FROM THE EDITOR

Hello All! Welcome to the Winter Edition of the StudentDO Newsletter! This edition of the Newsletter updates members on upcoming events and provides some perspectives on work we have already completed. Highlights of upcoming SOMA projects include D.O. Day on the Hill as well as the 2nd Annual SOMA Photo Contest. In addition, you will hear a fellow student's personal story detailing experiences at the annual SOMA Unity Project. Information on Omega Beta Iota, the political honor society, is included, as well as some news from your SOMA leadership. The next edition of the SOMA newsletter will be published just prior to the Spring Convention. As always, if you have any burning ideas that you’d like to see featured in the next edition or you’d like to write a story, please e-mail: jcasey@vcom.vt.edu

John Casey, OMS III
VCOM
SOMA Newsletter Editor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

D.O. Day on the Hill  1
SOMA Unity Project  2
A word from our President  3
OBI  4
Soma Photo Contest  5

StudentDO Newsletter
EIGHTH EDITION
WINTER 2007

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR D.O. DAY ON CAPITOL HILL
Thursday, April 26, 2007

Prepare to lobby your legislators on important issues such as Medicare physician payments, student loans, osteopathic graduate medical education, and others! You have already seen what grassroots lobbying is capable of accomplishing-- we were able to help PASS the recent bill about student loan interest rate reduction through the House!!!

The following is important information regarding this year’s D.O. Day on the Hill. Please be advised that all of this information is tentative, and is subject to change. We will work to keep you informed as any changes/updates are available!

THE BASICS:


Please remember to include your email address on your registration form! DO Day registration is separate from the SOMA Conference.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW:

Wednesday night: 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm: dinner and issue debriefing by AOA’s Washington Office

Thursday: Meet at Renaissance Hotel for breakfast, Q/A, and guest speaker, then bussed to the Hill itself; potentially participate in a press conference; lobby your legislators; return to Renaissance Hotel for recap of the day and reception.

(Continued on page 3)
The project was grand. The location was Orlando, Florida. The site was created by one man and titled Give Kids the World Village. We arrived there for an orientation that introduced its origin and development. The enthusiastic directors emphasized that the children are the bosses and the number one rule is to have fun.

The first night I was paired up with Aaron, a medical student from Chicago, and a six year old boy named Justin from Brooklyn for the Village Idol Competition. Typically the volunteers do not participate in the contest but since Justin was the boss he insisted we show some moves as his back up dancers. Instantly we agreed and listened carefully to Justin’s choreographic instructions. We cross arms first, do a one arm handstand, switch sides in the back with a slide, and improvise. Justin insisted I also pick up Aaron, catapult him in the air, he flips, and lands on both hands. Due to a lack of acrobatic talent and a potential danger to the community at large we held back on that great feat.

Justin had a contagious smile and witty sense of humor. I suggested we toss him around during the routine and catch him in midair to rebuttal his humor. It is then that he mentioned that he had a heart condition that would not allow him to do that. I was reminded that Justin was a terminally ill six-year old boy amongst over a hundred others visiting the village that week. The village houses just over a hundred families and provides them through generous donations a week stay in Orlando. The child gets full access to all the Disney attractions with V.I.P. front-of-the-line-cutting privileges. It’s a dream come true. And even though I’ve spent countless years hovering over textbooks, implementing diagnoses, and treating illnesses with antibiotics and surgical procedures there was absolutely nothing I could do to save my new friend.

We quickly changed the subject. The performance ended in a standing ovation and we were sure a shoe in for first place, the next Village Idol. All the performers were brought up on stage and the judges unanimously announced everyone a winner. In my true competitive nature I probably would have thought we were robbed but amongst all the winning smiles my dream of being the next American Idol, I mean Village Idol, withered amongst the applause without regret.

For the next three days, all ninety-seven medical student volunteers from across the country completed shifts at the Gingerbread House, Ice-Cream Shoppe, Carousel, Castle, and many more. The village is designed with a Candyland theme with a choo choo train as transportation. Did I mention that I personally got to drive families to and from their homes? This four day experience reminds me of how amazing it is to give to those in need. There are many people out there that have a personal story that is much tougher then getting through medical school and may just be a life story that comes to a quick ending. As a physician you will care for patients that will expect a lot from you. They may demand it as a privilege without realizing you’ve already given yourself to them. It shall be our goal as health care providers to treat those in need holistically in mind, body and spirit.

What a great ending to a year that’s past and a positive outlook to 2007. Happy New Year!

Alfredo Rabines, OMS IV is the SOMA National Vice-President and Speaker of the House.
SOME DO DAY FAQS

What are the issues, and when will we find out more about them?

