Orthodontists greet the future in Seattle

American Association of Orthodontists’ Annual Session draws more than 15,000

by Kristine Colker, Ortho Tribune

more than 15,000 people, focused on providing orthodontists with a look at this ever-changing future, from lectures on groundbreaking research, to clinical seminars exploring the newest technology.

“The Annual Session offers orthodontists the rare opportunity to confer with colleagues from all over the world in an exchange of ideas that enhance our ability to create healthy and beautiful smiles for our patients,” said AAO President Dr. Donald R. Joondeph before the event.

The events got under way on Friday, May 18, with a few talks on topics such as maintaining a successful practice or limiting exposure to malpractice claims when starting out, but the real action began bright and early Saturday, when the session officially kicked off and the doors to the exhibit hall opened.

By 9 a.m., the registration hall was buzzing with attendees checking in and picking up their tote bags, flipping through their programs, heading into the lectures (which began an hour earlier), and getting their first look at the colorful displays of the more than 200 companies spread out in booths throughout the exhibit hall rooms.

A huge draw of the conference was the lectures, more than 150 over four days, many of which were focused on the profession’s hot topics, including the benefits and clinical applications of 3D imaging. Others spoke about mini-implants, adult versus child orthodontics, and working with patients who don’t want to comply with treatment.

A well-attended part of each day featured lectures given by the profession’s rising stars, “each of whom is involved in groundbreaking research,” said Joondeph. Topics covered included everything from treating impacted teeth in adults to the autotransplantation of teeth to the anterior region.

Another group of lectures was geared toward orthodontic staff members, with topics focused on scheduling, working with teenagers and marketing a practice in a way that will bring the most attention to it.

Two of the biggest lectures came on Sunday, as Dr. Peter Ngan presented the Jacob A. Salzmann Lecture, addressing growth’s influence on orthodontic treatment, followed by Dr. Vince Kokich Sr., Dr. Dave Mathews and Dr. Frank Spear with the John Valentine Mershon Memorial Lecture on interdisciplinary treatment.

Of course, lectures weren’t the only draw of the conference. Over in the exhibit hall, more than 200 companies displayed their products and took the opportunity to interact with their potential customers, handing out brochures, toothbrushes or magnets, or offering free coffee along with a brief discussion about their newest items on the market.

Getting noticed was key for companies, and some went all out to accomplish this. Beyond the huge and colorful displays that couldn’t be missed, many attendees walking around the exhibit hall could be spotted adorned with pink buttons reading “I’m a Mac” (from topsXtreme) or carrying stuffed frogs with braces and “Seattle 2007” written across their chests (from OrthoTees). Then there was Forestadent, which drew crowds by way of the Porsche parked next to its booth and the chance to win—a Porsche driving experience in Arizona.

Other exhibitors relied on the products they came to sell. Imaging Sciences demonstrated its new i-CAT 3D imaging system; Masel set up lectures about the use of its Orlus mini-implant system; Opal showed off its new Opalescence Treswhite Ortho whitening tray; and TF Orthodontics promoted its OrthoScape practice management system. Other companies displayed office furniture, teeth-cleaning products or orthodontic instruments.

Beyond the exhibits and the lectures, the AAO also offered moments strictly designed for fun and little tastes of Seattle. Saturday’s opening ceremonies was a good indicator of that. It started with the keynote speech by Hagerman and his partner-in-fun, Mick Luneier, but at night it turned into a party. Attendees—many cleaned up and changed after a long day—headed over to Seattle’s Benaroya Hall, where they started the evening with a cocktail reception. Guests mingled, sipped wine and beer, and met up with old friends. Soon the doors to the auditorium opened and guests were swept inside to enjoy a slide show of Seattle’s high points. They were greeted by AAO President Joondeph and finally were treated to a performance by instrumental recording artist Kenny G.

