

# WREB

## A National Dental/Dental Hygiene Testing Agency

www.wreb.org

Spring 2006

## California Joins WREB



On April 5, 2006 the Dental Board of California became a member of WREB – a National Dental and Dental Hygiene Testing Agency. WREB provides clinical exams for use by state boards to determine eligibility for licensure for dentists and dental hygienists. California becomes the 12th member state.

Legislation which became effective January 1, 2005 added WREB as an option for meeting the requirements for licensure in California. “We view WREB as an important added pathway to licensure in California. By becoming a member we will have the opportunity to help shape the examination to ensure that it protects California’s consumers and serves those seeking licensure in the state,” said Robert Hedrick, Executive Officer of the Dental Board of California.

In 2006 WREB is administering 30 dental licensure exams at 24 dental schools (accepted for licensure in over 30 states). The schools range from coast to coast and include all five of the California dental schools. This allows easy accessibility to anyone wishing to take the examination. Dr. Paul Sims, President of WREB commented, “One of the many benefits of California joining WREB is that there are many candidates around the country who are planning to return to California to practice dentistry. In the past they have had to bring their equipment and patients to the California exam sites at great expense. Many of these candidates will now be able to take a WREB examination in their own school or one in a neighboring state without the inconvenience and added expense of returning to California for the exam.”

WREB welcomes California to membership and looks forward to adding the knowledge and experience of the California members to that of the other valued member states. WREB will continue to provide an excellent, reliable examination for determining initial licensure and continue to be a leader in clinical testing in dentistry.

California’s decision addresses only the dental examination. The legislation did not address the dental hygiene exam.

## CSW and a Revolutionary Development in Dental Testing

by Shane Clays, CSW Coordinator

It is difficult to deny. Technology today is moving forward at such a rapid pace we often find it is difficult to keep up. If you take a step back and look at how we live now compared to 20 years ago, you would see technological progress in virtually all areas of our lives. Take listening to music for example. Most generations reading this article can remember owning a record player, an 8-track tape player, a cassette tape player, then taking the leap to CD and over the last few years, we have moved into the digital age of music. We can now download our favorite tunes and store thousands of them on a device that is smaller than a checkbook. An entire room full of records can now be “replaced” by a small computer. Technology seems to have an effect on everything. Communications, transportation, home entertainment... the list goes on and on.

Technology has even effected the dental profession. Many of us have seen technological advances in x-ray technology, and in the materials and equipment we use. Now, some of the most advanced computer graph-



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## Will One Uniform National Exam Cure All Ills?

It is beyond question that we live in a highly mobile society. In any group of dentists or hygienists talking shop, it doesn’t take too long before the issue of mobility comes up. A major aggravation surrounding the mobility issue is the portability of competency requirements; i.e., board results, when moving from one state to the next.

In the past few years, this issue has intensified as more states decide to employ a regional board to conduct their exams, the region-

al boards are in a state of realignment, and a new attempt to produce a national clinical exam has begun which seeks to replace all regional and individual state exams.

On the surface, one could say that, of course, one exam would completely solve the dilemma of portability of results. However, what having only one exam does not accomplish far outweighs a desire for a simple, single answer to portability.

Yes, it would create a

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ics technology available is being utilized for a "first of its kind" dental exam. At the beginning of the year, CSW Computer Simulations LLC released a computerized 3-D dental exam that allows complete and full user interaction. What does this mean? One section of the test, the Prosthodontics section, uses 3-D images of dental models. Each model correlates with an individual question and each model can be fully manipulated by the user, just like a hand held model. Literally, the user can view the computerized model from all angles; they can open and close the model, look inside, from above, behind and under the model. With just a few clicks of a mouse, the model can be viewed from any angle the user wishes. The other section is the Periodontal section. This section uses actual x-rays that have been scanned in matched to correlate with questions.

