



IAQ RADIO+

Show Number: 777 BLOG

Mike McGuinness, CIH, CET, CIAQP Life and Times of an IEQ CIH & Jersey Boy

Good day and welcome to IAQ Radio+ episode 777 blog, this week presented another Life and Times show with Mike McGuinness of RK Environmental fame; the Life and Times of an IEQ CIH & “Jersey Boy”.

Michael McGuinness, is well known and respected for his deep technical expertise, field experience, role in the early days of mold and water loss training, standards development and "unapologetic no-nonsense New Jersey attitude".

Nuggets mined from today's episode:

You started your career in the 1970s with the NJ Department of Labor and then OSHA. What was the turning point that got you interested in IAQ?

Mike shared his career journey from his early work in New Jersey's Department of Labor and OSHA.

While working in an OSHA consultation program which provided free health and safety consulting to companies who agreed to rectify issues identified by the consultant. Mike investigated a building whose occupants complained of lightheadedness, headaches, lack of concentration, etc. Using a variety of monitoring equipment including detector tubes (which identified 3,000 PM of CO²); Mike found little to report. After encountering early cases of sick building syndrome. Mike left the government in 1984 to found RK (Ralph Kramden) Environmental. He began doing “Right to Know” surveys for schools and then added lead and asbestos when these substances became of concern. Jokingly Mike added after 1½ months experience mold was added to his repertoire.

Mike discussed his involvement with MidAtlantic Environmental Hygiene Resource Center (MEHRC) in developing the first mold worker course which he co-taught

with Mac Pearce and Davidge Warfield. [The course included notable observers including Joe Lstiburek, PhD].

Mike discussed his involvement with RIA's Water Loss Specialist course, for which he wrote Chapters for the training manual and presented during course (Health & Safety & Microbiology). Mike respects the academic and professional rigor required by the course.

IEQ subspecialty?

Mike outlined his experience with the IEQ subspecialty certification for industrial hygienists, which once had around 70 certified professionals but has since decreased to 45-50. The course has been discontinued due to a lack of interest and participation.

Just hanging out?

While hanging out in the lobby at an event, Mike observed a group discussion and to join there he met Lstiburek, Axelrad, Crandal, and others. He realized that by hanging out with smart people he could improve his knowledge.

The 4 Ps?

Mike credits Joe Lstiburek for teaching him the 4 P's: people, pollutants, pathways and pressure.

Mike added some more Ps: ignoring the 4P's results in IEQ Problems which result in Pissed Off People.

Mike-isms:

- Never get away from the basics so you don't have to get back to them.
- Harmony is when air pressure pulls pollutants away from people.
- Disharmony is when air pressure pushes pollutants towards people.
- On Hazardous Substances- less is good, more is bad

Mentors & Positive Influences:

Long list of people who have positively influenced Mike: Chin Yang, Joe Lstiburek, Phil Morey, Ed Light, Melinda Ballard, Sue Smith/MEHRC, Susan Valenti, Bob Krell, Karen Dannemiller, Hal Levin, Terry Brenan, Ken Martinez, Michael Berry, Bud Offerman, Mac Pearce, Susan Grayson, Harriet Burge, Harriet Ammon, ACGIH, Pete

Consigli, Joe Hughes, Cliff Zlotnik, ACGIH,... Mike credited Pete Consigli for building the bridge between Restoration and IEQ.

Business Mulligan? - Mike started his business without a business plan and still doesn't have a website, his broad-based professional interests and hobby interest coincide. Moisture, physics, building science. Mike opined there is always more to learn. In life and business Mike considers himself blessed and watched over by a guardian angel. Follows his gut feelings. Passionate about doing the right thing.

Do you know so and so? When asked whether he knows someone, Mike answers that he either does or doesn't travel in the same circles as the person he was queried about.

How many employees? Mike had 12 fulltime employees at his peak. He currently has 6 full-timers and during the summer an additional 12 student interns (interested in health & safety and IEQ) performing "Right to Know" surveys in schools, monitoring lead and asbestos projects, etc. Several of Mike's interns have gone on to become physicians.

Pet Peeves:

Charlatans preying upon chemical and mold injured folks with expensive medical testing. mycotoxin urine testing, etc. According to Mike, people that consume peanut butter are likely to have fungal mycotoxins in their urine.

Certifications that aren't real certifications:

Credentials that aren't real credentials. For example, a professor at New Jersey Institute of Technology was marketing and issuing PhDs (Professional Hygiene Diplomate).

According to Mike's research the purpose of a Certificate Program is to provide education. People who successfully complete a certificate course may not use acronyms behind their names.

Certificate Disqualification Test:

- 1) Is the organization granting the certificate also involved in the training?
- 2) Does the organization require their course be taken to obtain the certificate?

