

the probe

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY NEWSLETTER

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome!

As another school year gets underway, I can't help but reflect on how quickly we pass through the dental school experience. Between the coursework, the lab work, and later, the patient care, time seems to slip away quickly. I always find myself amazed at the end of another semester, wondering where all those weeks in between disappeared. Nevertheless, it is important not to allow yourself to become wholly consumed by all the seemingly endless requirements, tests and deadlines. Time will fly whether you are having fun or not, so make sure to take time and enjoy yourself. Each year comes with its own set of stresses and difficulties, but each comes with its own set of rewards as well. Find your balance and it will make dental school much more enjoyable. Good luck to everyone in the upcoming semester, and remember to have fun along the way.

~ Rachel Barone, D2012



ASDA Calendar of Events

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| August 25 | sgc/ASDA Welcome Back BBQ (tentative) |
| September 9-11 | ASDA District 4 meeting. Charleston, SC |
| September 10 | SNDA Annual Oral Cancer Walk |
| September 16-18 | VDA Governance Meeting. Fredericksburg, VA |
| September 17 | 2nd Annual Delta Dental Miles for Smiles 5k Event |
| October 21-23 | ASDA Central Regional Meeting. Raleigh, NC |



The Debate on Opening of New Dental Schools

There are currently 58 dental schools in the US that graduate approximately

4200 new dentists per year. In the early 1980's, the number of new dental graduates per year was nearly 6000. This high number of graduates was artificially created by federal grants to increase enrollment in dental schools and to open new dental schools. Soon dentists complained they were not busy and a dental career did not look as promising financially as it once had. As the grants ran out and the applicant pool began to wane, dental school enrollment declined due to reductions in class size and closures of schools. All dental schools that closed were private schools. The year 2000 was an inflection point as the last school closed and the first new school announced its opening. This new school is in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida at Nova Southeastern University and was the first dental school ever to be associated with an osteopathic medical school. Of note, it is also a private university.

Since 2000, twenty new dental schools have either opened, announced they were opening in the next few years, or are under serious consideration. Existing dental schools have also begun to increase their enrollments. First, this is in response to concerns that there are insufficient dentists. Secondly, is a concern that the impending retirement of those dentists who graduated in the days of over 8000 graduates per year will only worsen the perceived dentist shortage. Assuming that all of these proposed schools open and the existing schools increase enrollment, it is estimated that there will be an increase of 1200 to 1600 additional graduates per year. In the dental education community there is heated debate as to whether or not we actually need this increase in dental graduates and what the affect will be upon the profession. The new schools promote their intention to follow a "new model" of dental education that is community-based. Some have stated they may not even have a home-based clinical facility, the norm among traditional dental schools. Sadly, the US does not have a health care workforce strategy and neither does the dental profession. The opening of new dental schools and increased enrollments are driven mostly by anecdotal experiences in local areas under the rubric of increasing access to care to underserved populations. These are not evidence-based decisions that are likely to solve the access issues.

What are the issues being debated by the dental education community? They fall into

two general areas. First, will increasing the number of dentists help remedy the access to care problem? Second, will we still be producing scientifically oriented practitioners who are prepared to manage the increasing complexity of the patients they will face?

There is disagreement on whether adding additional dentists will improve access to oral health care for those who do not currently visit a dentist regularly. It would seem logical that if we had more dentists, some would choose to practice in underserved areas simply because of supply and demand. Experts who discuss this issue separate the need for dental care in a population from the demand for dental care in a population. In general, need is greater than demand and dentists set up practice in areas of high demand for dental care. The key to improving access is to increase the demand for dental care in populations with high need for dental care. Increasing demand is generally thought to happen if there are increased means to pay for the care. Many argue that there are plenty of dentists, but they are maldistributed away from areas of need. Thus, if a solution is found to increase the demand for dental care in areas of need for dental care, dentists will migrate toward those new areas of demand.

Student debt upon graduation is an important factor that determines where new graduates choose to practice. The average educational debt of dental graduates is around \$200,000. This fact alone drives new dentists to practice in high demand areas so



**David C. Sarrett,
DMD, MS, Dean**

they can earn enough to pay back their student loans. Programs that assist new dentists with repaying their student loans are effective in attracting practitioners to practice in areas of need. Maintaining dentists in such areas long-term will be determined by the inherent demand for dental care. Thus, communities that would like to increase the number of dentists should work to develop programs to increase the demand for dental care (to keep dentists in the area) and provide student loan repayment incentives (to initially attract dentists to the area). It is generally agreed that loan repayment is more effective than scholarships in attracting new dentists to a particular area. Students who enter dental school with the goal to practice in a certain geographic area often find their plans change due to other life events and opportunities. Thus, scholarship programs that require a return to service upon graduation often result in students choosing to repay their scholarships, including penalties, rather than honoring the service obligation.

