

**National Chimney Sweep Guild
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, March 28, 2006
Louisville, Kentucky**

AGENDA

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|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Call to Order | <i>Steve Pietila</i> |
| 2. Roll Call | <i>Paul Hempel</i> |
| 3. Approval of November 5, 2005 Minutes | <i>Paul Hempel</i> |
| 4. President's Report | <i>Steve Pietila</i> |
| 5. Treasurer's Report | <i>Ron Brigman</i> |
| 6. Executive Director's | <i>Mark McSweeney</i> |
| 7. Legal Report | <i>Art Garrett</i> |
| 8. Directors' Reports | |
| • Region 1 | <i>George Stroup</i> |
| • Region 2 | <i>Ron Brigman</i> |
| • Region 3 | <i>Thomas Rhines</i> |
| • Region 4 | <i>John Wharton</i> |
| • Region 5 | <i>Howard Rowell</i> |
| • Region 6 | <i>Bob Burney</i> |
| • Region 7 | <i>Steve Pietila</i> |
| • Region 8 | <i>Randy Brooks</i> |
| • Supplier Director | <i>Robert Huta</i> |
| 9. Committee Reports | |
| • Membership Committee | <i>Randy Brooks</i> |
| • NCSG By-Laws | <i>Howard Rowell</i> |
| • NCSG Long Range Planning | <i>Howard Rowell</i> |
| • NCSG Ethics | <i>Thomas Rhines</i> |
| • NFPA 31 Report | <i>John Pilger</i> |
| • Convention & Events Committee | <i>Robert Huta</i> |
| • NFPA 211 Report | <i>Royal Edwards</i> |
| 10. Old Business | |
| • None Submitted | |

RECESS FOR CSIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

RESUME NCSG BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 11. New Business | |
| • Election of 2006-2007 NCSG Officers | <i>Steve Pietila</i> |
| • Seating of New NCSG Directors | <i>Steve Pietila</i> |
| • Remarks by the new NCSG President | <i>President</i> |
| 12. Adjourn | |

DRAFT MINUTES ONLY

**National Chimney Sweep Guild
Board of Directors Meeting
November 5, 2005
CSIA Technology Center**

President Pietila called the meeting of the National Chimney Sweep Guild Board of Directors to order at 3:06 pm.

Directors Present: Paul Anderson, Ron Brigman, Randy Brooks, Bob Burney, Paul Hempel, Robert Huta, Mark Putnam, Hans Marsen, Thomas Rhines, Howard Rowell, George Stroup, John Wharton, Steve Pietila.

Staff Present: Mark McSweeney, Judy Thompson, Ashley Eldridge, Melissa Heeke, Royal Edwards and Wayne Black, Esq.

Guests Present: Renee Brigman, Bo Tasso, John Pilger, Kim Stroup, Connie Anderson, Jay Walker and John Mack.

A motion was made by Randy Brooks and seconded Bob Burney to approve the minutes of the July 2005 National Chimney Sweep Guild board of directors meeting. Motion passes unanimously.

President's Report: Submitted by Steve Pietila. In addition, he reminded all board members are welcome to provide input into the "Hedgehog" process. (*Note: Hedgehog process is an organizational strengths and core purposes exercise based on the book "Good to Great" by Jim Collins. See report for more information.*)

Treasurer's Report: Submitted by Ron Brigman.

A motion was made by Mark Putnam and seconded by Thomas Rhines to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted. Motion passes unanimously.

Executive Director's Report: Submitted by Mark McSweeney. He reiterated his earlier report on new database software progress. Online membership record access and event registration is expected to be available in January 2006. He also provided an update on plans for new member recruitment that will begin in November.

Legal Report: Submitted by Wayne Black, Esq.

Regional Reports

Region 1: Submitted by George Stroup. He also submitted an addendum with regional comments on CSIA and CSL. Pietila took a moment to acknowledge NCSG's

appreciation of the NER not scheduling a convention in 2007 when NCSG will be in the area.

Region 2: Submitted by Ron Brigman.

Region 3: Submitted by Thomas Rhines.

Region 4: Presented by John Wharton.

Region 5: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

Region 6: Presented by Bob Burney.

Region 7: Submitted by Steve Pietila.

Region 8: Submitted by Randy Brooks.

Supplier: Submitted by Robert Huta

Committee Reports

Nominating: Submitted by Paul Hempel. He indicated that he has received nomination applications from Randy Brooks (Region 8), Kevin DeLucenay (At Large), Diane Pilger (At Large) and Bob Priesing (At Large).

Long Range Planning: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

Finance Committee Update: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

By Laws: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

Membership: Submitted by Randy Brooks. He also shared his rekindled optimism about membership recruitment efforts. A discussion was held regarding the supplier and manufacturer coupon program. Coupons should be valid for use by all current and new members.

Ethics: Submitted by Thomas Rhines.

A motion was made by John Wharton and seconded by Bob Burney to overturn the Ethics committee decision in the case of Greater Northwest Chimney, Inc. v. Dimitri Desmons. Voting in favor: Paul Anderson, Ron Brigman, Bob Burney, Paul Hempel, Robert Huta, Mark Putnam, Hans Marsen, Howard Rowell and John Wharton. Abstaining: Randy Brooks, Thomas Rhines, George Stroup and Steve Pietila. Motion passes.

Convention & Events: Submitted by Robert Huta. A discussion was held regarding holding extended CSIA informational meetings at the 2006 NCSG Convention. Information was also shared regarding a list of potential seminars.

NFPA 31: Submitted by John Pilger.

