

### ***On the Edge, Brewster, Spring 2003***

The spring 2003 annual conference was held at the **Ocean Edge Resort** in Brewster, Massachusetts, Wednesday - Friday, April 23 - 25, 2003. The theme of the conference was ***On the Edge: Navigating Change Through Leadership***.

Although the weather was cool and rainy, the ACHE members in attendance created their own heat as they shared ideas and experiences in a high-energy environment. Download a pdf version of the 2003 **spring conference brochure** for more details.



Things got under way with an extremely lively presentation, *"Hook, Line, and Sink: It's Got Nothing to Do with Fish!"*, with Fred Colonies and Phil Sisson from the Community College of Rhode Island. *Fish!* is a video about the famous Seattle fishmarket where work and play, positive attitudes, and a customer-centered philosophy have created one of the most unusual environments you can imagine. This video set the stage for a real-life fish toss on the veranda! Ice cold cod, a good 24 inches long, flew through the air with the greatest of ease with the brave participation of some very good sports. And since a picture is worth a thousand words,





After the fish toss competition ended, with only minor injuries to Dr. Bill Simonton, President of New Hampshire Technical Institute, and just a few drops of fish blood on the tiles, Phil and Fred keel-hauled us back inside to teach us the "Fish Mambo". An exercise in back-slapping compliments followed. The stage was set for us to make the most of our time together, have fun, and learn from each other.



After the opening session, the banquet and awards ceremony followed. Tom Ingrassia presented the Exceptional Program Award to Joanne Galliano & Robert Delaney from the Community College of Rhode Island for the Welding Program in the Center for Training and Development at CCRI.





Another highlight was the surprise presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Tom Ingrassia. Tom was truly speechless at the time, as we caught him completely unawares. However, he did eventually find his voice, and sent us this wonderful response:

Talk about "shock and awe!" Let's see Dubya top this one! I am still totally shocked by the surprise you pulled on me. You guys are GOOD! As Barbara, my wife, will tell you, I am NOT an easy person to surprise (in 28 years of marriage, the only time she has been able to really pull off a surprise was for my 40th b-day...which was 10 years ago!). But, you did it!

I truly thank you so much for selecting me for the Distinguished Service Award. It means so much to be recognized by my peers. Perhaps for the first time in 25 years as a continuing educator, I feel like a success! If I have been able to serve as an example or role model for even just one other person, then I have fulfilled my mission in life.

Had I been a bit more composed last Thursday afternoon (I am seldom at a loss for words before an audience--but I WAS in a state of shock!), I also would have told you how much your enduring support and encouragement have meant to me through the years--but especially during the past two years, as I have stepped out of the secure (or, at least as secure as anything is these days!) into the uncertain. That you have continued to welcome me as part of the group is so important to me -and is a testament to the wonderful nature of Region I. We are more than just educators and colleagues. We are friends--and that is why I have worked hard to maintain my connection with you and the Region.

You know, people often ask why I made the career move I did, what's in it for me, and what the future holds. Let me share a story with you that, for me, explains it all. Last month, I was in Cincinnati, where MW was speaking at a national women's health conference. At the luncheon, one of the waiters approached me and asked if it would be possible to get an autographed photo of MW for his wife. He explained that she had recently lost her son in a shooting, and hoped the autograph would lift her spirits. (I explained that MW also had lost her son in a car accident 10 years ago.) Simple request--we give autographed photos all the time. Normally, I would have had MW sign the photo on the spot, but the schedule was hectic, and I asked for the wife's address so we could mail the photo. Two weeks later, I received a letter from the woman, thanking MW for the photo. The photo arrived the same day as her son's death certificate. She had expected to receive the death certificate, but the photo was a surprise. What she wrote had a profound impact on me. She said, "Mary, I have followed The Supremes' career ever since the early days. If you could survive the loss of your son and still look so radiant and give so much to others, then I know I can make it past the pain. You have given me the courage to go on." After reading this letter, I knew exactly why I am doing what I am doing now. Yes, the glamour and glitter are exciting. Yes, the travel is wonderful. Yes, meeting my idols is incredible. But, all that pales in the knowledge that something I had a hand in changed someone's life.

I am rambling now. But, I do want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for this honor. I will treasure it always. And remember always to follow your heart, because it will always lead you to your life's passion and the fulfillment of your dreams.

Tom Ingrassia

**More highlights from the conference:**



(above) Bill Simonton delivers keynote address, "Swimming in a Sea of Change and Contradiction."



(above) Dr. Allen Varner, President of ACHE, brings us up to date on national events.  
(below) Mary Wargo receives plaque of appreciation for her services as Region I Chair from Maureen Znoj.



(below) Meet the 2003-2004 Region I officers:  
(l-r) Larry Isaacson, Raymond Guillette, Jr.,  
Maureen Znoj, and Lewis Shena.



Dr. Allen Varner with several members of the conference planning committee: (l-r) Ron Blankenstein, Charlene Martin, Mrs. Varner, Dr. Varner, Mary Wargo, Steve Ozug, Maureen Znoj, and Phil Sisson.