There is debate on the impact of the proposed new dental schools on the preparation of new dentists for future dental practice. As might be expected, some of the leaders of existing dental schools are expressing concern that a rapid rise in the number of dental schools could lead to lower quality education. They point to the fact that there are not sufficient numbers of qualified dental faculty members to fully staff the existing dental schools, let alone additional new ones. An-

other criticism is that the majority of the proposed new schools are not associated with research intensive universities and this will result in programs that lack scientific rigor. A few voices are calling for a "new Gies Report" to examine the status of dental education. The Gies Report, Dental Education in the United States and Canada, was published in 1926 and reported on research funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Gies Report created the vision that dental education must be based on scientific foundations and be provided as a higher education health profession. The report made a clear distinction between dental education provided by institutions of higher education compared with proprietary schools or preceptorships. Another concern is that the declining emphasis on biomedical sciences in the dental curriculum is counterintuitive to the increasing medical complexity of dental patients, particularly the elderly and children.

The proponents of the new dental schools argue that a new type of dental graduate is needed; one who will be more interested in public service. They report placing more emphasis on the applicant's service profile than existing dental schools with the desired outcome being graduates who will seek employment in community clinics. These new schools are organizing with fewer departments and with less emphasis on the specialty areas of dentistry. The new schools also tend to have fewer administrators and a higher dependence on part-time faculty members. Despite these new schools having tuition and fees above many existing dental schools, the leaders of these schools are not concerned with having sufficient dental applicants. They readily point to a strong national dental applicant pool as being able to sustain the admissions to new schools. It will be very interesting to follow what happens over the next few years, but it is clear that more dental schools will open. Let us hope we do not create a bubble as happened in the 1980's.

Gies Report can be found at:
<http://www.adeagiesfoundation.org/about/Pages/>
<AboutWilliamJGiesandtheGiesReport.aspx>

Bad Things Can Happen to Good Dentists:

How to Stay in the Office and Out of the Courtroom

By Kris Norbo, D2014

On March 3, 2011 in Anaheim, California I attended a presentation from Dr. Mario T. Catalano; it was directed toward the members of ASDA and highlighted the reality of malpractice in the field of dentistry. This was an eye-opening experience, as it is not heavily stressed at Virginia Commonwealth University. However, it is imperative to use our acquired knowledge and reasoning to learn how to prevent a potential lawsuit. Dr. Catalano's examples of dentists whom received punishment were those who improperly documented procedures, prescribed drugs without taking into consideration the contraindications, and engaging in procedures that the dentist did not feel comfortable performing, which resulted in a failed procedure or even death. As a result, dentists lost their license, served jail time, and suffered massive fines.

Dr. Catalano emphasized different insurance plans how to pick the plan that best suites you as a practitioner. The two major plans discussed were the 1 million/3 million (1M/3M) dollar plan, and the 3 million/5 million (3M/5M) dollar plan. The 1M/3M dollar plan will cover the practitioner up to one million dollars per individual lawsuit, with a total of up to three million dollars per year. The 3M/5M dollar plan covers a practitioner up to three million dollars per lawsuit, with a maximum of five mil-

lion dollars per year. The covered amount is reset at the beginning of each calendar year. The two most important factors to address when contemplating between plans are, where do you practice, and if you're a specialist, are your procedures considered high risk for lawsuits?

The two states with the highest amount of lawsuits for dental professionals are Massachusetts and New York. Therefore,



it is best to select an insurance plan higher than that of a practitioner in Virginia. An oral surgeon is at the highest risk of all the specialties as their procedures can have more serious consequences. Therefore, an oral surgeon would most likely select a plan that errs on the side of safety, selecting the 3M/5M

dollar plan. An orthodontist is least likely to have a claim filed against them, as their work does not require as jeopardous or irreversible procedures; a 1M/3M dollar plan would be sufficient.

In conclusion, to decide what plan best fits you, consider the location of your practice and the severity of your procedures; always document your actions and err on the side of caution. Dr. Catalano is a practicing general dentist in New York and is welcoming of students to contact him with questions of interest or concern at mtcatalano@aol.com.

What is this ASDA stuff all about?

By Alex Barton, D2013

Most of you have heard the term “ASDA” thrown around by now, and as familiar as the organization may seem to some, an overwhelming majority of our students still secretly seem to wonder, “What is this all about?” In short, ASDA is the largest student-run organization for dental students. It is the only national association entirely devoted to dental student concerns and the student viewpoint on professional issues in dentistry. Though ASDA is foremost a national association, in order to best explain what ASDA is I’ll be breaking it down for you in terms of what ASDA is at the national level and what it is at the local level.

Though you may already think you have a grasp on what ASDA is at VCU, what you may not realize is how huge ASDA is on the national level. ASDA currently has over 17,000 predoctoral members at each of the 61 U.S. dental school chapters. This means that over 85% of all dental students are ASDA members. No other dental or medical student organization has the privilege of saying they represent so many of their colleagues. This enormous market share gives us a lot more than bragging rights though; it also guarantees that as ASDA members, our voice and opinions are the first ones heard on matters such as student loans, boards and licensure exams, and mid-level providers. This not only applies when we are talking to individuals in the dental community and members of the ADA, it also applies when we are talking to members of Congress and our State Legislatures.

