



from the office of

GATOR DENTAL ASSOCIATES, PA

# Gator Tales NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 2 Fall 2007

GATOR DENTAL ASSOCIATES, PA ■ 352/481-2741  
www.gatordental.com ■ E-mail: smile@gatordental.com

## THANKING YOU, OUR PATIENTS, FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY!

Thanksgiving is approaching and our office has much for which to be thankful. Below is a synopsis of our office history that I think will interest you. This newsletter will focus on the changes I have seen in the dental field and in the dental health of my patients over the past 25 years. Thank you goes to my employees for their dedicated service and to you, the patients, for allowing us the pleasure of improving your dental health and keeping your smile beautiful.

Yours in appreciation and in dedication to your oral health,



Dr. Jay Garlitz

## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN HAWTHORNE

**HOW IT BEGAN:** I bought my dental practice in December **1981** from the widow of Dr. James Mathews and began seeing patients in August of **1982**. My wife, Randi, had become familiar with Hawthorne while serving as a substitute teacher at Shell Elementary. We soon decided to move to Hawthorne to raise our family. Our first building was in The Dentistry Building on Myrtle Ave., where the Hawthorne Medical Center is located today. My hygienist, Sandie, was with me, not only from the start of my business, but also while I was in Dental School.

**THE MID-80s:** Our practice thrived, and in **1986** we were ready to add a part-time hygienist. Judy joined the practice and became a full-time hygienist a few years later. That year, I served as President of the Hawthorne Area Chamber of Commerce. In **1987**, LouAnn joined our team as a dental assistant, and I began teaching part-time at the UF College of Dentistry. That same year, we began using computers in preparation of our upcoming building project.

**WELCOMING NEW TECHNOLOGY:** In **1988** we moved into our current location and started our trend toward being at the forefront of dental technology. The business office and patient financial records were computerized. In **1991** Suzanne joined the business office team and, under her guidance, computer appointment scheduling began. By **1995** we had become Gator Dental Associates, PA, and had hired our first dental associate. In **1996** Debi joined the business office team.

In **1999** dental computers were introduced to our treatment areas. New technologies, such as digital x-rays, were implemented in **2001** and the office was converted over the next three years to a film-free and almost paper-free office. Paper charts were converted and patient charts became electronic charts.



**BRAND NEW CENTURY:** The year **2001** was a special one for me personally. I had been serving in various positions in organized dentistry during the 1990s, lecturing, writing online courses, and doing a lot of Internet publishing for dental organizations. I was recognized that year as the Florida Dental Association Dentist of the Year. In **2002** I was honored as UF Dental Alumnus of the Year. I served the American Dental Association as Chair of Electronic Communication and Vice-Chair of the Council of Communications.

**KEEPS GETTING BETTER:** In **2005** we were fortunate to add our current dental associate, Dr. Kathryn Hackenberg. Her dental assistant, Becca, joined our office at that time and BJ joined the business office team. Our murals were painted, and the office building

was renewed with the pleasant persona that matched that of our staff. Dental assistant, Melissa, graduated SFCC and joined our staff in **2006** after having trained with us while attending school at Hawthorne High School.

**WHAT HAS CHANGED IN 25 YEARS?** The manner in which our office manages your health has changed immensely. Our dental office is now patient-centered, with less time spent on paper, making much more doctor-patient time available. Our dental charts are entirely electronic and integrated with access to all your records and data (few offices are). Dentistry of 1982 now seems so inadequate... an age of treating emergencies and patching problems after they occurred. I now have a great mental picture of you and your dental needs, along with the feeling that I am really managing your health in a very proactive and preventive way. Digital radiography has brought our patients the advantages of much less radiation, and a large, on-screen image allows us to show you, our patient, our findings as we explain them.

The types of dental problems we see also have changed immensely. We see fewer childhood cavities and different issues in adults than in the past. In 1982 many adults had dentures or were headed toward them. Now dentures are rare (1 in 9 adults), and people are living longer and keeping their teeth. We are seeing more dental decay in older adults, and in the rest of this newsletter, I will describe why and what you can do about it.

