Here’s just one of countless scheduling decisions facing you at the upcoming 2011 American Dental Association (ADA) Annual Session: See if Chumlee, one of the “Pawn Stars” from Gold & Silver Pawn Shop, will make you an offer on a treasure you’re willing to part with — or push your office finances into higher gear by attending Lois Banta’s course, “Build Your Practice with Paid-for Dentistry.”

Just be sure to keep this in mind as you’re deciding between the two Tuesday-afternoon offerings: Banta’s “Paid-for Dentistry” session has no fee, is worth 2.5 C.E. credits, and with one insight could easily pay for your entire trip to Vegas. And Chumlee’s offer on your 19th-century ivory-handled tooth key? Well, more on Chumlee and the Pawn Stars Gold & Silver Roadshow later. First, a few more-critical details about the event.

The 152nd ADA Annual Session and World Marketplace Exhibition, Monday through Thursday, Oct. 10–13, in Las Vegas, Nev., offers: 260-plus continuing education courses spread across four days; 500-plus dental supply and service companies in the World Marketplace Exhibition; former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the opening general session; the return of the popular ADA Health Screening Program after its 2010 hiatus; and countless other education and networking opportunities — all under one roof in the Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

Nonstop education
More than half of the 260 C.E. courses are free (no extra fee beyond your annual session registration). Course topics cover all aspects of running a successful dental practice and keeping pace with the latest advancements in patient care and treatment. Among the possible education tracks: esthetic dentistry, ethics, federal dental services, geriatric dentistry, preventative dentistry, new dentist, and team building.

Additionally, the American Dental Association’s Education in the Round features six separate dental procedures performed live with actual patients. (Photo/ American Dental Association)
The Tal Assistants’ Association, whose 2011 annual meeting runs concurrently with the ADA Annual Session, worked with the ADA to develop a dental assistant track featuring 18 courses. There also are courses and events focused on all other positions within a typical practice, including hygienists, who can use course attendance toward license-renewal requirements.

World Marketplace Exhibition
The World Marketplace Exhibition hosts more than 500 of the industry’s leading suppliers of dental products and services. But there’s far more than just shopping going on. The Annual Session’s education theme is heavily represented in the marketplace, too, confirmed by The LOC (Learn, Optimize, Connect) and its 50,000 square feet devoted to exploring the latest tech trends in dentistry. Highlights include:

- The Laser Pavilion gives you the opportunity within a single workshop to touch and compare virtually every laser on the market while you learn basic laser physics and other fundamentals.
- Pride Institute Technology Expo features best-of-class high-tech products identified by Pride Institute’s “Tech Expert Leadership Council.”
- The 3-D Imaging Center, presented in cooperation with The American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, offers hands-on firing of various CBCT machines, with a comprehensive overview of CBCT principles and practices.
- The CAD/CAM Stage features 45-minute company presentations and full demonstrations of the making of a crown from prep to delivery on a typodont.
- Open Clinical and Science Forums, hosted by the ADA Council on Scientific Affairs and the Journal of the American Dental Association, give scientists and opinion leaders a platform to present sometimes controversial and always thought-provoking concepts in a lively discussion-and-debate format.
- And back after its successful 2010 debut, the New and Emerging Speaker Stage gives on-the-rise educators a one-hour lecture platform to present courses on some of the industry’s most important topics.

Education in the Round
Sponsored by Philips Sonicare and developed in cooperation with the American Dental Education Association, these diagnosis-to-treatment scenarios put you in a real-time, live learning environment. Six live-patient procedures are performed in a fully functional operatory, enhanced with the display of close-up, high-definition images of the procedures, step-by-step. The courses are:

- Live Surgical Demonstration of an Extraction/Ridge Preservation Procedure
- Active Clinical Treatment: The Art and Science (new-dentist track)
- Live Patient, Seeing is Believing: From Examination and Treatment Plan to Completed Prosthesis
- Live Surgical Demonstration of Root Coverage Grafting of Multiple Teeth in the Maxillary Arch
- Minimally Invasive Dentistry: Solving Anterior Esthetic Problems with Composite Resin
- Live Patient Biomimetic Dentistry — A New Generation

And plenty of fun
But this is Las Vegas. So you’ll need to break up your education focus with a few opportunities for fun. Among the many lighter-side activities sponsored by the ADA is the Pawn Stars Gold & Silver Roadshow, which brings us back to Chumlee (Austin Russell). From 2-4 p.m. Tuesday on the LOC Main Stage in the World Marketplace Exhibition, you’ll get to see the stars of the wildly popular HISTORY Channel show. Rich Harrison, Richard Harrison (Old Man), Corey Harrison and his pal Chumlee will appraise handheld items brought to the stage by a limited number of $49-ticket holders. That could lead to an actual sale transaction at the Gold & Silver Pawn Shop in Las Vegas, site of the breakout reality show. It’s another opportunity to pay for your entire four days in Vegas.

Never heard of “Pawn Stars” and have no interest in changing that? No problem. There are countless other opportunities vying for your attention at that same time. All you have to do is pick one.  

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TripAdvisor.com calls it the premier pool experience in Las Vegas. The 11-acre Mandalay Bay Beach boasts a wave pool; a winding, lazy river; three swimming pools; jogging track; and 2,700 tons of beach sand. (Photo/MGM Resorts International)