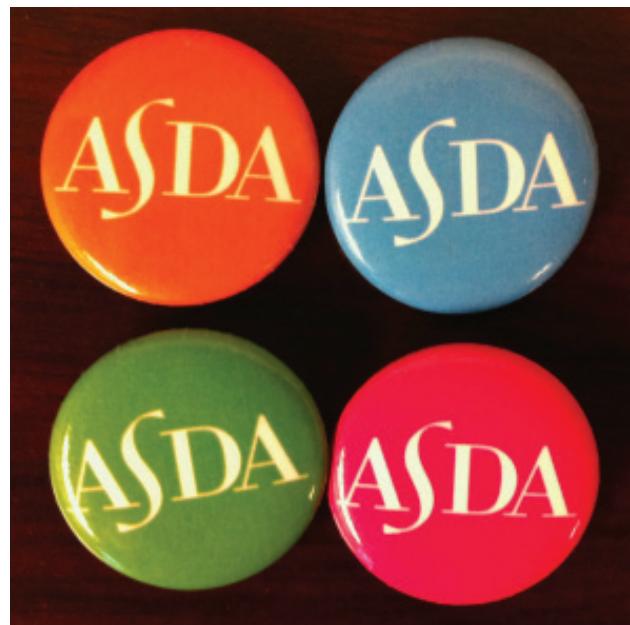
In order to keep such a huge number of dental students organized and well informed, ASDA has to have a number of students who represent the association on the national level. These students include a President, 2 Vice Presidents, a Speaker of the House, an Editor-in-Chief, 11 District Trustees, 5 Council Chairs, and a number of other Members-at-large and Legislative Coordinators. These students come from different schools all over the nation and help to organize and plan the events that take place for ASDA on the national level. These national

leaders are also the students who get any “work” done that the House of Delegates assigns to ASDA at annual session each year.

On the local level, every dental school runs their ASDA chapter a little differently. At VCU, our ASDA chapter and Student Government are one in the same; which is why our governing body at the school is called sgc/ASDA (aka Student Governance Committee/ASDA). That said, the most important thing to realize is that at VCU, every dental student is a member of ASDA. Though we have elected “ASDA representatives” in each class to help out with events, each and every one of us is a member of ASDA both at the local school level and at the national level.

At the local level for VCU, our sgc/ASDA leaders are responsible for informing all of our students about the issues we currently face as dental students and how we can get more involved in voicing our opinion on such issues. We also put on great events at the school such as the Welcome Back BBQ, Clinic and Vendor day, Happy Hours, VDA’s Day on the Hill, and the first annual co-sponsored Class of 2014/ASDA Dental Ball. In addition to keeping you up to date on the current issues facing your future profession, we are here to make your time in dental school enjoyable and memorable.

As extensive as this all may sound, the



way that ASDA keeps every one on the same page is by having each local ASDA chapter send representatives from their schools to each of the national ASDA meetings. These meetings include the District and Regional meetings in the fall, and Annual Session and National Lobby Day meetings in the Spring. At these meetings, dental students are able to find out what new and innovative events are taking place at other schools, as well as discuss the major issues that currently face us as dental students. These students then take all the information they learn at the national meetings and bring it back to their schools to inform their students about what ASDA is working on; thus bridging the gap between the local and national levels of ASDA.

I hope you are a little more familiar with what ASDA is all about now! For more information on what ASDA is or how to get more involved with ASDA at our local VCU chapter or on the national level, just send me an email at bartonba@vcu.edu or check out ASDA’s website at www.ASDAnet.org.

Alex Barton

VCU sgc/ASDA Vice President

National ASDA Chair, Council on Membership

The Threat to Ban Lunch and Learns

By Dilmarys Pena, D2014

Throughout the history of dental education, lunch and learns have been an essential tool aiding students to develop into well-informed health professionals. However, a recent enforcement of the Pharm-free Policy has heavily impacted the ability of dental schools nationwide to successfully host these programs. Many dental schools have put limitations on these programs, while some have completely done away with lunch and learns all together. This issue is a growing concern in dental education and will ultimately compromise the preparedness of dental students to enter the professional realm of dentistry.

After attending the 2011 National ASDA annual conference in Anaheim, California this year, I witnessed the magnitude of impact this policy has had on our dental schools. Representatives from numerous dental institutions claimed they have been met with resistance when trying to organize lunch and learns. Both the University of Connecticut School of Dentistry and Colorado School of Dental Medicine have experienced the shift in pressure from administration to ban lunch and learns. The UCLA school of Dentistry has already prohibited lunch and learn programs on their campus. The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Pittsburgh School of Dentistry have serious restrictions on their search for lunch and learn speakers. A myriad of other issues were communicated by student representatives such as schools only allowing non-profit speakers, not allowing vendors to purchase food for groups, vendors banned from mentioning/endorsing their product names or distributing samples, etc. With these restrictions, companies have no incentive to come to our schools and educate us on products and networking opportunities available to us free of cost.

The Pharm-free Policy was adapted as a result of pharmaceutical companies gifting products to medical students and physicians. In exchange for free products/gifts, medical professionals would endorse these products, unjustly choosing certain medications over others for their patients. Ultimately, the patients' best interests were not being served, increasing the costs of health care for patients. Pharm-free is a national

movement started by AMSA (American Medical Student Association) in order to "reduce conflicts of interest at medical schools and academic centers," preventing pharmaceutical companies from "bribing" students into endorsing their products. Initially, this policy was targeted to medical schools. Recently, the policy has diffused its way into dental schools and has put the future of lunch and learns in danger of being abolished.

