

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

AGENDA

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Call to Order | <i>Steve Pietila</i> |
| 2. Roll Call | <i>Paul Hempel</i> |
| 3. Approval of July 19, 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 Report | <i>Mark McSweeney</i> |
| 7. Legal Report | <i>Wayne Black</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 | |
| • Nominating Committee | <i>Paul Hempel</i> |
| • Long Range Planning | <i>Howard Rowell</i> |
| • Finance Committee | <i>Howard Rowell</i> |
| • By-Laws Committee | <i>Howard Rowell</i> |
| • Membership Committee | <i>Randy Brooks</i> |
| • Ethics Committee | <i>Thomas Rhines</i> |
| • Trade Development | <i>Greg Polakow</i> |
| • Convention Committee | <i>Robert Huta</i> |
| • NFPA 31 | <i>John Pilger</i> |
| 10. Old Business | |
| 11. New Business | |
| 12. Adjournment | |

DRAFT MINUTES ONLY – Not Approved

**National Chimney Sweep Guild
Board of Directors Meeting
July 19, 2005
Louisville, KY**

President Pietila called the meeting of the National Chimney Sweep Guild Board of Directors to order at 1:02 pm.

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

Directors Absent: Bob Burney

Staff Present: Mark McSweeney, Melissa Heeke, Royal Edwards and Art Garrett, Esq.

Guests Present: Renee Brigman, Bo Tasso, Greg Polakow, John Pilger, Kim Stroup and John Meredith.

A motion was made by Hans Marsen and seconded by Mark Putnam to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2005 National Chimney Sweep Guild board of directors meeting. Motion passes unanimously.

President's Report: Submitted by Steve Pietila.

Treasurer's Report: Submitted by Ron Brigman.

Executive Director's Report: Submitted by Mark McSweeney. Discussions were held regarding use of the online dashboard and liability insurance availability in New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

Legal Report: Submitted by Art Garrett, Esq.

Region 1 Report: Submitted by George Stroup.

Region 2 Report: Submitted by Ron Brigman.

Region 3 Report: Submitted by Thomas Rhines.

Region 4 Report: Presented by John Wharton.

Region 5 Report: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

Region 7 Report: Submitted by Steve Pietila.

Region 8 Report: Submitted by Randy Brooks.

Supplier Report: Submitted by Robert Huta.

Long Range Planning: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

By Laws: Submitted by Howard Rowell.

Membership: Submitted by Randy Brooks. A discussion was held regarding the new coupon program.

Trade Development: Submitted by Greg Polakow. A discussion was held regarding progress of the Chimney Academy.

Convention & Events: Submitted by Robert Huta.

NFPA 31: Submitted by John Pilger.

Government Affairs Committee: Submitted by Mark Putnam. Discussions were held regarding potential future lobbying activities and working with code-making bodies.

New Business

A motion was made by Randy Brooks and seconded by John Wharton to accept the NCSG FY 2006 budget as submitted. Voting in favor: Paul Anderson, Ron Brigman, Randy Brooks, Paul Hempel, Robert Huta, Mark Putnam, Hans Marsen, Thomas Rhines, Howard Rowell, George Stroup, John Wharton. Abstaining: Steve Pietila.

A motion was made by Hans Marsen and seconded by Paul Anderson to adjourn the meeting of the National Chimney Sweep Guild board of directors. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

President's Report
Chimney Safety Institute of America
National Chimney Sweep Guild
Prepared for the November 2005 meetings
Plainfield, Indiana

In the middle of our busiest time of the year it is again time to gather to evaluate our progress since our last meeting and to renew our commitment to the goals and objectives we have set for ourselves and for the organizations. The last few weeks have seen a tremendous amount of discussion regarding the new CSIA pricing structure and the Creosote Sweeping Log's participation in the Product Acceptance Program. I know that several of us feel like we've really been through the ringer. At a time when the demands of our own businesses are at their greatest we have been spending many hours responding to emails and strategizing about how to best deal with the reaction to the significant changes recently announced. Though the volume and subject matter appears to be returning to normal it is now time that the CSIA board and staff must make good on our pledge and deliver the goods in raising the value of CSIA Certification, and assure that the perception of industry professionals and the public is in line with what we are striving to achieve.