On Sunday, ambitious attendees participated in a fun run and walk at Seattle’s Myrtle Edwards Park, while Monday capped off with a “Celebrate Seattle” gala at the Experience Music Project in the city’s downtown area. There, attendees enjoyed a variety of appetizers, from pasta to seafood, and an open bar all while listening to music from Jerry and the Phibildys. Awards also had their moment during the AAO. Several were presented Sunday at the Excellence in Orthodontics luncheon. Among them, Dr. David Turpin of Federal Way, Wash., received the James E. Brophy AAO Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Bjorn Zachrisson of Oslo, Norway, was presented with the American Board of Orthodontics’ Albert H. Ketcham Memorial Award as well as the American Association of Orthodontists Foundation’s Louise Ada Jarabak Memorial Orthodontic Teachers and Research Award.

Like all good things, the conference had to come to an end. By Tuesday afternoon, the crowds were slimmer, the Starbucks line was a lot shorter, and many attendees had begun packing up and heading for the airport.

They, and you, can return next year when the 2008 Annual Session takes place May 16-20 in Denver.
Fish help AAO get off to an energetic start

by Kristine Colker, Ortho Tribune

Fish, Kenny G and orthodontics. Three things that don’t automatically seem to fit together. Except during the AAO Annual Session’s Opening Ceremonies. There they formed a perfect trio.

The events started with the fish. Actually, they started with Pike Place, the world-famous market that is more than just a place to buy some seafood. It’s a crazy place, filled with vendors that toss their fish in the air, try to scare their customers by putting the slimy fish in their arms and take pictures with the tourists that come to watch them work.

A far cry from an orthodontist’s office, right?

Not really. As the hundreds of attendees packed into an auditorium at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, a couple miles away from Pike Place, on Saturday, May 19, they found out life in orthodontics can be just as enjoyable—for doctors, staff and patients—as life down by Seattle’s waterfront.

“How do they win?” opening keynote lecturer Carr Hagerman asked the crowd about the Pike Place vendors, at the beginning of his presentation, “Catch New Energy! Fishing For New Possibilities And Energy In Your Workforce With The Fish Philosophy.”

“Energy.”

Something Hagerman and his partner, Mick Lunzer, had in spades as they interpersed the importance of their message—teaching those in attendance how to really be present in their jobs, keep a positive attitude and care about making each and every experience with patients and staff a pleasant one—with doses of laughter and fun. Throwing out stuffed animals to the crowd, performing a juggling act or simply making fun of the guy checking his e-mail in the front row, Hagerman and Lunzer kept the crowd laughing—and learning—for the entire two-plus hours.

Part two of the Opening Ceremonies also had its fun and energy. Later that night, a few blocks away from the convention center at Seattle’s Benaroya Hall, a couple hundred guests made their way into the main lobby to mingle, munch and enjoy a glass of wine, beer or maybe even a martini.

Then, the doors to the auditorium opened, and guests flowed in. Soon, images of Seattle filled the screen—the Space Needle, Pike Place and Mount Rainier. Once finished, the human greetings began: welcomes from Annual Session General Co-chair Dr. David L. Turpin and AAO President Dr. Donald R. Joondeph.

Finally came the moment everyone was waiting for: the crowd grew quiet, the music started and guests settled in to enjoy a performance by instrumental recording artist Kenny G, a performance that put the finishing touches on a day that proved sometimes you can combine fish, orthodontics and Kenny G.

AAOF lays groundwork for ’08 awards, pledges

by Jeffrey Cavanaugh (MSO/MO), AAOF President

The AAO Foundation, the charitable arm of the American Association of Orthodontists, provides support to orthodontic education programs and orthodontic research. Here is an update on the Foundation’s activities

Since 1994, the AAO Foundation Awards Program has contributed to orthodontic education and research as follows:

– $6.4 million in funding, primarily in support of senior faculty, including:
  – 125 fellowship awards
  – 149 research awards
  – More than 1,000 gifts in support of orthodontic residencies

– At the 67 graduate orthodontic residency programs in the United States and Canada, there are 11 department chairs and/or program directors who have been directly supported by the AAOF early in their academic careers.