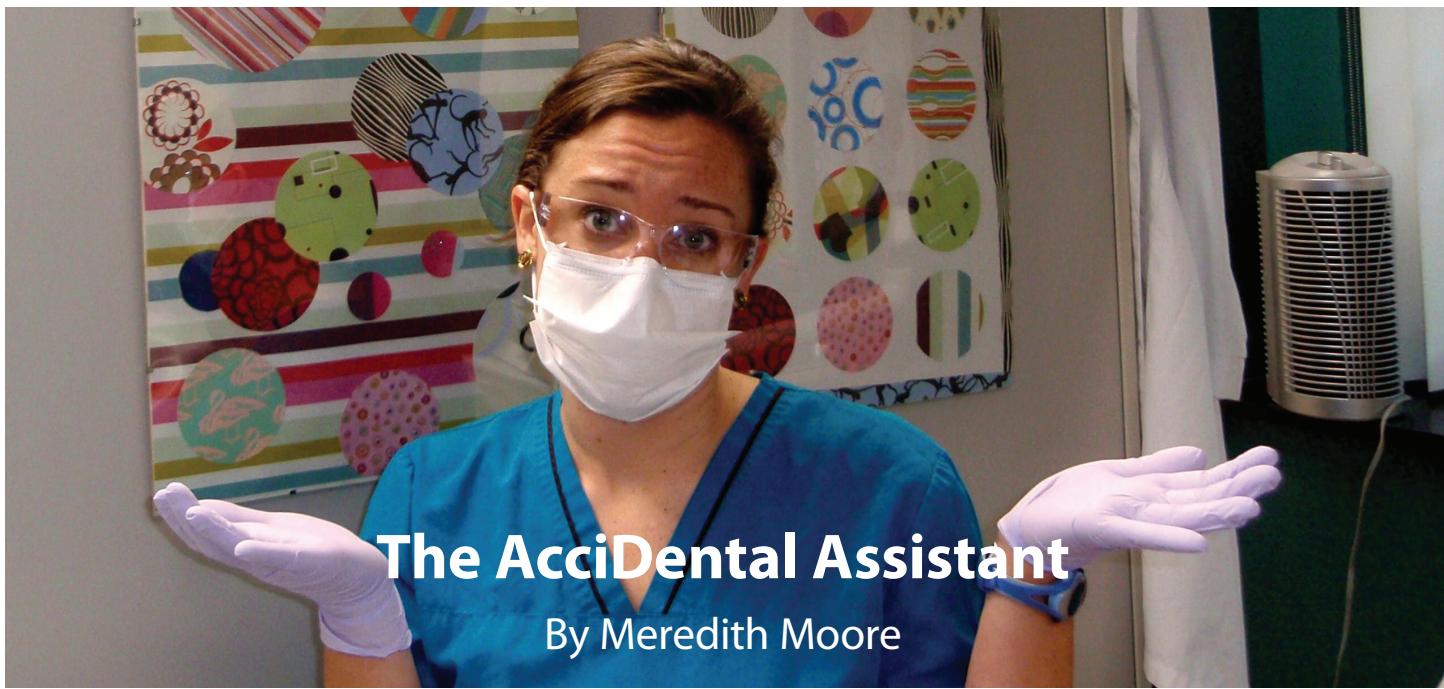
The forum I attended during the ASDA national conference was designed to create an organized solution to this lunch and learn issue. Besides a delicious free meal, students must realize the other significant benefits lunch and learns provide to us. Through these programs we are exposed to practice management and job placement resources. Most dental schools curriculums do not provide a great background on practice management and through lunch and learns we are able to discuss and heighten our knowledge on the real-world issues in dentistry. We are able to evaluate products and services in a controlled environment in the presence of our peers and dental school faculty members. As a result, we are more prepared to make our own evaluations once representatives visit our practices trying to push for their services. Lunch and learns provide an opportunity for a community of students to question and analyze services that will be available to them once they graduate through organized dentistry. Promoting organized dentistry may ultimately spark a student's interest in participating in ASDA on a local or even national level. Most importantly as ASDA members we

benefit from engaging in the most modern various dental related products/services free of cost! With all of the financial investment put forth in regards to our education, it is refreshing to actually have some form of education free of cost.

All in all we must get involved in fighting this issue on both a local and national level. The vast knowledge of dental products, the opportunity to meet and discuss in an organized environment, as well as a free delectable meal make lunch and learns a great benefit to all members of ASDA. Although this issue has yet to directly affect the Virginia Commonwealth School of Dentistry, it may be a challenge we are met with in the future. The American Student Dental Association Council on Education has provided a "Vendor Request Form" as well as a proposal sent to all dental school deans emphasizing the importance of lunch and learns and advocating for them to remain throughout all dental schools. Hopefully this will allure dental school administrations into bringing back these education-rich programs to all 58 schools throughout the United States.