Old Business

Mark McSweeney provided an update on liability insurance. A discussion was held regarding availability in New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

New Business

A discussion was held regarding getting more board and staff members involved in committee or leadership roles within affiliated trades. Opportunities will be researched and pursued as appropriate.

Steve Pietila asked those who will be seeking an officer position in 2006 – 2007 to announce their intentions:

Paul Anderson – Secretary
Ron Brigman – Treasurer
Randy Brooks – Vice President
Howard Rowell – President

A motion was made by Paul Hempel and seconded by John Wharton to accept NCSG Resolution 6-05 in honor of Wayne Black, Esq.'s more than twenty years service to the National Chimney Sweep Guild. Motion passes unanimously.

A motion was made by Thomas Rhines and seconded by George Stroup to adjourn the meeting of the National Chimney Sweep Guild board of directors. Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.

President's Report
Chimney Safety Institute of America
National Chimney Sweep Guild
Prepared for the March 2006 meetings
Louisville, Kentucky

I sort of feel like the Apostle Paul when he said, "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2Timothy 4:6-7) Now, I won't get into the part that continues about the crown of righteousness and such... What I'm looking forward to is the unique vantage point one possesses after stepping down, as well a little more time to work on my own business. It's a strange position in many ways. While I look forward to more time, I can't help but think of all things I would have liked to accomplish had I put more time and effort into it. And then I begin to think how much more free I'll be to concentrate on those things that really matter to me (within the organizations and outside of them). One thing that gives me confidence is that we have really worked on establishing a sound planning process that continues to be improved with each meeting. Improving communication between board and staff implementing accountabilities will always be a concern and progress must continue to be made.

Much of my focus has been on trying to move the board to concentrate more on issues of governance and strategic and long range planning and less on the day-to-day operations and tactical aspects of the organizations. This is especially difficult in the area of programs. Because we are very personally invested in much of what we do (and this is a good thing) we sometimes have difficulty letting go. But I believe that the long-term success of the organizations will have a lot to do with the boards' abilities to develop the visions and goals of the organizations and give direction to the professional staff (and volunteers to an extent) but allow them to develop the much of the strategic and tactical objectives under the leadership of the Executive Director. This will help to ensure continuity and stability for the organizations into the future. Presidents will come and go every few years, and though we've had some amazing folks do incredible things in the past, the President is a volunteer and will only serve in a part-time capacity.

Our success will rely on our ability to create greater demand for chimney sweeps with the CSIA credential, and to continue to raise the standard of the program itself. The Product Acceptance Program should prove to be effective in the effort of creating more awareness and recognition of the CSIA, but we must continue developing relationships with affiliated trades and other PR efforts. The board must once again step back from the more tactical aspects of the management of the organizations and move back into the strategic areas of analysis and planning.

You may recall at our November board meeting we discussed a book I was reading entitled Good to Great. The first three characteristics identified in "great" companies were "Level 5 Leadership", "First Who... then What", and "Confront the Brutal Facts". I think these are the areas that we still must focus on. The first two characteristics cover the area of *disciplined people*, the third area gets into the area of *disciplined thought*. The fourth area is what is called The Hedgehog Concept, and while still part of the *disciplined thought* area it is where the company moves from the *buildup* phase into the *breakthrough* phase. For those of you who want a bit more of the theory – the final area is *disciplined action*. And that is clearly what we need to move toward. For now however, I we must continue to focus on the three "circles" that make up this concept. . (What you are deeply passionate about, What you can be the best in the world at, What drives your economic engine).

Though these concepts may seem to some too ethereal, I believe this is exactly the type of conceptual and strategic development we must adopt if we are to achieve the level of excellence we so much desire for the organizations and our trade. Certainly we must keep both feet on the ground and keep listening to our members to understand their needs – but our response and our decisions must be based on sound principals and an accurate assessment of the relevant threats and opportunities we have before us.

And now the final review of my stated goals for the organizations:

NCSG

- Improved communication system with staff (Executive Director) to provide timely feedback on progress toward written goals & objectives – The dashboard has given us a good tool, but can be improved upon to help us see ongoing progress toward the strategic objectives of both organizations (which the board needs to see) and not just the tactical progress of the staff (which is to be managed by the Executive Director).
- 1200 voting member companies (by convention 2006) –The systems we are implementing give us the tools we have never had in place to approach member recruitment and retention as never before.
- 250 participants in insurance program (by convention 2006) –Though we haven't reached this goal, I'm satisfied with the efforts that are being made and by the tremendous benefit this is to many of our members.

CSIA

- Certification standard raised – including requirements for CEUs for recertification –This continues to be a challenge, but I hope the board and the next President will continue to pursue this direction. The higher profile and wider promotion of the CSIA credential will necessitate continuous improvements and strengthening of the entire certification program.
- Completion & adoption of Product Acceptance Program policy --**Completed & expanding!**
- Solid and realistic plan to address financial issues of CSIA --**Completed!**

Certainly this doesn't capture all that has been accomplished over the last couple of years. Hours of volunteer time, many impassioned discussions via email and after hours telephone conversations have gone on that just can't be quantified or documented to the extent that would do justice in recognizing the contributions of several of our board members. Much of what we've been doing is laying the groundwork for future growth and development of both organizations. As I've said before, it's not very sexy, but I believe it's worth the investment we've been making. There will always be unforeseen issues and challenges that pop up and demand our attention. We must deal with these with appropriate responses allocating the time and resources required to resolve them. Issues that this next board of directors will be dealing with include but will not be limited to the corporate structure, legal relationships and missions of the two organizations; implementing systems for ongoing board development including recruitment and identifying individuals for key leadership roles; strengthening existing partnerships and developing new ones with affiliated trades; increasing both business and technical educational opportunities and expanding the means through which education is offered; determining the direction for administration of CEU's and their role in recertification; and assessing the need for additional certification credentials. I'm sure that our next president will have additional areas of concern

that will challenge us as well. But regardless of the multitude of tasks we face we need to continue pressing on forward toward our stated long range goals and objectives, and our mission of promoting our trade, equipping our members, providing educational opportunities and serving the public as we promote safety, fuel efficiency and environmental responsibility.