Let me share something with you that I wrote in my President's Report for the July meeting:

As one who remains very positive about the future of both organizations, it seems almost ironic that we may face opposition to some of what we choose to do. However, I believe that if it comes it will be from a small (though perhaps vocal) part of our constituents. It will be up to the board and staff to make a strong, honest and clear case for the decisions we are making. If we do this I believe those who truly care and are committed to the missions of the organizations will understand the tough choices we are to making. I believe we are continuing to make great progress in adding value to both NCSG membership and CSIA Certification. We are establishing relationships with other national organizations and agencies that give us great strategic position in furthering the cause of the American chimney sweep and their role in the safety of the consuming public. There is certainly room for improvement in the areas of effectiveness and efficiency both. But I believe that as the role of the board evolves and the staff leadership rises to the challenge that we will successfully navigate this path and that both organizations will be the better because of it.

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 some time ago I mentioned a book I was reading entitled Good to Great. The first three characteristics identified were "Level 5 Leadership", "First Who... then What", and "Confront the Brutal Facts". I think these are areas that we are currently working 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 want us to focus on the three “circles” that make up this concept. Here is the section that introduces this in the book:

The Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles). To go from good to great requires transcending the curse of competence. Just because something is your core business – just because you’ve been doing it for years or perhaps even decades – does not necessarily mean you can be the best in the world at it. And if you cannot be the best in the world at your core business, then your core business absolutely cannot form the basis of a great company. It must be replaced with a simple concept that reflects deep understanding of three intersecting circles. (What you are deeply passionate about, What you can be the best in the world at, What drives your economic engine).

So let's spend some time thinking about what it is that we are passionate about as a CSIA or NCSG board member. What can these organizations be the best in the world at? And finally what drives the economic engine of each one? Please, take some time – think these questions over and jot down your thoughts to share.

This third question, “What drives your economic engine?” is probably the easiest to answer, at least for the present. We just spent a few weeks (and months before that) first discovering, then understanding and finally explaining what it is for the CSIA. Certification income is the most reliable revenue source and it has the greatest possibility of sustaining the organization for the next three to five years and perhaps beyond. For the NCSG it has always clearly been membership dues. And so staff will be focusing a great amount of effort on activities that aim to increase NCSG membership and improve the value and perception of the value of CSIA certification. Let’s not forget our successes in the area of increasing the value of NCSG membership. Both staff and the board deserve credit for what has been accomplished over the last year and a half. It should make it much easier now to go out and be successful in a well thought out and executed membership recruitment effort. And now that we’ve revamped the CSIA business model we must put the programming in place that will give meat to the bones. This will include the educational benefits that will be part of the certification package. This should address not only some of the concerns expressed by the larger companies, but make education more available to all certified sweeps that will participate. Accessibility must be increased both by electronic & technological means as well as taking programs “on the road”. This strategy should not only increase the value of the Certification program, but it should allow us to raise the technical standard of those that carry the CSIA credential at the same time. We will be much better positioned to require continuing education for recertification and perhaps initial certification as well.

In addition, we will finalize the “CSIA Certified Hearth Specialist” designation, which should be adapted from the earlier model of the Certified Chimney Sweep program. Deleting only the areas of knowledge that are not necessary for “non-sweeps” such as office retail sales staff. This would allow companies to have all of their employees “certified by the CSIA” without diluting the value of the CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep credential. This coupled with the Home Inspector Presentation Program that will be introduced at the convention in Louisville are two additional projects that should provide tremendous value for business owners and Certified Sweeps alike.

And now another review of my stated goals for the organizations with **my previous comments in red!** **My most recent comments are in blue.**

NCSG

- Improved communication system with staff (Executive Director) to provide timely feedback on progress toward written goals & objectives
The dashboarding feature we now have via the internet is a useful tool that should getting us further toward this goal. WE need to make sure that each of our stated (written) goals are

included so we may follow our progress toward them. More goals are appearing on the NCSG Dashboard and this will help us keep tabs with progress toward our goals. Howard and I each speak with Mark at least once each week by phone.

- 1200 voting member companies (by convention 2006) The primary responsibility of achieving this has been shifted to staff. They are embracing it and I believe should be rewarded if this is achieved. I have spoken to Debbie regarding the goal and she seems very eager to get to work on it. Mark stated this is the present area of focus and effort.
- 250 participants in insurance program (by convention 2006) I believe this is a very significant addition to the member benefit package and hope we can achieve this benchmark. I think continued promotion and provision of testimonials from the rank and file will help this effort. I'll have to ask Mark to give us an update.

