and proclaimed, "God, if you will just get me out of this, I promise I will never do anything like this again." At one point, they sat on a huge island boulder and performed meditative breathing exercises.

They finally began moving again, now both in Russell's canoe, and finally made it to the half-way point, Jackson Trace Road was just ahead. It was 8:30. "Do you think we should get out and get some help?" Trina asked. "Jackson Trace Road is very remote... there wont be any cars for a while," Russell speculated. Of course, as soon as they passed under the bridge, a truck, their last ray of hope, drove right over them. "Another good call Mr. Russell," Trina said sarcastically.

Again the paddlers dug in, they made their best progress in hours as they began to hear, or imagine hearing, Highway 77 ahead. They finally came upon a home, the first they'd seen since 6 o'clock. It was a rough looking, single-wide mobile home with several characters drinking and arguing in the yard. Russell heard some questionable and disturbing language, which Trina missed because she was loudly yelling, "HELP! HELP US!" "Shhhh," Russell hissed, "I don't think we want the help they'd offer." To avoid reenacting scenes from "Deliverance" or "Pulp Fiction", the pair made a serious push to distance themselves from the heathens.

At 9:30-ish, the pair finally eased into the boat ramp, right into the first of three search parties. Heading up this party was Revonda Stephens, Talladega's Environmental Secretary. "Yall are alive...Alita is gonna kill yall!" she yelled, adding, "Russell, you better call your wife right now!" Russell soon learned several things, that there were no less than 12 people looking for them, his phone can only hold 25 missed calls, and that missing persons reports can only be taken after one is missing for 24 hours. After loading the boat, calling off the search parties, and answering to loved ones, the adventure finally ended for the pair around 11 pm. The story was legendary by Friday in what became known as "Huck and Tom's Big Adventure". It was such a big hit that folks in the east-central chapter are planning some future floats together... just not race week.

Our new motto... lack of planning makes for better stories.

Written by Russell Harry

## Water Issues—continued from page 4

sponse across the states and to assure that all human health issues are appropriately addressed by those in command. (Talk about a new role!)

Operating on site and along side the UC, each state has a State Forwarding Operations Center (SFOC). Most every state agency has representatives assigned to this unit. This is the heart of the coordinated state response and where environmentalists have been working with ADEM, Marine Resources, AEMA, and others. Locally, environmentalists have staffed the Baldwin and Mobile County EMAs seven days a week since the onset to coordinate with local agencies and municipalities. Others have spent hours installing and maintaining current advisory and precautionary signs. Inspectors distributed information at condos along the beach over the weekend. Many have spent time investigating BP sites where thousands of workers are fed daily.

Both these situations have reminded us that every response is different and each requires flexibility, resourcefulness and teamwork. Most importantly, we have been reminded of the importance of what we do!

Space will not allow us to name everyone involved in the responses or details of the specific tasks involved. However, we all can look forward to more detailed presentations at future chapter meetings.

Written by Camilla English



Pictures from Fort Morgan, Alabama 2010

## Congratulations To:

Rachel Sullenger from the West Central Chapter for passing the Registered Environmental Health Specialist's Exam!

Teddy King from Southwest chapter is a new grandfather!

## Retirees:

**Barbara Henley**  
Solid Waste Officer for Covington County

**Christine Collins**  
Seafood Branch

**Toni Ackerson**  
Seafood Branch



## Presidents Letter



Greetings,

It has been an honor and privilege to continue to serve as President for the Alabama Environmental Health Association. The annual education conference, held at the Renaissance Ross Bridge, was richly rewarding. The events for the conference started out with a bio-fuel tour at the Hoover Safety Center and a golf tournament at the Oxmoor Valley Golf course. Proceeds from the golf tournament went to scholarships for the teen ambassadors (high school students) that assisted the association at the conference. Fabian Nelson was the keynote speaker presenting "A Daring Look at the Future of Environmental Health." There were thirty-nine wonderful speakers who were experts in their fields of study, and twelve exhibitors. The family outing was at the Hoover Met with Lindsey McDaniel (daughter of Steven McDaniel) throwing out the first pitch. Congratulations to the winners of the AEHA awards, Environmentalist of the Year was Cyndi Teresz-kiewicz and the Ansel C. Mullins was Beverly Spivey.

I encourage members to become active in the association and attend meetings regularly and to seek leadership roles within the organization. I found some interesting information about leaders and invite you to explore "the leader in you." There is a saying that great leaders are made, not born. This should give you hope that once you understand the characteristics of a great leader you can become one yourself. Here are a few things that every great leader, does or possesses to inspire others:

Leaders are always improving. They understand that things are changing around them and for them to be great leaders they must be changing too!

Great leaders inspire people around them to become better.

Leaders know how to concentrate on people's strengths, not their weaknesses.

Leaders are proactive, not reactive.

Leaders treat other people with respect and importance.

Great leaders are self-motivated. They understand there will be ups and downs in their lives and in their businesses, but they stay positive and do not let outside influences affect their attitudes.

Leaders are well spoken. They know how to say the right thing at the right time.

Leaders are always prepared.

Great leaders do not have big egos. They care about others as opposed, to being self-centered individuals.

Great leaders are great mentors.

Leaders are people who formulate goals and strive to achieve them.

Great leaders are ambitious, hard workers. They never expect more out of the people around them than they are willing to give themselves. This example is contagious and leads to everybody working harder.

I dare you to let these qualities emerge from you and blossom into a great leader too!

Lonnie F. Pressley, President 2010-2011

## AEHA 2010– 2011 Board of Directors

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### Upcoming Chapter Meetings

*Northern Chapter — Tuesday, October 26, 2010*

*West Central Chapter — Wednesday, October 27, 2010*

*East Central Chapter — Thursday, October 28, 2010*

*Southeast Chapter — Tuesday, November 2, 2010*

*Southwest Chapter — Wednesday, November 3, 2010*

Check the website for more information on the meeting locations and a copy of the meeting agenda