In conclusion, I want again challenge each of us to arrive at each board meeting prepared to contribute to the strategic work of the organizations. And we must continue to do our part between meetings in representing the issues and concerns of NCSG members and those with a stake in the mission of the CSIA. Our gifts and talents are needed to make the organizations better and this requires that we exercise them contributing to the efforts we have undertaken. We have each made an agreement to serve to the best of our abilities and to act in what we believe is the best interests of the organizations. I can ask no more than this.

It has been both a challenge and a joy to work with the board and staff as your president over the last two years. I am sincerely grateful for the respect you've given me and for your hard work and the dedication you've shown as we've made it this far. As I begin to be at a loss for words, let me close with the confession of the great literary figure Mr. Bilbo Baggins who said, "I don't know half of you as well as I should like.... And I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve."

Respectfully submitted,

Steven R. Pietila
President

NCSG Treasurer's Report

TO BE SUBMITTED UNDER SEPARATE COVER

Report of the Executive Director

National Chimney Sweep Guild
Board of Directors Meeting
March 28, 2006 • Louisville, Kentucky

As I enter my fourth convention with NCSG and CSIA, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our outgoing President, Steve Pietila. It has been a pleasure working with him these past two years, and he can be proud of the position he leaves both organizations in as he passes the baton.

NCSG is making significant strides in its evolution. We've been working hard over the past couple of years in the area of member benefits, and our efforts are finally starting to pay off. With the new *Sweeps Advantage* program, the Guild has a package that provides a legitimate opportunity for membership to bring tangible value to sweeps. The staff is hearing it from our members, the feedback from the most recent member survey supports what we are being told, and our recruitment numbers are telling us more of the same. Sweeps are finding value in NCSG membership.

Coming into Louisville, our total membership represents a 10% net growth since this time one year ago. The voting membership represents a 9% growth. The bulk of the growth has occurred since December when we began aggressively marketing the new coupon program and other benefits through a direct mail campaign to more than 4,000 prospective new members. Debbie Cornelius, Member Development, has been doing a great job following up with every prospective member that comes our way. She has also been aggressively pursuing lapsed members and having a positive impact on our retention.

The most commonly asked question relative to member "benefits" continues to involve the lack of a qualified medical insurance program. I wish I had better news to report on this front. Unfortunately, I have yet to find a glimmer that such a plan truly exists out there. Not only am I consistently told that it doesn't exist (by insurance and other association professionals alike), state insurance regulations across the country actually make such a program illegal unless there is a formal employee-employer relationship for everyone participating within the plan.

There are a small handful of larger associations that are working with health insurance brokers to offer some level of assistance to their members in finding coverage for themselves. While this type of service can provide a certain level of convenience to the member-applicant, the end results do not yield an insurance plan that would be any more attractive than that which member could get on his/her own by shopping a few agents. In essence, the association partners up with brokers who represent a litany of carriers who can write individual policies for their members. These policies are not written on a group basis and require all the typical underwriting of a non-guaranteed program. They are billed individually, they are cancelled individually, and truly have no "employee-employer" relationship that provides what everyone wants....a group program with good coverage at a group discounted rate.

Most associations have steered clear of these types of arrangements simply because the "program" is perceived to be an impressive and solid group type of plan by members when in reality it is merely a collection of individually written plans. When someone gets cancelled, experiences a drastic rate increase, or the carrier otherwise makes an undesirable change, the members get upset with their association because they assumed the association would be in a position to protect them from such things. None-the-less it is certainly an alternative.

There may be a small glimmer of hope on the horizon. Earlier this month, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee voted in favor of a "landmark bill" that would allow business and trade associations to band together to purchase group health insurance. The bill was approved by an 11 to 9 vote. While the full Senate has not approved similar legislation in past years, the House has approved similar bills eight times. The Bush administration supports the measure, so anything is possible.

There has been some renewed discussion recently about the future of *Sweeping Magazine*. After the dust settles from the convention, this is an issue I would like to tackle. The magazine has become financially very self-sufficient over the past couple of years, which is very good to see. However, Melissa and I have been discussing challenges related to content and management of the magazine over the course of the past several months and both agree that something needs to change. Having a monthly publication of *Sweeping's* size and intended quality essentially managed on a part-time basis at best is not meeting the needs of the members or the staff. We are taking some interim steps to spur some changes, specifically relative to input from the Technical Advisory Council, but I believe we will need to be more aggressive than that to get the magazine to its true potential. In our recent member survey, 92% of the respondents cited *Sweeping* as an important benefit of membership, ranking it higher than any other benefit. We know the magazine is valued, and it continues to be our members' preferred media for receiving information from the Guild.

Another benefit of membership consistently held in high regard by our members is access to a full-time Technical Director. This is great news, but as I mentioned last year that resource in becoming quickly tapped out. On a daily basis, Royal reports receiving up to 30 phone calls from sweeps and homeowners who have been sent his way. Between the calls themselves and the associated research he is often required to do, he has not only become over-extended, but he and I are both concerned with the level of service he is able to provide. I've used the term before, but Royal is essentially a one-man call center. More often than not, when Royal is unable to answer a call or get back to someone quick enough, that call reverts back to our office. It is not uncommon for Ashley, then, to find significant amounts of his time spent addressing technical inquiries, which of course takes him away from his educational responsibilities. This, too, is a priority issue we will need to address this spring.

