

# CAO 1987 Biennial Congress

*"Life is Worth Sea-ing"*

*"Our goals shall be accomplished if this 20th Biennial Congress becomes a special highlight in your personal album of memories."*

**W**hen Dr. Barbara Iftody penned these sentiments in her published pre-Congress welcome, she demonstrated the traditional hope of the Local Arrangements Committee Chairperson — a happily memorable experience for the delegates. In post-Congress hindsight, however, she may also



*Not in the water long enough to get queasy, participants in the "Loyalist Landing" re-enactment still sport smiles as the dory is pulled into the dock. Dotted among the Coast Guard cadet crew's striped shirts, in Loyalist costume, can be seen CAO President Dr. Scott Brisbin (front); Dr. Ray Corbin (directly behind Dr. Brisbin); NBAO President Dr. Les Clements (tipping his hat) and a bonneted LAC Chairperson Dr. Barbara Iftody with her back to the camera.*

*Les participants à la reconstitution de l'"Arrivée des Loyalistes" n'ont certainement pas eu le temps d'avoir le mal de mer, car c'est avec le sourire aux lèvres qu'ils arrivent au quai à bord de leur doris. Parmi les chemises rayées de l'équipage de la Garde côtière, nous voyons, habillés en Loyalistes, le président de l'ACO, le Dr Scott Brisbin (devant); le Dr Ray Corbin (directement derrière le Dr Brisbin); le président de l'AONB, le Dr Les Clements (qui salue du chapeau); et la présidente du Comité de l'organisation locale (COL), le Dr Barbara Iftody (la dame au bonnet, vue de dos).*

have to acknowledge a hitherto unsuspected reservoir of prescience!

Because from all those who attended the 1987 "Merry-Tyme Mingle" in Saint John, New Brunswick, comes unanimous agreement that CAO's 20th Biennial gathering was, indeed, the source of not just one, but many "special highlights" in their Congress memory albums.

From Opening Ceremonies to Closing Banquet, the infectious Atlantic Canadian hospitality dominated the program. Saint John, which calls itself "The Greatest Little City in the East" is firmly rooted in Loyalist heritage and the Congress planners had arranged several opportunities to recall these traditions.

## The Social Program

### Day 1 — The Loyalists' Return to Saint John

Landlocked Alberta, home to CAO President Dr. Scott Brisbin, doesn't provide much of a setting in which to get one's "sea legs", so it was no doubt with some trepidation that he joined Dr. Iftody, NB Association of Optometrists' President Dr. Les Clements and Dr. Ray Corbin in a whaling dory to "re-enact" the Loyalists' landing in Saint John. (Truth be told, it is doubtful that the original Loyalists embarked from a Canadian Coast Guard wharf, were carried across two hundred metres of calm inner harbour waters — rowed by several Coast Guard cadet volunteers — to land at a municipal dock beside a new, multi-million dollar Convention Centre and Congress Hotel complex.)

Such was the Congress opening and a further patch of local colour was added by a group called Delancey's Brigade, bedecked in period militia costume, who shattered the evening calm with several musket salvoes, complimented by a fife and drum greeting.

From the dock, the Dignitary party members, now somewhat reassured by their more solid footing, with Delancey's and the Saint John town crier as escort, were marched through the waiting crowd to the Loyalist Room (where else?) in the Convention Centre where the official Opening Ceremonies got underway. Following a very few brief formalities, including greetings from the Committee and the host Association, Dr. Brisbin declared the Congress open.

Not content with merely providing the forum for a "Mingle", the Local Arrangements Committee forced the issue by sticking a variety of unusual New Brunswick place name tags over the official Congress badges issued at the Registration Desk. As rapidly became clear, there were only two of each name and the purpose of the exercise was to seek out one's "match" in order to claim the official Congress souvenir — a coffee mug emblazoned with a colour badge featuring our Association's newest political animal — Lobby the Lobster. This in turn led to the colourful exercise of grown OD's, spouses and staff people drifting through the Loyalist Room, peering at one another's chests, like a Dating Game gone mad, in search of another "Weaver Siding", "Quispamsis", "Ste-Anne-de-Madawaska" or "Memramcook". Gradually, however, the plaintive cries diminished as more and more matched pairs emerged from one of the most imaginative Congress icebreakers ever seen.

