

March 18, 2005

## REGION 1 REPORT

There has been much activity in Region 1 during the past few months.

First of all, with recent election, there was a letter written by both George Stroup and myself to all of the members in Region 1. This had the effect of getting many people thinking not only about the relative merits of the two of us, but also about the issues concerning the Guild. My hope is that, combined with the national convention in San Antonio, this will increase Guild member participation in the Northeast.

There have been and continue to be many activities sponsored by the State Guilds. NY recently had a very successful winter meeting and Safety Workshop. Many state guilds have held or will soon hold their yearly organizational meeting. Over the next few months, there will be many activities open to sweeps from around the region and country. These include a Masonry workshop and a Sweeps Fest in NH, a charity workshop and June Week-Long Masonry School in PA, the NY Summer Workshop in July, and numerous other smaller events.

There have been several things happening in this region on the legislative front. In NJ, At-Large Director Steve Kuber worked with state legislators to introduce a bill to provide State licensing for Chimney Professionals. In ME, Phil Hilt and others in their small guild are working with state authorities to keep the Chimney Inspection portion of NFPA 211 intact. Realtors want to pass legislation to strike the part that pertains to Level II inspections and Real Estate transactions (NFPA 211 section 14.5.1). In MA Mass. Guild President Jeanie Jacobson and others are working to get licensing for Chimney Professionals with the CSIA certification as the requirement. And in CT, (which is part of the NY Guild), there is legislation in the hearing process to give a limited mechanical license to hearth appliance installers. NCSG member Marisa Chirico is attending those hearings, the next of which is March 8.

This is my last report as Region 1 Director. It has been a real pleasure and an honor to serve on this board with such a sincere and dedicated group of professionals. Thank you.

Mark Putnam  
3-3-05

March 18, 2005

## Region 2 Report

### Submitted by Ron Brigman – March 5, 2005

In preparation for this report I tried something different this time. In the past I have attempted to make phone contact with all of the state guild presidents to get updates on activities in their area. This is often difficult to accomplish. So this time I sent an e-mail to all of the members in Region 2 for whom I have e-mail addresses. I asked for their thoughts and comments on NCSG business. I got the email addresses from the listing on the NCSG site. A number of these addresses were not good (they bounced) and a number of them had spam blockers that bumped me. The response was less than I had hoped for; however I did get responses from sweeps in Virginia, Georgia and Florida. There are a couple of noteworthy issues and comments included below. I will add a report from SC

but have no information on W. Virginia or NC. In the end I think I like this idea and will continue to see how it works. I may need a little help from the office with my email listing for Region 2 members.

We recently attended the HPBA show which was held in our Region this year. As always this show is an experience. I was impressed with the number of chimney sweep companies that attended this event. Some of them obviously are there because they have retail stores, but there are a fair number of one man operations that come for education.

### **West Virginia**

No report.

### **Virginia**

Below is an excerpt from correspondence I received from VA.

*"I thought I would let you know the state of the Virginia Chimney Safety Guild. It is no more, as a matter of fact it never was. At a meeting to decide weather we wanted to continue having a VCSG we recently found out that the organization was never filed with the State Corporation Commission. Instead of attempting to salvage a organization with little interest or participation we decided to let it die and form a new organization with new goals and standards. The new organization is the Virginia Association of Chimney and Hearth Professionals, we are in the process of having the articles filed with the SCC. We have our first meeting scheduled on April 1st, 6pm in Richmond VA at Eurotech Chimney.*

*Speaking for myself I would like to see the NCSG focusing more on educating the public. I realize that great strides have been made so far. Our regional Better Business Bureau is having a "Scam Jam" on April 22nd, it is focused on educating senior citizens on how to avoid scams and fraud. Us and John Briscoe w/Black Goose Chimney are going in together to purchase booth space. We haven't decided if we will be just representing our companies or representing the new VA Association. I think events like this is where the NCSG, CSIA, state guilds, ect. should be represented. The NCSG is doing a great job offering educational opportunities to sweeps, and I hope they continue to work with HPBA to expand that oportunity with NFI credits being 1 for 1."*

### **North Carolina**

No report

### **South Carolina**

A couple of notable events have taken place in SC since my last report to the board. One being the passing of our good friend "Lucky" Dale Meisinger. Dale was a long time, active member and supporter of our state guild. Probably everyone in our guild learned something about working on chimneys from Dale. He was always willing to share his

knowledge with his fellow sweeps. Lucky Dale Chimney Sweeps continues to operate with Dale's daughter, Daisy, taking over the reins.

The South Carolina Chimney Sweep Guild cooperated on a project together in February on a large chimney restoration. The nature of this project was unique to others that we have done in the past. This was a job for a customer of one of our members. Several of us worked together to put together the bid and a majority of our members and a few other friends came together to do the work. The proceeds of the job all went to the guild. It is our intention to repeat this with at least one large job per year. Proceeds from jobs like this will go to the Guild and be used to subsidize education for our members.