In general, as our membership grows, we will need to be proactive in terms of the associated growing needs. Recruitment will go well, but retention will plummet if we are not in the right position to service the growth.

Our “new” database is slowly but surely beginning to show its stripes. The online member profile and event registration components are running smoothly, and we expect to encourage increased usage as we head into the upcoming educational season. Old habits are hard to break, and we saw that with less than 10% of our convention registrants opting to register online for this initial go-around. Moving forward, we may consider some form of incentive to encourage more people to use the online system, as it is these types of technological improvements that can serve a growing membership well (without having to add staff to the solution) the more they are used.

In May we anticipate that our eCommunities will be up and running, which will facilitate anything from our variety of discussion lists to committee and task force discussions to online document sharing and retrieval. This fall we anticipate having eOrders functional, which will allow for online ordering of merchandise, materials and potentially membership renewals.

Future convention planning is an issue I have asked our incoming president to put on the table. We are currently contracted through 2008, and the plan is to pursue 2009 this spring and 2010 in the fall. However, before we get too far into the process, I believe we need to come to a common understanding of exactly what we envision for the annual NCSG Convention & Trade Show. In terms of our size, we are at an awkward stage of being too large for many traditional venues that work very well for regional conventions, but not large enough to give us a true negotiating edge with larger venues. This does not need to be a long debate over mission statements, but I’m not sure there is a real consensus about what we expect our convention to be. Once we determine that, that will go a long way in helping the site selection committee determine when and where the best opportunities lay for our future needs.

Speaking of future convention needs, of a more immediate concern is our 2007 30th anniversary convention at the Mohegan Sun. Robert and I will begin working with Howard and others immediately following Louisville to begin putting together what we hope will be not only the largest, but most innovative convention and trade show in the history of the Guild. Beyond being a significant anniversary year, building off the conversation I referenced above, we hope to use 2007 as a launching pad for a new and improved style of learning and exhibiting for NCSG.

Finally, I welcome all of you to Louisville. Convention is always a time for change and renewal, and I look forward to bringing on our new leadership at a time when NCSG is primed for great success.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark McSweeney, Executive Director

NCSG Region 1 Report

Submitted by George Stroup

Recent NCSG BOD election results command hearty Region 1 congratulations to New York State Guild's Past-President, Diane Pilger. Diane will be joining the Board of Directors as an At-Large Director. At-Large Directors are elected for a three year term by the entire voting membership to represent NCSG nationwide. Congratulations also go out newly elected At-Large Directors Bob Priesing, NC and Kevin DeLucenay, IN; and re-elected Directors in Region 7- Steve Pietila, OR and Region 8 - Randy Brooks, CA.

Since the November NCSG Board of Directors meeting, over 40 companies have joined and/or renewed their NCSG membership. Current NCSG Member Companies in Region 1; CT 34; DE 5; ME 20; MD 42; MA 56; NH 24; NJ 71; NY 89; PA 81; RI 10 and VT 25. I am honored to have the opportunity to welcome you all to the NCSG community.

Regional Updates

January 25-28, 2006 - The 2006 Northeast Regional Chimney Sweep Convention and Trade Show held right outside of Mystic, CT was a resounding success and attendees were treated to unseasonably warm weather. The superb staff at the Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa exceeded the NER Convention Committee's expectations and SER Expo Services prepared a tremendous venue for the Trade Show ... it cannot go unsaid that this magnificent show would not be possible without the support of the NER convention exhibitors!

Forward schedule your 2007 educational venue & please note: the NER Convention Committee voted unanimously to skip a year hosting a convention when an NCSG convention is scheduled in Region 1. Therefore, there will not be an NER Convention in 2007. The NCSG has adopted a reciprocal position of support for the regional guilds that voluntarily opt to forgo their annual conventions during the years that NCSG holds its convention and trade show in their region and NCSG will extend *NCSG member convention registration rates* to all NER state guild members for our 2007 convention and trade show. See you at the Mohegan Sun in 2007.

State Guild Updates

Massachusetts Chimney Sweep Guild – A recent seminar featured keynote discussion by Mr. Walley who reviewed the comprehensive liability insurance policy that NCSG introduced at the San Antonio Convention last year as well as other insurance issues relative to our chimney sweeping businesses. Mr. Walley is able to write the policy from Stratus for most New England chimney sweeps, for more information you may contact MCSG Treasurer, Loreen Koubek, at 781- 849-8202. For information about upcoming seminars, please visit the website mcsq.org.

New Hampshire Association of Chimney Sweep Professionals – Recent Executive Planning meeting (slope-side at Cannon Mt) yielded a full spring/summer calendar. Plan a visit to the NH seacoast and attend the following seminars: April 29th & 30th - Hands-on relining seminar; tile removal, relining oil flue 1st day, wood flue 2nd day CEU's TBD/ May 20th - CSIA CCS Review & Exam/ June 24th -Sweep Fest. Visit nhacp.org for details or you may call NHACP Secretary, Kim Stroup, at 603-823-7000.

New York State Chimney Sweep Guild – Two prestigious NYSCS Guild awards were presented during the NER Banquet by NYSCS Guild President, Ruthie Francisco. The President's Award was presented to Jeff Leonard and The Andrew Schukal Memorial Award was presented to Shawn Simboli. All urge you to remember to book your calendars for the 15th Annual Summer

Workshop! This year's dates are July 28th – 30th. Visit nychimneysweepguild.com for updates on 2006 seminars.

