

DIMENSIONS

Message From The Chair... Bonnie Lonbaken, RD



Greetings! This is an exciting time for DBC and certainly for me as I begin to embrace the honor of your Chair for this year. Thank you for the confidence you have shown so early in my tenure. This is not **my** year; it is **our** year together and I am privileged to lead the way!

Congratulations and thanks to **Hope Hale** for her leadership last year. Hope began her term 2004-05, and continues this year by offering you, the members, Professional Development Programs. You will be hearing news of events throughout this year as Hope's passion continues to benefit all of us!

The Board came together in June for a planning meeting directed at developing our Program of Work for 2005-06. We had a very productive couple of days and I wanted to summarize a few highlights!

- **The Student Stipend Program.** Assist a student to attend FNCE 2005 in St. Louis, MO, October 22-25, 2005. This is a wonderful way to mentor our upcoming student dietitians and introduce them to the FNCE activities.
- **Visit a College or University In Your Neighborhood.** There is no more important time than now to send the message that we diverse members of DBC have something very unique to offer a student dietitian. Many of you may already know about potential changes being proposed for our degree structure and internship requirements in the House of Delegates. Think of the impact you could make if every DBC member shared potential career avenues for students to consider.
- **Leadership Conference.** November 9, 2005 in Houston, TX is the date for a half-day Leadership Conference as an offering to members and non-members. Emory Austin has already been contracted as our keynote speaker. Mark your calendar, and [check out page 7 for more details!](#)
- **DBC Dimensions.** DBC's newsletter has evolved into this amazing document. We have had encouraging news from our spring edition being posted electronically and a lot of favorable comments. Share a copy with your colleagues and continue to spread the news of DBC.
- **Membership** continues to grow and we are excited to see that new members have joined DBC as they renewed their ADA membership. This is a continued focus for me! New members bring new ideas and added volunteer opportunities to participate in the ongoing efforts of this great organization!
- **The Web site** has been exciting to watch evolve. Please visit www.dbconline.org, which introduces you to this year's board, offers new volunteer opportunities you may wish to consider, posts job opportunities, and so much more. If you have not updated your own personal record, please do so! You will receive no spam or pop-ups, as we are secure, thanks to all our great professionals working on the site.

Plans for FNCE St. Louis 2005 and yes, plans for FNCE Hawaii 2006 are currently being discussed! We hope that your plans include attending both meetings!

Please feel free to drop me a note via e-mail at BLonbaken@lyonsmagus.com if you have suggestions or projects that you would like to participate in with DBC.

Best regards,

Bonnie Lonbaken, DBC Chair 2005-06

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Save the Dates!

The DBC Planning Committees are hard at work planning exciting networking events in St. Louis for FNCE 2005. Make sure to mark your calendar for these exciting events:

DBC Board Meeting: Friday, October 21 at the Renaissance Hotel, 11:00 am-5:00 pm.

DBC Networking Reception: Sunday, October 23 at the Renaissance Hotel, 6:30-8:00 pm.

DBC-Sponsored Education Session: “Managing Your Career Towards Business and Industry,” on Monday, October 24, from 12:30-2:00 pm. Presented by Bonnie Lonbaken and Annette Maggi.

DBC Breakfast: Tuesday, October 25 at the Renaissance Hotel, 7:00 am.

For more details about these and other DBC events, and to keep up with the latest events of interest to DBC members, please visit the events page on the DBC Web site: www.dbconline.org/meetings/index.htm.

Help Students Attend the 2005 FNCE !

Students are our future! The **Student Stipend Challenge** is on again this year!

The Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo Student Stipend Challenge is a wonderful way to get dietetics students involved and excited about the profession. The Challenge allows ADA to award dietetic student ADA members a \$100 stipend towards their FNCE expenses.

Last year a total of \$13,200 was raised, allowing 132 students to receive \$100 to offset the cost of attending the national meeting. Money was donated by members, corporations, and DPGs, including \$3100 from DBC! The students receiving the award are sent a note saying, “Your \$100 has been provided by [YOUR NAME HERE] on behalf of the Dietitians in Business and Communications Dietetic Practice Group. You can contact [YOUR NAME HERE] at 555-1212 or jane@dietitian.com.”

This is the perfect opportunity to introduce DBC to future dietetics professionals. Your individual or combined donation, in increments of \$100, will allow you and DBC to be recognized as you promote the field of dietetics. Your donation is a great way to encourage your student recipient to look at the vast career opportunities exhibited by DBC members. If you do not feel \$100 is within your budget, please consider finding a colleague who is willing to share the donation. There have been very endearing stories from previous years’ recipients, and it’s wonderful to know we can make a difference!

Please send a check no later than August 19, 2005 made payable to ADA/DBC #32. Mail to Marsha Diamond, 28 S. Foxcroft Drive, Marlboro, NJ 07746. Make sure that you indicate this is for the Student Stipend Challenge. Thank you for your support!