### **Georgia**

Below is an excerpt from correspondence I received from GA membership:

*"I'm not sure if NCSG can help but Chris Holland ( Georgia chimney Services) and I (Magic Dragon Chimney Services)both have experienced Realtors checking to see if we perform level II. As soon as we answer affirmative they hang up. I found out from Chris, while shopping at Lindemans, that one realtor mentioned that they would go back to their previous sweep, a none certified sweep. But that is not the issue. What is the issue is  
realtors deliberately fanagling so their deal goes through. Do we need Fire Marshall indorsement requireing a CSI sweep's Signature at time of home sale?"*

### **Florida**

And Florida sends this:

*"Fl is planning a guild meeting and work shop in May 2005. My business is better than ever and planning to expand --  
Please relay to the NCSG that we appreciate what they (and You) are doing - and keep up the good work.  
I have some ideas for future plans and will talk to you in Chattanooga .  
Wish I could be there in Texas ....."*

### **Summary**

It is my opinion that since these folks have gone to the trouble to respond to me we should give some consideration to their issues and make some formal response either from the BOD or from staff in regard to their concerns. Discussion is welcome

March 18, 2005

## **Region 3 -**

Some of the smaller companies experienced a significantly slower than expected revenue in the new year and questioned wheather the economy was the cause. Those that offered repair, relining and installation services fared better. Businesses with larger work forces, with the need to maintain a schedule for their employees, report about normal income after the busy season. No one commented on the weather as a factor either way. Interest

in classes at the Tech Center is not high, but several have plans to send technicians this year. Chimney Physics is the course most mentioned. One member has had a sweep fail the certification test a few times and inquired if an oral examination was possible. Having a tech go through this very scenario, I assured him Ashley can make the accommodations. Attendance at convention likely to be similar faces that make it an annual commitment. Most I heard from have been in the past and will again. I hope to rally the region for 2006 in Louisville . Terry Dearborn is fully recovered from recent surgery and back climbing. He reports the 'American' company in his area is still operating questionably and displaying our logos. He says their actions affect all area sweeps negatively.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Rhines

March 18, 2005

## **Region 4**

A sweep in Mississippi sweeps right along with the rest of the chimney sweep world. The busy season has been good. Things are slower now, warmer for sure. He's doing different things like spending more time in the office and has a second helper nowadays.

A sweep in Tennessee is enjoying his business successes very much. Loving the cold, insert burning-creosote producing weather.

John Wharton becomes the new Region 4 Director. He seems well placed in his business world, (and) happy and content in his life's work. He will be a great asset to 'The Board'.

Alabama sweeps are too busy to talk. No one is complaining to me.

A sweep in Arkansas is perturbed by home inspectors not recommending a level II inspection upon real estate transfers. Otherwise, business is good, and life is good as well.

Sweeps in Louisiana are getting few calls these days. Repairs not done during the crazy season are being accomplished at this time.

On a personal note, thank ya'll for the experience of working with the Board. You men and your spouses do great things for the National Chimney Sweep Guild and in fact for all Americans. Ya'll deserve to be commended for your unselfish service time and time again. Thank you for letting me walk with ya'll.

Respect Fully,

John Bordelon  
Region 4 Rep to the BOD / NCSG

March 18, 2005

## **NCSG REGION 5 REPORT**

3-1-05

### **WISCONSIN**

The WGCSS held it's January meeting in the Dells with a Certification review followed by a seminar on financials given by Ellen Rohr of BareBonesBiz. This was a very well received seminar and WGCSS is planning on having her do a follow up seminar on financials at it's next meeting.

### **MINNESOTA**

There was a good number of MN sweeps attending the WI Guild seminar. Sweeping activity was strong through December, but continues to be a struggle for the first quarter of the year as with most of the region.

### **North & South Dakota**

Cleaning and repair activity is about the same as last year at this time.

### **Iowa**

Smaller companies are doing all right with multi truck companies struggling to keep everyone busy

### **NEBRASKA**

Nebraska state guild is small but stays active promoting CSIA certified sweeps. Sweeping activity is up a little from last year at this time.

## **GENERAL CONDITION**

The Region overall reports business activity finishing up 04 about the same as 03 with some companies reporting modest single digit growth mainly because of price increases and trimming expenses. Interest is in business financials and ways to operate their companies more profitably in 2005. Response to certification and course offerings last year improved dramatically by taking them on the road again back to the region.

Respectfully submitted,  
Howard Rowell

Region 5 Director NCSG

March 18, 2005

## **Region 6 Report for San Antonio , March 18, 2005**

This is my last report as Region 6 director. It has been an eventful 6 years on the NCSG board. I'd like to give you a short summary of the good things that happened during those years. None of this took place because of my efforts, but due to the wonderful stewardship of the entire NCSG board.