The issues to be lobbied are continuously updated and under scrutiny, and as such, will not be available until closer to the actual date of D.O. Day. Information on the issues to be lobbied will be distributed as the issues are determined. Also, a student debriefing session to review the issues will be held on Wednesday evening, April 25, 2007, from 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm. This session will most likely be held at the Embassy Suites hotel that is hosting the SOMA Conference (see below for details).

What can local SOMA chapters do to encourage student participation?

Set up e-registration parties, hold group fundraisers, help facilitate transportation to/from DC, try to defray some student costs incurred by attending the conference, work with administration to properly reschedule exams and other conflicting events when possible, distribute information about D.O. Day as it is received, coordinate Political Action Training Course for the campus, etc.

Where should we stay?

The AOA will be hosted at the Renaissance Washington, 999 Ninth Street NW, Washington, DC, 20001, (202) 898-9000. The SOMA convention will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 1250 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC, 20037, (202) 857-3388. Several hotels are located in the vicinity, however, and may offer competitive rates. Additionally, the public transportation system in DC is excellent, so getting around is easy! Feel free to share a room with multiple students in order to help reduce costs.

What happens if I cannot attend and I’ve already registered?

Don’t panic. Please just inform Leann Fox (lfox@osteopathic.org) or Alissa Sims (asims@osteopathic.org) ASAP when you know you cannot attend. They are easily reached via email or by calling (202) 414-0140. It is important that you let them know of your inability to attend as soon as you find out, because they are already working diligently to set up your appointments with your legislators and it reflects poorly on you and the profession if you just don’t show up.

I’m new to lobbying and might feel slightly intimidated... what can I do to prepare?

Keeping informed is one of the best ways to prepare for D.O. Day on the Hill. Additionally, several students, physicians, and AOA staff members who are "veterans" to D.O. Day will be available to answer your questions and to assist you throughout the lobbying process! It’s most difficult the first time you do it--after that, it’ll be smooth sailing!

A word from the SOMA President . . .

I am proud to be an osteopathic medical student. Our profession has come a long way since 1874 when A.T. Still M.D., D.O. created a new breed of medicine teaching bright young minds that the amazing human body was able to heal itself. Over the years, we have begun to incorporate more evidence-based medicine into our practice as our allopathic colleagues have become more “holistic” in their treatment of patients. With more osteopathic graduates entering specialty care and less D.O.’s practicing osteopathic manipulative treatments on a daily basis, the distinction between D.O. and M.D. has become even less obvious. It is my fear is that in 20 years when my sons go to apply to medical school, there will be no osteopathic medical schools left.

I am sure that you have been asked what makes the osteopathic medical profession unique. The most obvious answer, of course, is that we are trained to perform OMT. However many D.O.’s will never use OMT. Another argument is that we are trained to treat every part of the patient’s disease including the physical, psychological, and spiritual components.

John Strosnider D.O. has dedicated this year of service as President of the American Osteopathic Association to the theme of “Back to the Basics.” He has created the Greatness Fund to raise money for lofty projects such as national media campaigns and large clinical trials studying the effects of OMT in our patients. This is (Continued on page 6)

D.O. Day on the Hill Questions not answered here? Then contact either:

Leann Fox
lfox@osteopathic.org

Alissa Sims
asims@osteopathic.org

Both are in the AOA’s Department of Government Relations.

Marty Knott, OMS VI is the SOMA National President.
Omega Beta Iota

by Dana Block

The Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) is pleased to announce its launch of an affiliate organization, Omega Beta Iota (ΩΒΙ), the NEW national osteopathic political action honor society. ΩΒΙ has been founded with the intent to provide a level of prestigious distinction to osteopathic medical students and professionals who are exceptionally involved in the political arena.

The osteopathic medical student’s call to advocacy is deeply seeded in the ground of the osteopathic profession. It is through the vision, initiative, and diligence of our predecessors that our noble profession has come to be the osteopathic medicine of today. The D.O.’s fundamental rights to attend an accredited osteopathic medical school, sit for national board exams, earn licensure, and practice medicine within the United States have been granted because of legislative advocacy of early D.O.’s. It is in this spirit of persistence, camaraderie, and accomplishment that Omega Beta Iota is founded.

Induction into ΩΒΙ may occur only after the completion of several requirements, including membership in various organizations, grassroots political activism, and participation in politics at the national level. The hope is that through the establishment of ΩΒΙ, a more politically conscious and politically active osteopathic constituency will develop. Additionally, fostering teamwork, discussing issues, and sharing common political goals at the most elemental level of the profession—the osteopathic medical student—will create a network of osteopathic physicians who share a political mind. This network will further strengthen the American Osteopathic Association’s (AOA’s) political affairs campaigns and will facilitate the future growth and success of the osteopathic profession.