The only complaint — that smoked salmon is so expensive. It vanished quickly among the hoard of early arrivals at the buffet table, leaving only a delectable assortment of the more traditional hors d'oeuvres and canapés for those less fortunate lovers of the Maritime version of this particular delicacy.





*Saint John's Mayor, Elsie Wayne, appears to be miming her warm welcome to "The Greatest Little City in the East".*

*Le maire de Saint-Jean, Elsie Wayne, semble mimer son chaleureux message de bienvenue à cette charmante petite ville de l'Est.*

## **Day 2 — The Greatest Little Saleswoman in the East Says Hello and the King Kong of Lobsters Says Good-Bye**

Saint John's Mayor, Elsie Wayne, is an extremely energetic, busy and dynamic individual. Her schedule, unfortunately, kept her from extending the traditional Mayor's welcome at the Opening Ceremonies but she more than made up for it with a rousing hello from the podium at the luncheon on Day One. She had the remarkable ability of making us feel like the most important group ever to visit the City and then, in the next breath, tell us that the Canadian First Ministers' Conference was slated for this same room just under a month away. Saint John, she said, armed with its lavish athletic facility built for the Commonwealth Games, a new multi-use Trade and Convention Centre/Market Square, bracketed by two new hotels and an ongoing core revitalization scheme, is serving notice to the rest of Canada that it plans to be much more than the site of this country's only two-way waterfall.

With only half a day of the City's welcome under our belts, the Congress delegates were already feeling right at home.

Special guest speaker at this luncheon was the province's Minister of Health and Social Services, the Hon. Nancy Clark Teed. It is obvious that Optometry in New Brunswick enjoys a very special profile among the province's health care providers, a point that was stressed by the Minister in her remarks. She cited several examples of this profession's services to the people of New Brunswick as emblematic of a "caring" approach, including the diagnostic screening programs offered by the NBO's Mobile Vision Services van to both school children and senior citizens.

It is a CAO tradition to preview the coming Congress at each Biennial meeting and Day 1's luncheon also offered the opportunity for a few words from Dr. Ian Edmison, Publicity and PR Chairman for "Rendezvous Ottawa '89" to invite all and sundry,

on behalf of Local Arrangements Chairman Dr. Pierre Levasseur and his Committees, to the nation's capital August 1-4, 1989.

Meanwhile, at Saint John's Thistle St. Andrew's Curling Club, over 1/2 tonne of lobsters was being readied for the evening's social event, billed simply as a Feast and Fun Night in the program. But what a feast! And what a Fun Night!

It is no small exercise to create a warm atmosphere in an arena normally surfaced in sheets of ice but, apparently, it is routine for the organizers. Draped tables, chairs and a huge stage replaced hacks and hog lines; a virtual army of waiters and chefs supplanted the skips, leads, seconds and thirds who normally populated the floor of this Club. When the delegates arrived, there was already a festive air provided by the brightly lit hall, complimented by the rowboats full of iced Schooners, Olands, Keiths and James Ready's. Meanwhile, those few unmatched from the previous evening's place name search began table by table quests, with etched napkins, for the other half of their souvenir coffee mug entitlement.

One of the evening's early highlights surely had to be the demonstration of how to eat a lobster — or, more correctly, how to get at the parts of the lobster that are edible — offered by the NBO's own Noella Lebrun and Dr. Richard Duguay. Obviously the size of the crowd required a clearly visible prop and the granddaddy of all Fundy lobsters, estimated by the knowledgeable as somewhere in the region of 7-8 pounds, was used for the occasion. (The less informed among us simply saw it as the biggest dead red bug we ever wanted to see, and went back to our beautifully grilled T-Bone steaks.) Ingenuity, in many cases however, replaced the Lebrun/Duguay Method as not a few impatient diners were observed cracking claws with empty



*NBO President Dr. Les Clements (L) presents a "token of appreciation" to the Province's Minister of Health and Social Services, the Hon. Nancy Clark Teed.*

*Le président de l'AONB, le Dr Les Clements (G), exprime sa reconnaissance envers la ministre de la Santé et des Services sociaux de la province, l'hon. Nancy Clark Teed.*