Membership Outlook

Business growth is strong in the Northeast thanks to this season's insatiable appetite for supplemental heat. Be sure to attend a business seminar or two this spring to protect your assets.

In less than two weeks, March 29th through April 1st, the 2006 NCSG Convention & Trade Show will be held in Louisville, Kentucky on the scenic Ohio River. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Respectfully submitted,

George Stroup
Region 1
Franconia, NH
(603) 823-7000
stroupco@verizon.net

Region 2 Report

Submitted by Ron Brigman – March 17, 2006

Business seems to have slowed down for most of the sweeps that I have spoken to. This could be, at least partly due to the onset of our recent warm spell.

I would like to acknowledge newly elected at large director from our region, Bob Priesing. It is encouraging for our region to be the home of two at large directors.

West Virginia

I was unable to contact anyone from West Virginia.

Virginia

Virginia is hosting the SCSA convention in June and most of the movers and shakers in the newly reformed VA Guild are busy prepping for that. Things are on track for this event and it appears there will be a lot of hands-on activities for the attendees.

North Carolina

NC will hold their Spring meeting in Jacksonville in early April with a seminar on building brick profiles. Their summer meeting in Lenoir, in mid July, will include a chimney relining seminar.

South Carolina

The SC guild held its quarterly meeting on February 23rd, 2006. An excellent seminar on Basic First Aid/CPR was presented at the local EMS facility in Prosperity, SC.

Georgia

I was unable to make contact with anyone from Georgia. The Georgia state guild is currently, more or less inactive.

Florida

Florida members had a successful meeting at Royal Edwards house with 17 in attendance according to President Jeff Curry.

Region 3 Report

March 2006

Number of member companies		Number of Certified Chimney Sweeps
Illinois	35	80
Indiana	34	68
Kentucky	17	14
Michigan	22	29
Missouri	24	45
Ohio	42	99
Totals	174	335

As was experienced by many, certain hearth products were in slim supply this past season, but most report no current backlog on installations. Fair January weather in the region helped.

Only one of three Region 3 nominees gained a seat on the board as an At Large representative. We welcome Kevin Delucenay and extend a grateful thank you to out going At Large director Paul Hempel.

Midwest Chimney Safety Council annual meeting/workshop scheduled for August in St. Louis.

Michigan is losing one member company that is relocating to Colorado.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Rhines

Region 4 Report

March 2006

Region 4 welcomes one new member from Mississippi: Mr. Armon Johnson from Jackson MS, We also mourn the loss of the wife of one of our members. Mrs. Cleveland Pope passed away early this month.

I am enclosing the latest news bulletin from HPBA regarding the new rules from EPA regarding woodburning and emissions regulations and how they will effect us in Region 4.

FROM: Jack Goldman and John Crouch

RE: U.S. EPA Proposes to Tighten Fine Particulate Standards; Plans to Protect Residential Woodburning

On December 20, 2005, the U.S. EPA proposed to tighten the 24-hour standard for PM2.5, or fine particulates. These standards cover soot with a diameter of up to 2.5 microns. If EPA issues the proposal as a final rule, the hearth industry will feel increased pressure from air regulators across the country.

The proposed standard will lower the 24-hour limit from 65 to 35 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), and leave the annual limit (an average over the entire year) unchanged at 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The agency is also proposing an entirely new 24-hour standard of 70 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for particles in the 2.5-10 micron diameter range. The proposal complies with the settlement of a lawsuit to force EPA to review and potentially revise the standard every five years, as required by the Clean Air Act. Under the provisions of the settlement, EPA had to propose a standard by December 20, 2005, and must issue a final decision on the proposal – i.e., adopt it or retain the current standard – by September 27, 2006.*

The existing PM2.5 standard was issued in 1997 and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2001. Since then, EPA and the states have been implementing that standard: monitoring the air to determine which areas do not comply with the standard, and setting deadlines for nonattainment areas to draw up and then implement plans for cleaning up their air sheds. The industry is watching the process carefully to ensure that woodburning is not banned or otherwise severely limited in these plans.

Areas not in compliance with the current PM2.5 standard are generally major metropolitan areas east of the Mississippi River, plus the Los Angeles and Central Valley basins in California and Libby, Montana. HPBA has just completed a study that ranks those areas, based on factors of importance to the hearth industry, and will begin approaching air planners in the higher ranking areas first to educate them about such measures as:

** woodstove changeouts,*

** real estate transfer rules (i.e., conventional woodstoves must be removed or replaced when a house is sold),*

* two-stage no burn days, and

* development of a standard, with EPA, for a clean-burning wood fireplace.

The proposed regulations, if adopted, will probably trigger new non-attainment areas and will have two results. First, many of the areas that are in attainment for the current standard may find themselves in nonattainment for the new standard – i.e., more areas will have to plan for reducing fine particulate levels. Because EPA already has the monitoring data that it needs for the new limits, it can already predict which areas may be swept in by the proposed rules. Besides adding more eastern cities, the proposal would add western cities such as Salt Lake City and Seattle to the list of nonattainment areas. Second, while areas that were planning to comply with the 65 µg/m3 standard will have five extra years to comply with the lower and more stringent standard of 35 µg/m3, many of those areas may choose to begin planning for compliance with the lower (proposed) standard, and somewhat bypass planning for the higher (existing) standard.

The net result would be that more areas would have to comply with a lower standard for PM2.5. This will unquestionably bring more pressure on residential woodburning.

