

Chairperson's Report Conference XVII

Every annual Nicotine Anonymous World Services Conference has had traditional events and common elements that carry over from year to year, giving delegates and attendees a sense a common purpose and unity over time, no matter where or when a conference convenes.

Our 2002 conference was no exception. From the start of Friday evening's Gratitude Meeting, where we listened to Howie G. from New York and so many others share the blessings and gifts their nicotine freedom has brought them, to Saturday evening's banquet with the wonderfully funny and moving speakers Joe. S of Huntington Beach, California and Mike B. of Levittown, New York, to Sunday's Spirituality Brunch, where Marcia G. of Hauppauge, New York shared from her heart, conference attendees heard many exquisite voices of recovery experience, strength and hope. At Sunday's sunrise meeting, through the many marathon meetings, and all around the hospitality suite, the renewing of old friendships, and the starting of new ones, was everywhere. These will all be among the special moments for which this conference will most be remembered.

And the surroundings were grand ... a first-class hotel centered amid the heritage and cultural diversity of Brooklyn, a few steps from the historic Brooklyn Bridge and a bounty of fine eateries. This weekend of sharing and service might, to some extent, be cherished solely because of its unique setting and its distinctive people. A special note of gratitude goes to Eileen C. and the many planners and other servants from her New York Metropolitan Area Intergroup who organized every detail and helped to make this conference a resounding success! Delegates their local meetings and intergroups came from Arizona, Chicagoland (Illinois), Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey/Pennsylvania, New Orleans, New York Metropolitan area, Northern California, Rocky Mountain (Denver), Southern California, Texas, and even Bermuda. They came together for the most important purpose of conducting the current business of the Fellowship. The workshop discussions and the proposals arising from them, not unlike previous conferences, raised spirited debate between newcomers and old-timers, between East and West, and especially, between traditionalists and reformists. The diversity of views and healthy deliberation led repeatedly to a heightened call for "what's best for the entire membership of Nicotine Anonymous?" It was resolved during the Conference to:

- Leave unchanged our Bylaws Articles I and II. The proposed amendment that would have revised three of the Steps and one of the Traditions to become **gender neutral**, failed to achieve the required two-thirds vote of the Delegates present to send it to all the groups for final ratification. The Conference strongly encouraged that there be ongoing discussion into the future about how both gender and spiritual neutrality relate to the membership and the growth of the Fellowship.
- Amend the Bylaws Article VII, Section 2, item c) to permit the officers to designate a place for holding of a meeting of the Delegates, including a **future World Services Conference, outside the United States.**

- Approve publication of a **second edition of “Nicotine Anonymous: The Book,”** to replace some references to smoking, smoke-free, and smoke with references to using nicotine, nicotine-free, and nicotine. Included in the new edition will also be a list of our Traditions and numerous grammatical improvements.
- Accept sixty-three submissions for a new **literature work-in-progress, the “Book of Daily Meditations”** addressing nicotine recovery. The Conference clarified the format for the book and affirmed that all submissions would be from the perspective of a recovering nicotine addict rather than someone still using.
- Elect **new officers:** Robin L. of Georgia as Chair-Elect; Dale K. of Maryland as Secretary-Elect, and Jeff C. of California as Treasurer-Elect. The Conference also extended its appreciation and gratitude to those officers whose terms expired: Scott J. of New York as Chair-Emeritus, Leslie S. of Virginia as Secretary-Emeritus, and Jack R. of California as Treasurer-Emeritus.
- Heard passionate proposals from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Atlanta, Georgia to host the **2004 World Services Conference.** At their meeting immediately following the Conference, the officers did select Philadelphia as the conference site for April 23–25, 2004.

One of the most traditional highlights of any conference is the countdown of the lengths of abstinence, from the longest to the shortest. Following Saturday’s speakers, as each year is called out, more and more people stood in celebration of their personal victory over nicotine. One of two attendees first to stand with the longest time—over 30 years, presented a copy of “The Book” to the attendee last to stand with the shortest time—one hour. They both had traveled all the way from Bermuda unknowingly to bring everyone at this Conference two surprise gifts ... an opportunity to bear witness to the power of carrying the message, and a wonderful reminder that *It Works!*