DBC TopLine

- **Greens are in...** at McDonalds anyway. Since introducing their higher quality salads, these items now rank in at 8-9% of all sales at the chain. This is huge news, considering in 2003 salad sales at the Golden Arches were essentially non-existent. Many possible reasons account for the salads' success, but what strikes me most is that this time around the company is really advertising their salads and other healthier options. Additionally, they're using core marketing techniques like couponing to promote these items.
- Speaking of marketing wins, the **Organic Trade Association** hit it big with their promotion tied to *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*. Now playing at www.storewars.org, the video highlights the advantages of organic foods. Finally, the nutrition world is serious about getting in the game and using well-known marketing techniques to appeal to consumers.
- Many players in the nutrition world are watching the movement and reaction to **glycemic labeling** in Europe and Australia to see if it will cross the pond and become a **trend** in the USA. More telling than anything is the fact that the celebrity set is said to be getting hooked on the low Glycemic Index (GI) diet. Rumor has it that Bill Clinton, supermodel Naomi Campbell and former "Sex and the City" star Kim Cattrall are all following a low GI diet.
- An interesting article in my local paper (*St. Paul Pioneer Press*) caught my eye recently. It stated that the **fastest growing population of Internet users** is preschoolers aged 2 to 5. This either suggests that all other age groups are already saturated with Internet usage or that this communication and information beast is taking over anyone old enough to walk. The

Highlighting the latest hot spots from research, industry, and government, as a service to DBC members.



“...low fat has become so mainstream that it doesn’t need buzz to sustain its impact.”

intriguing points to me in this statistic are what it may mean for the future of work and nutrition education. If you can use the Internet by age four, by age 10 you’re guaranteed to be a computer whiz!

- AC Nielsen data indicates that with over 19,000 products in the marketplace totaling over \$22 billion in annual sales, **low fat products** are still a heavy hitter in the marketplace. Yet there's no buzz about them, what with low carb, whole grain, GI, volumetrics, and others getting all the attention. It's a good thing, though, suggesting that low fat has become so mainstream that it doesn't need buzz to sustain its impact.
- The greatest labeling disservice I've seen lately is on **Ian's Lightly Breaded Fish Sticks**. On the front of the package, a flag announces that the product is "Allergen Free." Another flag calls the product "wheat free, gluten free, dairy free, egg free, nut free, soy free." Did Ian miss the fact that FISH, the main ingredient in the product, is one of the big eight allergens?

Note: Comments in response to items highlighted in this column are always welcome. Please forward thoughts, suggestions and/or comments to Annette.maggi@target.com.

Annette Maggi, MS, RD, LD, FADA, is the author of two books and multiple magazine articles. In addition to writing this regular column, she is also DBC's Geographic Representative Chair. Her expertise is in food labeling, nutrition strategy, project management, and communications. If you have an idea for the Topline, send Annette an email at annette.maggi@target.com.

WANT TO SEE YOUR WORK PUBLISHED?

- DBC is always looking for informative articles and interesting information to include in this quarterly newsletter. **Writing is one of the best networking tools we have!** *DBC Dimensions* is read by over 1,000 health and nutrition professionals, and they can learn from you! Please submit your ideas to Tricia Silverman at coeditordbc@nutrilifestyles.com.

"We must innovate or we will vegetate. If the latter happens, we will soon be out of business."



According to Marshall Field, successful pioneer of one of the most famous and recognized retail establishments in the world, the twelve rules for success are to live and work by the:

1. **Value of time**
2. **Success of perseverance**
3. **Pleasure of working**
4. **Dignity of simplicity**
5. **Worth of character**
6. **Power of kindness**
7. **Influence of example**
8. **Obligation of duty**
9. **Wisdom of economy**
10. **Virtue of patience**
11. **Improvement of talent**
12. **Joy of originating**

As I've reflected on these thoughts over the years, I've come to realize a number of things.

Value of time. You can find the time to do anything you are truly passionate about. Think of the tasks you have perpetually put off. Are you really interested in doing that task?

Success of perseverance. You can achieve anything you put your mind and efforts into. Life is too short to work at things you don't like, don't care about, and aren't passionate about.

Pleasure of working. No matter what we are doing with our career, we are all in a sales position. If we aren't passionate about what we have to sell, then we won't be successful.

Dignity of simplicity. Keep things as simple as possible; why complicate the issue? There is no law written that says you need to make life as complicated as you can. I like the KISS principle - keep it short and simple!

Worth of character. Your professional reputation will be around a long time after you stop working for a given company, so don't compromise your reputation. Stand firm and seek other employment if needed in order to maintain your professional reputation.

Power of kindness. I firmly believe that what goes around, comes around. It may be some time in the future before the kindness is returned. But take the time to plant the seeds

now.

Influence of example. Do you walk the talk? What you do says a lot. People often watch what you do and see if it matches what you say. If you don't walk the talk, you are not nearly as influential.

Obligation of duty. As professionals we have a duty to educate. This may be in a formal or informal setting. Do you take that role seriously? Do you keep up to date or know where to go to get help?

Wisdom of economy. How creative are you at finding ways to be thrifty? As entrepreneurs we all learn it's a lot different when you are spending your money instead of someone else's money. You think twice about spending and examine the return on investment a lot closer. If you are employed, consider what spending will do to your budget and the bottom line for the organization.

Virtue of patience. The saying goes, "God grant me patience, and do it now!" We all want things instantly, but patience is a virtue.

Improvement of talent. We must innovate or we will vegetate. If the latter happens, we will soon be out of business.