Creating such a test has not been easy. It has taken thousands of man-hours to create and implement this test. It all started in August 2001 when CRDTS, SRTA and WREB met to discuss the possibility of creating a computer simulation exam. The meeting resulted in an agreement to move forward with this monumental project. The first portion of the test to be attacked was the Prosthodontic section. Test specifications, multiple choice questions and prosth models, from previous exams were used. Additionally, three bench exams' statistical data and the Ebel method of standard setting were used, and the best models and questions were picked to become computerized models.

Once the questions to be used were identified, the task began of finding a company that could help make this vision a reality. A Google search resulted in a 16-page list of companies to choose from. After some preliminary research we identified a company based in Australia named Zoomorphix that had all of the experience with this technology that we needed.

Working in collaboration with the Joint Prosthodontics committee Zoomorphix immediately began work on the Prosth exam. The aim was to produce the most realistic looking models and at the same time allow a Candidate full interaction with the model. They took the physical Prosth models and laser scanned them at high resolution. After that, months were spent refining 47 models to be as

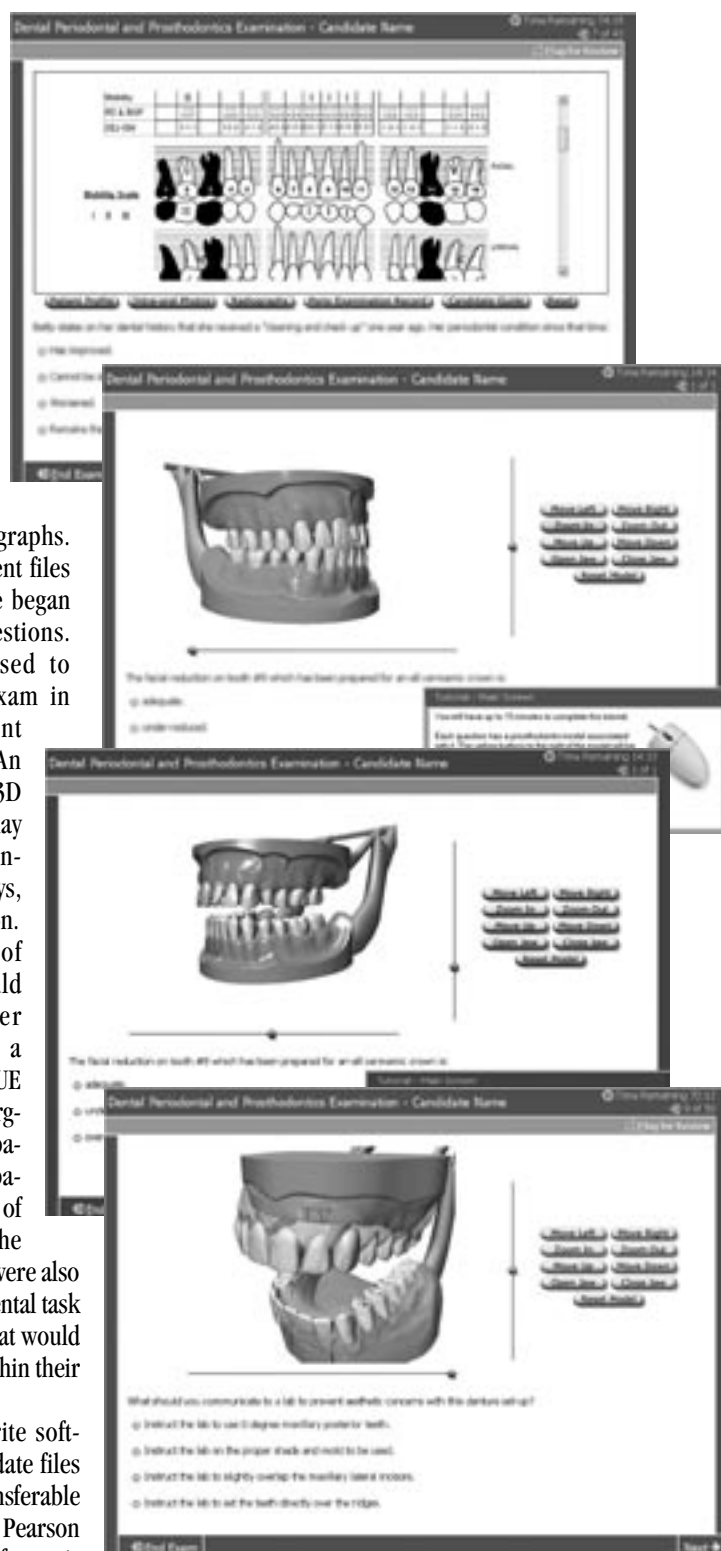
close as possible to the real-thing with focus on keeping models fully interactive so the candidate could manipulate the computer model as if it were the real thing.