– 80 percent of junior faculty supported by the AAOF remain in full-time academics after five years.

– On the AAOF Web site, there are 198 Final Reports from peer-reviewed, funded proposals.

2007 awards

At the most recent meeting of the AAO Foundation Board of Directors, following the recommendations from the Foundation’s Planning and Awards Review Committee, the AAOF approved the Awards Program for 2007 to include an aggregate of $605,000, which includes three post-doctoral fellowship awards, 14 orthodontic faculty development fellowship awards, one biomedical research award, one Center Award-Applicant Defined and one Center Award-Call for Proposals/Orthodontic Collections. The total amount established this funding round includes $585,000, which includes Center Award-Call for Proposals/Orthodontic Collections, post-doctoral fellowship awards, orthodontic faculty development fellowship awards and biomedical research awards, with the number of each to be determined by the quality of the various proposals. In addition to the amount determined by the AAOF BOD, there is another gift from the AAOF, this time for an additional $180,000 restricted for the support of junior faculty. The deadline for proposals is 5:50 p.m. CST Friday, Dec. 14. Awards materials are expected to be available through the AAOF Web site, www.aaofoundation.net, no later than July 1.

Endowment campaign

As of May 1, the AAOF Endowment Campaign, “A Case For The Future,” realized $50.1 million in pledges, of which $20.6 million has already been redeemed. The campaign has seen numerous pledges from Constituent and Component Societies, AAOF Corporate Partners and Friends of the Specialty (including AAO and constituent society Regents: AAOF Regents are those individuals who pledge while orthodontic residents).

As of May 1, the AAOF Endowment Campaign, “A Case For The Future,” realized $50.1 million in pledges, of which $20.6 million has already been redeemed. The campaign has seen numerous pledges from Constituent and Component Societies, AAOF Corporate Partners and Friends of the Specialty (including AAO and constituent society staff), but the vast majority of all funds pledged have come from AAO members.

The focus of the campaign is three-fold, i.e., participation, receipts, and planned giving:

– Participation: One-third of all AAO members have pledged “A Case For The Future,” i.e., the amount of a full treatment case, usually redeemed over three to five years. This includes $84 million of the Foundation’s Vanguard Society, those individuals who pledge while orthodontic residents.

– Regents: AAOF Regents are those persons who pledge a minimum of $25,000 over as much as 10 years, i.e., the equivalent of a case every two years.

– Planned giving: AAOF members are asked to consider including orthodontics in general and the AAOF Foundation in particular in their estate plans. Those individuals who inform the Foundation that they have made this commitment are considered members of the AAOF Keystone Society. Currently 208 individuals have made this commitment.
3-D imaging a hot topic of AAO lectures
by Kristine Colker, Ortho Tribune

There were speeches from rising stars (such as Dr. T. Gerard Bradley on self-ligation vs. conventional ligation) and speeches from those who have been lecturing for years (such as Dr. Jorge Farber on how titanium mini-plates expand the limits of orthodontic treatment). There also were special speeches, such as the Jacob A. Salzmann lecture given by Dr. Peter Ngan and focusing on growth and whether it’s a friend or foe to treatment. Then there were those whose speeches focused on some of the most talked-about, cutting-edge topics in orthodontics today. Here is a look at four of them.

Dr. James Mah
“Virtual Orthodontic Care”

Dr. David C. Hatcher
“Clinical Applications of 3-D Imaging”

There wasn’t too long ago that 2-D imaging was not only just the standard in orthodontic treatment but the only treatment available. All of that is changing. With the development of 3-D imaging, orthodontists are now able to get a picture of their patients’ facial structure and teeth placement that would never have been possible before.

During his speech, Dr. Mah focused on these digital 3-D technologies. Cone-beam computed tomography and dental models have created so-called “virtual orthodontic patients.” However, clinicians are just beginning to explore and establish the benefits of this technology to better visualize and understand particular malocclusions and to simulate, plan and conduct therapeutics. Dr. Mah took his 45-minutes to go over some of the clinical findings regarding this technology as well as discussing applications using virtual patient technology.