Joy of originating. To succeed, we must enjoy thinking and working outside the box. Creativity is a key to success and can open new pathways for our career.

We know that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Success is similar in that each individual measures it differently. For some, success is a good paying job. For others it could mean living in the neighborhood you want. For still others, it could mean living debt-free and being satisfied with what you have. We know from Hollywood that wealth, fame, and beauty don't always bring success and, more importantly, happiness. Success is really an internal measure that we each use to determine if our life and career are on the path we want. The ultimate goal should be happiness and inner peace.

Linda S. Eck Mills, MBA, RD, FADA, LDN is the owner of Dynamic Communication Services in Bernville, PA. As a professional speaker she uses interactive methods with organizations that want to develop employee confidence. To learn more, contact her via her Web site www.theconsultantsforum.com/eckmills.htm.

The House of Delegates (HOD) deliberated on many significant issues these past few months that will impact our dietetics practice in the near future. We met at a formal meeting in Chicago, IL on April 30-May 1, 2005 with 180 participants and extended our dialogue via electronic means before and after this meeting.

Here are the significant outcomes of these discussions and voting.

Dietetics Education Task Force Report

This report generated more comments (more than 900!) from delegates, educators, and members than any other report and sparked a lively discussion at the HOD meeting.

- As a result of the recent House vote, the charge to the Task Force will be to explore alternatives to address the future education needs of ALL entry-level dietetics professionals (DTRs, RDs), as well as advanced-level practitioners.
- The HOD Leadership Team will review the Task Force composition and make adjustments to ensure inclusion of non-clinical practitioners (food and culinary professionals, community, food service management and/or school nutrition services).
- Please watch for a report in fall 2005 on progress being made by the Task Force.

Nutrition Diagnostic Codes

This session was presented by the Standardized Language Task Force and provided information about the Codes and how to implement the terminology into practice. Also, the session provided participants with information on how to offer suggested changes to the system of diagnostic terminology.

- The HOD recently voted to accept the Nutrition Diagnostic Codes. This will be communicated to the newly established Nutrition Care Process/Standardized Language Committee. This is especially significant for our clinical dietetics practitioners as we continue to standardize practice and advocate for reimbursement for Medical Nutrition Therapy.

- Regular updates will be requested from the committee to keep delegates informed on progress.



Value of ADA Membership

The HOD discussion focused on understanding how and why members perceive value in their connection to the ADA. Gaining insight into these perceptions of personal benefits of membership will assist in recruitment and retention efforts in the future.

- The HOD Leadership Team will forward the motion and the dialogue results, including the document "Summary of Value of Membership Dialogue, HOD Spring 2005," to all ADA Teams. These key messages and delivery methods will be used for developing recruitment and retention messages for members.
- All ADA Teams and Organizational Units, including DBC, will be requested to provide a report on efforts to use these message/delivery methods in spring 2006.

Communications

Delegates shared their challenges and successes in communicating with members. We want to improve and welcome your thoughtful input on how we can improve our communication channels to and from you, a valued DBC member, and ADA.

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This is my last message as your Professional Issues Delegate now that my three year term has ended. I thank you for your support and the "memories"! It is time to welcome Margie McAllister, an outstanding past DBC Chair and now your new Professional Issues Delegate.

Rita Grandgenett, MS, RD
Rdgrandgenett@comcast.net

Do You Have a Member or Professional Issue? Members are encouraged to use ADA's Issues Management Process, designed to allow you submit issues of concern to the Association. Please submit your issue to the Issues Management Committee at issuesmgmt@eatright.org. For more information, visit http://www.eatright.org/Member/index_763.cfm

"We want to improve and welcome your thoughtful input on how we can improve our communication channels to and from you, a valued DBC member, and ADA."



Kimberly DeNovelliis, RD

As the first Corporate Dietitian for Super Bakery Inc., Kimberly DeNovelliis, RD, quickly learned that 'MVP' stands for a specially formulated blend of Minerals, Vitamins, and Protein in healthier-for-you bakery items. Due to Kim's dietetic training, Super Bakery requested she develop nutritional standards for alternatives to today's supplements in the healthcare industry. Kim has assisted with the development, labeling, and marketing of the Daily Donut while managing its national sales strategy. In addition, she recently published an article entitled "The Female Athlete Triad" in *Today's Dietitian*, March 2005 issue, and has contributed as a guest dietitian on PBS's series, "Zonya's Healthbites." Contact Kim at kimd32@atlanticbb.net.

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Dr. Lilian Cheung, Director of Health Promotion and Communication in the Nutrition Department at the Harvard School of Public Health, who co-authored the elementary school curriculum Eat Well and Keep Moving, has released a new book designed to empower adolescent girls to stay healthy. *Be Healthy! It's a Girl Thing: Food, Fitness, and Feeling Great*, co-authored with Mavis Jukes, encourages girls to take charge of their lives through healthful eating, physical activity and maintaining a positive body image. The Cactus Plan—based on science-based nutrition guidelines—provides girls with fun tips on how to make healthful food choices and lifestyles.



Lillian Cheung, PhD, RD

With her recent promotion to Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Strategic Counsel to the CEO for National Dairy Council (NDC), Jean Ragalie, RD not only leads the development of nutrition strategies and policies that impact the entire dairy industry, but proves you can blend nutritional goals and business values on behalf of social responsibility.