Once the Prosth exam was complete, it was time to begin the work on the Periodontal section of the test. Starting with AAP standards and perio cases from schools, the committee created test specifications and patient files with medical and dental history, charting, intra oral photos and radiographs. After the test specs and patient files were created, the committee began the task of writing test questions. Zoomorphix was again used to develop the Periodontal exam in collaboration with the Joint Periodontal committee. An exclusive trademarked Glass3D technology was used to display an interface that allows candidates to view photos, x-rays, charts and medical information.

Next came the task of finding a company that could administer the test. After considerable research a company named Pearson VUE was chosen. Pearson is the largest education publishing company and the largest testing company in the world. They use state of the art security and offered the least cost to candidates. They were also willing to take on the monumental task of developing new software that would allow the CSW exam to run within their framework.

The last step was to write software that would allow candidate files and test results to be fully transferable between all three agencies and Pearson VUE. This complex piece of software is a fundamental tool in the day-to-day operations of CSW. It ensures all candidates information is sent to Pearson VUE so that candidates can register for tests and it ensures all test results are sent back to CSW and on to the proper agencies.

Finally, after 3 years of work the test was implemented and we are proud to



say as of 2006 the CSW Computerized Exam is now in place and being used throughout the entire country. If you have any questions about the test, please give Shane Clays a call at 602-443-4468 or shoot him an email at cswwcontact@yahoo.com. He would be happy to answer your questions.

## WREB's Believe it or Not... *Lea Erickson, DDS (Utah) Glass sculptor extraordinaire!*



***Beadmaking is like dentistry...***



It began innocently enough. Lea Erickson's daughter brought some polymer clay to her house and taught her to make beads with it. Lea soon graduated from baking polymer beads in the oven to making glass beads in a hot flame. Thus began her love affair with hot glass.

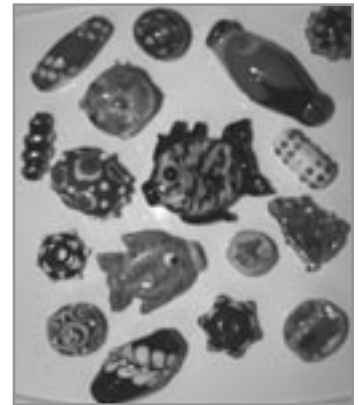
She has taken glass bead-making courses in Arizona, Arkansas, and California. The beads are made from rods of colored glass in a flame of oxygen and either propane or natural gas. The first stage is learning to make something that actually looks like a bead. Then the beads become adorned on the outside with additional colors. After mastering the process of decorating the outside, creating designs that are encased inside the beads are attempted. As skill develops, the beads get larger and increasingly complex, eventually requiring a larger torch. Larger beads must be very slowly cooled to prevent breakage,

necessitating a kiln to control the temperature and rate of change.

