

June 27, 2009
ADHA Report
BJ Rischar Wiesen
MNDHA Delegate 2009
86th Annual Session Washington, DC
One Delegates View

Dear Members,

Wow! Talk about being in a room full of movers and shakers! The 86th Annual American Dental Hygienist Association's Center for Lifelong Learning in Washington DC was outstanding. My five day journey began the morning of June 19th from Duluth, Minnesota. I flew to Detroit where I met up with Minnesota Dental Hygienist Association President Pat Johnson, RDH, BA and Immediate Past President Mary Beth Kensek, RDH, RF, BS then continued on to Washington DC. After our arrival to DC, we took the Metro train to our home for the next four nights, the Omni Hotel. "It's an adventure" Mary Beth urged us on as we rolled our luggage through the underground then onto the streets of DC. And an adventure it was, especially for a first time delegate like me. Our first stop, the registration desk where we stopped for a quick picture with the presidential cutouts.



*MDHA President Pat Johnson
RDH, BA, Immediate Past
President Mary Beth Kensek,
RDH, RF, BS and BJ Rischar
Wiesen RDH, BS posing with
Obama cutouts*

After checking and settling in, we met with ADHA's Megan Fitzpatrick Director of Governmental Affairs and our District VII cohorts (South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin delegates or "ota, ota, ota, sin" as they commonly refer to themselves). A few of us set off to check out just a couple sights including the Washington and World War II monuments before the effects of a long travel day set in.



2009-2010 District VII Trustee Louann Goughnough, RDH, BSDH and MN Delegate BJ Rischar Wiesen RDH, BS at the Washington Monument

Saturday morning June 20, 2009. Our day began with *Plenary Session: ADHA Awards and Keynote Presentation* by “The Healthy Humorist” Dr. Brad Nieder. The awards presentation was an eye opening experience. The dedication and ingenuity of the winners was exceptional and a lot to live up to. I kept mental notes to myself about how their ideas could be incorporated into our component and how much outreach remains to be done in our own communities. Dr Brad Nieder was enjoyable and I found myself laughing out loud through most of the presentation. Definitely a great way to start the day...inspired and renewed.

We headed onward to the Exhibit Hall and Marketplace for the remainder of the day to check out all the new and improved dental hygiene products. It was then that I realized I had badly miscalculated my luggage arrangement and had not left enough room for the essential convention freebies!

Saturday afternoon, we had just enough time to take a bus tour of the sights of DC. We boarded a double-decker bus and made our way to the upper deck and into the late afternoon sunshine. We drove by all the sights associated with DC, Arlington Cemetery, the White House, the Capitol, Lincoln Memorial, National Cathedral, and Jefferson Memorial just to name a few. The tour briefly stopped at Union Station and we went in for a couple architectural pictures.



Inside Union Station

Saturday night ended with the *Institute of Oral Health Benefit/President's Reception* featuring the "Big Band Era". I met 94 year old Esther Wilkins as she danced the night away. Pat and I pulled her briefly from the dance floor just long enough to take her picture.



Sunday, June 21, 2009. Then the real work began. After a 7 am breakfast, our *District VII meeting* began. Current District Trustee Linda Jorgenson RDH, BS from Wisconsin led us through the proposed by-laws and resolutions up for discussion at the first House of Delegates meeting, which was soon to follow. We worked up a plan as a district and headed to the house floor. I have to admit my impression of session one greatly reminded me of a scene from the Wizard of Oz as speaker of the house Kimberly Hickman Bowen RDH, BSDH, MA rapped the gavel and spoke from the long officer table on stage. She called Andrew S. Lang CPA and President of LangCPA Consulting to the stage for his report “Lang Report on Various Dues Related Issues”. He condensed his report by speaking on two main issues: changes due to inflation and adjustment to student dues. The bottom line on inflation: “inflation has risen 2.8 times more than dues” and raising dues “is not personally popular but a matter of responsibility to future members”. And on student fees: “only 21% of graduates join ADHA, and ADHA does not need to support people who will not stay”. Good information, spoken very factual and to the point.

Sunday’s *Presidents Luncheon* was a tribute to the current ADHA President Diann Bomkamp RDH, BSDH. Johnson and Johnson Healthcare Products/ADHA Awards for Excellence were also honored at the luncheon. A fine meal and five inspiring stories were consumed.

Sunday afternoon the *Town Hall Forum*, which was formally known as the Reference Committee Hearing, was next on the agenda from 2-5 pm. These forums were designed to keep the House of Delegates sessions flowing smoothly by offering an opportunity to share thoughts on the important policies that direct our profession.

Candidates Forum was slated from 5-6:30 pm and was a great opportunity to hear from the upcoming leaders in their own voice and to ask questions. Upcoming President-Elect Caryn Solie, RDH spoke on her visions for the upcoming year. “Now more than ever, members need ADHA and ADHA need its members. ADHA and its chapters need to be the first place a dental hygienist comes when their education or workplace is challenged.”