Jean Ragalie, RD

Action For Healthy Kids (AFHK), a nationwide movement co-founded by Jean with NDC's backing, provides vital support to schools to address childhood obesity. Supported by 4,000 volunteer team members, AFHK is bringing together health professionals, educators and scientists for the Healthy Schools Summit in Washington, DC this September.

*Did you just write a new book? Are you (or a fellow member) an award winner? Did you do something creative and unique that promoted dietetics in business and communications? Are you selling a new product you've developed? Are you launching a speaking tour? Did you just get a promotion or start a new job? Did you just launch a new web site or new business? Tell us about it on the **DBC Movers & Shakers Page!** Write up your accomplishment (or other members' accomplishments) in **120 words or less**, along with a headshot in JPG format (optional). Please follow the Writer's Guidelines, posted here:*

http://www.dbconline.org/members/dimensions/files/dimensions_guidelines.pdf.

Please send to Tricia Silverman, co-editor, at coeditordbc@nutrilifestyles.com.

If you want to use more words and/or your business logo, it would be considered an advertisement, and you would be offered the member discount rate for a newsletter ad.

REMINDER... Is your information up to date on www.dbconline.org? This online directory is a super member benefit that allows you to search for fellow DBC members by name, job focus, location, and more. Let others find you to network! Check your status at www.dbconline.org/directory/index.asp today! (Remember to update your contact information with ADA too—on-line at www.eatright.org.)

Dorothy Dawn, RD enjoys a career as a dietitian and author of the book, *The Best Darn Book About Health and Nutrition*. In her book, Dorothy stresses the importance of balancing the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of health, with fun twists of her personality coming out in every chapter! Dorothy has lectured at Santa Ana College in Southern California, teaching firefighter students a course on nutrition and is shooting an educational show with the Anaheim Fire Department on how to make grocery shopping cost efficient yet nutritious! She is a consultant and speaker for various organizations and corporations, and a spokes model for various companies. Dorothy is a graduate of Eastern Michigan University and is originally from Brooklyn, Michigan. She lives happily in Southern California and enjoys spending time cooking, dancing and playing piano. Visit her Web site at www.bestdarnbook.com or dorothydawn.com.



Dorothy Dawn, RD

Debbie Lofley, RD has recently joined Extendicare as the National Director of Dietetic Services. She is responsible for providing strategic guidance, operational oversight, and direction to all dietary and nutritional programs and processes. In addition, she provides direction to regional and facility staff on all issues related to feeding, nutrition, product selection and development, program costs, and compliance. Extendicare has over 400 retirement centers in 20 states. Debbie's current volunteer activities include Mentor Chair for DBC, symposium committee for FCP, and on the Member Value Committee for ADA. Previously, she has served as FNCE Volunteer Chair, Communications Chair, and Nominations Chair for DBC. She has also reviewed ADA position papers. Debbie was on ADA's Customer Satisfaction Task Force, which produced a toolkit that is available as a free download at eatright.org. Watch the journal for an article on customer satisfaction that was written by the task force team.



**Dianne Scheinberg,
MS, RD, LDN**

Dianne Scheinberg, MS, RD, LDN is excited to announce the launching of her consulting business: Dianne B. Scheinberg and Associates. Centered out of Newton, Massachusetts, in the greater Boston area, services include individual nutrition counseling, corporate wellness, freelance writing, and consulting to fitness centers, community health centers, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. More information is available at www.dbsnutrition.net.

Mark your calendars and save the date Wednesday, November 9, 2005, from 1-5 p.m.

DBC is sponsoring a symposium on Leadership in Houston, Texas. Keynote speaker, Emory Austin, with the reputation of being a dynamite speaker, will present on the topic of **Personal Leadership**. Additional speakers will be announced at a later date. So, mark your calendar, now—November 9, 2005 in Houston, Texas from 1-5 p.m. for a special not-to-be-missed DBC symposium, with networking to follow. Location to be announced in the Fall newsletter and on the DBC Web site at www.dbconline.org/meetings/index.htm. For more information about this fantastic speaker, go to www.fivestarspeakers.com and type in “Emory Austin.”



DBC Spotlight on... Dr. Jo

Joanne V. Lichten, PhD, RD, MS, RD is an independent consultant in the food industry.

Working as a consultant dietitian sounds like a dream job! Please share some of your responsibilities.

It is a dream job because I get to do the things I love (writing, speaking, and media work) in the area I love (mostly healthy restaurant food and healthy business travel) and have the time and flexibility to have fun and be a good wife and mother.

My business changes from year to year. Just a couple of years ago, I had two books that I had self-published (*Dining Lean* and *How to Stay Healthy & Fit on the Road*) in bookstores everywhere. I was selling PowerPoint presentations and handout kits through catalogs to dietitians and had a variety of other products for sale on my website. In addition to freelancing for many consumer magazines and websites, I was writing a regular column for USATODAY.com on healthy business travel. And I was frequently speaking at nutrition and health conferences. I had also been doing media spokesperson work for companies including KFC, NutriGrain, SlimFast, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter, and Yoplait.