CSIA

- Certification standard raised – including requirements for CEUs for recertification I believe we must make progress in this area, it is directly related to the perceived value of our credential by the “affiliated trades”, general public and those that hold the credential. I have spoke with John Pilger the Chair of the Certification Committee and given him the direction I want us to take. With the new pricing structure it is vital that we make real progress on this and in a timely matter. Once again, as Ashley role adapts to the changes in the CSIA business model he will be taking a greater role in the further development of this process.
- Completion & adoption of Product Acceptance Program policy **DONE!!**
- Solid and realistic plan to address financial issues of CSIA **DONE!!**

In conclusion, I want again challenge all of us to arrive at the meeting prepared to contribute to the strategic work of the organizations. Yes, as you have seen our efforts are not always appreciated by everyone that we serve. But we have an agreement each of us has made, which is 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. But if you find yourself unable or unwilling to keep this agreement, than the best thing to do is to reevaluate your role. This is the meeting where board members look to how they might better serve the organizations by seeking an officer position on the board. Traditional those intentions are announced at the November meeting. I have already indicated that I will not be seeking another term as President. All NCSG offices will be open for election at the first board meeting in Louisville. It's time to be thinking about whom can best lead these boards into the future, and to consider whether one of those individuals is you. What's your passion? What are you best at? Let's continue to find the answers to these questions together.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven R. Pietila
President

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CSIA and NCSG Boards of Directors Meeting
November 5, 2005 • CSIA Technology Center • Plainfield, Indiana

Coming out of our last meeting in July, I expressed to Steve that, beyond day to day management, our administrative priorities were primarily two-fold over the course of the next four to six months: 1. Prepare for and launch the new CSIA certification pricing program; 2. Prepare and launch the new NCSG member recruitment program.

We are all well aware of the activity to date relative to CSIA certification. Needless to say, between the preparation leading up to the October 3 announcement and the various forms of follow up and additional information dissemination since that time, a considerable amount of staff time has been consumed with this project.

At the time that this report is being written, the staff is preparing a second mailing that will be received by all certified sweeps early in the week of October 31. That mailing will include an updated and expanded list of FAQs largely based on the questions and answers that have occurred on the NCSG discussion list in the 2-3 weeks following the initial announcement. It will also include a reminder and registration instructions for the upcoming online town hall meetings. The thought behind the second mailing is the reality that the majority of our certified sweeps do not participate on the NCSG discussion list, so they have not benefited from some of the dialogue and additional information that has been shared via that venue. Additionally, I do not want to simply rely on the average certified sweep proactively revisiting the CSIA website for updated information, and want to ensure that everyone is fully informed about the town hall meeting opportunities. While some people may have looked at the website after receiving the initial mailing (and undoubtedly many did not), most have likely not gone back to look again since. These mailings, done in-house, do take quite a bit of staff time to produce and assemble, and do cost money. However, Steve and I agreed that it's good customer service and the timing is right.

In addition, eight full pages of the November issue of *Sweeping* will feature additional details of the background leading up to the pricing changes, as well as future plans for the income stream. That issue is expected to be in the mail at the time of our board meeting.

Moving beyond the initial announcement and subsequent communications, the next twelve months will be critical. While CSIA's financial picture will not be significantly impacted by any "new" income until 2007, it will be important that we maximize our available resources so that sweeps can in fact see tangible signs that CSIA is moving in new and positive directions. As a leadership team, board and staff alike, we need to ensure we are identifying practical and affordable -- yet innovative and tangible -- ways to add real value to the certification program. The good news is that this does not require us having to reinvent the wheel. We have already identified some good concepts (rocker patch program, chimney inspection program, Certified Hearth Specialist program, online education programs, etc.). Ashley has begun initial development on some of these things, and now that he is able to return full strength following medical leave, he will be able to raise his intensity on these various projects. Perhaps prioritizing these and/or identifying other value-generating programs (meaning, which if these things has the greatest developmental value to working sweeps) should be our focus during our upcoming work session.

It is a natural tendency to get bogged down with negative input and political jabs about decisions that have been made. However, at the end of the day, we all know that while these have by no means been easy or quick decisions, they were undoubtedly the right decisions for the future of CSIA. It is also important to keep this in perspective and recognize that we have received an equal amount of public and private support for the business decision that was made. While nobody likes a price increase, I firmly

believe that ultimately the vast majority will continue to support the program because they still recognize its value in the long run. None-the-less, it is important that CSIA develops a mechanism for tracking participation and retention beyond 2006 so that we can continue to make the business decisions necessary moving forward.

