

NAWS Chair Report April 24, 2020.

*Greetings to the fellowship of Nicotine Anonymous.* I want to start my last report, as chair, by saying a heartfelt thank you to all those who serve this fellowship. Over this past year I have experienced countless servants offering considerable amounts of time to support the fellowship and each other. Each one of you is a miracle. It would take pages to list all the servants and their contributions. However, most do it in the shadows with no expectation of recognition. Rather, simply giving back in gratitude for the freedom they found through our program of recovery.

I also am deeply grateful to the previous chairs who have so graciously supported and encouraged me. They were mentors willing to share their experience, strength and hope. I never felt alone on this journey of being chair.

The NAWS board has experienced some changes throughout the year. Due to unforeseen circumstances a few of the original 2019-2020 board members were not able to continue their service. We had previous board members step into these vacated positions, so we always maintained a complete nine-member board. The current board is filled with wisdom from past board experiences. And we certainly needed that wisdom for all the unprecedented events that occurred.

Since the last chair report much has happened in our world and with NAWS. It has been unprecedented time in several ways. Some may recall, that at the 2019 conference there was no Intergroup available to host the 2020 conference so NAWS created its first NAWS Conference Committee. It was a fabulous experience. So many willing servants gave of their time and talent to meet, plan, organize and come together to host the 2020 “We Can See Clearly Now” conference in Lancaster, PA.

Then covid-19 arrived, and our conference was canceled by the hotel about the same time our board decided it was not in the best interest of the health of our fellowship to have an in-person conference. We were deeply saddened by this. Some more than others. So much loss: no hugs, no arm in arm walk n talks between, before and after meetings, no dinner with friends we haven't seen since last year's conference, not being able to be physically present with each other, meet new people over brunch, hug the newcomer and on and on. Granted none of this is the business of the fellowship, which is the purpose of the conference and the requirement of our bylaws. However, it is about connection. Some of us need physical connection more than others and that loss of physical connection leaves a void even though the business is being attended too.

The board decided to have an unprecedented all online conference to attend to the business of the fellowship as outlined in our bylaws. We meet to work through some of the issues from this new venture. The result is two separate but related components, one for the business of NAWS and one for the social aspect.

The NAWS Conference 2020 “We Can See Clary Now” seemed to flow with no major glitches. The attendance was about equal to face to face conferences and the number of registered delegates was about the same as well. What this suggests is that no matter the venue, we need to let people in the fellowship know how important it is for delegates to represent us at the annual conference.

Being a delegate is a vital role for the fellowship. Delegates represent the voice of the fellowship and hold the position for one year. At the 2020 conference the delegates voted to accept a new publication, “The Sponsorship Booklet”. This was the third year this booklet was a workshop and it was on our website for viewing and suggesting edits for months. Garnering approval from the fellowship through the delegates is taken seriously and much is involved for conference approved literature.

The Monday after the conference work was begun on the next steps for the Sponsorship booklet. Printing, cost estimates, layout, design, and font size are all part of next steps. When the booklet is published and ready for use all the delegates who have had a part in its approval can feel accomplished. Literature is a legacy of the fellowship that keeps on giving. Well done delegates!

The other conference workshop, Daily Mediations, encouraged attendees to write a story for the next edition of “A Year of Miracles.” Many offered their experience strength and hope thorough writing a meditation to be put into the new book. That book will be read by someone seeking to gain or maintain freedom from nicotine. How exciting and another legacy of our fellowship.

It is sad to report the unexpected death of our office manager, Teresa I. Teresa served the fellowship for many years with passion and commitment to offering hope to the suffering nicotine addict. She will be missed.

NAWS has a new office manager, Bill P., from the Dallas, TX, area. The office address will remain the same. Bill has served as a past NAWS chair and a past NAWS treasurer. He hit the ground running and is working diligently to get the office fully operational. I could not begin to explain all the details that are involved with this transition. The board has appointed a transition team to assist Bill in getting acclimated to the to his new role as NAWS office manager.

Bill H. took over as chair on April 26, 2020. He has been intricately involved with all the unprecedented issues our board has dealt with this past year. John D. is serving as the chair elect and Damara R. is serving as treasurer elect. We welcome them to the NAWS board.

With gratitude to all who serve our fellowship,

Sharon C.