

Chairman's Address

John Gaccione
Westchester County, New York

Thank you Director Hockert

It is my pleasure to welcome everyone here to the 99th Annual Meeting of the National Conference on Weights and Measures here in Detroit. We have over 250 attendees, the most in over 15 years. At our meeting in January we had over 150 attendees, near record attendance for an interim meeting. The Executive Director passed along that it was great year for NCWM attendance and everyone worked hard to get the word out about the regional meetings and the NCWM Meetings. When I asked at one of the Board of Directors meetings if the attendance increase had to do with who is the Chairman, there was a long awkward silence followed by quick motion to adjourn. Thank you all for attending and for participating.

I want to take a minute to thank our distinguished guests, Dr. May, Acting Under Secretary for Standards and Technology and Acting Director of NIST, Chief Deputy Director Wenk of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Carol Hockert, Director of the NIST Office of Weights and Measures.

Thanks go to the City of Detroit and to Craig VanBuren and his staff for all they have done to welcome us to Michigan. To our presiding officers, thank you Jack Walsh, Jerry Butler, Marco Mares, and Scott Ferguson.

Please take a minute to look around the hotel and the surrounding area. I would say that Detroit is a city on the rise.

Thanks to the NCWM Staff. Don, Jim, Elisa (who if you didn't know, started the year with the last name of Robertson and switched along the way to Stritt (congratulations Elisa), Tyler, and to Darrell.

My theme at the beginning of my tenure as chairman was "Meeting Tomorrow's Challenges Today". Well Folks, tomorrow's challenges are here. We talked about some of the challenges yesterday. Examples include:

- CNG/LNG fueling for everyday on-road vehicle use.
- Electric Vehicles and the ability to charge those vehicles and travel hundreds of miles between charges.
- And railroad scales that speed up the weighing of freight by 2 to 3 times.

Another challenge was to continue to support the regions and in turn the jurisdictions that make up those regions. We continued and expanded the train the trainer program. With NIST's help we began to help not just the supervisors, but the field inspectors. On the NCWM webpage we now have a list of certified trainers available to help the regions and their jurisdictions.

We continued to expand the professional certification program. As mentioned earlier, more exams will be brought on line, expanding the number of available exams.

NCWM has faced this year's challenges. NCWM rose to its challenges. NCWM welcomes new challenges.

Being Chairman brings with it 2 to 3 page list of responsibilities and duties. When I first looked at that list, it was an "uh oh" moment.

We have l and r, we have s and t, we have pdc, wwma and cwma, swma and ntep and so on and so on. I didn't get the cheat sheet of abbreviations and acronyms.

I have to tell you that being associated with the employees of NCWM has been nothing less than terrific. They work hard, put the interests of the members first and provide a level of service second to none. Look at how well these past few days have gone.

To my fellow board members, thanks for making it easy to be the Chairman. The Board of Directors this year faced a number of issues. We took them all in stride and did what was best for the conference. We recognized a need and added the necessary staff.

Part of being Chairman includes traveling to each of the regional meetings. To me it wasn't an obligation or chore, it was a pleasure. At each of the regions I spoke about how NCWM could and would support the region and how well supported regions help NCWM. The NCWM model works and it works well.

In preparing for today I was looking for a phrase or adage or a line from a song that would put in context my regional experiences. Something that could sum it all up. Some phrase everyone could relate to and something that was, yes probably corny.

Some years back there was a Broadway Show called "Rent". Some of you may have seen the movie. Part of the chorus of one of the songs is; "How do you measure, measure a year". Perfect for a weights and measures official.

The song continues:

"Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes, how do you measure, measure a year."

How did I measure this year? I measured it in people (hundreds). I measured it in regions (4) I measured in national meetings (2).

Historians say it was Horace Greeley, the famous 19th century author and newspaper publisher that said "Go west young man, go west". It wasn't. It was really Kurt Floren of LA County, California who said it.

This year the Western regional had almost 100 attendees and representation from every state in the region except 2. Very impressive. That's the most for any of the 2013 – 2014 regionals. Thanks to Mahesh Albuquerque, the Western Regional Chair and to the Host State of Montana.

Just as an aside, Kurt never stopped reminding me we were at the Western Regional and how the Western is first of the regional cycle. I had to constantly remind him of the east coast- west coast, right coast- left coast rivalry. We continued and I finally remarked that he lived 3 hours behind civilization. Without hesitation, Kurt recommended I visit Santa Monica, California for a long walk on a short pier.

Next was south to West Virginia. I decided to drive to Charleston (about 11 hours) and what a great ride it was. Again, excellent attendance at a regional meeting. About 70 attendees and only 2 states didn't have representation. The southern region has 2 Commonwealth's. Many, thanks to Rich McComas, and the state of West Virginia for their hospitality.

When arriving at the Southern regional meeting I was greeted by the ever smiling Tim Chesser of Arkansas. Tim gave me a warm welcome, and said John "don't worry about a thing, I will take care of everything."

Everyone has a moment of revelation, an "ah hah" moment; this was an "oh no" moment.

Next was to the Northeast. To Manchester, New Hampshire. To NEWMA, the little region that could. Don't dare tell them they can't. Yet meeting attendance wasn't so little. 50 attendees and again only 2 states not represented. Another region with two Commonwealths. Thanks to Chair Lou Sakin and to the host State of New Hampshire.

As always, NEWMA lived up to its hard working, hard playing reputation. Anything else about the NEWMA annual meeting can be read in the Manchester, New Hampshire Police Blotter.

And, finally to Central. 75 attendees and only 2 states not represented. Again, great attendance. Many thanks go to Ron Hayes, our Chair Elect. After a long and sometimes heated discussion about how to pronounce the name of the host state between members of the host delegation, I ended up leaving there the same as I came, not knowing whether to say Missoura or Missouri?

At several of the regions I was asked which region I liked the most, what region was best at this or best at that. My carefully worded response was and continues to be, every region was great, every region was unique and every region had great hospitality rooms.

NCWM is about equity. It is about a safe and fair marketplace. NCWM is about its people.

There was something I repeated at each of the regions. I reminded everyone that the work they do affects everyone in the marketplace almost every day. Let's not forget that.

So again thank you to everyone for attending, participating and thank you for making NCWM the successful organization that it is.