

Perceptions of a Board Member in St. Louis
By: Marlienne Goldin

We arrived from all parts of the US, Texas, Maryland, Kentucky, Pa, North Carolina to name a few. Some of us made plans to share hotel rooms to cut down on costs. Some of us had been in contact with each other weeks before and had flights arranged so that we could arrive around the same time and share a ride from the airport to the hotel. It was great to reconnect with Sharon Eifried, Nancey France and Denise Miner-Williams at the baggage claim at our agreed upon time. It was a mini reunion of like-minded people. Being together was like being with family, but with only the favorite relatives. As we traveled from the airport we passed Washington University, an impressive campus indeed. After we checked in at our hotel we all met in the lobby for dinner. Donna made a reservation for us at an Asian fusion restaurant in a great part of St. Louis that reminded me of Greenwich Village in New York City. (I am a transplanted northerner and cling tightly to my NY roots). The area was full of neat shops and lots of restaurants with outside dining. This was a part of St. Louis that I didn't get to see when the IAHC held its conference there in 2007. This visit changed my whole perception of the city. Dinner was excellent and we headed back to our hotel to get ready for an 8:00 AM start for our Board Meeting. Little did I know the following 2 days were going to be filled with many more opportunities to enjoy great food.

Our hotel was very close to Barnes Jewish Hospital, and the Children's Hospital. The buildings are all connected by above the street walkways. Once again I was reminded of NY City Medical Centers that take up many blocks and are connected by enclosed walkways. I was impressed by the size of Barnes Jewish Hospital. Our host was the Goldfarb School of Nursing where Donna Taliaferro, the current IAHC President, is employed as the Associate Dean for Research. The School of Nursing was a short walk from the hotel, about 2 blocks. When we arrived at this new modern facility the guard at the information desk let us in and we took the elevator up. Donna had reminded us that a hot breakfast was being served at 8:00AM. We followed our noses to our breakfast, which was being served in a conference room with an amazing view of the city. Both the view and the breakfast vied equally for my attention. What a great way to kick off our 2009 IAHC Board Meeting!

Minutes of the previous Board Meeting of April 2008 in Chapel Hill, NC were approved and we moved along in our agenda for the business meeting. The first day was dedicated to official business and committee reports. I won't go into all the details of our Board meeting because you can read the minutes and see for yourself. About 10:00 AM a conference call took place with Zane Wolf, the Editor of The International Journal for Human Caring. Dr Wolf updated us on what was happening with the Journal and suggested the Journal might feature a CE article every month. We worked until it was time to break for lunch, which was another culinary treat! Individual box lunches were served in the same conference room with the amazing view, followed by pastry and cookies for our afternoon snack. After we ended the workday Dr. Michael Evans, Dean of Barnes Jewish College sent a van to the hotel to pick us up. Just when we thought it couldn't get any better we were driven to the prestigious St. Louis Club where we

enjoyed dinner as guests of Dr. Evans. After a multi course dinner we rolled, (literally) to the van and rode back to our hotel satiated.

The next morning we were back at Goldfarb starting our day with another hot breakfast. After we ate we were ready to tackle discussion about the mission of the IAHC. Where do we want to go? What is important to us? How best to sustain our organization? How can we be sure that we remain financially responsible? One thing is very sure...each Board member is dedicated and committed to our organization. Coming up with our new Mission statement was easy and we were all in agreement, **“The International Association for Human Caring (IAHC) provides the forum for discovery and dissemination of caring science.”** Completing the vision followed without much effort.

We moved on to planning for the 2010 Conference co-sponsored by Mayo Clinic, in Rochester, Minn. Marion Turkel and I agreed to be on the planning committee as liaisons to the Board for the 2010 Conference. We spoke about the 2011 Conference in San Antonio co-sponsored by the School of Nursing at the University of Texas Health Science Center. Valerie Lunsford volunteered to help Gail Williams, our President Elect, with the 2011 conference planning. Nancey France discussed the possibility of a conference in Kentucky. We moved on to strategic planning. We did a SWOT Analysis of our organization, and set our goals for the coming year. In the afternoon we had a tour of the Goldfarb School of Nursing. The facility is modern and attractive. We were able to go into the three separate simulation labs. Each lab was filled with the latest in simulation manikins, and not just 2 or 3 manikins per lab, but 12 to 15 per lab. The manikins are even culturally diverse, with tattoos and piercings! Unbelievable! Every Goldfarb Staff member we encountered was welcoming and helpful. After our tour we went back to our meeting to tie up any loose ends. Some of us would be leaving for the airport shortly. It was such a productive 2 days. I must comment that Sharon Eifried, the IAHC Secretary has the hardest job of all. While our ideas were flowing hot and heavy she was trying to record everything accurately. Sometimes she would ask us to stop so she could clarify and capture what was exactly agreed upon. This was Sharon's last Board Meeting; Denise Miner-Williams will be filling that role in 2010. Donna gave Sharon a lovely gift to thank her for her hard work these past years. We shared common goals, sustaining and moving the IAHC forward with strong leadership, increased membership, educationally worthwhile conferences and financial viability. We worked hard but for all of us it was a labor of love. None of us will forget the hospitality extended to us by Donna Taliaferro and the Goldfarb School of Nursing.