

NODA News

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NODA News

MISSION STATEMENT

To establish and maintain a cohesive organization that serves its membership by promoting the art, science, and professionalism of dentistry, and by communicating the value of oral health to the community.

VOL. 44 JULY '06 NO. 3

Update on the Status of the New Orleans Dental Conference

BY GLENN C. DUBROC, JR., DDS
(2007 Chairman)

First, I apologize for the length of this article, but there are many issues relative to our New Orleans Dental Conference about which you should be updated. As you all know, the conference suffered the misfortune of cancellation in 2004 due to the threat of hurricane Ivan, cancellation in 2005 due to hurricane Katrina, and postponement this year due to the vast displacement and personal hardships of our membership. In January 2006, Dr. Peter Glaser, acting on behalf of the NODA Board of Governors, approached me about serving as the chairman for the next conference. I must confess that my instinct was to reject the offer. Having been temporarily forced out of my office in the devastated Lakeview community, I, like many of you, was sorting out the pieces and contemplating my future in this city. After much consultation with family and friends, I elected to accept the position.

My immediate charge was to research the possibility of moving the conference to occur outside of the hurricane season. It quickly became apparent that there is a major dental convention nearly every three to four weeks from January 1 through May 31. The only viable opening appeared to occur in April, but it was desirable to avoid Easter weekend, Passover, and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, during which time hotel availability is limited and room rates can be at their most expensive. Additionally, due to the spectacular weather, April is an extremely popular time for conventions to visit New Orleans. Fortunately, the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) was able to accommodate our meeting space needs in the Morial Convention Center on April 12-14, 2007. Although this date coincides with the French Quarter Festival, the latter has not posed a problem for us to secure hotel space.

Historically, the CVB has been reluctant to offer the NODC a firm date more than one year in advance. During our negotiations, we explained to the CVB how this policy hampers our ability to recruit the most popular speakers, whose schedules are often booked two years in advance. The CVB consented to giving us a firm date for April 2008 and a tentative date for 2009. While the change in date offers our conference unique opportunities and addresses our concerns about inclement weather, it also poses

substantial challenges. The city of New Orleans desires the biggest and best conventions. If a bigger fish comes along in April, our conference might be compelled to seek a different pond. Consequently, our current and future challenge is to become a major player in the convention industry and demonstrate to the city that we too can bring tourist dollars to town.

The next issue was how to get the Conference back on a sound financial foundation. Although the conference purchased cancellation insurance prior to the 2005 meeting, this matter is still under review by the insurance company and, as of this writing, it is not clear when or if a settlement is forthcoming. The conference committee agreed that we would need to break with tradition and charge NODA members a registration fee. Despite the fact that registration had been free for NODA members, most courses did have an attached fee (74% of all courses in 2003, 66% in 2004, and 72% in 2005). This, coupled with the fact that NODA members received a dues waiver in 2006, served as justification for implementing a registration fee for the 2007 meeting. Your registration fee (an incredible value) will be a one price pays all for three full days of continuing education (up to 18 hours) and there will be no additional charges for individual courses. Register early and you could be eligible to participate in one free hands-on workshop.

In February, I received a telephone call from then-LDA President, Dr. Tim Perry. He explained that it was completely understandable that NODA would desire to move its conference outside of the hurricane season. However, he expressed concern that the proximity of the NODA Conference only three weeks and 80 miles removed from the LDA Annual Session in late March would potentially stunt attendance at both meetings. He inquired whether or not NODA would consider joining forces, whereby the LDA would cancel its 2007 meeting and move the House of Delegates to New Orleans. I explained to Dr. Perry that this would be a sensitive matter that might not be acceptable to some of our members, but I did not want to dismiss the concept without considering the possible benefits. There was no escaping the fact that our conference's attendance was not growing, particularly in terms of

dentist participation (981 in 2001, 977 in 2003, 800 pre-registered for 2004, and only 784 pre-registered for 2005). As competition for the continuing education dollar grows, exhibitors seek out the meetings that offer the best opportunity for face-to-face interaction with doctors. Since exhibitors fund a substantial percentage of any conference's income, declining doctor attendance is an ominous sign and a trend that must be reversed.