Dilmarys J. Peña
ASDA Representative
DDS Candidate
Class of 2014
VCU School of
Dentistry



The AcciDental Assistant

By Meredith Moore

Peering over the sand dunes in Destin, Fla., eating a grouper sandwich with my mother during my last high school spring break, I began devising my plan for becoming a bona fide beach bum. Was there ever a more brilliant plan for life? Beautiful skies, balmy weather, endless views into a boundless ocean – I had found my destiny.

Mom supported my decision to move to Florida and wait tables, but she insisted I go to college first. So after four years of studying...I'm not sure what...at Oklahoma State University, they handed me a certificate and I headed eastward to the sunshine state.

My foray into adulthood included many memorable firsts, not the least of which was my first dental appointment not organized by my parents nor covered by their insurance.

Dentally speaking, I had been raised very responsibly: prophylaxis every six months, home care enforced, sweets discouraged, braces at age 14, retainer lost a respectable one time. I was no stranger to the dental office.

But something was different about my visit with Roger D. Clay, D.D.S. in Vero Beach, Fla. I left his office in a state of shock. I stood in the parking lot with my patient care kit in hand, frozen in disbelief. He had given me information – powerful information that had never been revealed to me in nearly two decades of regular dental visits.

During my appointment with Dr. Clay he handed me a mirror and instructed me on oral hygiene. I will never forget watching that floss sink 2 mm under my gum line as he carefully explained to me the mechanics of proper flossing technique. I had always thought

flossing was a way to get grilled chicken out from between your teeth, but no – there was more to it than that.

He also described in the simplest terms possible what happens when you eat or drink sucrose. He explained that frequency is the real killer, not quantity, which was good news considering I had not yet broken my severe Twizzler addiction cultivated in college. Now I understood why I shouldn't drag out my candy craze over a two-hour viewing of "10 Things I Hate About You," but rather finish it by the time the previews are over.

But why had no one ever told me? It wasn't difficult to understand. Science was never my forte, but I could certainly comprehend how cavities develop and how periodontal disease happens and most importantly, what I could do to control the situation.

After several years of dental visits, and several odd jobs later, Dr. Clay hired me to be his dental assistant. He trained me and I worked with him for nearly four years. Still, there is nary a scientifically-inclined bone in my body, but I loved working with him. Why? Because he kept it simple. He talked to patients like intelligent people, always explaining exactly what was going on.

"I'm just getting the monkey off my

back," he used to say. He won the hearts and trust of many of his patients because by educating them about their oral health he empowered them to make informed decisions, in regards to both the care they received in his office and the choices they made in their day-to-day lives.

Dentistry is a strange profession because the ultimate goal is to get your customers to not come back (that is, to get them coming back only every six months or so). It's also strange because biology doesn't always work out the way you might anticipate. Dr. Clay also used to say something like, "If you inform patients about possible outcomes before treatment, it's an explanation. If you tell them after, it's an excuse."

I never imagined I would work in the medical field, but I'm grateful my carefully conceived plan to soak up the sun and sip margaritas on the Atlantic shoreline led me down this path.

My hope for all the VCU dental students as they carve their individual careers is that they have wild success and immeasurable happiness. But I especially hope they seize every opportunity to inspire patients and possibly other unsuspecting acciDental assistants.

SNDA Impressions Program

By Nickie Hosseini, D2012

The VCU chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) held an impressions program on Saturday February 5, 2011, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Attendance for this event was about 50 pre-dental students, all from varying backgrounds. Though the event was held to target under-represented minorities in the dental field, the program drew students from many different walks of life. The purpose of the impressions program is to introduce under-represented minority pre-dental students to the dentistry family, specifically VCU's dental school. The students are given an opportunity to find out if dental school really is for them, as well as have exposure to people and resources that will help them achieve their goals.

Many of the activities were geared at helping the students become stronger applicants. This included a talk about the dental school admission process, a description and prep session for the Dental Admissions Test (DAT), a mannequin lab simulation, and mock interviews. The students also had a chance to network with dental professionals and dental students throughout the day. Based on feedback from the pre-dental stu-

dents, the mock interviews and the mannequin lab experience were the highlights of the program. The mock interviews helped familiarize the students with what kind of questions they will be asked at dental school interviews. In the mannequin lab, the students cut tooth preparations on typodont teeth, and were able to restore them. They were very excited to be doing this on their own. Overall, the program was a great success, and we hope to only make it bigger and better in the years to come.

The SNDA impressions program would not be possible without the dedication of the members of SNDA. In addition, SNDA would like to give a special thank you to the many faculty and community dentists, including members of the Peter B. Ramsey Dental Society, who contributed their time and experience by giving mock interviews, helping in the mannequin lab, and answering many questions for the pre-dental students. Their attendance at this event added great value to the student's experiences. We greatly appreciate their help, as do the pre-dental students.