Then, in 2003, I got recruited by Burger King Corporation to become their chief nutrition officer. So, our family packed up and moved from Houston to Miami. BK was interested that I had not only written books and hundreds of articles, but had spoken more than 1000 times and appeared on more than 300 radio and TV shows. Unfortunately, after a year, the business changed directions (away from health) and I left in December 2004.

Right now my business is in transition and I'm still looking for more challenges (call me if you have some ideas!). While my business used to be focused on the consumer, I'm now more interested in working with the food industry. So, instead of going back to self-publishing, my agent has found an interested publisher for my books. I continue to write consumer and professional articles related to either healthy business travel or eating healthy in restaurants. Now nearly all of my speaking has been to the food and restaurant conferences or to food companies discussing healthy trends in restaurants. My next conference is at the Flavor Event: The Business of Flavor. In addition, I just started some work with NPD (market research

company). Right now, I'm summarizing their research of the new Dietary Guidelines and formulating marketing implications for the food industry.

Why did you decide to go into business?

Actually, I never planned to go into business. About 17 years ago, while finishing up my doctorate in Adult Education at Texas A&M University, I found counseling private patients not only fit into my schedule but also paid well.

This led to opportunities to teach both hospital and corporate group classes including all the weight management classes for Compaq (I beat out the Weight Watchers proposal back in the late 80s). I saw fewer patients as I accepted more speaking engagements. I greatly enjoyed speaking; eventually I joined the speaking circuit with CareerTrack, one of the largest business training companies in the world, for six years and conducted full-day programs on stress management, conflict resolution, and dealing with anger. I stopped seeing patients in 1999.

I never even planned on writing a book. Back in the early 90s when I was counseling patients, I frequently got questions about what to eat at certain restaurants. My plan was to contact the chefs at many of the Houston restaurants and put together a handout to help my patients. But, my handout got so big it turned into a book: *Dinin' Lean in Houston*. Because it was a local book, I decided to self-publish it. I found I greatly enjoyed all the marketing, PR, and sales. That's why, when the book went national (*Dining Lean*) and I came out with my third book, I self-published it as well.

How do you juggle travel and family so well?

I've been traveling with my job for 11 years; my husband travels as well. And, remarkably, we've had very few problems not having coverage for our 15 year old daughter. Because my speaking engagements and media opportunities are often planned weeks or even months in advance, my husband is often able to plan around my travel.

But, a few times a year, both of us need to travel at the same time. If the trips overlap by more than just one day, I often opt to take Allie with me. She loves tagging along for the media work; occasionally, they've even put her on the radio or TV show. If the work days are long, my (retired) parents fly to my destination to keep her company. Although we live more than 1500 miles away from my parents, they've been able to develop a great relationship because of all these weeks together. →

“...find your niche. It might be a certain age group, medical condition, or industry. Read everything you can about your specialty, including business magazines and news—not just nutrition.”

ADA Political Action Committee...Why Contribute? by Cindy Wolfram, Co-Chair LPPC

Contributing to an organization or cause is a personal decision. I would like to provide basic information about ADAPAC for you to consider. As a frequent attendee to the Public Policy Workshop and active in other legislative events, I have participated in the activities of the government relations program and see the success of ADA's endeavors.

One thing I learned early was the need to make political contributions to members of Congress that support the issues important to dietitians. ADAPAC is an avenue to contribute to their process. Combining our funds lets our voice be heard with more impact.

ADAPAC is the only PAC focusing solely on food, nutrition, and health issues. Having a PAC is essential to having our voices heard and to keep our issues in front of Congress. ADAPAC has represented members of ADA since 1981. Currently, ADAPAC is advancing ADA public policy priorities including Obesity, Child Nutrition, Medicare and Medical Nutrition Therapy, Aging, Nutrition Monitoring and Nutrition Research. Take a moment to consider how these issues impact you personally and professionally. In my case, as a dietitian in long term care, it is clear that aging, Medicare, and medical nutrition therapy impact my area of practice. Considering nutrition monitoring and nutrition

research, I realize the potential impact as there is currently very little information and actual research for nutrition care over 55 years of age. Our contributions can help potentially get our voices heard as funding for research is being appropriated in Congress.



You may have some questions about the decision regarding use of the contributions. Here are a few basic facts:

- ADAPAC funds do not pay wages, and ADA does not employ outside lobbyists. Funds are for one purpose: to make contributions to candidates for future office who support ADA's mission, vision and public policy priorities.
 - ADA Board of Directors does not take into account a member of Congress party affiliation, ideological stance, or extent to which he or she leans "left" or "right." The established criteria include the candidate's past or present support for ADA's public policy agenda, the perceived need for the candidate's support in the future, the candidate's

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SPOTLIGHT continued

What advice or words of wisdom do you have for new dietitians that may want to enter the business arena of dietetics?

First, don't expect to be successful in business right out of school. Get some experience in a more traditional setting first. I recommend getting some business experience outside of the hospital. It's a great way to make the contacts you'll need later on. Then develop your business on the side.

Secondly, find your niche. It might be a certain age group, medical condition, or industry. Read everything you can about your specialty, including business magazines and news—not just nutrition. If I had to do it all over again, I would have gotten an MBA in addition to my dietetics degrees (I still may).

And, lastly, while many dietitians write well, there are very few dietitians that speak well in front of an audience and have the media experience. This is a very good way to differentiate yourself from the group. If speaking scares you, join Toastmasters. Watch the pros on TV, then contact your local radio and TV stations, and volunteer your expertise to be

a guest.