Dr. Hatcher, for his part, focused more on diagnostic dilemmas that result from 3-D imaging. Historically, the goals in diagnosis and treatment planning have been to decide the best course, sequence and timing of treatment. Imaging can play a significant role in this process.

Dr. Hatcher has ample experience with orthodontics. He received his dental degree from the University of Washington and received his master’s degree and specialty degree in oral and maxillofacial radiology from the University of Toronto. He was an associate professor and chair of the Division of Radiology at the University of Alberta in Canada and has a faculty appointment at the University of California, San Francisco. He has published many articles and lectured extensively in the United States, Canada, Asia, South America and Europe. Dr. Hatcher is in private practice at Diagnostic Digital Imaging, which has locations in Sacramento, Napa, Roseville and Vacaville, Calif.

During his lecture, Dr. Hatcher discussed imaging strategies and the employment of conventional and 3-D imaging modalities to reveal the hidden anatomy of common conditions in a way that will aid the orthodontist with diagnosis, treatment planning and treatment. The ranges of conditions he covered included everything from growth disturbances, jaw asymmetries, impacted teeth and incidental findings to pathologies involving the TMJ, airway and sinuses.

Dr. Vance J. Dykhouse and Dr. Allen H. Moffitt
“ABO: Measurement of Treatment Excellence”

The American Board of Orthodontics’ mission has been to maintain the highest standards of excellence in orthodontics. For more than 75 years, the board has served the specialty of orthodontics in evaluating the clinical performance of orthodontists. The practicing orthodontists have brought their very best cases to the board for peer review by the board examiners. In the 1990s, the ABO began to develop, test and implement more objective methods for measurement of clinical excellence.

Dr. Dykhouse was president of the ABO until May 2007. He received both his DDS and his MS in orthodontics from the University of Missouri at Kansas City in 1966 and 1970 respectively. He is a member of the Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontists and the Charles H. Tweed International Foundation, where he also is a member of the teaching staff. He has been a member of the part-time clinical faculty at UMKC for more than 20 years and practices in Blue Springs, Mo., with his son, David.

Dr. Dykhouse, along with Dr. Allen H. Moffitt, the new president of the American Board of Orthodontics as of May, who maintains a private orthodontic practice in Murray, Ky., used his presentation to discuss the ABO’s measurement instruments and their practical application, detailed in the 2006 “ABO Resident Clinical Outcome Study.”

Dr. Dykhouse also made sure to not only address the ABO’s use of these measurement instruments but the development of the objective grading system and the implantation of the instruments to evaluate clinical excellence.

Dr. Thomas F. Mulligan
“Challenging What You Were Taught”

Orthodontics is changing daily. New research, new technologies, new understandings of why things work the way they do. But what happens when the things you were taught, in school or from a mentor, that you have accepted as fact for years and years, turn out to be wrong?

Dr. Mulligan has lectured worldwide for more than 50 years. He is the author of books in several languages, including “Common Sense Mechanics in Everyday Orthodontics.” He received the first Strang Award. He also is a diplomate of The American Board of Orthodontics, a member of the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontists and a past president of the Southwest Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontists.

With all this experience behind him, Dr. Mulligan knew what he was talking about as he informed attendees about how stimulating and exciting it can be once you discover assumptions you have held on to might be wrong.

During the course of his lecture, attendees were taught a number of things, including how to question claims made by individuals who consider themselves to be authorities, a means of providing force systems necessary for any tooth movement without the need for “special” appliances or auxiliaries, the knowledge that orthodontic treatment can be provided in a qualitative manner without the use of expensive gadgets and the realization that although the basic requirements for orthodontic tooth movement have not changed over the years, marketing has indeed led to the unnecessary use of expensive appliances.
From imaging systems to toothbrushes, AAO exhibit hall had it all

by Kristine Colker, Ortho Tribune

Some were big with huge signs and bright, colorful displays. Some were smaller, with rows of instruments crowded on just one table. But they all had one thing in common: the exhibitors at the AAO Annual Session all brought out their best products to entice attendees to stop at their booths and, hopefully, make a few purchases.