Once the kiln was available, Lea began experimenting with fused glass—glass that is cut, layered and fired into ornaments and functional pieces. Many of her fused pieces have been used for charities. She earned more than a \$1000 to donate to her church selling fused Luther Roses and made more than 200 glass tiles for a window at the church—each tile with a raised Christian symbol. She recently remodeled her house and made custom tiles for the backsplashes in the kitchen and family room and sconces for the patio doors. Her most recent new technique is glass casting. And, of course, she now wants a bigger kiln.

Lea's passion however continues to be for making beads and fashioning them into interesting pieces of jewelry. Her jewelry has been sold in galleries in Salt Lake City and New York City, and she

is an active member of the Glass Art Guild of Utah. She describes bead making and stringing as "just doing dentistry without a patient attached." Her love affair with hot glass has not cooled and is even being shared by her husband who took the glass casting class with her and is eager to begin marketing glass tiles for architectural purposes. She just wants more time to sit at the torch and make beads.



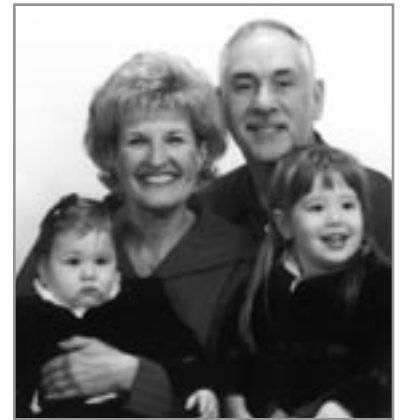
## Beyond WREB... *by Tammy Slater, Oregon*

Tammy Slater became involved with WREB in 1986 when she was in dental assisting school. Karen Waide, the original auxiliary coordinator, and someone Tammy considers both a mentor and role model, hired her (one of her students) to work the Portland dental exam. After working as an auxiliary and Endo proctor for seven years, Linda Paul finally, as Tammy puts it, "detached me from her ankles" and made her the second auxiliary coordinator. That was 15 years ago! Since WREB has grown, Tammy has spent the last three years mainly as a site coordinator. This year, she will also be the site coordinator for three hygiene exams. Last year, she retired from the Endo practice where she had been office manager and chairside assistant for 17 years, to mainly work for WREB. This has fulfilled the career desire of her heart, Tammy says.

Her education has progressed from CDA to EFDA to RN. All her nursing has centered around the dental field. When asked what she does, she says proudly that she represents the #1 Dental testing agency in the United States. We are not only doctors, dental assistants, hygienists and staff but have become friends and family. "Our success comes from our candidates' successes and the great people that make up WREB."

Tammy has been married for 34 years to Don and they have two sons. Joel is 30 and has been married to wife Amy for five years. They are parents to the Slaters' granddaughters (see photo), Sydney

who is 3 ("going on 13") and Brooklyn, who is 14 months. Joel and Amy serve as the children's pastors at the church the Slaters attend. Other son Jay is 27 and recently engaged to Jessica. They will be married this Fall. Jay is applying to dental school and Jessica is a medical transcriptionist for five pathologists.



When not doing yeoman's service for WREB, church or family, Tammy likes to sew, do crafts, read, cheer on the Ducks, golf and SHOP! The claim is that she knows directions to all the malls at WREB exam sites. A good person to know, apparently!

Tammy sums herself up by including her WREB accomplishments, her personal spiritual convictions, and the love and support of her family and friends as defining aspects of who she is.

WREB is grateful for Tammy's ongoing service and is about to phone her for some directions to a mall...

Thanks, Tammy.

# WREB Continues to Grow

In our last newsletter, we showed you pictures of the expansion of the building, now see how our staff is expanding!

We are very pleased to welcome two new employees to the WREB staff. From left to right, Kayse Maryott is our new Dental Department Manager and Shane Clays is the CSW Administrator.

Kayse hails from Kansas City, Missouri and her work history includes a 20-year active duty military career in both the Army and the Coast Guard. Kayse has worked for a non-profit before: The International Association of Administrative Professionals. She has wanted to work at the management level in a non-profit because she likes being of service to people.