How has DBC membership helped your career professionally and personally?

The DBC membership has been helpful in three ways. First, I subscribe to the listserve to get quick answers to pressing questions and to learn from other dietitians. Secondly, I use the directory to find experts in areas that I need to know more about. And, finally, I use the listserve to share my knowledge on healthy restaurant foods. My frequent postings in this area has been an ideal way for me to let everyone know what I do. I've gotten quite a bit of work from this informal marketing. I invite each and every one of you to do the same. When you find articles of interest in your particular field, send them to the group, so you get known as the expert!

Edited by Carol Berg Sloan, RD, Geographic Representative for the Los Angeles Area and DBC Directory Chair.



restrictions. I have always enjoyed cooking, and had restaurant and food service experience, so I thought, "I can do that," and my business was born.

My first client delivered a dose of reality: he owned two dented, old aluminum pots and no seasonings. Because of this, I immediately instituted the pre-cooking interview policy for new clients. I visited their home with a checklist of the equipment and ingredients needed: pots, food processors, knives, seasonings, bowls, oils, and flour. I learned that many people don't have basic ingredients.

Initially, I offered meals that were customized to individual dietary requirements, to distinguish my service from frozen meals in grocery stores. Each order included six choices from my menu, and I prepared five servings of each. Women usually opted for 300 kcal meals and men had anywhere from 400-600. Everything was low fat and low sugar.

In order to manage recipes, I wrote my own computer program. This was during the mid-1980s, and few diet analysis programs existed with the recipe manipulations I needed. I took each client's order and entered the calorie limit and choices of the meals. The computer totaled up the ingredients, generated a shopping list specific to that order, and printed customized versions of each recipe, so that when divided into five portions, the calories would come out right.

A typical day involved printing out the shopping list and recipe guide, buying the groceries, going to the client's home, unloading and cooking, bagging everything into individual portions, freezing, and cleaning up.

I did have my share of mishaps. Once I knocked an open jar of mustard across the kitchen and onto the white dining room carpet. Fortunately, the carpet had a miracle stain repellent, and it cleaned right

up. Another time, as I was bringing in groceries, the two dogs escaped and went on doggie walkabout for two hours. Another client had an enormous remodeled kitchen and neglected to hook up the fancy appliances, so I was forced to work with one small old cooktop.

I charged customers a flat fee plus the cost of ingredients. The cost per meal, on average, was \$4-\$5. My main competition at the time was Lean Cuisine and other frozen meals appearing in grocery stores.

Because my recipes were personalized, I worked for clients who did not care about saving \$1 or \$2 on a meal. They valued the personal touch and my emphasis on better ingredients. However, my customer base would always be limited by the extra cost.

I spent the first couple of years expanding my clientele, changing menus, sending out promotions to existing customers, inventing new recipes, and tweaking my computer program. I was featured in the local media a few times, as this kind of cooking service was a novel idea. Eventually I thought about expanding the business. How could I find more customers?

Advertising didn't seem like a very good idea. I would not have any control over the clients, and could find myself in some unpleasant situations. Hiring more cooks was also problematic. My customers expected to see ME. What if an employee turned out to be a thief, or incompetent, or unreliable? Improperly prepared food would be a disaster. And what would stop an employee from stealing the customers and the recipes?

The obvious way to grow was to open a take-out store. This would also allow me to focus on fresh foods, and not be limited to frozen meals. I had no money, and no financial institution would have considered loaning money without collateral, so I went to the Small Business Administration instead. I explained what I was doing and what I would like to do, but they discouraged the idea of a loan.

Life intervened. Newly pregnant with twins, I had to reschedule a few cooking appointments due to morning sickness. At some point in the pregnancy, I just put everything on hold. It became clear that running a personal chef business while dealing with infant twins was not only out of the question logistically, but made no sense economically.

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In the past few years I have seen media stories about personal chefs. The writers make it sound like a great business for people who love cooking. But today there is even more competition for the personalized food dollar than there was twenty years ago. There are hundreds of choices in take-out, frozen meals, and restaurants vying for customers' dollars. Finding clients might be even more difficult these days. How can you distinguish yourself from these other choices? Will clients be willing to pay the extra cost of a personal chef? An RD could capitalize on the nutrition angle to get clients on special diets. I'm not convinced that enough customer demand exists. However, if you do want to investigate such a business, here are some considerations:

1. Am I a very good cook, able to improvise at a moment's notice?
2. Do I have a strong network of contacts in the health profession for customer referrals?

3. Am I extremely organized?
4. Am I comfortable working in people's homes?
5. What are the liability issues? How can incorporation or insurance protect me?

I personally would not return to this type of work, but I am glad I did it. I have cooked in many kinds of kitchens with lots of different equipment. I learned that home cooking in the traditional sense is dying, since people may lack time, not know how, and not want to clean up. Whatever the reason, prepared foods are here to stay.

Donna Feldman, MS, RD is a new DBC member. In addition to her personal chef business, she has work experience in research, asthma/allergy, weight control, and food service management. She is currently developing a business plan for a Web site on healthy eating. She can be reached at feldman3@mindspring.com (no hyphen).