Drs. Allen, Jackson, Abubaker and Adams



SNDA Hosts Annual Oral Cancer Walk

By Tiara Harrison, D2014

It's that time of year again. The Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry Chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) is hosting its 3rd Annual Oral Cancer Walk on September 10, 2011. According to the National Cancer Institute, approximately 34,360 Americans will be affected by oral cancer each year. More than 36,000 estimated new cases of oral cavity and pharyngeal cancers will be diagnosed in 2011 in the U.S., and more than 7,800 people will die from the disease. Gaining support and participation for this event means raising awareness in the Richmond community. Awareness is not only important for members of the general public, information about oral cancer can also stress the importance of early detection screenings given by healthcare professionals. Early detection is essential in combating this aggressive disease. A portion of the proceeds

collected from the walk will be donated to the VCU Phillips Research Institute to help fund efforts for research in oral cancer. All forms of participation are welcomed and would be greatly appreciated; for more information feel free to contact Tiara Harrison at harrison1t@vcu.edu.



On Liberteeth...

By David Chesser, D2012

Liberty, standing alone, is transient. Enduring liberty, however, requires active support, proactive defense, and dedication to the cause. Whether by insidious or catastrophic means, collective liberty will inevitably falter through time and evolve toward some form of tyranny if it is not continually sustained. Like teeth, liberties are immediately susceptible to structural decline and ultimate collapse the moment a consistent negligence in its preservation and conservation is inherently noticed by “‘foreign or domestic’ bodies” seeking to undermine its integrity. That’s right, I just compared teeth to liberty. I think it should be noted, however, that unlike teeth, liberty, once lost, can be restored to its original, natural form – no need for bonding agents, only courage.

Why do our liberties seem to falter when no safeguards are placed to protect them? Maybe we don’t know how to protect our liberties. Maybe we don’t understand what “unalienable” means in reference to our rights. Maybe we don’t know what our rights are. Or, maybe, it has something to do with human nature. World history tells a grim story of individuals longing for absolute power or, at least, to acquire as much of it as possible, even at the expense of other peoples’ liberty; Joseph Stalin, Caligula, and Saleh Ashkanani are a few examples among many. They seem to stand in jealousy when power is either not found in their sole possession or “worse”, that it is found ubiquitously among a nations’ citizens. It’s precisely from these types of individuals or ideologies that our liberties need to be protected. The “I just kinda wanna go along to get along” type of attitude will not protect you. So, I have to ask, how bad do things have to get before you do something, before you get involved?

Do you enjoy your liberties? Do you enjoy your right to speak freely, to worship as you may (or may not), or the idea of absolute sovereignty over your property? What about your right to vote, to start your own business (a dental practice, for example), or to move freely around the country without having to check in with a government official? When we speak of public activity, this is really what it’s all about.

Unfortunately, public activity to some is synonymous with the manipulation of public law, or the manipulation of what it means to the extent that it satisfies their own personal desires or political biases. This “manipulation of law” is often in the form of government subsidies or political favors where bureaucrats pick winners

and losers with the subsequent loss of liberty dealt to those individuals who refused to kiss the ring of their elected official. Many people are disgusted by this occurrence when it does happen, myself included.

Unsurprisingly, just mentioning “politics” has become almost taboo in some social forums, while in others; people flinch at the mere thought of it. Well, in light of the seemingly endless barrage of media bias and the complicated jargon used in politics, I can’t say that I blame those who succumb to the temptation to recoil from the idea of political activity. On the flipside, if we get so caught up in the distasteful nature of “playing the game” we’ll fail to understand what taking an apathetic stance towards political activity really means; the loss of individual liberty. Yes, it takes time and effort to keep up with your oral hygiene, but if you do not, your teeth will fall out. The circumstances surrounding the conditional future of our individual liberty is equally straightforward.

Having spent some time, although not a lot, speaking with officials in Washington, DC, their consultants and their aids, I can tell you that my suspicions have been confirmed. Many individuals involved in the legislative process tend to be far more concerned about their own rights or the rights of those expressed through the mouth of a lobbyist than they are about your rights; the rights of the average either uninformed and/or apathetic American citizen. This is to be expected. In the Theory of Moral Sentiments, published in 1759, economist Adam Smith put it this way:

“Every man is, no doubt, by nature, first and principally recommended to his own care; and as he is fitter to take care of himself than of

any other person, it is fit and right that it should be so.”

So, if this is the “nature” of man, as Smith puts it, I suppose Virginia’s first governor Patrick Henry would respond by saying, “Why stand we here idle?” ... “The war has already begun” ... “our brethren are already in the field”. Is avoiding public scrutiny, like life, “so dear” and enjoying the relaxation complacency offers, like peace, “so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?” – that is the one foreseeable consequence to the “rampant” loss of individual liberty. Gov. Henry understood that the revolutionary war was inevitable and that if they were to accomplish independence from Great Britain, their participation would be needed. Likewise, our present-day war to maintain liberty, though not as conspicuous as the individual threats during the revolution, will not go away by sticking our proverbial “head in the sand.” Sometimes, we must, as Dumbledore once quipped, “face the choice between what is right and what is easy.” I think Congressman and former dental practitioner of 30 years, Paul Gosar of Arizona’s 1st district would agree.

