

2014 WSC CHAIR'S REPORT BULLET NOTES

START

Hello to my sisters and brothers in fellowship.

- My name is Michael and I am a nicotine addict, and I have the pleasure and privilege of being your Nicotine Anonymous World Services Board Chair for this, our 30th World Services Conference. This chair's report is usually about the state of the fellowship, and I will talk about that as well, but . . .
- I am going to begin this chair's report as I did last year's by saying something unusual, "Thank you for being here." That may not seem unusual on the surface, but ... (You know the rest.)
- Today, thank you for being here means thank you for being here. There are still-suffering nicotine addicts all around the world and there are sisters and brothers, many of you right here in this room who have been devoting considerable chunks of your private lives to helping the still-suffering to find and maintain freedom from nicotine. You volunteer and serve on an individual level as sponsors, on a group level as chairs, secretaries and treasurers, as intergroup representatives and as Nicotine Anonymous World Services Delegates. Some of you serve in all of those ways simultaneously. I want you to know - if you don't already - that what you do matters and your 12th Step work is appreciated. I am just one member who can breathe free because of you. Even the members who just joined this year or even today are all important to my health, and you are the reason I was able to welcome 3 grandchildren into this world and soon a fourth, and I thank you for it. Never doubt how important you are. I would like to especially express my appreciation to all of you and the others out there, who start meetings and keep the doors open. To me there is no greater commitment.

- This year Nicotine Anonymous lost a dedicated servant – Joanne C. In 1985 Joanne, along with her husband, Oscar, Charlie S. and our very own Scott J. opened a meeting in Islip, NY, and from that meeting grew all the Long Island meetings. Most of the meetings on the east coast are directly descended from that meeting. Joanne kept that meeting open for almost 30 years, even when she became sick 2 years ago, until a few weeks ago when her cancer finally kept her away for good. For many of those meetings she kept the doors open - even when nobody showed up as well as the times when 30 or 40 people showed up. Her faith in her Higher Power was often tested but never wavered. 24 years ago I walked into that meeting and found acceptance, healing and a safe space to share what was eating at me and keeping me using nicotine. I will remember Joanne just as the people you help will remember you.

- Nicotine Anonymous is the only place I go to where I can expect to see miracles, and the miracles keep happening. I just never know exactly when, but they will keep happening. They often happen when we least expect them.

- Al's Story:
 - Gripping about NicA work
 - Asking why I do it
 - Al's anniversary
 - Higher Power's direct answer,
 - "You're the reason I'm here."
 - People with difficult physical, mental and emotional challenges find healing and help to heal others.

- It isn't always easy to see it, but your work bears fruit. You make it safe for people to ask for the help they desperately need. To know that, just think about yourself and how you were received and welcomed when you most needed it.

Since the last WSC in Ocean City New Jersey

- I want you to know that Nicotine Anonymous is alive and well and growing stronger.
- As a program we have our challenges. In a world of instant gratification and quick fixes, we are not a quick fix, and there are so many promises of quick fixes. Whether those promises are authentic or not is irrelevant to us because our promises are real.
- We do what we can to reach out to the still suffering nicotine addict, and we will continue to do so, yet we may never be as big as some of the other fellowships. I have come to accept that. We are a relatively small but very active and spiritual program, and the members who have experienced our program are all the evidence we need. It's not our way to keep statistics or records or to take attendance. We are our own proof.
- We don't sell, cajole or evangelize; we just help anyone who comes to us with a desire to stop using nicotine, and we will continue to do that. We reach out to others in our own way, prescribed by our traditions. There will be an outreach workshop today at 2:00PM. If you have any talents or desires, please attend and pitch in. We can do outreach on a world services level, but outreach must always be inherently a local and very personal endeavor. One of the best ways to outreach is to take a nicotine addict to a meeting.
- As per a motion passed by the Delegates in 2013, the name of the Give and Live Program was changed to the Gift of Gratitude

Program and made more obvious on the website. While membership is down, and sales are down, donations are up! Isn't that something? The indications are that membership is down then how can donations be up? For this I have to thank all who donated and worked so hard and also another member who has the initials HP. The new Gift of Gratitude flyer is in your folders, and I would like to encourage all of you to donate by way of Gift of Gratitude. A tax deduction may not be the best reason to donate although to me it is a perfectly good one. Nicotine Anonymous is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and making an automatic monthly donation through your bank to NicA gives you or your accountant a record of your gift. If only 200 members gave \$10.00 per month, that would give Nic A enough income to keep reaching out to the still suffering.

- There is great news about our literature. You can now buy a Newcomer's Package in our store. Checko M. has been our literature coordinator since the year of the flood, and mostly he has had to do it alone. In a few moments he will be showing you something very special. As some of you already know, getting literature approved by the fellowship can be a lengthy and frustrating process much like pulling teeth, but also like putting them back in and pulling them over and over. There will be 4 workshops on literature today. I encourage you to participate.
- There will also be a workshop on Sponsorship and Step Study. Is sponsorship a lost art or a forgotten tool? Please help me to see that it is still a part of our promises. There is much to know about sponsorship. Please attend.
- We will also have a workshop on writing meditations. Is that where your talents lie? Are you a thinker and a writer?