When I first was elected in Jan.'99, the NCSG staff was in the middle of the move to Indianapolis . For our region, the move meant the office was now in cheap flying distance or driving distance for most of us. The board was involved in purchasing land and building the Tech Center . The grand opening of the Tech Center brought tears to us old timers who had only a dream of a building and classroom that we owned. Now sweeps could get real education and technical training in our own facility. No longer did sweeps have to get training only at conventions or regional classes that were a long way from home. The diagnosis and documentation class, part one and two, now give you everything you need to write reports in the field. The chimney physics class gives you the tools to diagnose and solve smoky fireplaces and stoves, and this class will make you the best in your area to help customers. The NCSG is now on sound financial footing, something that has been a real problem for 25 years. It is with a great sense of pride that I view how well the NCSG has grown in every fashion since I came on the board. It was also a time of great humility for me to see how others on the board were so committed to the success of the NCSG for our members. Every decision that the board made was, "What will this decision do to help all our members?".

Bob Burney from TX has been elected. I first met Bob at least 15 years ago at the NCSG convention in Fort Worth . He will do a great job as your new director.

Now for my personal stuff: I am retiring from sweeping. I will be renewing my NCSG membership at the end of March as a senior member. I would like to thank the entire board and our wonderful staff in Indy for their help over the years. I will still be moderator of the NCSG discussion list for a short time. Once the NCSG office has their database mastered, they will take over the nuts and bolts of list maintenance, with Paul Hempel as tiger tamer and referee. I'll be like the high school dropout who still cruises the school parking lot, looking for old friends at the next convention. J

Sweeps luck to all of you!  
Marion Schroll

March 18, 2005

## **NCSG Region 7 Director's Report March 4, 2005**

Submitted by Steve Pietila

Here are the current membership figures for Region 7:

Oregon – 8  
Washington – 10  
Wyoming – 2  
Montana – 0  
Idaho – 3  
Alaska – 1

Total – 24

There's plenty of room for growth to say the least.

I must confess a major obstacle is my own lack to time devoted to recruitment. I will of course attend the only industry event that takes place in this region which is the Oregon Chimney Sweep Association conference April 28 th – May 1 st being held in southern Oregon this year. This event is typically attended by about 30 – 40 chimney sweeps in the region. There is a nice slate of seminars this year including one by John Crouch of the HPBA.

Most sweeps are reporting increased sales this year, especially those that sell hearth products. It was an exceptionally dry year (from the effects of El Nino), but temperatures until recently were cool. It will be interesting to see what the effects will be on our upcoming fall season. The economy seems to be slowly recovering in the sense that unemployment, though still above the national average has is coming down.

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### **March 2005, Region Eight Report.**

Currently, member sweeps total 0 in the state of Hawaii , 2 in Arizona , 2 in Nevada , 4 in Utah and 76 in the great state of California . That's right a grand total of 84 region eight members.

The "Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild" remains the only state guild within region 8. The GSCSG is offering a southern California workshop on Saturday April 2nd. These events are well publicized, yet continue to yield 99.7% California NCSG members only.

That being said, sweeps I have spoken with had a better than expected fall and winter. With the robust economy, new construction, home renovations and real estate values at all time highs, the spring and summer months look promising as well.

Weather has played a major role throughout the region in regard to demand of service. Every state has experienced far above normal rain fall totals. Many in the region report rain, snow, flooding, mud slides road closures have slowed mobility but increased business.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Brooks  
NCSG Region 8 Representative

March 18, 2005

## NCSG Supplier Director Report

March 2005

Like my report in November, I draft this report with snow falling here in Northern Michigan . Different from when I drafted my previous report, I do not consider it good news. Fighting a head cold and weary from a long HPBA Expo, the idea of an industry meeting in the Caribbean is sounding very good to me right now.

With the economy starting to roar, the supplier side of our industry has been busy. There are a number of trends which forecast a good year for hearth industry suppliers. High oil prices will drive alternative appliance sales. Relatively low interest rate will help support the new construction market and an overall strong economy will certainly help retail sales in general. In addition to those factors, strong HPBA attendance can be seen as a predictor of a healthy year for the hearth industry.

As I noted in my November report, our suppliers are still dealing with substantially increased raw material costs, but the good news is those prices seem to be stabilizing. It will be better news when those prices go back down, but that may be too much to hope for.

I look forward to debuting out priority point system for booth selection in San Antonio . Please see my convention and events committee report for more information on that subject. I this new system will give our suppliers a reliable mechanism for choosing their both space for future NCSG tradeshow. The NCSG is also going to debut a new discount

program for booth space developed with the goal of encouraging our suppliers to expand their displays to create a more dynamic tradeshow. The system is set up where suppliers will basically get a booth free if they buy 3 booths at full price. Again, the goal is to encourage our suppliers to bring out their best displays and purchase island layout to show their wares in order to provide our attendees the best possible convention experience.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Huta,  
NCSG Supplier Director