



Good Times Rolled ...at the AAAOM Reunification Conference in New Orleans

By Rachel Toomim, LAc.

Les Bon Temps! The good times were plenty during the recent AAAOM Reunification Conference in New Orleans this past May. Truly a *phoenix risen*, the city of New Orleans proved a gracious and beautiful host. Sunny weather, spotless streets, gorgeous architecture, omnipresent music and great food all created a setting that was impossible not to enjoy. Along with top-notch presentations from experts in the field of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, this was an event that celebrated both the resilience of New Orleans and the enduring nature of Oriental medicine around the world.

Each morning started with poolside Tai Chi led by Floyd Herdrich. Among the conference highlights were in-depth presentations on OB/GYN by Ed Garbacz, Pulse Diagnosis of the Eight Extraordinary Meridians by Will Morris, and Taoist Non-Insertion Acupuncture techniques by Bill Reddy. Michael Gaeta held an informative session on Ethics for AOM practitioners, and Chris Huson offered a lively and instructive Pediatric TCM course. An all-star team provided the NADA (National Acupuncture Detoxification Association) Training, which, thanks to scholarships provided by Blue Poppy, Golden Flower Herbs, Mayway and NADA, several local Louisiana acupuncturists were able to attend.

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM), the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental medicine (NCCAOM), and the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CCAOM), all held meetings at the AAAOM conference. Expect to see enhanced collaboration among the national organizations as a result of the opportunity to meet and talk in a relaxed and comfortable environment.

A media event sponsored by the NCCAOM on the role of acupuncturists following Hurricane Katrina drew reporters and photographers from the Associated Press and the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Live radio interviews for the *Health Beat of America* were given by the AAAOM, NCCAOM, and Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB). Therapists from the American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA) and AOM practitioners from AWB offered bodywork or ear acupuncture on futons laid out in the vendor area.

The Saturday afternoon banquet luncheon was a moving and inspirational experience as local residents described their experiences with the relief acupuncturists. AWB Executive Director, Diana Fried presented a beautiful and poignant slide show illustrating the important work that the AWB teams have provided in New Orleans since the Hurricane and discussed plans for future projects. Laura Cooley and Wendy Henry of CCREW (Community Relief and Rebuilding through Education and Wellness), formed after 9/11 in NYC offered insights about the earliest post-Katrina days in New Orleans. Slides of acupuncture outreach by the late Marc O'Regan during the Pakistani earthquake of Oct. 2005 as well as current work being done in Vietnam and Cambodia (by New Orleans acupuncturist Quang Huynh and

Wendy Henry from NYC) offered a peek at the world view of relief work and training occurring beyond our borders.

Banquet attendees left the event with feelings of awe and pride in our ability to make a difference, both in our daily efforts and through heroic activities of our colleagues who took time off from their own busy acupuncture practices to take healing to the front lines.

Special gatherings with sumptuous buffets were hosted by the American Acupuncture Council and the Worsley Institute, presenting numerous opportunities for conference attendees to meet one another, exchange information and stories, and renew the connections that inspire us in our work. In true Louisiana fashion, the conference and everything surrounding it offered *lagniappe* (pronounced: *lan-yap*)...Cajun for “*that little something extra!*”

Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler! Let the Good Times Roll...see you all in Portland. OR in October!

Comments from Attendees:

Loved all of it – especially the massage

Michael Gaeta was excellent – a must have again

Treating Gynecology/Obstetrics with Acupuncture was “one of the best lectures I’ve ever attended... Dr. Garbacz is a great instructor...very engaging...exceptional...”

William Morris presented practical pulse work – excellent! Very useable info and easy to learn. This class was great – repeat it!

Chris Huson’s Pediatric Acupuncture was very animated. I liked the small group with open discussion. Could have been a longer class – he is funny and full of good information.