"Will clients be willing to pay the extra cost of a personal chef? An RD could capitalize on the nutrition angle to get clients on special diets."

PERSONAL CHEF RESOURCES

Websites

<http://www.uspca.com>

The United States Personal Chef Association offers members great benefits such as recipe exchange, marketing templates, food and cooking reference information, and a member exchange forum. An affiliate site, the culinary business academy, at culinarybusiness.com, offers home-study and classroom courses to prepare you for a career as a personal chef.

<http://www.personalchef.com>

The American Personal Chef Association provides resources and networking opportunities such as conferences, webhosting, discussion forums, a video library, and bookstore.

<http://www.personalchefsnetwork.com>

Personal Chef's Network Inc. provides networking opportunities and answers many questions about the personal chef career. Check out the Links Library for some interesting sites sure to please the "Foodie" in all of us!

Books

Become a Personal Chef: An Introduction to the Industry by Brian T. Koning

How to Start a Home Based Catering Business 4th ed. by Denise Vivaldo

List compiled by Tricia Silverman

SUPPORT ADAPAC! ...continued from page 9

leadership position or committee assignment, and the nature of the event associated with the contribution, if applicable.

- ADA membership dues do not go to ADAPAC. Under federal campaign finance laws, dues cannot be used for political action purposes.
- Political contributions cannot guarantee a vote or even support for an ADA issue, however, supporting candidates helps foster relationships with the member of Congress and his or her staff, which creates an increased awareness on their part of ADA's issues and priorities. This increased awareness often leads to support of a particular issue. It has even greater impact when ADA members who are constituents help raise the awareness level.

DBC is working to increase member awareness and education of the legislative process. Making a contribution to ADAPAC is easy and a contribution can make a significant impact. For instance, if every member of ADA donated just \$10.00 each year, ADAPAC would be one of the largest health care professional PACS in the country, with receipts of \$1.4 million per election cycle. There is no minimum for a contribution, and the current recommendation is a "dime a day" or \$36.50/year. Additional levels include the Capital Club, with giving at a level of \$100.00-\$249.00 annually, President's Club giving level of \$250.00-\$499.00, and Eagle Level of \$500.00 or more.

Consider giving; it's our future!

CHAIR

Bonnie Lorbaken, RD
Corporate Dietitian
Lyons Magnus
1540 Keller Parkway
Suite 108, PMB 243
Keller, TX 76248
817-847-6611 (P)
817-847-1775 (F)
blonbaken@lyonsmagnus.com

CHAIR-ELECT

(Joyce) Annette Hinton, MS, RD, LD, CEC
Creative Culinary Consulting, Inc.
3544 Lake Ridge Drive
Gainesville, GA 30506
770-535-2305 (P)
gahinton@bellsouth.net

PAST CHAIR

Hope Hale, MS, RD, CD
Principal Nutrition Scientist
The Schwan Food Company
Research and Development
1604 Superior Road
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-8577 (P)
507-537-5174 (F)
hope.hale@schwans.com

SECRETARY

Jane M. Dunn, MS, RD, CD
Director Clinical Nutrition Services
University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics
600 Highland Ave. F4/120-1510
Madison, WI 53792
608-263-8227 (P)
608-262-1636 (F)
jm.dunn@hosp.wisc.edu

TREASURER

Marsha Diamond, MA, RD
National Client Relations Manager
The CBORD Group, Inc.
61 Brown Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
732-972-9484 (P)
732-617-7671 (F)
mabd@cbord.com

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Lisa Poggas, MS, RD
Nutrition Services Manager
Parker Adventist Hospital
1277 Whispering Oaks Drive
Castle Rock, CO 80104
303-688-4498 (P)
303-688-1288 (F)
lisapoggas@centura.org

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Jennifer R. Barnhill, MS, RD
District Manager
Nestle Nutrition
6402 Falls Lake Drive
Charlotte, NC 28270-1129
704-321-7978 (P)
704-321-0345 (F)
Jennifer.barnhill@us.nestle.com

GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVES:

GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVE CHAIR
Robie Wright, MA, RD
435 Wycliffe Drive
Houston, TX 77079
713-722-9793 (P)
281-584-2640 (F)
rjwright@houston.rr.com

BOSTON AREA

Peggy O'Shea, MBA, RD, LDN
Vice President, Consumer
Marketing Group
Cone Communications, Inc.
855 Boylston Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02116
617-331-6989 (P)
oshea_peggy@yahoo.com

CHICAGO AREA

Sylvia Meléndez-Klinger, MS, RD,
LD, NCSF
Hispanic Food Communications, LLC
338 N. Quincy Street
Hinsdale, IL 60521
630-734-3422 (P)
hispanic_rd@yahoo.com

HOUSTON AREA

Robie Wright
(See Geo Rep Chair)

LOS ANGELES AREA

Carol Berg-Sloan, RD
4212 Boyar Avenue
Long Beach CA 90807
562-427-7884 (P&F)
cbergsloan@ix.netcom.com

MINNEAPOLIS AREA

open

NEW YORK AREA

Ellie Krieger, MS, RD
In Balance LLC
2565 Broadway #191
New York, NY 10025
212-663-9828 (P)
ellie@elliekrieger.com