Certification Course

A certification course involves a professional assessment of knowledge independent of training courses, is only valid for a limited amount of time before continuing education is required. Grantor organization is not involved in training and there is no mandatory course attendance.

What organization Certifies the certifier? Many industry certifications lack proper accreditation and could be challenged in court. The NCCAA.org, ANAB.org and CESB.org are recognized accreditation organizations.

“The **ERMI (Environmental Relative Moldiness Index) test** is a method developed by the EPA to assess mold contamination in homes by analyzing settled dust for 36 different mold species. It provides a standardized way to evaluate indoor air quality and potential health risks associated with mold exposure. “wiki” Mike is not a fan of ERMI testing.

Indoor Environmental Professional-(IEPs) Mike doesn't like the term. Mike opined, that restorer can take tape lifts.

Certified Industrial Hygienist- CIH like other designations is not a guarantee of competence. For Example, CIHs specifying double-layered Tyvek in attics during the summer.

Teamwork. Mike advocates a teamwork approach in which the CIH and restorer develop the specifications together. CIH on how to protect workers/occupants. Restorer on how to clean and restore.

Standards: Prescriptive or Performance? Mike leans towards performance, this is where we need to go, now it's up to the contractor to determine how he wants to get us there. The IICRC writes prescriptive standards. IICRC standards include: a Limitations, Complexities, Complications, and Conflicts [LCCCs] section. Mike and Cliff expressed concerns about prescriptive standards potentially being weaponized and subordinating experienced restoration contractors. Noteworthy Improvements in industry cooperation between IICRC and RIA on standards development.

Standard Cynicism: The IICRC standards require so much documentation that contractors don't have time to do their jobs. Standards organizations want to make money by selling standards written by hardworking unpaid volunteers.

Mike worked on National Lead & Asbestos Standards, and it was obvious that members were expressing the interest of the companies or organizations they worked for. NAVY and GSA Standards are performance based, here is where we want to get to, it's up to the contractors to get us there.

Oldtimers like Mike were working in the IAQ industry in the wild west days. before the development of industry mold standards.

What is fungal ecology? According to Mike, there is no such single thing as "normal fungal ecology". The normal fungal ecology of every building is different. AS such, the normal fungal ecology of a wet home will be moldy.

Post fire damage clearance in the old RIA-IESO Soot Standard? - Soot, char and ash. No universal agreement, no hard, fast rules. Minimum Clearance white glove and "smoke odor free".

ROUNDUP

Pete Consigli, Global Restoration Watchdog & Historian

- Pete and Howard Brickman (wood flooring authority) attended the National Wood Flooring Convention in Orlando, FL where they recruited experts for future technical discussions and identified potential speakers for future events.
- After listening to Mike; Pete hopes we won't lose a couple of sponsors.
- Mike is a huge Springsteen fan.
- Pete claimed to have no substantiative comments; and then:
- Mike was well prepared for the interview
- Pete didn't want to pile on or go on the record. What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas. The first rule of fight club is that you don't talk about fight club.
- Mike could always comedically wind Chin Yang up.
- Mike McGuinness and Jack Springston were IAQ pioneers.
- Both Mike and Jack have strong opinions on IICRC standards and other written works.

- Having similar experiences in the wood flooring industry; Howard Brickman laughed at 75% of Mike's comments about CIHs.
- There is no good role for consensus to have in consensus standards. Both Howard and Mike agree that the consensus process for 'writing standards sucks. (conflict of interest, self-serving and corrupt).
- Pete said, due to hidden agendas, monetary gain, conflicts of interest, and coverups; ethics and conflict of interest policies must be policed and enforced. These unethical activities erode confidence of both volunteers and the public.
- Howard's CV boldly states that he is no longer affiliated with certain organizations
- Pete and some industry peers are in the twilight of their careers and want to pass on knowledge and experience to the next generation. Pay it forward. Experience is the best teacher.
- The older we get, the more we realize that our parents were right.
- Don't waste talent.
- Joe Lstiburek: We must relearn what others before us knew.

What would you have been if you hadn't gotten involved in safety, health and IEQ?

Mike: An architect, a golf course architect.

Mike McGuinness' Final Comments:

The future of IAQ? So bright you got to wear shades.

Life lessons Mike McGuinness learned in kindergarten. Tell the truth, ask first, cleanup, share milk & cookies, hold hands when working together, and say you're sorry when you "F" up.

Muhammad Ali quote: Service to others is the price we pay for our room in heaven.

Z-Man signing off

Trivia: Name the retired vocalist and song writer long considered the Grandfather of the New Jersey Sound?

Answer: Southside Johnny Lyon

Answered by Don Weekes, Ottawa, Ontario Canada