Meanwhile, some key staff (namely Melissa, Debbie and myself) need to be turning our focus toward the priority of NCSG recruitment. We have a lot to be proud of in terms of adding real value to NCSG membership over the past eighteen months or so. As discussed, we now need to become more aggressive in promoting that value to literally thousands of sweeps across the country who have not yet discovered the benefits to their business of membership in the Guild. It has been our intention to start our new contact program during the Fall season, and that has been identified as a priority during the month of November.

We will also be firming up the details of NCSG's "member-get-a-member" program. Other associations have found considerable success with these types of programs, and there's really no reason why it should not be successful for NCSG as well. In essence, it is merely an ongoing incentive program that recognizes current members for helping the Guild to grow its membership. Again, with everything we have put in place over the past year plus (and we will continue to identify more), the benefits of membership are arguably the best they have ever been.

A more significant overhaul of the NCSG website is still on our wish list, but it's not been in the financial cards yet. However, we have made some good changes to improve its user friendliness and marketability. Member benefits, for example, are now easily identifiable to members and potential members alike. We were very pleased with the reaction to the NCSG Disaster Relief Network and believe it will be a very valuable industry resource for years to come. The member coupon program is beginning to get some positive reaction as well, and that will undoubtedly increase with the mailing plans this fall.

In its initial development, the coupon program was intended to be an actual hard copy coupon book. However, as it grew we determined that the program would have greater value if it were a bit more fluid. Since its announcement, we have already received a number of calls and emails from supplier participants requesting slight modifications to their individual offerings. While there is certainly a tangible benefit to producing a physical book, we recognized that doing so is limiting. For those who do not have convenient access to the internet, we are able to produce hard copies of the coupons upon request, and have done so.

This past summer I discussed with the board plans for some staff related changes. As you already know, the planned changes took place, as did some unplanned changes. Perhaps my biggest disappointment was in our inability to identify what I was looking for relative to management of our IT, database, and web operations. However, this past month we did begin a new relationship with a contractor who is already making progress on our database (iMIS) goals. The immediate priorities are two-fold...certification processing and bringing our e-series expectations to fruition. I anticipate having a more meaningful update, including practical timelines, for you at our board meeting.

I look forward to seeing each of you soon. Safe travels.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark T. McSweeney, Executive Director

NCSG Legal Counsel Report
-- Confidential --

To be submitted under separate cover.

NCSG Region 1 Report – November 2005

Region 1 has a number of sweeps that have recently become members of NCSG. I am honored to welcome you all to the NCSG community. Joining NCSG from Maryland: **Skip Creswell** Ace Chimney Sweeps, Inc; **Vincent DeCrisci** Chimney Tek/ Service Tek; and **Michael Gasdia** Fire-Free Chimney Sweeps, Inc. Hailing from Massachusetts: **Dave Bancroft** Sweepman, Inc.; **Carl Brooks** Bob's Magic Broom; **Patrick Moynihan** Hardwick Chimney Services; **David O'Shea** All About Chimneys; **Andrew Parker** The Chimney Guy; and **Joseph Podrecca** Chimney Sweep Professionals. Joining NCSG from New Jersey: **Gary Crawford** Poppins; **Michael Maguire** Jersey Shore Chimney Sweeps; and **Terry Polis** Terry's Chimney Service. Hailing from New York: **Craig Ford** C.F. Ford, Chimney; **Tom Geno** G.S.C.; **Matt Hanby** Matters of the Hearth; **Carl Hutchison** Hutch's Chimney and Stove Service; **Jeff Pistritto** Embers Chimney Work/ Home Improvement; **Robert G. Rozzoni** Holy Smoke Stove and Fireplace Chimney; and **Michael Scanlon** Michael Scanlon Chimney & Fireplace Services. Joining from Pennsylvania: **Patrick T. Farrow** Farrow Heating; **Stephen Hall** Cat in the Hat Chimney Sweep; **Glen Kellogg**; **James King** A King's Chimney Service; **Robert A. O'Connor** O'Connor Chimneys; **Bill Stevenson** Bill's Mechanical Service; and **John Wisnewski** Let There Be Light Chimney Sweep. Hailing from Vermont: **Clark DeBona** Chimney Works, Inc.; **Thomas Jones** Mason Jones; **Chad M. Redding** Redding Chimney Company; **Thomas J. Santopolo** Rutland Chimney Services, Inc.; and **Brian Shult** Black Magic Chimney Sweeps.