Our political battles as members of the osteopathic profession are far from being over. We are currently engaged in important struggles for improved healthcare for all Americans, proper physician reimbursements, and international recognition of the osteopathic profession. There is no better time than now to become politically active! If you are already involved in the political realm, apply for induction into WBI and be part of a moment of osteopathic history!

The inaugural induction ceremony for Omega Beta Iota is scheduled to occur in Washington, DC, in conjunction with D.O. Day on the Hill in late April 2007.

Requirements for induction and official application forms may be found online, on SOMA’s homepage: www.studentdo.com. Applications for induction into WBI’s inaugural class must be postmarked by March 15, 2007. Any questions may be addressed to local SOMA chapter officers or to Dana Block, SOMA National Director of Political Affairs, at dblock@nova.edu.
SOMA PHOTO CONTEST!

SOMA is proud to announce its Second Annual Photo Contest! SOMA wants to highlight all the wonderful things that osteopathic students across the country are doing, so break out your camera and take some pictures! Photos may be related to any part of your education or SOMA activities. Some ideas to get you started may include giving OMT treatment to a patient, work at a volunteer health clinic, students working on group projects relating to school, or even an international health trip. The top winners will be featured in the spring edition of the StudentDO Newsletter. Prizes will be awarded with the Grand Prize being at least $250 cash! All submissions are due March 1st, 2007 and must be e-mailed to soma.photos@gmail.com. Be sure to include your name, school, and a brief description of the photo that will be included for the judges as they evaluate entries. Any questions may also be directed to the same e-mail address. Good luck and we look forward to receiving your entries!

And now for the fine print: Contest is open to all osteopathic medical students. All submissions become the property of SOMA for use and display. Judging will be conducted by a panel selected by the SOMA Newsletter Editor. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at the Spring SOMA meeting in conjunction with D.O. Day on the Hill. All questions should be addressed to the SOMA Newsletter Editor. In the event of a conflict or dispute, all issues will be referred to the National SOMA Board of Trustees, and their decision will be final.
the direction our profession needs to be heading. We need to clarify our unique contributions to patient care while continuing to advance the practice of medicine. We need to show our pride regardless of our future specialty or location of practice. We need to investigate and report our findings regarding the efficacy of OMT. We need to validate the use of OMT in every area of medicine in which it is currently practiced.

What can we, as osteopathic medical students, do to make a difference in the future of our profession? I have 3 suggestions:

1. Maintain pride in your profession. I am applying for an ACGME accredited general surgery residency position next year. I am not alone. Over 50% of our graduates are going into ACGME training programs. On my interview trail, there were many times where I was the only osteopathic medical student interviewing. My ERAS records indicate that I am a student at the University of North Texas Health Science Center. Nowhere does it mention the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. (There are schools that no longer use the word “osteopathic” in their title.) It takes pride and commitment to state that you are a D.O. student while interviewing for a residency that has never taken an osteopathic graduate. As students, we have that necessary level of pride. But what happens when we graduate? It saddens me to see a D.O. with M.D. embroidered on their white coat or behind their name in a phone book or on a name placard. It takes effort to show your pride in your profession. I hope that you and I will never become complacent in letting our patients and colleagues know who we are.

2. Be an advocate of your profession. I completed most of my 3rd and 4th year rotations, as many of you have, at hospitals where the majority of residents and physicians are M.D.’s. This has given me the opportunity to educate my colleagues about osteopathic medicine. In addition, we have all had patients that do not know what a D.O. is. One of my favorite examples of this is when I was working with an Asian physician and a patient thought his first name was “Do”. We have to educate the public about who we are.

3. Commit to the philosophy of osteopathic medicine. We each have a different definition of what makes our profession unique. For me, part of our uniqueness is that we are trained in OMT. I do not see myself using OMT in my practice as a surgeon on a regular basis. However, the concepts will forever be part of who I am as a physician. It changes the way I approach pain in my patients. I consider the musculoskeletal system every time. I teach my patients simple muscle energy techniques and will refer them to D.O.’s that perform OMT when I feel that it is necessary. I will support and participate in osteopathic research. As I said before, it will be different for each of us depending on what specialty we enter. There will always be a way to use the osteopathic principles we have been taught. It may be a little harder for all of you future pathologists out there.

In the next six years the number of practicing osteopathic physicians in the United States will double. With three new schools opening next year, the growth of our profession is tremendous. It is our responsibility as the future of the profession to ensure its identity and it’s success.

Proud to be a future D.O.,

[Signature]