PHILADELPHIA AREA

open

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Lisa Kelly, MPH, RD
Senior VP, Group Management
Director
Publicis Dialog
4410 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
#203
Washington, D.C. 20016
202-270-0729 (P.D.C.)
206-270-4636 (P Seattle)
lisa.kelly@publicis-usa.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR
Linda Schuessler, MS, RD
Manager, Wellness Promotion
Fiserv, Inc.
720 Mosswood Ln.
Spartanburg, SC 29301-5366
864-587-5978 (P)
2schuess@bellsouth.net

FNCE NETWORKING CO-CHAIRS

Cheryl Robinson, MS, RD, LD
The Kinkaid School
201 Kinkaid School Drive
Houston, TX 77024
713-243-5068 (P)
713-782-3543 (F)
cheryl.robinson@kinkaid.org

Karen Horsley, MS, RD, LD

Director Healthcare Marketing
Sysco Corporation
1390 Enclave Parkway
Houston, TX 77077
281-584-2533 (P)
281-584-2640 (F)
horsley.karen@corp.sysco.com

SPONSORSHIP CHAIRS

Annette Hinton (See Chair Elect)
Cindy Parker (See Friends of DBC
Representative)
Maureen Leugers, MBA, RD
Health Care Marketing Manager
Gordon Food Service
2345 Mission Hills Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-717-4114 (P)
616-717-7698 (F)
mleugers@gfs.com

LEGISLATIVE & PUBLIC POLICY CO-CHAIRS

Cindy Wolfram, RD, LD
Division Director of Dietary
Skilled Healthcare, LLC
4507 Apollo
Houston, TX 77018
713-957-2883 (P)
713-957-3397 (F)
cwolfram@skilledhealthcare.com

Kimberly Stitzel, MS, RD

Nutrition and Health Policy Advisor
Office of Disease Prevention &
Health Promotion
US Department of Health and
Human Services
1101 Wooton Parkway
LL-127
Rockville, MD 20852
240-453-8267 (P)
202-453-8282 (F)
kstitzel@osophs.dhhs.gov

MEMBERSHIP/MARKETING CHAIR

Marcia D. Greenblum, MS, RD
Director, Nutrition and Food Safety
Education
Egg Nutrition Center
1050 Seventeenth Street NW Suite
560
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-8850 (P)
202-463-0102 (F)
mgreenblum@enc-online.org

MENTORING CHAIR

Debbie Lofley, RD
Extendicare
15417 W. National Ave.
PMB 218
New Berlin, WI 53151
414-908-8820 (P)
414-908-8044 (F)
dllofley@extendicare.com

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Hope Hale (See Past Chair)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO-CHAIRS

Venesa W. Strong, RD, MNS, MBA
President, Venesa W. Strong
Consulting
2886 Lorencita Drive
Santa Maria CA 93455
805-937-4520 (P)
805-937-4520 (F)
vstrong@impulse.net

Lola O'Rourke, MS, RD

Nutrition Consultant
Spokesperson, American Dietetic
Association
6529 NE My Way
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
206-842-2594 (P)
206-842-1715 (F)
orourke@bainbridge.net

FRIENDS OF DBC REPRESENTATIVE

Cindy Parker
Basic American Foods
759 Miller Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941
415-383-1197 (P)
415-383-1198 (F)
cparker@baf.com

NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR

Dina Aronson, MS, RD
23 Hawthorne Place
Montclair, NJ 07042
646-536-2636 (P)
703-940-5502 (F)
editordbc@aol.com

NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR

Tricia Silverman, RD, LDN, MBA
144 Cedar St.
Dedham, MA 02026
781-381-0154 (P)
coeditordbc@nutrilifestyles.com

WEB SITE MANAGER

Cheryl Robinson
(See FNCE Networking Co-Chair)

SPEAKERS' BUREAU CHAIR

Melissa Joy Buoscio MS, RD, CDE
Manager of Consumer
Communications and Public
Relations
Midwest Dairy Council
834 Mapleton Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-386-2025 (P)
708-386-2125 (F)
melissajoy@midwestdairy.com

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Terri Raymond, MA, RD, CD
DCS, President
3011 80th Ave. SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040
206-232-8700 (P)
206-232-8741 (F)
tjraymond@aol.com

DBC LISTSERV MANAGER

Erika Jones, MS, RD
Midwest Dairy Council
10901 Lowell, Suite 135
Overland Park, KS 66202
913-319-7233 (P)
913-345-0790 (F)
toejones@yahoo.com

ADA SUPPORT & DBC STAFF:

ADA/DPG LIAISON

Susan DuRaw, MPH, RD
American Dietetic Association
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite
2000
Chicago, IL 60606-6995
800-877-1600, ext. 4814 (P)
312-899-4812 (F)
sdupraw@eatright.org

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES DELEGATE

Margie McAllister, MS, RD, LD
Sysco Corporation
800 Trinity Drive
Lewisville, TX 75056
469-384-6407 (P)
469-384-6438 (F)
McAllister.Margie@corp.sysco.com

DBC ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Kathy Miller
Record Services, Inc.
8200 So. Quebec Street, Suite A-3,
#279
Englewood, CO 80112
303-779-1231 (P)

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DBC Office
8200 So. Quebec Street, A-3, #279
Englewood, CO 80112

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