NCSG Member Companies in Region 1; CT 31, DE 5, ME 12, MD 42, MA 48, NH 20, NJ 70, NY 79, PA 77, RI 10, and VT 22

Regional Updates

January 25-28, 2006 - The 2006 Northeast Regional Chimney Sweep Convention and Trade Show will be held right outside of Mystic, CT. Registration information is available on the Internet at www.nerconvention.com. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact one of the following NER Registration Committee members for more information; Jenn Ryan at 973-398-3978, Rick Anderson at 717-975-3526 or Paul Devenny at 609-386-1299. This year the Northeast Regional Convention Committee is planning a first, there will be a special evening "Sweeps Social Gathering & Pass The Pigs Tournament". Never played "PIGS"? ... Ride the Wave to Mystic, Sail Away with a Wealth of Knowledge!!

Stratus Status – You may recall Bill Koehler, from Stratus Insurance stated, "filings are still pending in NH and RI. The bureaucratic process takes time," and he had asked for patience in this matter. NCSG is continuing to push this as much as possible but it is unfortunately still not available in RI and NH. This is not a function of Stratus specifically, but rather an issue with those states' insurances boards and the fact that the parent company of Colony Insurance (the underwriter for the program) has other subsidiary companies already operating in those two states. The president of the insurance company is involved and says that they will continue to push for a change.

A reminder that nominations are currently being accepted for NCSG Board Members!! In 2006, seats for Regions 7 and 8 and three At-Large positions will be open. At-Large Directors are eligible voting members from any state! Please contact Paul Hempel, NCSG Nomination Committee Chair for more info at (618) 462-6242 or via email at skypylot@ezl.com.

March 29 – April 1, 2006 - The 2006 NCSG Convention & Trade Show will be held in Louisville, Kentucky on the scenic Ohio River! For more information, please visit the Internet site www.ncsg.org.

New York

Ruthie Francisco, president of NYSCSG, reports "...we are very busy preparing for the NER [2006 Convention]. We are in the process of a huge membership drive and are offering a chance for all new/renewing members of the NY Guild to be entered into a drawing to win a brand new laptop (to be

drawn at the NER [2006 convention]). We are also offering a free half page ad to all advertisers for our convention issue of the NY News." Ruthie asks that all camera ready artwork be mailed to her by December 1, 2005 at 60 Pershing Drive, Scotia, NY 12302 or you may call her at 800-249-3943. Her preference (if at all possible) would be to receive jpegs or pdf files at WINDRF@aol.com.

Massachusetts

Jeannie Jacobson, president of MCSG, reports "The Mass Guild will be holding its annual Holiday Party and General Meeting on Dec. 10th & 11th [2005]." The CSIA price changes are on the agenda for the MCSG board meeting on 11/9/05. Jeannie has invited Greg Polakow, CSIA Board Member, to address MCSG membership at the general meeting on 12/11/05. She states there have been lots of reactions to the CSIA price changes in MCSG; they are in the process of revising the Guild's By-Laws, and the CSIA certification mandate may have to be reviewed based on the price change issue. Other than that, everyone is looking forward to the NER [Convention].

CT, DE, ME, MD, NH, NJ, PA, RI & VT

All other Guild contacts seem to share Ernie Hostedler's consensus, "busy fall so far and with fuel prices going up it looks like an extended busy season".

Respectfully submitted,
George Stroup
NCSG Region 1
Franconia, NH
stroupco@kingcon.net

Region 2 Report

Submitted by Ron Brigman – October 27, 2005

In my area we seemed to have skipped from summer to winter. We had above average temperatures until a few days ago and then they dipped below average. This change finally got the phone ringing frantically. But most I have spoken with have been fairly busy for some time.

West Virginia

No contact with anyone in West Virginia this time around.

Virginia

Members of the Virginia guild have been mainly occupied with preparations for next year's South East convention. They will host this gathering in Williamsburg.

North Carolina

I was able to attend the quarterly meeting of the NC Association of Professional Chimney Sweeps in early October. Prior to their meeting they completed one of their Operation Safe Sweep projects. This has been an annual event for several years. This year, member John Handler arranged for the group to line and repair two chimneys in an old farm house that is occupied by an elderly couple. They were not financially able to have the badly needed work done so it was a perfect project for the group to do, at no charge to the home owner, for their annual charity event.

At the meeting new officers for the Association were seated. The new president is James Owens, VP Wayne Welch, Sec./Treasurer, John Bud.

I was also able to hold the first "Town Hall Meeting" concerning the new pricing structure for CSIA certification, with the NC guild. I used the PowerPoint presentation and it was quite well received. In case you missed it, here is a portion of my informal report to the board about this meeting.