With more than 200 booths to choose from, attendees could find everything they were searching for. 3-D imaging systems, practice management software, mini-implants, brackets, wires, office furniture and even toothbrushes. Here is a look at some of those companies, what they offered and what the 2007 AAO meant to them.

Ormco

Dr. Alan Badgen draws a standing-room-only crowd in Ormco’s booth during his “Damon™ System Tips & Tricks” presentation. Despite lower attendance numbers at the AAO, Ormco was extremely pleased with the record number of attendees in their booth. “Our booth was constantly busy with doctors and staff members who were there to learn about the advanced techniques and technologies presented in our 15-plus in-booth seminars,” said Ormco Director of Global Marketing Oliver Gelles. (Photo provided by Ormco)

Cadent OrthoCAD

Cadent OrthoCAD™’s Digital Study Model software is displayed on a laptop at its booth, along with a teddy bear. Attendees could receive if they watched a presentation. “We were very pleased with the Seattle AAO exhibitor show. Not only did a number of our current customers drop by the Cadent OrthoCAD booth to say hello, but also many other doctors stopped by to find out how our ground-breaking 3-D technology can help save them time,” said Marketing Director Diane Goochee.

Great Lakes Orthodontics

Janice Gruber, Marsha Kubarek and Bill O’Brien at the Great Lakes booth. “It was a very successful AAO for Great Lakes Orthodontics,” said Director of Sales & Marketing Bill Gertner. “We were especially pleased at the market response to our new products. It’s always a pleasure to see our established customers and have an opportunity to create new ones.”

TP Orthodontics

Rodrigo Aguilar, General Manager, TP Monterrey, Mexico, left, and N/Cole Baker, Account Executive, USA, at the TP Orthodontics booth. “In general, the 107th AAO Annual Session was successful for TP Orthodontics in terms of brand awareness,” said Director of Marketing Laura M. Wagner. “Once again, the InVu™ ceramic bracket attracted many AAO attendees to the TPO booth. Practitioners got to see first-hand why InVu ceramic brackets are known for their reliable strength, beauty and functionality. We received dozens of compliments on our booth design, which made all of the hard work preparing for the show worthwhile. TPO also launched two new products, the NY™ hybrid bracket and the Lo-Rider™ molar tube. Both of these products feature an advanced and patented polymer mesh base exclusively manufactured by TP Orthodontics.”

Ortho Technology

Dr. B. Giuliano Maino draws a crowd for his presentation at the Ortho Technology booth. “The AAO was a highly successful meeting for Ortho Technology with our new product introductions and having Dr. Maino presenting the spider screw temporary orthodontic anchorage system,” said Marketing Director Jason Bourque. “We want to thank all of the great people for visiting our booth. Contact us for future courses featuring Dr. Maino. Our next course is October 29 in Tampa, Fla.” (Photo provided by Ortho Technology)

Masel

Director of Sales and Marketing Kathy Perini at the Masel booth. “We cherish these four days each year for the opportunity to spend time with our customers from around the world. Hundreds of doctors and staff took advantage of the educational lectures provided at our booth on digital photography, the new Orlus Mini Implant and MI Paste. As usual, pliers and brackets were very popular, and we sold out of our newest distal-cinch plier the very first day. To everyone at the AAO, thanks for your incredible effort. Great job. To our customers and friends, thank you truly. We appreciate your confidence and trust.”

