A number of sessions have already sold out at the American Dental Hygienists’ Association Center for Lifelong Learning at the 89th Annual Session. But plenty of opportunities remain open as the June 13–19 meeting approaches.

The Phoenix Convention Center’s west building is expected to be filled with more than 2,000 dental professionals representing various dental-profession sectors and career stages. Certainly the focus is on dental hygienists, but the annual session includes educational and networking opportunities of benefit to all members of the dental-practice team.

Highlights include a two-day-long exhibition hall, two plenary sessions designed to get the days started on fun, inspirational notes and, of course, the three days featuring 28 unique C.E. sessions divided into six tracks: clinical practice, public health, education, research, professional development and new hygienist. There also is a separate student track: A total of 24 C.E. hours are available.

This year’s theme is “Navigating through a changing profession and seizing the opportunities of tomorrow.”


On Thursday, June 14, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. there is a selection of 15 different “Lunch & Learn” sessions, with box lunches for all participants. Each table topic is limited to nine registered participants per table. Quite a few of the choices already are filled up, but others still have slots open. Among the still-open sessions as of mid May: “Calming Dental Anxiety,” “The Role of Inflammation in Periodontal Disease and Rheumatoid Arthritis,” “Minorities in Dental Hygiene,” “Forensic Dentistry: How to Get Involved,” “School-Based Sealant Programs” and “Integrating Preventive Oral Health Measures in Health Care Practice.”

An annual Community Service Day on Wednesday, June 13, provides 50 attendees the opportunity to go to a local senior center to provide oral health and oral cancer screenings, toothbrush prophylaxis, fluoride varnish and oral health education. Preregistration for this event was required and the registration deadline has passed. It’s sponsored by the ADHA, the ADHA Institute for Oral Health and DentalEZ Group.

On the “just-for-fun” side of things, a number of area tours are available through the meeting website, including a visit to the Grand Canyon and a tasting tour of area vineyards. There’s even a night-vision Hummer tour through the pitch-black Sonoran Desert, featuring spectacular views of the night sky and desert wildlife. A barbecue dinner is included, complete with campfire, cowboy guitarist and a country western band. Many of these group tours sell out quickly so you’re encouraged to sign up soon.

Event registration and details are available via a link on the association’s website, www.adha.org. The association can be contacted at (312) 440-8900.

‘Pros in the Profession’ winner named

Crest Oral-B selects fifth of six recipients to be honored in 2012

Crest® Oral-B® has selected Olga Torres, RDH, of Clewiston, Fla., as the fifth winner of the brands’ second annual Pros in the Profession® award program, which honors registered dental hygienists who go above and beyond the call of duty every day.

Torres has been practicing dental hygiene for five years, holding a dental hygiene degree from Palm Beach Community College. She also works as the sole dental hygienist at the Florida Community Health Center.

Torres frequently works with pediatric patients, sometimes seeing up to 15 children a day for dental cleanings. She has a passion for these patients and dedicates much of her free time to giving presentations to both kids and their parents to teach them about the importance of oral health. She also uses her bilingual skills to communicate with migrant patients facing language barriers in her community.

When Torres is not working or volunteering, she is in school part-time pursuing a bachelor’s degree or spending time with her 16-year-old daughter. She also guest-hosts a local radio show a few times a year, covering a variety of dental health and hygiene topics.

Torres relies on Crest and Oral-B products for maintaining her own oral hygiene, as well as that of her patients. Among her favorite products is the Crest and Oral-B Pro-Health For Me Collection for her pre-teen patients.

Throughout the year, a total of six deserving professionals will be named this year’s Crest Oral-B Pros in the Profession winners.

Winners receive a plaque, a $1,000 monetary award, recognition at an awards cocktail reception at RDH’s “Under One Roof 2012” annual meeting in Las Vegas, tribute in dental trade media news announcements and on www.dentalcare.com, and an exclusive trip to Proctor & Gamble Co. headquarters in Cincinnati.

The Crest Oral-B Pros in the Profession program recognizes registered dental hygienists who go above and beyond the call of duty every day.

Throughout the year, Crest Oral-B rewards a selection of deserving professionals, as nominated by their peers, who truly make an impact on patients and the oral health cause.

To learn more about the program, visit www.prosintheprofession.com.

For information about Crest Oral-B products and resources, you can visit www.dentalcare.com.
By Patricia Walsh, RDH, Hygiene Tribune Editor in Chief

The Rhode Island fire of 2003 was the fourth deadliest in U.S. nightclub history. Ninety-six people perished on the night of the fire, four more in the hospital later on. The staff of the local medical examiner’s office was completely overwhelmed.