In her downtime, Kayse can be found walking her dogs or riding her horse, or (along with her significant other) pursuing the adoption of a foster child. Scuba-diving and making stained glass round out her leisure activities. Welcome, Kayse!

Shane comes to us from a distinguished career as a non-profit management representative and has worked most recently as Executive Director for the Maricopa County Bar Foundation. Prior

to that, he worked with the Maricopa County Bar Association Young Lawyers Divisional Director. When asked if he was a “lawyer in disguise” he quipped, “No, but I play one on television.” Shane was born in California, raised in Oregon and lived in Seattle prior to moving to Arizona.

When you talk with him, you will think he’s from the East Coast. Since he’s a huge Sopranos fan, perhaps that explains it. Shane is also a dog lover and likes to swim with his Labrador Retriever and his “mix” dog.

WREB is very fortunate to have found both of these eager professionals. They are already enhancing the operations here. Welcome!



## Calendar Update

D-ERC .....	July 19.....	Keystone, Colorado
DH-ERC.....	July 19.....	Keystone, Colorado
Board of Directors .....	July 20.....	Keystone, Colorado
Western Conference .....	July 21-22 .....	Keystone, Colorado
AADE Annual Meeting .....	October 14-15.....	Las Vegas, Nevada
Board of Directors .....	January 6, 2007.....	Phoenix, Arizona

# Liaison Committee Conducts First Meeting

*by Lorin Peterson, DDS, Co-Chair*

The WREB Liaison Committee held its inaugural meeting on February 25th in Phoenix, Arizona. The committee was formed as a venue for the various components of the dental profession to provide formal input to the dental and dental hygiene examination process. Those attending the meeting were Dr. Lorin Peterson (co-chair), Barbara Dixon, RDH (co-chair), Dr. Michael Biermann (ADA), Dr. Ken Kalkwarf (ADEA), Trisha Nunn, RDH (ADEA), Mr. Blake Robison (ASDA), Mr. Dan Jones (AADA), Nance Wabshaw (WREB staff) and Ann Hayward (WREB staff). Lynne Tatum-Little, RDH (ADHA) was unable to attend.

The first half of the meeting involved a review of the current WREB dental and dental hygiene exams. Committee members were given a brief demonstration of the computerized CSW exams for prosthetics and periodontal diagnosis. Barbara Dixon stated that WREB’s dental hygiene committee is also pursuing computer simulation testing in order to more broadly evaluate the scope of dental hygiene care. Field testing is projected for 2007.

The second half of the meeting involved input from all committee members regarding the current examination process. Dr. Kalkwarf stated that ADEA feels all current exams have an over-emphasis on evaluation of technical skills and not enough evaluation of diagnostic and critical thinking skills. Dr. Kalkwarf and Mr. Robison expressed concerns with the manner in which patients

are used in current exams. Ms. Nunn concurred and added that successful dental hygiene therapy is dependent on a host of biological factors in addition to calculus removal. She advocated that dental hygiene treatment outcomes be measured longer-term.

WREB’s Exam Development Committee listed some exam innovations to be considered. When these innovations were discussed at the committee level within WREB, many educator members were opposed to these based on time considerations. The Liaison Committee discussed the concept of a pilot project to allow evaluation of exam innovations that all parties could support.

Mr. Jones stated that the state administrators are not in favor of a non-patient based exam. Dr. Biermann discussed the ADA’s support for candidate mobility.

Dr. Kalkwarf remarked that as a health care profession, it is imperative that dentistry develop a means of assuring continued competency.

The Liaison Committee did not develop definitive solutions for all the various topics discussed; but the dialogue was very open and candid and all the committee members were grateful for the opportunity to voice their opinions. The very existence of this committee is indicative of WREB’s commitment to work with the dental profession as a whole.

## Uniform Nation Exam *continued from page 1*

situation where there is 100% portability of credentials to practice. It would also allow students and candidates to focus only on the procedures tested in one exam.