*"Hello, you don't know me, but I have a name badge that says I'm from Gondola Point Quisbis...no, really, and I was wondering if you have a match. No, I don't smoke...oh, never mind."*

*"Bonjour. Vous ne me connaissez pas, mais mon porte-nom dit que je viens de Gondola Point Quisbis...non, sans blague, et je me demandais si vous aviez une 'match'. Non, je ne fume pas...ah, laissez faire."*



*The NBAO's Mobile Vision Van was a hit both with young patients and the media.*

*La fourgonnette publicitaire de l'AONB a eu beaucoup de succès auprès des jeunes et des médias.*

wine bottles when they failed to yield to the proddings of the plastic picks provided by the Club.

Music this evening ranged from the regional fiddling/step dancing variety to the kind of thundering guitar runs first heard from Chuck Berry and Mark Knopfler. No one was disappointed and, in a nice touch, an alternate lounge area was available for those ears to whom Chuck Berry and an unholed boxcar wheel are one and the same.

### **Day 3 — Exhibitor forum and the optometric tidal bore sweeps through Saint John**

Day 3 was the Exhibitors' opportunity to show their wares and it began with another CAO Congress first — a breakfast "seminar". It was designed so as to allow one particular Exhibitor to sponsor an event and thereby focus delegates' attention on a particular product or procedure. The Exhibitor — Polymer Technology, chose to highlight its new Boston Equalens and did so with a bright flair and several energetic "touches" that started the day off with a bang. A Dixieland band, lots of coffee and a generous amount of product information made this first ever CAO Congress breakfast "seminar" a great success.

(With all due respect to the folks at Polymer Technology, however, for painfully obvious reasons, not everyone who attended the previous evening's festivities was wholly enthralled at being greeted by what looked like a badly fried egg adorning the hats which were given out to promote your new Boston Equalens.

That being said, your hosting the very lively breakfast introduction to the day was nonetheless greatly appreciated.)

It was an event which many delegates expressed a desire to see repeated at future Congresses and, it is hoped, was perceived as a mutually beneficial forum for the Exhibitor concerned, as it certainly was for the optometrists who took part.

Both luncheon and an evening cocktail party this day were held in the Exhibit Hall. It is another CAO tradition to "cap-

ture" an audience in this way for the Exhibitors to ensure a generous attendance at a portion of the Exhibit Program. Coupled with in-Hall door prize draws and a passport system which required a significant number of booth visitations, the resulting "osmosis" of delegates through the Hall was a great success this



*A lobster so big, it takes six just to hold the tray. The six are (L-R): Mrs. Monique Lambert, AOA President Dr. John Tumblin, Mrs. Calli Brisbin, Mrs. Billie Tumblin, NBAO Executive Director Noëlla Lebrun and CAO Executive Director Gérard Lambert.*

*Le homard est si gros qu'il faut six personnes juste pour soutenir le plateau. De gauche à droite, on reconnaît Mme Monique Lambert; le président de l'AOA, le Dr John Tumblin; Mme Calli Brisbin; Mme Billie Tumblin; la directrice générale de l'AONB, Noëlla Lebrun; et le directeur général de l'ACO, Gérard Lambert.*



year, again as evidenced by the many post-Congress positive comments that have been received at the CAO office. 1987 saw a record participation by the Exhibitors and their ongoing support and participation in the CAO Congress program is a much appreciated part of the Biennial success stories that have marked our conventions. (Refer, too, to the statistical summary that follows this article.)



Who says an LAC Chairperson's lot is an unrewarding one? Dr. Barbara Iftody (L) had her number come up in the draw for a hyperopic's television set presented by les Services Optométriques de l'Association des Optométristes du Québec. Shown here presenting the prize to Dr. Iftody is Dr. Jean-Marie Rodrigue.

Qui a dit que le poste de président du Comité de l'organisation locale n'est pas rémunérateur? Le Dr Barbara Iftody (G) a gagné le téléviseur pour hypermètre qu'ont fait tirer les Services optométriques de l'Association des optométristes du Québec. Sur la photo, le Dr Jean-Marie Rodrigue présente le prix au Dr Iftody.