*(more on other side)*

# ORAL HEALTH FOR ADULTS, COMING IN FOR CLEANINGS AND EXAMS...IS IT HYPE OR A REAL NEED?

Dental cleanings are definitely not hype and are your best dental insurance against costly and painful care. Dental issues can arise rapidly. We live in a fast-paced world—one of increasing stress and households of multiple wage earners. We have more material possessions, but time is of a premium and we do not always focus on our health the way we should. By our 30s, it seems our weight is increasing; eating habits are changing and becoming based more on fast-food or packaged foods. Blood pressure is getting higher. And more of us are getting diabetes. Some of us need drugs to deal with anxiety and depression. All these issues, and more, contribute to an increased prevalence of adult dental problems. We used to think of childhood as the cavity-prone years, but it is now just as important for adults to come in for regular preventive dental care (cleanings) and exams.

## WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT ADULT RECALL VISITS FROM THOSE FOR KIDS?

The adult years are when gum disease starts to be a concern. We see this issue arising in many patients as young as their twenties and getting more prevalent with each decade. Smokers have more dental problems early on with the chemicals and heat making for drier mouths with more gum disease and decay. Anyone on medications that make your mouth have less saliva (more dry) (blood pressure medication, for example) is at a higher risk for decay. Allergies, asthma, sleep apnea, and anything that leads to “mouth-breathing” also dries the mouth out. It takes an hour to have enough time to tell you the issues we see for adults, and all this—including oral cancer screening—gets evaluated every time you see the hygienist and dentist. We do not have a standard or preset time for patients to come back

for cleaning or x-rays. We evaluate your risk factors and set up a recall schedule that is personalized to match your needs.

## WHAT ABOUT SENIORS?

Dental problems can be amplified with age and decay can spread rapidly. Unlike in 1982, seniors have their teeth longer, and with the longer lives comes medical conditions and medications. Special attention is given to these considerations, and coming in for visits as prescribed (3 month, 4 month, etc.) are paramount to your health. The high risk is fast spreading decay along the roots that become exposed as we age. Once started, root decay can cause tooth pain and teeth that are difficult and expensive to fix.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU. IF YOU ARE OVERDUE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!**

**2007 IS ALMOST OVER!** Don't forget to come in for the dental work that you need so you can start 2008 on a healthy note. If you have insurance benefits, most plans have yearly limits so benefits not used this year are lost forever...and if they are needed, that is more money that will have to come out of your pocket in future years. Call the office ASAP and come in.



JAY H. GARLITZ, DMD and ASSOCIATES  
6605 SE 221st St. ■ Hawthorne, FL 32640-0010

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## TEAM NEWS BITES

Melissa has rejoined our staff as a full-time dental assistant now that daughter, **Abby**, is old enough to be without her during the day.

Suzanne's son, **Daniel**, is now Lieutenant Dan, serving in the US Navy. Son, **Scott**, is starting nursing school at SFCC and daughter, **Sarah**, is finishing her degree at UF in Health Promotions.

Sandie's son, **Rob**, continues to work on his degree at UF.

LouAnn's son, **Troy**, was recognized as “Officer of the Quarter” at the Palatka Police Department.

BJ's daughter, **Rena**, is finishing her senior year in the IB program at Eastside High School. She plans to attend UF and be another great GATOR! BJ's son, **Jason**, begins this year in the IB program at Eastside, and youngest son, **Travis**, begins at Hawthorne Middle School.

Judy's son, **Troy**, has transferred back to UF from UCF, and son, **Tyler**, begins working on his degree at SFCC.

Dr. and Mrs. Garlitz's son, **Dustin**, has just started a PhD program in Philosophy at USF in Tampa. His area of interest is the Philosophy of Music. He plans on becoming a college professor.

Dr. and Mrs. Garlitz's daughter, **Janine**, has officially joined the working world. She earned her JD Summa Cum Laude at age 23 from Nova Southeastern in Ft. Lauderdale. She has accepted a position of Corporate Attorney in the firm Ruden-McClosky, located in downtown Ft. Lauderdale.

Our newsletter designer, Dr. and Mrs. Garlitz's cousin **Risa**, was just married to Mr. Gordon Grant, formerly of San Francisco. They reside in Jacksonville.

The Hawthorne Lions wants you as a member. See [www.hawthornelions.org](http://www.hawthornelions.org), or talk to Dr. Garlitz or BJ about joining.