The services of many dentists were needed to help bring peace and closure for the families of the victims.

Without a standing local identification team, matching dental records was a call 24/7 and works closely with the medical examiner. Each year, as members of one of the teams (antemortem, postmortem, comparison), we continue our education in disaster preparedness.

The annual American Society of Forensic Odontology meeting is routinely held the third week in February and attracts dentists from around the world. During a course entitled “Beyond IDs and Bitemarks,” I had the privilege to be seated next to the only forensic odonto-

This particular dentist, an army colonel, had made the trip for continuing ed-

tuation for the past five annual meetings. I noticed that several of his uniform insignias were against a purple velvet back-

ground. They reminded me of the purple velvet ribbon that graced my nursing cap. I suppose some things dental are univer-

sial during lunch I found myself sitting between a doctor who works hand-in-

hand with the Canadian Mounted Police and a woman dentist from Korea.

While my focus was on community preparedness, there were other areas cov-

ered at the meeting as well. These special-

studies included preparation for court testi-

mony in civil litigation, child or spousal abuse evidence and professional fraud.

The director of our state forensic team is a woman dentist from Maine. The initial response team is responsible for assessment, site evaluation and personnel planning. The subservice of individual teams are trained, but may or may not have experience in forensic dentistry. We are available on 48-hour notice. We need to be capable of augmenting or relaying the initial response team during mass disaster. Training includes a familiarization of the WinID (www.winid.com) or standardized chart-

ing system used by the medical exam-

iner’s office. It is not vastly different from those seen in any U.S. dental office. Most dental professionals catch on quickly. The software can be downloaded for home use.

The Katrina response was the first time digital radiography was used by a U.S. identification team. A 12-pound, hand-held radiation source, the Arache

Nomad, enabled easy access to victims. Its initial implementation by other teams was after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The manufacturer has responded to the needs of dental teams by making modifications. It has reduced the overall weight of the unit to five pounds, increased the battery life. The American Dental Association is currently working on a common “language” to facilitate the translation of our routine Dentrix chart-

ing to the WinID system via a centralized computer base. There is federal mandate that all dental and medical records be computerized by 2017. This will greatly assist forensic teams in the future when comparison matches need to be made.

Winnie Funari, a forensic dental hygien-

ist who frequently lectures about her 9/11 experiences, was on the ADA committee charged with developing these important changes. She is immensely proud of the fact that 50 percent of the post-9/11 iden-

tification team members were dental hy-

gienists.

Typically when dental remains are used in forensic identification via DNA, it is the molar that is used because of its size. DNA is a nanopiscor is male to minimize compromised DNA. In a cata-

clysmic event, the molar is most likely protected by thick cheek tissues, thus less likely to have been damaged by extremes in temperature. The molar is the tooth class richest in DNA and the root body is the anatomical region with the highest concentration of DNA.

Standardization of dental charting greatly increases the likelihood that re-

mains can be identified. Hygienists play a critical role in the documentation of a patient’s unique permanent oral characteristics. Metrical record keeping and up-to-date quality radiographs are essen-

tial to assist law enforcement or disaster response teams beyond the charting of missing and existing dentition, dental hygienists need to document what makes each and every patient truly “different.” Is it their cusps of carabelli, rotated bi-

cuspid, peg lateral or large tori? Is there an eddied position impaction, macro-

dontia or microodontia? Hygienists can ease the burden of those working long hours, often in a difficult environment, by simply doing their day-to-day job well.

Mass casualty situations are emotion-

ally tiring and difficult times. Response teams should not have to waste precious hours trying to understand chart nota-

tions or searching for good radiographs. A decrease in the use of amalgam only augments the need for detailed patient records. Hygienists are ideally suited for assisting authorities with antemortem (predeceased) information on dentures, ortho appliances, or dental photographs.

All persons possess an identity during their lifetime, and the dignity of con-

firming and maintaining this identity after death is a strong compelling soci-

eal need. Hygienists, as compassionate health care workers, are ideally suited to play an integral role in forensic organiza-

tion and record keeping. We are already trained, well-educated educators of the human condition.

Hygienists wishing to learn more about forensics can go to the following sites:

• American Society of Forensic Odontology (www. asfo.org): Continuing educa-

tion credits; membership open to all den-

tal professionals.

• American Board of Forensic Odontol-

ogy (www.abso.org): Membership limited to dentists.

• Center for Education and Research in Forensics (www.arforensic.org): Weeklong training courses.

• Disaster Preparedness Response (www.


aia.org/2590.aspx)

• National Disaster Medical System (www.phe.gov/preparedness/responders/n
dm/Pages/default.aspx)

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