"We were on the agenda early in the meeting. Right after the treasurer's report. And I think it went very well. There were 15 people in attendance in addition to Renee and myself. There were a lot of intelligent questions asked. But the tone was interested, not defensive at all. Ironically most of the questions came from NON CERTIFIED people. They all seemed to follow the trail easily. They all seemed to get it. They really got it. Several commented afterwards in conversation with Renee that they appreciated the logical clear way it was laid out. They said they could really see how the cost was justified."

South Carolina

The first annual gathering at Lucky Dale's, since Lucky's passing, took place in September. The main focus was the project of constructing an outdoor chimney by Lucky's graveside. It is at the

family cemetery located on the family farm. We had participants from Florida, Georgia and both Carolinas. Renee wrote an article for SWEEPING about the event I wrote one for SNEWS. You can read the details there.

The SC guild also had its quarterly meeting and an auction. The auction was mostly things contributed by former member Kevin Cowan, when he closed his store last year.

Georgia

No news from Georgia this time around. It seems that the Georgia Guild is more or less inactive at the moment.

Florida

The Florida guild is planning a meeting and workshop in January at Royal Edwards home in Tampa. Exact date and time is not yet determined. The work shop may possibly be on installing a Bellfire.

Summary

Business seems to be booming across the region, as it is in many other parts of the country right now. We are seeing a greatly increased interest in wood burning.

Region 3 Report

Not a state by state report, except to note that the Indiana association has had so little participation it is likely going to follow Michigan and disband. Reaction to the new business model for CSIA is hung up on the fee structure, as was to be expected. I feel I have been successful in focusing on the virtues of the model itself, specifically the earmarking of funds and the goals of each piece of the pie. It has relieved certified sweeps, I have spoken with, to realize the new fee structure will not affect them until after their renewal date. And the annual maintenance fee only comes when renewing after Jan. 1, 2006. Few got that part. Also, explaining that the business model will not be fully funded until three full years after inception, helped keep things in perspective. There is hearsay between sweeps of not recertifying, but the ones I did speak with all say they will continue maintaining their credential. Not one sweep I have been in contact with has not raised rates this season. I used this opportunity to suggest keeping in mind the new fee structure as price adjustments are being made. Will be sending out membership packet to new owners and alerted them of the recent CSIA decisions and new member benefits. Discovered a couple of sweeps not on the discussion list and encouraged joining as a real member benefit. And to go to the websites for more information on recent developments etc. May well see another subscriber to the THM. I have received commitments from three member companies to attend convention next year and identified a prospect for the nominating committee. All in all nothing bad to report and the busy season chugs on.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Rhines

Region 4

NCSG REGION 5 REPORT

10-26-05

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Guild is planning a follow up seminar in January with Ellen Rohr from BareBonesBiz. This will be more advanced from the previous year using real chimney company financials taking into account the climate of the region.

Sweeping activity is the strongest it has been for the last 20 years this fall. The same is true for masonry repair and relining activity.

MINNESOTA

Demand for sweeping, repair, and liners is very strong. Sweeps are busier than they have been for a long time with strong backlogs.

North & South Dakota

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

Iowa

Sweeps are very busy and retail sales are way up on wood stoves and hearth retail accessories. Appointment schedules are full with some reporting difficulty in meeting wood stove & pellet demand due to supplier's backlogs.

NEBRASKA

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

GENERAL CONDITION

All states are reporting business is very good due to higher home fuel heating cost predictions. Homeowners are turning to wood and servicing their chimneys much like what was seen in the early 80's.

Comments on the new CCS price structure varied. Most understood why it is happening and were coming to terms with accepting it. Ones that struggled with it were focused on web site hits. CCS's need to see there is much more benefits even though our web sites are showing substantial increases in hits. Decreased liability and increased sales for additional repairs are points that need to be brought forward. The larger companies seemed to struggle with the increase more than single truck companies.

Respectfully submitted,
Howard Rowell
Region 5 Director NCSG

Region 6

NCSG Region 7 Director's Report
November 5, 2005
Submitted by Steve Pietila

Here are the current membership figures for Region 7:

Oregon – 8
Washington – 11
Wyoming – 2
Montana – 0
Idaho – 3
Alaska – 1

Total – 25 (down two from last report)

As you would expect the busy season is in full swing, and most folks are booked well into the winter. The season started early this year with schedule filling up early to mid August. Many suppliers are low or out of chimney and liner materials. Stove sales are brisk and Pellet stoves seem to be the hot item this year.