That evening, under the organization of Dr. Tom McCue, many of the graduating classes of optometrists from both Waterloo and Montréal took full advantage of the City's hospitality. They ranged throughout Saint John, an optometric tide, to locations as diverse as the Reversing Falls Restaurant and an outdoor café directly in front of the downtown Labatt's Blue Live Amateur Night Talent Competition stage — where a number of unfortunate souls from, of all groups, Dr. McCue's own class were subjected to a rendition of Johnny B. Goode played on the bagpipes by a character dressed like Santa Claus! (Never let it be said Saint John's amateur musicians lack an imaginative spark.)

#### Day 4 — A light lunch, a loud launch and a lunge for the lounge

The Congress' final day offered the opportunity to showcase CAO and one of its umbrella organizations — the Canadian Optometric Education Trust Fund, or COETF.

Throughout the Congress, more and more attendees began sporting buttons which read "I'm In, Are You?/J'en Suis, Et Vous?"; "in" being a reference to in the draw for one of the most attractive prizes ever offered by a COETF fundraising activity — a luxury trip for two through the Champagne region of France aboard the beautifully appointed Hotel barge *Liquenda*. The event officially launched the COETF's Industrial Fundraising Campaign which will see a cross Canada drive to elicit funding largely from the ophthalmic manufacturing and supply com-

munity to which Optometry has for decades contributed its professional business.

As draw time (built around a light buffet luncheon) approached, excitement rose to a fever pitch (helped along by National Fundraising Chairman Dr. Reid MacDuff's suspense building exercise of first choosing ten finalists, as well as by air bursts from a foghorn loaned by a local restaurant and a series of Loyalist militia drum rolls provided by a young member of Delancey's Brigade especially conscripted for the event). In keeping with the event's suspense, we won't steal the COETF's thunder by announcing the results here — the complete story and draw results appear under a COETF banner elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, the traditional CAO Congress lull came — a breath catching time identified on the Program as a "Free Afternoon".

The weather throughout had co-operated beautifully. This final afternoon was no exception and Saint John's hospitality and historic walks beckoned many attendees away from their hotels.

By early evening, however, showered, shaved, shampooed and dressed to the nines, delegates began once more to assemble in the Convention Centre foyer for the gala concluding event — the CAO President's Banquet, Awards Night, Dance and Social.

Any banquet table rush was avoided through the foresight of a pre-event table reservation process arranged at the Registration Desk. Once the delegates were seated, the program began with the Head Table's trooping in to the strains of a solitary piper and the rhythmic applause of the delegates.

The honour roll for the 1987 Biennial Congress, that is to say the banquet dignitaries at this year's head table, were as follows: CAO President Dr. Scott Brisbin and his wife, Calli; NBO President Dr. Les Clements and his wife, Ruth; 1987 CAO President's Award winner, Dr. Irving Baker and his wife, Helen; 1987



CAO Council takes time out from the pre-banquet reception in the Royal Suite for a photo in all their finery. Seated L-R: Dr. Jean-Marie Rodrigue (Qué); Dr. Tom Adamack (BC); Dr. Scott Brisbin (President); Dr. Bruce Rosner (Past President). Standing L-R: Dr. Joe White (NB); Dr. David McKenna (PEI); Dr. Doug Côté (NF); Dr. Margaret Hansen des Groseilliers (ON); Dr. Greg Perkins (MB); Dr. Mike Duffey (NS); Dr. Jim Krueger (SK) and Dr. Grant Campbell (AL).

Lors de la réception précédant le banquet dans la Royal Suite, les membres du Conseil de l'ACO posent pour une photo, parés de leurs plus beaux atours. Assis de gauche à droite: le Dr Jean-Marie Rodrigue (QC); le Dr Tom Adamack (C.-B.); le Dr Scott Brisbin (président); le Dr Bruce Rosner (président sortant). Debout de gauche à droite: le Dr Joe White (N.-B.); le Dr David McKenna (Î.-P.-É.); le Dr Doug Côté (T.-N.); le Dr Margaret Hansen des Groseilliers (Ont.); le Dr Greg Perkins (Man.); le Dr Mike Duffey (N.-É.); le Dr Jim Krueger (Sask.) et le Dr Grant Campbell (Alb.).