This past June, Alex Barton (D3), myself, as well as two students from other dental schools and one practicing dentist had the opportunity to sit down with Congressman Gosar in the nation’s Capitol. He did not strike me as some obscure political figure, but rather, an average



American citizen who simply decided to do something about, what he perceives, as threats and strikes against his and our liberties; the McCarran-Ferguson Act (1945), out of control government spending, and the individual mandate found in last years Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, among others. I won't go into the details of those issues here, although I'd like to. I only bring them up to highlight that it doesn't really matter what your personal convictions are with regard to these past and present legal controversies. Con. Gosar has his convictions and is doing something about them. The moment we decide to act will be the moment our convictions will begin to matter as well. At least, they will matter in the legal sense of the word.

I think it's important to highlight again that no single trait of Con. Gosar's character forced me to conclude, "Oh, that's why he's a Congressman" other than his courage. Don't get me wrong. He's a very bright individual and he knows a lot about "getting stuff done" in Washington, but I think a lot of that can be learned in time by those who want to get involved in the legislative process. In other words,

I don't believe that any of us should feel that our voice is either unimportant, undeserving of being heard on the public stage, or that we should write off the notion of getting involved simply because we don't understand all the issues. Having rights and realizing that they stand in need of defense should be enough to motivate you to get involved to some degree.

We put our liberties in jeopardy the moment we acquiesce to the notion, "Politics? No thank you". I'm not saying that your rights are affixed to politics or that they're even on the same playing field. Your rights, as it were, existed before any established government. However, because we currently live in a republic (Article 4, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution), our unalienable rights are formally declared through the rule of law, the Constitution being Supreme, above all. Where there are laws, there is also public sentiment. Will your voice be heard?

The reality is that while showing indifference to politics may be "cool" to your friends, at the end of the day, there will ALWAYS be someone out there who IS galvanized to be politically active with the risk that that individual will be pushing their ideology, not your best in-

terests, your rights, or even reason itself. Suffice it to say that your greatest strike against your own liberty will be your neglect toward that specific liberty you feel you can get away with not defending.

Taken into a broader context, Thomas Jefferson stated the following In the Declaration of Independence, "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes" - we won't abolish our government over a parking ticket. Jefferson continues: "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

If we reserve the right and the duty to throw off a government that seeks to annul our individual liberties, is it not also our right and our duty to support and defend those liberties once they're formally established in a government that "we the people" designed? Well, if you enjoy liberty it is. Why? Liberty, standing alone, is transient.

A COMMON (opti)BOND OF DENTISTRY

by Lauren Gibberman, D2014

Ever since receiving my acceptance letter during my last year of undergrad, I had thought about what being a dental student at VCU would be like. Needless to say, when I first arrived for D1 orientation back in August, I was nervous, anxious, but most importantly extremely excited to begin my dental school experience here at VCU. I knew that even though my class was made up of people of all different backgrounds, as soon as we walked into orientation, we would have something to talk about. After being surrounded by students with an eclectic assortment of scholastic interests for the previous sixteen years of my academic life, it was exciting to finally be with people who share my love and passion for dentistry. Sure enough, at eight o'clock in the



morning on the first day of orientation, when the official D1 class of 2014 was thrown together in that lovely room on the fourth floor of Wood, I realized that I was looking at the faces of classmates that I would remember forever, classmates with whom I would, first and foremost, share the common bond of dentistry.

Attending the National American Student Dental Association Conference, this year held in Anaheim, California, felt similar to that first day of D1 orientation. Students traveled from dental schools across the nation to learn about ASDA, organized dentistry, sit in on and participate in official ASDA meetings, and meet other dental students. Throughout the conference, there were many opportunities to get to know our fellow attendees. Each day, lunch was set up so that everyone was assigned to a random table to facilitate mixing and mingling. Being naturally a bit shy, this was daunting at first. However, I soon realized that just like at orientation, all I had to do was talk about school

to break the ice. My knowledge of what it meant to be a dental student quickly expanded from what it was like to be a dental student at VCU to what it's like to be a dental student at various schools throughout the country. A specific conversation I had with a girl from the University of the Pacific, a dental school known for having a three-year curriculum instead of the traditional four years, made me realize how vastly different dental education can be throughout the country. As a D1, she is already doing crown preps and will enter the clinic to see her first patient this August! Throughout the conference, I continued to meet future dentists from different schools, each with a different story. I'm very grateful that through ASDA, I got this unique opportunity to interact with dental students from around the country. I know that throughout my life, through continuing education courses and other dental-related events, I will continue to meet peers with whom I share a special bond of the love of dentistry.

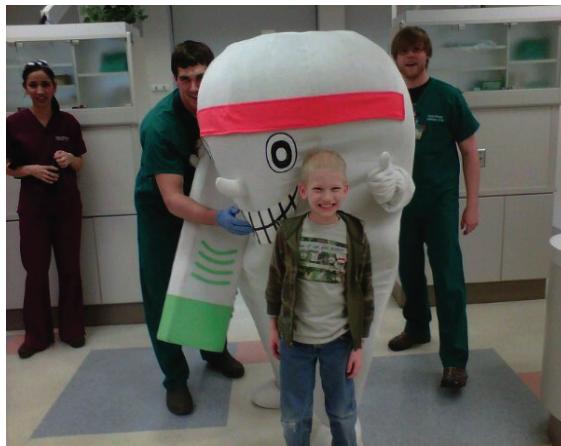
Help Us Strive for Greater Access to Dental Care— It's the 2nd Annual Miles for Smiles 5K!