The Natural Dentist

Manager of Professional Programs Nadine D’Ambrosio at The Natural Dentist booth. “This year’s annual session was very successful for us. The AAO provided the perfect venue for introducing our new Healthy Teeth Natural Fluoride Rinse. Our ADA-accepted formula is made with natural fluoride for cavity prevention, along with xylitol and aloe vera gel to ease mouth irritations. The Natural Dentist Healthy Teeth contains no alcohol and no harsh chemicals, so it’s safe for everyday use. We were thrilled with the terrific response to our products and the constant traffic flow.”
Kidzpace Interactive

Josh Angle, age 6, of Portland, Ore., plays one of the games at the Kidzspace Interactive booth. He’s a “professional gamer,” his dad, Dr. Darrell Angle, said. The Kidzspace booth offered fun for both the kids and the doctors at the AAO. “With our recent alignment with Playscapes, geared toward innovative play activities for younger children, and Daydream Receptions, which creates magical theming of doctors’ waiting rooms and play areas, doctors can transform their offices into a ‘destination’ of fantasy, limited only by the imagination,” Kidzspace Director of Sales Kim McCarthy said.

Dentaurum

General Manager for the U.S. Market Craig A. Beach and Director Axel Winkelstroeter at the Dentaurum booth. “This year we are again present at the AAO with our entire staff and are presenting our tomas®-System,” Winkelstroeter said. “We are, for the first time, showing our new assortment for the tomas-System. It is an auxiliary kit that contains all attachments—everything for the tomas-System.” Added Beach: “What makes us the market leader and what really puts us as No. 1 is that we are one of the only companies that doesn’t just sell you a starter kit and say, ‘OK, good luck.’ We have a whole system. Other people have a starter kit to place pins. We have the starter kit, then we give you the auxiliary kit to use with those patients. We have an atlas reference library that shows you cases and pictures of patients and how to set the pins up. So really, from A to Z, we cover all the anchorage needs. We are really proud of that.” (Photo by Cornelia Pasold)

Opal Orthodontics

Ellie Astridge, right, demonstrates the Opalescence TresWhite Ortho whitening tray at the Opal booth while Wendy Askins, left, looks on. “Opal Orthodontics was thrilled with the doctor and staff attendance of the AAO Annual Meeting again in 2007. The exhibit hall was well-attended with a steady stream of interested clinicians seeking the newest techniques and products related to patient care. Opalescence TresWhite Ortho by Opal Orthodontics made its debut with raving reviews. TresWhite Ortho is a convenient oral hygiene treatment tray that can be worn over braces. The tray contains 8 percent hydrogen peroxide, which is proven to be effective as an antibacterial agent to promote healthy teeth and gums during orthodontic therapy. As an added benefit, patient compliance can increase due to TresWhite’s ability to whiten under brackets – leaving your patient’s teeth healthy, straight and white.”

Ortho Organizers

Director of Marketing Celine Cendras at the Ortho Organizers booth. “Ortho Organizers, Inc.’s participation at the recent AAO meeting was truly a huge success. In addition, it was a very exciting meeting for us. With overwhelming positive and supportive response from attendees, we effectively launched to the global market two new innovative products, OrthoShield™ Safe-T-Tie™ Ligatures and the Ancor Pro® Orthodontic Anchorage System. As well, we were able to continue to share, and build on, our commitment of the repositioning of the company as a strategic alliance and innovative partner. Ortho Organizers also showcased our continual efforts of rebranding the company, which included the premiere of an amazing new booth. With all of the excitement of the two new product launches, new booth and new marketing materials, there was much buzz surrounding the Ortho Organizers booth.”

Ortho II—Ortho Computer Systems

Vice President of Development Matt Hilleman, from left, President Dan Sargent and Vice President of Operations Todd Schuvela at the Ortho II booth, which was demonstrating its ViewPoint software, which provides a comprehensive practice management, imaging and communication solution with scheduling, charting, appointment reminders, insurance, paperless document management and backup features.