- There is great news about our website, but I'm going to hold off on that for the moment as well. You'll see why.
- The WWML is much improved. It actually indicates that we have fewer groups than a few years ago, but it is much more accurate. Thank you, Gwynn A. for your diligence and devotion. If she's calling you up and getting your attention, it's because she's doing HPs work. Please don't wait to give her updates on changes in meetings as they happen. There is a meeting change form on the website and that's the way to do it. Nic A will benefit, and there will be fewer occurrences of something we never want to see: Someone going to a meeting to find nobody home.
- Are we truly an international fellowship, or do we just say so? We have been connecting with more countries, but we need members to chair and staff our International Committee in order to bring more countries into NAWS. All the countries outside of the US should be receiving the benefits of NAWS membership and also contributing donations. We could really use a self-starter to head up the International Committee. We need policy and protocol on all these international procedures, and that's why we need our International Committee fully staffed and working on this. In addition, our Intergroup List only contains US Face to Face, Phone Meetings and VONR as groups. That's great, but we also want to add Intergroups in other countries. This will lead to increased and improved communication and international outreach. I would like to thank Checko for all he has done this year to enhance our connections with members outside the US and all the work he has done on translations.
- This is my second year in a row as your chair, and tomorrow I will hand this gavel over to your new chair, Andy A. I think I know a little bit about how a pregnant woman feels: I can't wait to get this thing out of me, but I also think I'm going to miss it. I can't

say enough about what it has meant to be the chair for the past 2 years. It has certainly had its ups and downs, and many of my sisters and brothers in the fellowship have heard me complain about the downs, but I can tell you right now with frankness and sincerity that I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. I feel now like I can do almost anything.

- The second year has been much easier than the first was for several reasons. For one, it took me a full 6 months just to find out how to do all that I had to do and just as importantly what not to do. I learned that by trying to be and do everything, I stole from my talented colleagues, so I learned to let the best team play, and they did. I want to thank them right now, and I will be thanking them and others throughout the conference. When I mention your name, would those who are here please stand.
 1. Two who could not be here are Bonnie H. and Gary M. Thank you Bonnie for mentoring me especially during that first year and thank you Gary for volunteering to take on any extra tasks that the fellowship has needed over the years. Gary never refused to help in any way.
 2. Thank you Sherry and Jean our active treasurer and secretary for this past year for all you have done and for always being ready to jump in whenever I asked you. I know it wasn't always easy.
 3. I want to acknowledge your next active board members Andy, Sarah and Zulma who will become your active officers tomorrow. We will give you 100% support.
 4. Thank you Teresa, our office manager, for all the work you do that is above and beyond, for your consistency from year to year throughout all the different elected administrations, and for always having the courage to give me suggestions and for

- telling me what I needed to hear – even when I didn't want to hear it.
5. Thank you to all the committee members who work on projects throughout the year. We will mention you individually during the committee reports.
 6. I'm not going to completely thank Robin right now. I'll have more to say at dinner tonight.
- I want everyone here to know that I agreed to continue for a second year only because my colleagues stepped up. The first year was stressful, and I had some conditions I wanted met before I kept the gavel for another year. Among my conditions were that Robin would stay on as chair-emeritus advising me, that Chick would take on additional duties as treasurer emeritus by setting up and taking care of all the technical work on our online meetings and that Marguerite would take on the extra duties of preparing the agendas for all the board's face-to-face and online meetings. It is incredibly stressful – maybe not for others, but for me to have to chair an online meeting while simultaneously taking care of all the WebEx necessities as well as to having to electronically set it up and invite everyone and prepare all of the agendas. The second year had a fraction of that stress because they never hesitated. Chick, Marguerite and Robin are your outgoing or 4th year emeritus officers. Please stand up. If only I had known how easy it was to get them to go along, I would have asked for more.

My sisters and brothers,

- As well as the 12 written Traditions, we have unwritten traditions. One of them is rotation of service. A fellowship needs experience from its veteran members, but it also needs an infusion of new ideas and an ability to think outside the box to avoid stagnation and to grow and thrive. Many of you have given so much

through-out the years that I hardly have the right to ask you to do any more, but I will anyway. I'm OK with that because I am not asking for myself. I am asking for the members across the world and for the still suffering nicotine addicts who haven't found us yet.

- More than a few of us, myself included, are still alive because of our fellowship and are enjoying a better quality of life than if we had never found NicA. Even our friends, who have passed on, had clean time to enjoy and a closer connection with their Higher Power & their families & friends because of Nicotine Anonymous.
- As a board and as delegates, we are responsible to all the folks who leave the comfort of their homes to go out every week to make sure the doors are open to the still suffering nicotine addict. They count on us. As delegates and Board members and volunteers, we need to continue to support them, and in that way, we do our Higher Power's work.
- So I am asking you to do more: Run for one of the 3 offices that will be open this weekend: Chair-Elect, Secretary-Elect or Treasurer-Elect. Volunteer for a committee position or to chair a committee. Form an intergroup where you don't have one and join yours if you do.
- If your hands are already dirty with the soil that nurtures Nicotine Anonymous come on in and get them even dirtier. I won't promise you it will be easy or even that you'll always be appreciated. You won't, but I will promise you that you'll get back 10 times what you put into it just as I have.

Thanks again for allowing me to be your chair.

Michael; B