By Lindsey North, D2013

The 2nd Annual Miles for Smiles 5K, sponsored by Delta Dental, will take place at 9AM on September 17th, 2011, in Joseph Bryan Park, Richmond, VA. This non-profit organization and 3.1 mile road race, created by students at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry, donates all proceeds to the Mission of Mercy (MOM) Project. With these funds, the MOM Project is able to buy additional necessary supplies to help in their cause for greater access to dental care. Many residents of rural areas of Virginia do not have the ability or resources to obtain essential dental care. With the MOM Project, created in July 2000 by Dr. Carol Brooks at the VCU School of Dentistry in conjunction with the Virginia Dental Association and the Virginia Health Care Foundation, citizens of areas such as Emporia, Wise, Grundy, and Gloucester, VA, can participate in MOM Project events which provide free dental services through the volunteer efforts of dentists, dental hygienists, and dental students. Over the past 10 years, the MOM Project volunteers have participated in over 41 missions, served over 32,000 Virginians, and provided over \$16.5 million in services. With additional donations, such as the proceeds from Miles for Smiles, the

MOM Project will be able to expand its services and help those in need.

Last year, through race registration, donations, and sponsors, the Miles for Smiles 5K raised over \$7,500 for the MOM Project and helped to buy a new box truck to transport supplies. This year, we hope to expand the race to approximately 400 participants and donate greater than \$12,000 to



Molar Mike and his giant toothbrush, seen here at Give Kids A Smile Day, will make his debut at the 2011 Miles for Smiles 5K.

the MOM Project. On the forested, shady course in Bryan Park participants can bring friends and family, including jogging strollers, to enjoy the fall race and help us welcome our new race mascot Molar Mike! There will be age group medals and \$10 Dave & Busters giftcards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd male and female

in the age groups 19 & under, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50 & above, as well as prizes for overall top 3 males and top 3 females. All participants will be entered into a raffle for various prizes including: California Pizza Kitchen cookbook and 2 free dinner vouchers, 2 \$10 giftcards to Baker's Crust, 2 \$15 giftcards to Jason's Deli, 1 free month of unlimited hot yoga at Bikram Yoga, 2 free sundaes at Bev's Ice Cream, Trader Joe's groceries, and two \$25 giftcards to Carytown Sushi (with more raffle prizes to be announced closer to race day). Race registration is \$20 until July 31st, \$25 until race day and \$30 on September 17th. This includes a Zorrel Tee hybrid technical t-shirt, race goody bag, and entry into the raffle which will be held after the awards ceremony. Race day registration will begin at 7:30AM, race packet pick-up will begin at 8:00AM, and the race will start at 9:00AM. The Miles for Smiles 5K will be a fun-filled event

for the whole family and together we can help improve future projects as well as expand awareness and support for the Mission of Mercy Project!

**For more information & race registration or donation
please visit: www.givenow.vcu.edu/MilesforSmiles5k**



The new MOM truck purchased with help from the Miles for Smiles 5K 2010 donation.



Approximately 130 participants enjoyed the Miles for Smiles 5K on October 2, 2010.



Mustaches for Massey

By Tarah Coleman, D2014

Throughout the month of November people noticed a new trend sweeping the first year dental students...mustaches. However, this was not just an ordinary fashion statement; these mustaches were being grown for a cause. This year the first annual Mustaches for Massey fundraiser raised \$2500 for cancer research through donations for mustaches and T-shirt sales.

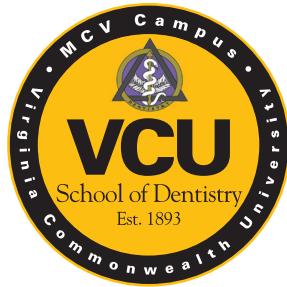
The fundraiser was developed from jokes about "No-shave November". Andy Coalter decided that if students were going to grow mustaches it should be for a good cause. Andy contacted the VCU Massey Cancer Center, one of the nation's leading cancer research centers. Andy organized the fundraiser and successfully recruited most of the class to get involved, guys and girls alike.

In addition to raising money for Massey Cancer Center we also wanted to help raise awareness. There has been a significant increase in head and neck cancers which experts believe may be attributable to the Human Papilloma virus (HPV). This year in the U.S. alone 50,000 individuals will be diagnosed with oral, pharyngeal cancer, or cancer of the larynx, resulting in 13,500 deaths. The alarming death rate is attributed to late diagnosis. Often times the cancer is not discovered until it is at a late development stage. Therefore, it is very important that we as future oral health providers understand the importance of preventative measures such as head and neck exams. These simple exams save lives.

Our event was a great success this November, and we hope to make this a class sponsored event for the next three years. So don't be surprised to see mustaches making a fashion comeback this November! These students are just raising awareness and funds to support the fight against cancer.

Sponsored by

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Please submit story ideas, questions, comments or concerns to Rachel Barone at baronert@mymail.vcu.edu
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