My *Leadership Mentoring Session* from 6:30-7:30 pm was lead by District XII Trustee Susan Savage, EDH, BSDH. Susan explained what her job as a trustee entails, which included visiting her district states of Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Trustees divide up the United States into twelve districts and make up the ADHA Board of Trustees. Trustees serve a two year term and can serve two consecutive terms or “until a replacement can be found”. It was interesting to hear how Susan balances her life between her 8 children, part-time work, and trustee responsibilities.

At the *Presidents Reception*, which followed the Leadership Mentoring Session, we personally met President Bomkamp and discussed Minnesota Dental Therapist Legislation. I found her to be a very warm, friendly, and down to earth leader. Just getting the chance to speak with her was worth the trip.

After a long day inside, a few of us fled into the evening to see what we could before darkness fell. We took the Metro and walked to visit the Washington and WWII memorials again as well as the Lincoln, Korean, and Vietnam Memorials which were more impressive by night. The Korean Memorial impacted me the most as the figures were ghostly by night. I thought about how scared and far away from home those soldiers must have felt. It was a very moving experience.



Left: Ghostly statues at the Korean Memorial.

Monday, June 22, 2009. The *Institute for Oral Health (IOH) Breakfast* began early that day at 7:00am. Did you know that IOH has community education scholarships available? Check it out at the AHDA website.

The *Mega Issues Forum* followed from 8:00-11:00 am. Upon entering the Regency Room we were instructed to draw a table number and proceeded to join other delegates from around the country. My table's facilitator was ADHA Immediate Past President Jean Conner, RDH. Mega Issues Forum was a chance for us to "examine workforce issues that directly impact the profession of dental hygiene". Specifically the following two questions were examined: What role can and should ADHA play in removing barriers and promoting opportunities for dental hygienists to advance the profession? And what workforce models of practice currently in development are most likely to make this possible? This of course was where Minnesota shined having recently passed the first Dental Therapy program in the country. Our forum paperwork included a section entitled "The History of Introducing a New Provider in Minnesota: A Chronicle of Legislative Efforts 2008-2009". Our table had many states represented each bringing their own personal challenges. It was interesting that each table came to similar conclusions. On the role of ADHA removing barriers and promoting opportunities, answers were stated that we want to see ADHA develop a business model, nationalize licensure and board exams, and work to become self regulating in the dental hygiene

profession. On question two in regards to workforce models, the group concurred that the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner model provides direct access, increased opportunity and the advancement of the dental hygiene profession.

Our day continued with *District Discussions #2* from 11:30-2:30pm and moved into the 2nd *House of Delegates (HOD)* from 2-8:30 pm (a real barn burner). Many of the proposed by- laws and resolutions at this year's HOD dealt with bringing ADHA into compliance with the Illinois State Law for non-profit organizations. A battle of words and their accepted legal placement proved to be lively and entertaining especially for students who were getting their first look at ADHA.

Later that night we were able to cast our ballots for ADHA's 2009-2010 leaders then we went out to dinner at a nearby restaurant with District VII delegates "ota, ota, ota, sin, we're the states to be in".

Tuesday, June 23, 2009. A two hour session named *Growing Your Membership Online: MySpace, Facebook and YouTube for Newbies* began at 8:00am and was presented by ADHA staff members Katie Powell, Director of Membership, and Jeff Mitchell, Director of Communications. This session provided an interesting insight and made me feel real old. Note to self; have the kids/grandkids come over to educate me and show me how to navigate Facebook. I'm informed by newly appointed District VII Trustee Louann Goodnough that MDHA has its Facebook page going and Component One can link into it. Now to find a willing young person to help coordinate it! The states of Oregon, Nebraska and Washington were highlighted for having excellent websites for keeping members informed.

The 3rd *House of Delegates*, the last session of our trip, was held between 10:00 am-1:00 pm. Presidential Awards were given to Minnesota Senator Ann Lynch, Representative Cy Thao, and Michael Scandrett from the Safety Net Coalition for their work on the Minnesota Dental Therapist Legislation. Installation of newly appointed officers followed. ADHA President Lynn M. Ramer, LDH took the stage and was presented the gavel by Speaker of the House Kimberly Hickman-Bowen, RDH, BSDH, MA (Oz). We proceeded on to the *Installation Luncheon* and packed our bags for the flight home.

What did I learn? Well, all this and I'm still digesting. If I get the chance would I do it again? In a heartbeat but next time I'll do it better! Thanks Minnesota.



Left to right Student Delegate Jenna Gabriel , District VII Trustee Louann Goodnough, RDH, BSDH, MNDHA Immediate Past President Mary Beth Kensek RDH, RF, BS, MN Alternate Trustee Haley Dollins RDH, BSDH, MNDHA President Pat Johnson RDH, BA, and BJ Rischar Wiesen RDH, BS.