Imaging Sciences

Director of Sales Michael J. Archer, left, and Dr. Joe Restic of Portland, Ore., show off the benefits of the i-CAT® imaging system at the Imaging Sciences booth. “The AAO Annual Meetings have consistently provided a great venue and receptive audience to showcase our i-CAT Cone Beam 3-D Dental Imaging System, which is why we chose the 2007 meeting to debut the next generation i-CAT,” said President and CEO of Imaging Sciences International Ed Marandola. “This year we presented to the AAO attendees a brand new, sleek design and enhanced features for the most successful orthodontic treatment planning, including shorter scan and reconstruction times, smallest file size, the largest field of view for orthodontic work-up and an easy-to-use adjustable ‘flip panel’ sensor that captures both large and small fields of view. The new and improved features were met with great success and excitement.”

G&H Wire Company

Plak Smackers

Regional Sales Manager Tina Kinley, left, and Stacia Beddow at the Plak Smackers booth, with some of the many oral care products the company offers, all focused on giving the patient a pleasant experience.

Photos by Kristine Colker: Ortho Tribune
Trips, TVs and iPhones up for grabs at the AAO

by Kristine Colker, Ortho Tribune

It was a little like going to a carnival. Walk into the exhibit hall at the AAO Annual Session and, to your right, you might see a couple guys giving away some cotton candy. Sit down and watch a demo and you just might walk away with a new TV. See the car on the floor? You could win a chance to drive that, too.

Getting noticed was the name of the game at the AAO, and many companies went all out to do so.

Forestadent probably had the most noticeable giveaway. Sitting next to its booth was a shiny blue Porsche, drawing in crowds of people to watch a presentation and possibly win a chance to get behind the wheel during a Porsche driving experience in Arizona.

Over at OrthoEase, watching a 10-minute demo gave you a chance to win a 42-inch HD flat-screen TV. At WildSmiles, a winning doctor could walk away with a trip for two to New York, while a winning staff person could come away with a diamond necklace.

TP Orthodontics not only had three big giveaways, but it had a lot of little ones, too. Just filling out a card won three lucky doctors — Dr. Seuss Kassie, of Arizona, Dr. John Murphy of Ohio and Dr. Nathan McGuire of Missouri — a complete coffee/breakroom makeover. They came away with a two-pot, commercial coffee maker, a Starbucks gift basket with coffee and teas, a coffee bean grinder, a toaster oven and six bistro-style mugs. Not to mention the 26 other doctors who also won their very own Starbucks gift baskets.

Then there was topsXtreme, whose presence was hard to ignore. Everywhere you turned, people were eating cotton candy and sport ing pink buttons stating things such as “I’m a Mac.” Many wore them for fun, but for eight attendees, wearing them won them an iPod shuffle.

AAO attendees who saw a presentation of topsXtreme, the Mac OS X-based orthodontic practice management system with imaging, then were able to enter a drawing for a new Apple iPhone (a combination mobile phone, widescreen iPod and Internet communications) of which Dr. Ron Jacobson of Chicago, Ill., came out the winner.

“topsXtreme wanted to be the first to offer Apple’s latest technology to the orthodontic community and to do it with excitement,” said President Mark Sanchez, D.D.S.

Of course, not everyone could win a big prize, but for those who didn’t, there were many consolation gifts to be had: coffee provided at the Ortho Organizers booth, tooth brushes from Plak Smacker and little stuffed frogs, complete with braces and a shirt reading “Seattle 2007,” for those who took their picture with the giant stuffed frog at the OrthoTees booth.

See? Just like a carnival.
‘It’s nice. It’s big. Lots of stuff here’

Attendees tell us what they really thought of the 2007 AAO
by Kristine Colker, Ortho Tribune

Walking into the Washington State Convention & Trade Center every morning during the AAO, you never knew who you were going to meet. It might be a resident just starting out or an orthodontist who had been practicing for years. It could be the president of a company or a lecturer ready to share his expertise.

The more than 15,000 attendees came from all over the nation and across the world, and Ortho Tribune caught up with a few of them to gather their thoughts on the AAO and host city Seattle.

Dr. Julian Konviser
Private practice, London, England

How many times have you been to the AAO Annual Session?
I’ve been to many.

What are your impressions of the AAO?
Terrific. Absolutely terrific.