There is much work ahead for the hearth industry, besides meetings with air planners, to protect residential woodburning. We must monitor planning by air regulators in each of the areas that are currently in nonattainment, and be prepared to respond – in numbers – when and if proposals surface that will limit woodburning. This will involve (i) keeping an eye on proposals that reduce PM2.5 at the expense of residential woodburning, (ii) writing letters and calling public officials, and (iii) attending public hearings. HPBA and your affiliate will work with you, but we will only be successful in preserving residential woodburning in these nonattainment areas if you donate a little time when asked to speak out for the industry. When we ask for your help, please provide it. You will be working to preserve your future.

We will keep you apprised of developments in the proposed tightening of the PM2.5 standard nationally, as well as developments in your area. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jack Goldman at goldman@hpba.org or John Crouch at john.crouch.hpba@sbcllobal.net.

** EPA is also proposing to eliminate the annual standard for PM10 (particles with a diameter of 10 microns or less) and to eliminate the 24-hour standard for PM10, except in areas (i) that have populations of 100,000 or more or (ii) that have current violations of that standard (at last until areas have been designated as out of compliance with the new 24-hours standard for PM2.5-10).*

I hope to see many fine folks from Region 4 in Louisville. The best way to keep up with our Trade and have fun that I know of.

John Wharton

NCSG REGION 5 REPORT

3-15-06

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Guild held a follow up seminar in January with Ellen Rohr from BareBonesBiz. This was more advanced from the previous year using real chimney company financials taking into account the climate of the region and was well attended. Sweeping, repair and retail sales remained strong through mid January with mild temperatures. February was on an even comparison with the previous year with March being below the previous year's business activity for most companies.

MINNESOTA

Demand for sweeping, repair, and liners were strong in the fourth quarter of 2005 continuing into January. Many sweeps attended the WI Guild meeting on financials in the Dells. Positive comments on all who attended this financial seminar.

North & South Dakota

Also reporting consumer interest is heavy in sweeping, and purchasing wood stoves in reaction to home heating costs.

Iowa

Sweeps were very busy as were retail sales through the fourth quarter of last year into January. Supply of wood, pellet, and corn stoves were first becoming available mid January, some not until February.

NEBRASKA

Also reporting homeowner's strong interest in wood burning. Sweeping activity was strong.

GENERAL CONDITION

The fourth quarter of 2005 was very good for everyone. Some that relied heavy on wood, pellet, and corn stove sales struggled as availability became very hard to get product. There was an inquiry from a member on how we can help them introduce legislation to accept NFPA211 as the code in their state. There was a suggestion to put pictures of all members in an area on the web site to put a face to the name of members.

Respectfully submitted,
Howard Rowell
Region 5 Director NCSG

Region Six Report

March 2006

There are 46 National Chimney Sweep Guild members in Region 6 as of this writing. We also have 82 CSIA Certified Chimney Sweeps in the Region.

The most recent activity in the Region is a three-day workshop to be hosted by the Texas Chimney Sweep Guild on July 10, 11 and 12 in Galveston, TX. Some of the seminars include installing an insert in a pre-fab fireplace, American Red Cross CPR Course, and removing a non-removable damper and reinstalling one. For those needing to recertify we will proctor the test for them if they have the tests sent to us. All of the classes will be completed by noon so everyone can enjoy the sun and surf or go shopping.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Burney
NCSG Region 6 Representative

NCSG Region 7 Director's Report
March 2006
Submitted by Steve Pietila

Here are the current membership figures for Region 7:

Oregon – 10
Washington – 10
Wyoming – 2
Montana – 0
Idaho – 5
Alaska – 1

Total – 28 (up three from last report!)

There are 38 CSIA Certified Chimney Sweeps in the region.

Most OCSA members continue to be satisfied with the level of involvement and don't wish to join the national organization. I'm hoping that the increased benefits will heighten interest and change some minds. The OCSA still has its own certification program, and again most choose to stay with just that.

The OCSA has a new president, Chris Winslow. Unlike the past president Chris is a member of the NCSG. I look forward to any assistance he might provide in increasing numbers from the region.

The legislation requiring special licensing for hearth product & venting components installation and service is still dormant but I am told it is not completely dead. We'll be keeping on eye open to see if this resurfaces. With the impending implementation of PM 2.5 air quality standards there will again be areas in Oregon that will not be in compliance. There is currently a locally sponsored stove change-out program being conducted just outside of Eugene, Oregon. Contact was made with the State DEQ official in charge of this at the HPBA Expo in Salt Lake City, and I look forward to developing that relationship on behalf of the NCSG and OCSA.

March 2006, Region Eight Report.

Currently, member sweeps total 2 in the state of Hawaii, 3 in Arizona, 3 in Nevada, 3 in Utah and 90 in the great state of California. That's right a grand total of 101 region eight members. That's a better than 20% increase over the 84 members I reported on last March. I feel and have been told that the new member benefits are a huge reason for the increase and retention of members in this region.

The "Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild" remains the only state guild within region 8. The GSCSG is holding its 26th annual convention and trade show in Sacramento, CA this July. There will be four days of education available to sweeps from all over the country.

The wood-stove shortage affected sweeps this last season who sell and install hearth products. Many say that the increased awareness of the need to have hearth products serviced and inspected has increased business throughout the region. Many more home inspectors are recommending NFPA-211, level II inspections as a way to limit there liability in real estate transactions. This is due in large part to many within the industry that frequent the monthly meetings of the home inspectors in many different areas of the region.

I will continue my efforts to increase membership within the region and make myself available to the members.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Brooks
NCSG Region 8 Representative

NCSG Supplier Director Report

March 2006 BOD meeting

After a record breaking sales year in 2005 many are preparing for a similar year in 2006. Expectations are for a drop off in volume, however not by a drastic amount. Continued high Fuel Oil, Natural Gas, and Propane costs are expected to continue to the drive demand for alternative fuel heating.

