

Neil Rauch - Delegate Report
2009 World Service Business Conference

I arrived in Albuquerque at 1:30 on Sunday, May 3.

Region 7 typically rents a car for the week to help their delegates negotiate the logistics of getting to and from the airport, and also to the supermarket, drug store, etc. This is one of the many ways in which we help take care of one another. John A., the husband of our Region Trustee Donna A. shouldered the burden of all of the pick ups and drop offs. (there were about 25 delegates traveling from Region 7 this year). Bravo to John.

As is my custom, I got myself settled into my room, then made an immediate trip to Wal-Mart to make sure I had everything I needed in terms of food. Being Kosher, I would not be able to partake of the food either at the Hotel Albuquerque, or any of the neighboring restaurants.....first things first. Due to abstinence, I would not feel the least bit deprived for not being able to explore the Southwestern cuisine that is so prevalent here.

This was my eleventh World Service Business Conference; eight as a delegate, three as a volunteer. I immediately began to notice familiar faces, and the joy of seeing my "extended family" immediately kicked in, as it does for all delegates who become a part of this wonderful process. If you've ever seen "Mr. Smith Comes to Washington", that's the type of exhilaration that can accompany engaging in this week long exercise.

Getting in a day early is one way that I cope with the travel-related fatigue and the change in altitude, which can take its toll. Baltimore Area Intergroup reimburses me from Monday to Sunday, so this day is on my dime, but it's well worth it.

The Region Trustees and Region Chairs are generally also here early, so I had some quality time with the folks who are instrumental in setting the tone for the Conference, many of them members with 20 or more years in the fellowship, and long histories of service on behalf of all of us in OA. It is one of my favorite times of Conference, since we all become extremely busy by Tuesday.

I enjoyed my first of several trips to the hot tub, where informal meetings take place as we try to stay ahead of the stresses of an aggressive schedule. I slept well.

Monday May 4

I awoke early enough to do my morning prayers and meditation with a cup of tea, have my breakfast, shower, and STILL make the morning OA meeting at 7AM.

I was fortunate enough to lead the very first meeting at Conference this year. I chose the topic of how people prepared themselves for the experience, and their expectations.

The morning meetings are an absolutely joy. They are filled with people with a strong commitment to OA – people who do service gladly, and who are stretching themselves to do things that in many cases, they have not done before. From the Trustees to the newest of newcomers, each of us was dealing with situations that are, in some sense, new to us.

An added bonus – one member, formerly of Region 7, invited me to participate in the taking of "wedding pictures" – celebrating her tenth anniversary. Why take them now?

Because she is 150 pounds lighter now, and had grown tired of having no motivation to see herself in her old body in the old album. She was wearing a elegant wedding gown and he a tuxedo, and they looked like the real deal, all goo-goo eyes and kissy-face, and we all shared in the joy of lives that have been clearly enhanced by her OA recovery

It's only 8:30 on Monday, and already it's been a memorable trip.

Stay tuned for the next episode of Neil Rauch – World Service Delegate (and lucky guy)