Congress Local Arrangements Committee Chairperson Dr. Barbara Ifody, Special Committee Consultant (and francophone emcee throughout virtually the entire Congress) Dr. Raymond Corbin and his wife, Colette; CAO Executive Director Gérard Lambert and his wife, Monique; special guest Dr. John Tumblyn, President of the American Optometric Association and his wife, Billie and special guest Dr. G. Burt Holmes, President of the International Optometric and Optical League.

As with any banquet, the formalities and fun of necessity had to be preceded by a meal. The process of eating and drinking, however, was actually made much less painful this year through the provision of a superb menu by the Congress organizers, built around the entrée of a beautifully poached fillet of Atlantic salmon.

In our next issue will be found the highlights of the presentation of the CAO President's Award to Dr. Irving Baker, but another award, acknowledged as "long overdue" by President Dr. Scott Brisbin, was also presented on this occasion. A special plaque, in recognition for long and devoted service to *The Canadian Journal of Optometry* \* *la Revue Canadienne d'Optométrie* as its manager and Treasurer during the 1950's and 60's, was presented to Melvern M. Katzman of Toronto and accepted, in his absence, by Dr. Mitchell Samek.



CAO President Dr. Scott Brisbin (L) presents the 1987 CAO President's award to Dr. Irving Baker, Registrar of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.

*Le président de l'ACO, le Dr Scott Brisbin (G), présente le Prix 1987 du président de l'ACO au Dr Irving Baker, registraire du Collège des optométristes de l'Ontario.*

With formalities (which included a special acknowledgement to each of the Local Committee Chairpersons and support staff) concluded, delegates were offered a choice of two completely different types of entertainment. In the main ballroom, The Thomists, a 16 piece orchestra made up of local university music students, presented a wonderfully varied program of Big Band and Swing tunes that have become classics in only the short decades since they first crossed the airwaves. For a few golden hours, delegates waltzed, tangoed and fox-trotted across the polished dance floor to the ageless melodies of the likes of Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller and Duke Ellington.

Meanwhile, across the hall, contemporary technology pervaded and a wide range of modern recordings were played by a more than adequately amplified disk jockey. And a curious

phenomenon resulted — perhaps attracted by the novelty of live, unamplified music, a much younger audience than might have been expected spent the evening with the Thomists while a good many of those to whom "Dire Straits" means profound difficulty crossed the hall and got down to some serious rocking.



A happy host and hostess at the final event of the Congress. NBO President Dr. Les Clements (R) has just presented a special City of Saint John Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in Meeting Coordination to Merry-Tyme Mingle's Local Arrangements Committee Chairperson Dr. Barbara Ifody.

*Un hôte et une hôtesse des plus ravis, lors de la soirée de clôture du Congrès. Le président de l'AONB, le Dr Les Clements (D), vient de remettre à la présidente du Comité de l'organisation locale, le Dr Barbara Ifody, le prix spécial de la ville de Saint-Jean pour l'excellence de la coordination.*

The evening pressed far into the night and Dr. Brisbin's suite finally became the gathering point for the last of the diehards who, it seemed, just didn't want the "Merry-Tyme Mingle" to end.

But all good things...etc.

We can't say enough good things about the City of Saint John. Certainly the 1984 site inspections, in which CAO's Council committed the Association to the City, confirmed that the properties and space were adequate to our needs. But it was the people of this community, who went the extra mile to make you feel welcome, that took this Congress out of the realm of a business/social/exhibit focussed meeting. "Hospitality" is not a feature you can write into a hotel contract; "warmth" is not normally an expected part of the transaction by which a visitor acquires a piece of local art. But Saint John's hospitality and warmth was everywhere — from the man in Delancey's Brigade patiently explaining to a doubting young delegate that a black powder flintlock musket doesn't have a 9mm magazine; through the convention centre's staff "recital" before the banquet that elevated "Remove the salad fork from the LEFT" to a stanza in an efficient, organizational poem (witnessed, incidentally, by very few delegates. What they saw was simply the well-orchestrated result of this pre-banquet drill.); to the final hotel desk farewell from a checkout agent who seemed genuinely saddened to see "all you optometrists" leaving.

Dr. Ifody and her committee's efforts have left many a Canadian optometrist wondering why it took until Biennial number 20 to get to New Brunswick.

Undoubtedly, our next visit will be well before Biennial number 40!