Most OCSA members continue to be satisfied with the level of involvement and don't wish to join the national organization. OCSA still has it's own certification program, and again most choose to stay with just that.

After last years mild winter folks weren't sure what to expect, but even though the really cold weather hasn't hit everyone is extremely busy both with sweeping and repairs. There doesn't seem to be too much deferral of repairs, so I guess that means consumer confidence is pretty high.

November 2005, Region Eight Report

Currently, member sweep companies total 1 in the state of Hawaii, 3 in Arizona, 3 in Nevada, 4 in Utah and 83 in the great state of California. That's right a grand total of 94 region eight members, that's 9 more than last report, a 10% increase.

I would like to personally welcome William Costa, "Hawaii Chimney Sweep Inc." of Hawaii, to the NCSG. I feel a personal visit by a small delegation of 12-15; directors may be in order in the near future.

A workshop sponsored by the GSCSG was held in the Sacramento area of California on Saturday, August 20th. A large showing of 40+ companies was in attendance and most participated in the hands on work shop.

To date, I have nothing specific to the region to report other than increases business being discussed by every sweep I have spoken with in the last few weeks.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Brooks
NCSG Region 8 Representative

NCSG Supplier Director Report

November 2005 BOD meeting

I've spoken with a mixed bag of industry suppliers in the last few weeks. All are reporting excellent sales. The energy pinch created by already high energy costs and compounded by the hurricanes in the gulf has increased consumer demand for alternative heating products to near panic levels. This will mean business for our members not just during this period, but also via increase maintenance and repair work in the future. The general business climate for suppliers is moving from good to great. Even with excellent sales, they are still dealing with high raw material costs and the costs of fuel surcharges and other high energy cost issues. Should the demand for raw materials lighten overseas the business climate here would improve to excellent in my opinion.

Generally speaking the suppliers I've spoken with support CSIA commitment to a self supporting price structure. They understand costing very well from their own businesses and know that CSIA is doing what CSIA must do to deliver the CCS program to its participants. As long time supporters of the CSIA in general and the Tech Center specifically, they understand it is the responsibility of CCS to maintain their own certification program financially so other fund raising effort can be used for more future oriented purposes.

There has been excellent support for the coupon book being developed under the leadership of Randy Brooks and the membership committee. Now that the book has been completed for the year we have supplier support is in excess of \$6000.00 per member. Considering an average of 1000 members of NCSG annually, this represents in excess of \$6,000,000.00 of supplier support. I am a bit surprised to not have seen any major reaction on this program from the membership. I am very interested to see how this program is view by the membership this time next year. Should this not be taken advantage by the sweep members of the association, it will be a colossal disappointment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Huta,
NCSG Supplier Director

Nominating Committee Report for November 05 Board Meeting

Unfortunately not much activity to report.

Bob Priesing has stepped up and is running for one of the three open At-Large seats. He has turned in his nomination form and it's also been forwarded to the office. I believe he will make a fine board member.

Diane Pilger has given mixed signals as late as the week of October 17th. She's emailed a number of times inquiring, has asked for the nomination form, but doesn't seem to know if she wants to run or not. In her last mail she said she doesn't want to but others have told her she should. I wrote her back saying if she wanted to run, fine, but not to run just because others want her to, citing that we needed committed board members. I am neither encouraging her or discouraging her at this point. **10-28 update:** Diane has officially submitted her nomination form.

Diane also implied in one of her emails that Steve Scally might be running. So far I have not heard from Steve. I'd like your opinions as to whether I should encourage him or not.

I have also received an email from Marge Padgitt indicating she may seriously be considering running, but nothing formal yet.

As of this writing, October 25th, we have no candidates for region 7 or 8.

And that's the sad news guys. We are in pretty desperate need of leadership and we don't have much stepping up. There has only been one mention in Newslink and one in Sweeping so far. I have not mentioned it on the member list considering the current climate there. Hopefully after another mention or two we will get more candidates but frankly my bag of tricks is empty and I have no idea what the next step needs to be.

As always, I solicit your input and advice.

Paul Hempel
Nominating Committee Chair

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:

- [2008 Convention Site Selection...](#)
- [2009 Convention Site Selection...](#)
- [Benefits of Burning Wood Brochure...](#)
- [Ongoing Membership Recruitment...](#)
- [Patches for Classes](#)

Also an update on the iMIS software implementation status will be given by staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Rowell
Long Range Planning Chairman

Finance Committee Report

NCSG

The Finance Committee and staff worked out a financial plan to meet objectives for the Membership Recruitment drive for fiscal year 06-07. Funds were allocated for the Member Coupon Benefit Program as well.