What has been your favorite part of the AAO?
Well, they’ve come up with honesty in orthodontics. That many cases don’t work, many cases fail.

What is the most important thing you will take with you from the AAO once you return home?
I think what I would say more that anything else is that I now know that I must warn my patients more and more that orthodontics is very likely to fail. You’re taking an abnormal physiological condition and trying to make it normal, and if the growth factors aren’t there, they aren’t going to stay there.

Terah Akrige
Private practice, Louisville, Ky.

How many times have you been to the AAO Annual Session?
10? 15?

What are your impressions of the AAO?
It’s nice. It’s big. Lots of stuff here. Technology is wonderful.

What is the most important thing you will take with you from the AAO once you return home?
That there are soon going to be a lot of things obsolete that our office uses.

Have you had a chance to experience any part of Seattle outside of orthodontics while you’ve been here?
No. But we’re going to stay a couple of days longer, and I guess that’s when that will happen.

Dr. Barry White
Private practice, Geulph, Ontario, Canada

How many times have you been to the AAO Annual Session?
Many.

What has been your favorite part of the AAO?
The two big lectures. The Mershon lecture and the Salzmann lecture.

What is the most important thing you will take with you from the AAO once you return home?
There are always a few tips you pick up. Actually it’s more talking to other people. Different get-togethers. Little tricks, pearls, what not.

Have you had a chance to experience any part of Seattle outside of orthodontics while you’ve been here?
I just had a quick tour around the town. Other than that, I ended up driving up a closed-off street on the way up to the convention.

Lindsay and Kristy Brehm
Consultants, San Diego, Calif.

How many times have you been to the AAO Annual Session?
Lindsay: It’s my 35rd.

What has been your favorite part of the AAO?
Lindsay: Kenny G concert.
Kristy: That was spectacular.

What is the most important thing you will take with you from the AAO once you return home?
Lindsay: There are a lot of good educational programs that the booths have. That’s really nice.
Kristy: And some new products. We’re very interested in those.

Have you had a chance to experience any part of Seattle outside of orthodontics while you’ve been here?
Lindsay: Mariners game. That’s the best thing.
Kristy: Had a wonderful, wonderful dinner down on the water.
Lindsay: We’re staying at the Edgewater hotel. It’s wonderful. Right on the water.

Connie Sedon and Michelle Brammer
Residents in orthodontics at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry, Louisville, Ky.

How many times have you been to the AAO Annual Session?
Connie: This is our very first.

What are your impressions of the AAO?
Connie: We just talked about it. We thought it was a little overwhelming. There were just so many companies here. It’s great. But it’s a little overwhelming for us since we’re kind of new to the whole thing.

What has been your favorite part of the AAO?
Michelle: Going around and seeing the exhibits is really fun just because sometimes as residents we might not get to hear from all the companies and see what everybody has to offer and so, for us, it’s good to see what’s out there.

What is the most important thing you will take with you from the AAO once you return home?
Michelle: I’m thinking about starting my own practice, so for me it’s getting a game plan together and figuring out what I need to look into in order to set my practice up.

Have you had a chance to experience any part of Seattle outside of orthodontics while you’ve been here?
Connie: The [Pike Place] market was so much fun, watching the fish being thrown.
Michelle: Also the restaurants down by the water. That was a good time.

Roger Hennigh
Resident, Eastman Dental Center, Department of Orthodontics, Rochester, N.Y.

How many times have you been to the AAO Annual Session?
This is my second time.

What are your impressions of the AAO?
It’s a good meeting. Lot of good speakers. Didn’t see as many as I’d like to. Exhibits are good.

What is the most important thing you will take with you from the AAO once you return home?
Anything that I can change in terms of techniques. I’m on a bit of a shopping trip for the practice I’m going in to.

Have you had a chance to experience any part of Seattle outside of orthodontics while you’ve been here?
We got down to Pike’s Place, which is a really neat market. I’m actually from D.C., so I’d love to see more of that down there.