Support of the NCSG as demonstrated through tradeshow participation in Louisville is good. I will expand more on this in the Convention Committee report.

There has been some progress on the clean burning prefabricated open fireplace front. Hearth and Home Magazine issued a challenge in the form of a category in their VESTA award program to the hearth industry to develop such an appliance. While there were no entrants this year, a number of fireplace manufacturers reported they have fireplaces in the works for this category. Considering this news, I expect to see new models of next generation of prefab open fireplaces in the marketplace next year. Should this new type of fireplace come into the marketplace, I feel it is the type of product the NCSG should promote to its members.

I have heard little from suppliers on the success of the NCSG member coupon program. I'm reading this as good news. I will, and I encourage other board members also to, make a point of asking suppliers how that program has worked out for them while in Louisville.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Huta,
NCSG Supplier Director

NCSG Membership report, March 3, 2006

As of the time of this report, we have 992 voting members of the NCSG. This number is up 9.4% from the 907 voting members we left Texas with last March. As for Dues paying members, we have 1068. This is an increase of better than 10% over the 970 in San Antonio. I am encouraged with the progress but know we have room for additional growth as well. I will come to the meeting in Louisville with updated totals provided by the staff.

Our membership message now packs quite a punch. The coupon program, liability insurance, CSIA discounts and the many other services we provide, save NCSG members many times the cost of the membership per year. We shouldn't stop here.

We must continue to:

- 1) Expand the benefits of NCSG membership.
- 2) Find new ways to deliver more than is expected by the members, to the members.
- 3) Explore new ways keep the NCSG membership message in front of the non member and achieve a minimal attrition rate that is significantly lower than the association average.

Over the last year, the membership committee as it previously existed, has been dissolved. The critical task of personal contact with the membership as well as the task of personal contact with the non- member sweeps has been shifted to the staff. This was done out of respect to the limited time resources of the volunteer committee members to:

- 1) Respond to the expired members in a timely manner.
- 2) Make contact with members during the business day, during the busy season.
- 3) Deliver a uniform message, have a good understanding of the multiple benefits of NCSG membership and articulate them to the member.

The development of the coupon program was key, to the benefit package that already existed. Aside from the progress made in making liability insurance available to sweeps, technical support, CSIA education discounts and numerous other benefits, the coupon program put the package over the top. Any business in America that offers chimney sweeping as a service is losing money not being a member of the NCSG.

The development of the marketing program has been and will continue to be the foundation of membership retention and expansion. This program currently consists of direct mail. I would like to see the delivery of these direct mailing pieces included with our vender partner customer mailings. I would also like to see even more vender participation in the coupon program.

This has been a productive year for the expansion of NCSG membership. I look forward to the continued expansion of the benefits and number of members. It has been an honor to serve the NCSG membership this last year.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Brooks
NCSG Membership Chair

By-Laws Committee

The committee has been reviewing the by-laws and watching for areas in action plans that may require a by-laws change.

There are no recommendations for the Board to consider at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Rowell
By-Laws Chairman

Long Range Planning Committee
NCSG

Updates will be given on how our long range plans are developing through the respective committee reports.

These plans include:

- 2009 Convention Site Selection
- Benefits of Burning Wood brochure
- Online ethics complaint management
- Database Implementation
- Member-Get-A-Member
- Membership Drive
- Member Benefits Update

At the spring LRP work session focus will be:

- Enhancing our member benefit program
- Development of Government Affairs Member Packets
- Board Involvement with Convention Planning
- Sweeping Magazine Analysis

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Rowell
Long Range Planning Chairman

NFPA 31 Report

The new edition of NFPA 31 will be available after April 15, 2006. Below are the changes that will affect our industry.

Definitions

1400°F Type Factory-Built Chimney. NFPA 31, 2001 ed.

A chimney suitable for continuous use at 1400° F (760° C), composed of listed, factory-built components, intended for open, non-enclosed use at specified minimum clearances to combustibles and use in noncombustible locations, and assembled in accordance with the terms of its listing to form the completed chimney.

Deleted

Substantiation – This type of chimney is not within the scope of NFPA 31

Combustible Material. NFPA 31, 2001 ed.

Material made of or surfaced with wood, compressed paper, plant fibers, plastics, or other material that will ignite and burn , whether flame-proofed or not, or whether plastered or unplastered.

Changed to read:

Any material that will burn, regardless of its auto ignition temperature.

Draft. NFPA 31, 2001 ed.

The pressure differential that causes the flow.

Change to read: A pressure difference that causes gases or air to flow through a chimney, vent, flue, or fuel burning equipment

Qualified Person. NFPA 31, 2001 ed.

One familiar with the construction and operation of the equipment and the hazards involved.

Changed to read: A person who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, professional standing, or skill and who, by knowledge, training, and experience has demonstrated the ability to deal with problems relating to a particular subject matter, work, or project.

Appendix is now called Annex.

Proposed Changes

Recommendation: Appendix E "Relining Masonry Chimneys" should be removed from the Appendix section of the standard and reinserted at Chapter 6 " Venting of Combustion (Flue) Gases" and renumbered at 6, 6.1 to 6. 21 and Tables E.7(a) to E.7(e) and Tables E, II (a) to E. II (e) and Table E.14 to be removed from Appendix E and reinserted at Chapter 6 and renumbered accordingly.