Updates on how these are progressing will be given in the Membership Committee report.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Rowell
Finance Committee Chairman

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

MEMBERSHIP REPORT NOV., 2005

As of July 1st, the much anticipated coupon program is for all intent and purposes completed and ready for implementation this fall renewal and membership drive season. Thanks to the efforts of the membership executive committee and our unbelievably generous vender family, the perceived value of the ever expanding program now exceeds 15 times the cost of NCSG annual membership. After having received the offers from the venders, we have produced the coupons and received final approval from the venders. Venders that want to participate at anytime in the future will simply contact the office and have them produce a coupon for the membership to redeem.

I have a commitment from our friends at Y2 marketing to produce a couple of direct mail pieces to present our case for membership and or continued membership in the NCSG. These color ads will be produced and provided to the staff in exchange for advertising in "Sweeping" as well as a booth convention. I wanted to take advantage of the generous offer by Copperfield to include it in there new catalog mailing that was sent out in August sometime. This I felt was most important as there mailing goes out to 5,000+ company's nation wide. Due to the extra staff time being absorbed by other more pressing issues over the late summer, this has not happened to date. Y2 marketing has not provided the staff to date with any ad copy for review. The latest issue of sweeping has finally made the long awaited announcement to the membership, but we have missed the boat as far as the mass mailing offers we were hopping to utilize this fall.

After these programs are in place, I will move forward with additional benefit programs that have been presented as food for thought by others that share the desire to expand our membership.

Until the staff finds time to tie up loose ends with Y2 marketing and get this and all other benefits of membership presented to the 5,000 sweep companies that are not currently NCSG members, I'm uncertain of reaching our goal of 1,200 members by convention.

The benefits now being implemented have never before been provided. If we can deliver this marketing presentation to the non member masses prior to December 1st, I am most optimistic of its success in increasing our membership to the stated goal of 1,200 members by convention.

The membership committee and its SOP as they formally existed are now extinct. The personal phone calls to the membership that fail to renew, will now be handled as a staff function. This most important job must be handled in a more timely and efficient manner. The staff will be taking on more of a sales function than go-between with numerous committee members. Given the new and improved case for membership in the NCSG, I believe we have strengthened the pitch that the staff will be presenting.

No longer are we a \$420 magazine subscription as we have been accused of in the past. The membership talking points are expanding rapidly and will continue to do so. The new goals of this committee are simple, we will continue to deliver more than we promise, more than is expected and more than anyone can imagine year after year.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Brooks

Trade Development Committee

Greg Polakow, Chairman

To be submitted under separate cover.

NCSG Convention and Events Committee Report

November 2005

Developments since July

Mark, Royal, and I completed site visits to three properties in Southern California in preparation for the 2008 convention. We have two viable candidates and are in contract negotiations at this point. Our leading candidate is the Palm Springs Riviera. You can look at that property at www.psriviera.com.

Plans for the next 6-12 Months

With the expectation of completing contract negotiations shortly, possibly even prior to this board meeting, we are already making plans for 2009. As dictated by the board approved convention rotation, the NCSG Convention and Tradeshow will be in the southeastern part of the country. I would like to have site visits and contract negotiations for the 2009 convention completed prior to our meeting again in Louisville.

Repeated for my July report –

Due to its location and value, Louisville 2006 has the potential to break records in every category. With that said, I can not overstate the importance our promoting this convention early and often. Initial meetings on the theme and timetable of this convention have already occurred at the staff and committee / staff level and I look forward to an aggressive, consistent, sales oriented, and professional marketing effort with the purpose of making this convention the most profitable in the history of the NCSG.

In addition to promoting the Louisville during this time period, NCSG will also begin what might be described as “light” promotion of our 30th Anniversary convention at the Mohegan Sun in 2007. This is unusual for NCSG, but considering Mohegan Sun has its own national marketing campaign I think it benefits NCSG to have its potential attendees aware of our connection to that property. My hope is when Mohegan Suns’ television advertising, sports marketing, and other marketing pieces get in front of our target market; it will remind them of our upcoming event and therefore enhance our success.

Convention program assessment:

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

NFPA 31 Committee Report

No meetings were scheduled. The next meeting will be early 2006

John Pilger
NCSG Rep to NFPA 31