Two face-to-face meetings between NODA representatives and LDA leadership disclosed much common ground that merited bringing the matter before the NODA Board of Governors. From the beginning, it was clear that in order for this concept to grow legs, the terms had to yield a win-win for both entities. After a few revisions, a contractual template was developed for a one-year partnership. The contract was reviewed by LDA leadership, the LDA's Council on Annual Sessions, and the NODA Board of Governors. On May 3, the NODA Board of Governors voted unanimously to accept the terms of the one-year contract that defines the division of duties and sharing of profits.

Our theme for the next conference is appropriately "Rising from the Storm." Hurricane Katrina taught us all many lessons. We are now compelled to think differently about our future; our very existence as a community depends upon it. These are indeed different times and the politics of the past must remain just that. Our success as an association of professionals hinges on working together towards the common good. I would ask that each of you, no matter what your personal bias regarding an LDA-NODA joint venture, give at least some credit to those who are thinking "outside the box" and avoid pre-judging the concept. This is neither my conference nor my committee's conference. This is YOUR meeting. My committee of volunteers and I pledge to offer you our very best effort to create and execute a convention of which we can all be proud. Your input is valued and welcomed. Please contact me at my office (283-8873) or by e-mail (ituth@aol.com). The conference website (nodc.org) will soon be updated with valuable information. Please be on the lookout for future announcements.

President's Message

by WILLIAM F. SCHMIDT, DDS

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL CRAWFISH BOIL

Dear Colleagues:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I report that the Crawfish Boil was a resounding success this past month. Due to the efforts of Dr. Mark Chaney and the rest of the board, Benco Dental Supply Company donated \$3,000.00 for the Crawfish Boil. Without this donation, we may have had a "bring your own" hot-dog roast! All in all, over 135 attendees enjoyed the festivities. Over 185 were signed up to attend . . . too bad, those that did not attend missed a good time.

By September, we will again get serious with the C.E. at the monthly meetings. Remember that refreshments are served at the General Membership meetings at no extra cost to members. Incidentally, when the board meets at a dinner meeting each month, we each pay for our own meals. Your elected board is hard at work representing you! We are receiving money

monthly from the ADA to support us. We have trimmed the office expenses to a minimum.

Dr. Dubroc, Chairman of the New Orleans Dental Conference Committee, is working tirelessly to put on the 2007 Conference. We will be joined by the Louisiana Dental Association in presenting the 2007 Conference. Dr. Dubroc will address more of these issues in this publication.

Once again, sign up and help "pull the wagon." The association is constantly in need of new blood and ideas. It is **YOUR ASSOCIATION!**

Warmest Regards to All,
Bill Schmidt

WE WANT YOUR NEWS

Anyone knowing of any dentist who has made a significant contribution, gained an elective or appointive office, written an article, delivered a paper, or rendered unusual public service, please call or write Dr. Kristi Soileau, 2820 Napoleon Ave., Suite 470, New Orleans, LA 70115. Phone: 899-2255.

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Please contact (757) 226-3858 or Scott.Hill@ob.org.

NODA News is published every month with the exception of June and August. Deadline for ads and editorial material is the 5th of the month preceding publication. Ads and news should be sent to Dr. Kristi Soileau, Editor, 2820 Napoleon Ave., Suite 470, New Orleans, LA 70115.

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Continuing Education Corner

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June 24-25		<i>Expanded Duty Dental Assistant</i> w/Nancy Weiss, RDH, EDDA & Henrietta Frederick, EDDA At the LSU South Campus, Baton Rouge	24 hrs.	Auxiliary	\$ 369.00
June 2-4		<i>Local Anesthesia for the Dental Hygienist</i>	72 L/P	Hygienist	\$ 995.00
July 14-16		w/Drs. Michael O'Brien & Frank Drongowski			
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