Substantiation: As stated in the 2001 edition of the standard "Origin and Development of NFPA 31 (last paragraph): " major revisions to Appendix E were made to provide needed guidance for evaluation, repair and relining of existing masonry chimneys when replacing heating systems with high efficiency combustion appliances . However as per the standard the appendix is not part of the requirements of NFPA 31 and is included for informational purposes only. This statement is not only confusing to the oil heat installer and local Code officials enforcing safety requirements, but actually contradicts the reasoning and rationale provided for the major revisions to Appendix E. Properly sizing exterior masonry chimneys when replacing older heating equipment must be performed, As per NFPA 54 , National Fuel Gas Code, specifically states the installing contractor must follow the appropriate venting tables which include tables for "existing exterior masonry chimneys . In NFPA 54, following the venting tables is not an option or guidance for evaluation as stated in the NFPA 31 standard, which creates a conflict between two NFPA standards. Existing exterior masonry chimneys "are fuel neutral", potential unsafe conditions will eventually occur, if the exterior masonry chimney is not properly sized and or relined at the time of heating unit replacement. As a result of the National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987, effective January 1, 1992, the minimum efficiencies for residential gas fired and oil fired heating units was raised, resulting in lower flue gas temperatures, effecting exterior masonry chimneys, Please note both standards repeatedly refer to the NFPA 211, Standard For Chimney, Fireplaces, Vents and Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances" and as per 14. 2.5. 3 of NFPA 211 states "sizing of flues for liquid fuel appliances shall be in accordance with NFPA 31"

Unfortunately NFPA 31 does not direct or mandates the installer to follow specific guidelines. Providing proper venting tables and requirements inside the standard, will not only provide the oil heat installer with the information and guidance required for a safe installation, but would also provide for Code officials the guidance for enforcement. In addition, the references at E. 15: "Oil-Heat Vent Analysis Program" (Brookhaven National Laboratories, 1994) "Development of Oil Heat Venting Tables" (Oil-Heat Technology Conference and Workshop 1994) " Chimney Related Losses in Oil-Fired Heating Systems " (Brookhaven National Laboratories, 1990) and Masonry Chimney Inspection and Relining " AGAL 1990) provide for excellent research material for justification for this proposal.

Rejected

Committee Statement: Action to make recommendations of Annex E of NFPA 31 mandatory is premature. Until there is sufficient laboratory and field data that validates the computer-generated model on which Annex E is based.

Proposed Change

NFPA 31, 2001 ed. 6.5.10 The chimney connector shall be securely supported, and all joints shall be fastened.

Accepted

Proposed Change

NFPA 31, 2001 ed. 6.6.4 Prior to installation of an oil burner or oil-fired appliance, the chimney or flue gas venting system to which it is to be connected shall be examined by a qualified person in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 11 of NFPA 211, Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances. If the chimney or flue gas venting system

is found to inhibit the performance of the oil burner or oil-burning appliance, as specified by the manufacturer, or shows signs of imminent problems, the owner of the oil burner or oil-burning appliance shall be notified in writing.

Change to read:

6.6.4* Prior to the installation of a new or replacement oil burner or oil- burning appliance, the installer shall perform a visual inspection of the chimney or flue gas venting system.

6.6.4.2 If any deterioration exists, or if any flue- lining debris is present, or if the chimney or flue gas venting system is found to inhibit the performance of the oil burner or oil- burning appliance as specified by the manufacturer, the owner shall be notified in writing, stating that the chimney or flue gas venting system to which the appliance is connected shall be examined by a qualified person in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 11 of NFPA 211, Standard for Chimneys Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances.

A6.6.4. If the chimney or flue gas venting system shows signs of deterioration or is unlined and the oil burning appliance is maintaining the proper draft, as specified by the manufacturer, the appliance may be installed while awaiting the inspection and proper maintenance to be accomplished, as required by Chapter 11 of NFPA 211.

Substantiation: This more clearly sets forth the duties and limited responsibilities of a service technician when installing an oil-fired appliance.

Respectfully submitted,

John

John Pilger

NCSG Convention and Events Committee Report March 2006

Developments since November

The contract for the 2008 convention has been signed. The Palm Springs Riviera will be our site. You can look at that property at www.psriviera.com.

Plans for the next 6-12 Months

As determined but the current rotation, we are already making plans for 2009 in the southeastern portion of the country. That search will begin in earnest sometime this summer.

Considering the convention rotation dictates the NCSG convention and tradeshow will return to the Midwest in 2010 and there is a natural draw for us to bring our convention back home to Indianapolis, the site selection committee will also begin preliminary research for the 2010 convention this year.

Convention program assessment:

While there are many parts of our convention program which are evolving well, I think the NCSG will be wise to do an evaluation of its current convention model and its evolution. There are many factors which make up a successful convention and I think its time for us to discuss those factors to insure our conventions are on the right track. With this considered I intend to gather a group comprised of convention staff a small group of board members to have some strategic discussions later this year.

The following bears repeating from my November Convention Committee Report:

The overall direction of NCSG conventions is a good one. I'm excited about the possibilities created with our shift to a more sales oriented marketing program at NCSG which I expect to have a positive ripple effect on our conventions.

We do have a problem I think the NCSG will need to deal with within the next 3 to 5 years. We host a convention which asks a great deal from the properties which host us. Simply put, we do not sell enough room nights compared to other events which demand the same amount of tradeshow and breakout space we demand. We will either need to increase the number of room nights we sell, or trim the size of our convention space needs if we are to have plenty of site options in the future. After an extensive search for a west coast site we had only three options, and one of them simply was not viable once we had a chance to see it.

Respectfully Submitted,
Robert Huta,
NCSG Convention and Events Committee Chairman

March 16, 2006

NFPA 211 BOARD REPORT

Submitted by Royal Edwards

The new 2006 edition of NFPA 211 will be available in April of 2006