NEIEP recently celebrated Joan Davlin’s 20 years of service as an employee with the program. Joan has enjoyed her years as a NEIEP employee, observing in her decades the evolution of the program from a paper-based student record keeping system to our current database and web presence. “It is always changing,” Joan says. “There has always been something new going on.” Joan does well with change, and her ability to stay the course in service to NEIEP for 20 years speaks to her willingness to transform her workdays as needed, adapting to new technologies and organizational structures with ease.

One of the biggest changes Joan has experienced at NEIEP is “the computers,” she says. “In the early days, we had three computers that each did one job: one was for Probationaries, one for correcting, and one for making certificates. Now everyone in the office has a computer and we are all working off of a main computer.”

Joan is a graduate of Ben Franklin High School in Rochester, New York, which is the city where she initially began her career with NEIEP. After high school Joan moved around a lot and worked hard raising her three daughters Cynthia, Susan, and Robin before moving back to Rochester in the late seventies. It was on December 28, 1984, that Joan was sent on a temp job to work for the National Elevator Industry Educational Program, which at the time was operated out of a renovated house in Rochester. Joan stuck around, moving into a permanent position, and when NEIEP moved to Massachusetts in August 1990, Joan followed her career here as well. Robin, her youngest daughter, made the move with Joan. “Even though my family is in Rochester, moving to North Attleboro wasn’t a difficult decision for us. We were used to moving from before, and it’s so beautiful here and so close to everything,” Joan explains.

Joan has many fond memories of working at NEIEP that include some favorite anecdotes from over the years. “Once I remember on those first three computers we had, I was the first one to come in to work (since I lived nearby), and it was my job to turn on the computers for the day. They took a while to warm up,” Joan describes. “One morning as I turned on the computers I heard a voice calling, ‘Help! I’m stuck in the computer! Get me out!’ I laughed and when everyone came in they had to hear it too. Apparently our computer guy, who worked nights, had put that in for fun.”

Joan also explains how the various excuses she would get for why students couldn’t return their home study exams on time often provided some comic relief. Joan once received a note from a student that read, in part, “What with people dying and another having a stroke, mama and the kid having a truck accident, working three weekends and getting ready to go to court with mama’s ex-husband, I near shot myself when I realized how much time had passed!” Needless to say, Joan still has a copy of that note posted to her office wall.

Joan says that she still enjoys her job very much, specifically working with the computers that make tasks much easier than before. “I like the
20 Years of Service (continued)

people I work with here and all the different people I talk to on the phone. I also enjoy living in New England; in fact, this is the longest I have lived in one place – 16 years.”

Outside of the office, Joan enjoys craft work, collecting Barbie Dolls, taking in a good movie or two, and playing on the computer. For vacation Joan makes time for traveling around New England with her daughters one week every year. “We still haven’t seen everything yet!” she admits. Two of Joan’s three daughters (the third lives with her) arrive on Memorial Day week, and they will spend their time going to visit some places they haven’t seen before, places they’ve enjoyed in other years, or just laughing or goofing off. “My living quarters will be crowded and a mess.” Joan exclaims, “but I love having them.”

NEIEP’s Office Manager Diana Chaffalo says, “Joan is a lot of fun to work with. She is a hardworking individual with a one of a kind personality. Over the years, Joan has shared several workplace stories from the past and we have made some new stories of our own for her to look back on and laugh about. Joan’s contributions and time spent with the NEIEP program are valued. The secretarial staff and I look forward to working with Joan for years to come.”

Many will remember the series of NEIEP’s Corner articles that ran in the Elevator Constructor Journal for several years, dealing with technical and education-related topics pertinent to mechanics and students alike. Those articles were eventually printed and bound in the form of 2 slim but dense volumes of quality material. NEIEP has a number of these volumes available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Rob at ext. 30 for more information on how to order copies.

INSTRUCTOR TIP: TROUBLESHOOTING THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

This is the time of the year that Instructors are finishing up their classes and preparing their students to challenge the year-end final comprehensive examination. A question instructors sometimes ask is “how can I get more students to pass the final exam?” The common frustration is the instructor has a good rapport with the students, makes himself available for help and recognizes that the students are getting good unit exam grades but they end up doing poorly on the final. Using your troubleshooting experience you can identify the elements that can lead to poor student performance.

Start out by reviewing the year’s experience and each phase of instruction. Consider all elements of your class presentation by categorizing the different elements that affect the classroom dynamic.

Setup Did you allow yourself enough time to gather your talking points used to support your class objectives? Does the layout of the classroom meet your needs? Are the labs on site and ready to use?

Delivery Was there a proper mix of lecture, open discussion and lab time? Did the students have the opportunity to ask questions and contribute to class discussions? Did each student have the opportunity to utilize the lab if applicable?

Material Was the material too basic or too advanced for the students in your class? Was the material accurate? Is the layout of subject matter appropriate? Was there a need for additional supporting elements such as video or labs? Inform your local committee or contact us directly so that we can make the adjustment to the material or perhaps budget for the development of supporting video or labs. Instructor input is always appreciated and is essential to the overall program.

Student Participation Are the students active participants in the class? Do they feel comfortable asking questions? Do they come to class prepared?