However, without any competition, there is no incentive to keep costs down, no incentive for innovation or change, and the real possibility that the entire profession will be governed by one licensure examination, with little or no oversight.

Imagine as well the incredible logistical and quality-control challenges of one organization administering the exam all across the country. Since this is a clinical exam, not a written exam, the administration (and facilities involved) will vary from site to site unless standards are set and enforced. Since some of the desired standards may be unenforced at some locations, this will be a formidable, probably impossible task.

The fact is that it is not possible to administer a “common content” exam by various testing agencies in anything close to a uniform manner because methods of administration vary from agency to agency, and state to state. This will most definitely affect outcomes for candidates. The challenges facing a single agency attempting this is vast. When you multiply that by however many agencies will attempt

to duplicate each other, it becomes clear that this is highly unlikely to be truly “uniform”.

Having highlighted a few of the anticipated challenges of one uniform national exam, the contrasting scenario with mutual recognition of all acceptable exams begins to shed light on a more sensible direction.

Once again, if portability is the issue, the existing examinations can become equivalent which would again allow 100% portability. The free-market approach also ensures that costs will be competitive (read: lower). The ability to be innovative in testing content and methodology becomes easier as you are working with a less cumbersome organizational structure. This also allows for a more adaptable governing structure, closer to the state boards and consumers. Schools and states would have a choice of examinations. Different methodologies may appeal to different constituencies. Smaller agencies allow for uniformity within the agency and can better calibrate a smaller number of examiners as well as maintain consistency within the agency staff.

In our view, the bottom line is this: Historically, state boards and testing agencies have failed to agree on the “ideal” makeup of a clinical examination. Psychometricians have agreed that test administration

and examiner calibration are at least as important in test validity and reliability as content. Since no clinical examination can test all of the procedures that a dentist will do, the tests that are given should be well designed and administered to best insure competency at the most common tasks dentists perform.

Mutual recognition is an immediate possibility that only requires state boards to be open-minded and recognize that insuring competency is much more involved than just agreeing on which procedures to test. It involves reliability, validity, fidelity, fairness, and consistency, to name only the most important features.

If there were immediate mutual recognition of examinations, it would allow all “valid” testing agencies to continue. This would provide valuable benefits to all, including

- healthy competition, resulting in improved testing and decreased exam fees
- a continued emphasis on quality assurance and ongoing innovation.

Who wins? Everyone. Candidates, state boards, and testing agencies not only win but can rest easier knowing that the tests they have available reside in a world of accountability, not monopoly.



## Meeting With Dental Educators

WREB is holding a forum with dental educators in conjunction with the Western Conference of Dental Examiners and Dental School Deans. The forum is scheduled for the afternoon of July 21 in Keystone, Colorado. This is an opportunity to share ideas and concerns of interest to both educators and examiners. The agenda includes discussion of various exam formats and the

advantages and disadvantages of each. WREB has found these forums to be positive experiences and appreciates the input from all educators. Please contact the WREB office at 602/944-3315 for additional information or to register for the meeting. There is no cost to attend. For information on the Western Conference, please contact John Barch at (210) 567-3264.



## Linda Sward, Idaho State University School Coordinator

**I have been a hygiene school coordinator since:** 2002.

**Favorite aspect of being a site coordinator:**

I really enjoy making new friendships with all the people you meet during each exam.

**Most memorable event at a WREB exam:**

During the WREB exam last year, our friend and colleague Gretchen Hess (a WREB examiner) was in chemo and radiation therapy. She was feeling well enough at the time to have lunch with all the examiners, most of whom she had not seen during the year because of her illness. It was a joy to see smiles on everyone's faces, including hers.

**What I do for fun:**

My hobbies include yoga, gardening, good books, walking, and trying new recipes.

**My favorite slogan:**

Prior preparation prevents poor performance.

**My advice to students:**

Be prepared, read all the WREB information sent to you, and follow instructions completely.



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