Sometimes, unfortunately, the old adage “you can bring a horse to water but you can’t make him drink” is the only explanation for a student’s poor performance. Gathering students together for four hours one night a week is not enough time to implant all of the concepts covered firmly in the minds of every student. The students must dedicate time out of the job or at the coffee shop. Difficulties with math or reading comprehension can be overcome using a multitude of tools available at the local library, bookstore or on the Internet. Communicate to your students that you both have a common goal of successfully completing the course and gaining the most out of the learning experience. Clearly explain both your role, as the instructor, the students’ role and the responsibilities each must bear to meet that goal. If both parties hold up their end of the bargain the chances of obtaining that common goal are very good.

As is done in the field, troubleshooting the problem often requires careful analysis of many elements. If you, as an instructor, have done your best to eliminate all of the potential problems that may arise, you can feel confident that you have done your part. There are many people in every local, whether affiliated with NEIEP or not, who are willing to help a student experiencing difficulties in grasping the concepts presented in the curriculum. The students themselves need to be aware that careful analysis of the situation and logical troubleshooting of their learning challenges will help them repair the break in their learning process and enable them to achieve their goal of passing the year-end examination.
NEIEP educational consultants Andy DiPaolo and Ron Boehm are leading another round of the new Advanced Train the Trainer Course (ATTC) for NEIEP instructors. The event, taking place in Warwick, RI, March 23-28, is the third effort since the pilot for advanced training was launched last May. The ATTC is designed to be highly interactive using the experiences and problems faced by our veteran instructors to drive the instruction and discussion. The course focuses on the issues that surfaced in a needs assessment conducted in the early winter of 2004. These issues include the use of in-class technology (computer hardware setup and PowerPoint as a tool for presentation); motivating students and creating exercises; adult learning and teambuilding, creating and using action ideas to shape the learning environment, and more.

The Advanced Train the Trainer Course has received positive feedback from the groups of NEIEP instructors across the country who have attended so far. Highlights noted include tackling the PowerPoint presentation and understanding how to incorporate it into lesson planning; considering and discussing each instructor’s best and worst teaching experiences, and reflecting on what can be learned from them; and using the seminar to refresh instructors’ understanding of what students’ needs are and how to keep up with new students to keep learning fresh. The ATTC will continue to build on its successful efforts at providing additional training to NEIEP instructors. Look for a new round of seminars that will coincide with lab workshops to be scheduled for this coming fall.

NEIEP Chairmen and Committee members are receiving notification that we are seeking nominations for 2005-2006 Instructors of the Year, with a deadline of June 30. We ask that you consider who on your NEIEP Instructional Staff deserves a nomination for Instructor of the Year for this past school season. As we have so many high quality Instructors currently active in the program, we know this may be a tough selection for many committees. Please take time to give thoughtful consideration to your choice, and submit the nomination information to the NEIEP Office. You may submit a letter of recommendation along with a list of the instructor’s accomplishments, or you may contact the NEIEP office for an instructor nomination form.

We will choose winners from the following regions:

- Region #1, Midwest
- Region #2, Northwest
- Region #3, Southwest
- Region #4, Southeast
- Region #5, Northeast

Winners will be announced this summer. Best wishes to all potential candidates.

Do you need some help with a NEIEP website-related technical issue? Perhaps you are receiving an unknown error message or you are having a problem navigating the website or finding a particular resource. These issues can arise from time to time. When you have a technical problem with the NEIEP website, don’t forget that NEIEP has a help desk to assist you. Renee Dupras is the person to contact. Renee is available to help with a variety of web-related concerns. When necessary, feel free to contact her at rdupras@neiep.org or 800-228-8220 ext. 20.
Once again it is time for local committees to register makeup sessions. Makeup sessions begin in March and end in June. Each makeup session must be requested and approved by NEIEP prior to beginning. Makeup session requests should be submitted to NEIEP via the Class Builder section of the NEIEP website, which is available to Local Chairmen and co-Chairmen.

**Classroom Makeup:**
Each Local may register four (4) four hour makeup sessions totaling sixteen hours per site.

**Distance Learning Makeup:**
Each Local may register three (3) four hour makeup sessions per site.

If you have any questions about the Makeup process, please contact the NEIEP office.

Committee Chairmen and co-Chairmen can assist the accounting department in ensuring that important documents are filled out correctly and submitted to the NEIEP Office. The following list details some helpful procedures that JACs can perform to make sure NEIEP has correct information for the local programs:

- We must have a current NEIEP Contract Form on hand at all times. We are receiving paperwork where Chairman/Co-Chairman names do not match to the NEIEP Contract we have on file.
- Locals must register classes to the exact site where the classes are to be held. If that particular site does not appear, they must contact NEIEP to have that site added.
- Locals should anticipate their needs at the beginning of the school season for the entire school year, taking into consideration makeup classes, etc., so that we do not have to change or add leases in the middle of the school year.
- If a local uses the NEIEP Lease form and does not have exclusive use of that particular site at all times, they must specify what days, times, etc., that their classes will be held.

NEIEP appreciates the hard work of local committees. Adding these items to your list of duties will support the proper administration of your program. Please contact Jan at extension 12 with any questions.