

Light My Fire – D&D Orientation (1998 Throwback)

Original script by Dottie Ancona; summary by Judi Adams

October 2020: Our October meeting has historically been our Desk and Derrick Orientation Month. In years past, it has also been a costume contest since it coincided with Halloween. The brother of member Elaine Lesnak videotaped the October 1998 Halloween Costume Contest and D&D Orientation meeting, and it was later converted to DVD. This year we were unable to meet in person since March but were determined to meet virtually in October; however, Mother Nature was not on our side. Hurricane Zeta came through the afternoon of the scheduled meeting and the entire Westbank lost power – some of us for 20-24 hours; others for 6-7 days. Needless to say, the meeting didn't happen in October. But we were determined to see this video and hold a meeting.

November 2020: On November 18th, we met virtually via Zoom with no interference from hurricanes (just some not so minor technical/operator errors) and were able to have our Region Director Susan Miller install our 2021 Officers and Board of Directors and were able to watch the original 1998 D&D Orientation video – Light My Fire, scripted by member Dottie Ancona and enacted by members of the Board of Directors, the club, and their family and friends. . Here is a summary of the video.

October 1998: Kim Aucoin (no longer a member) introduced guest speaker Dottie Ancona, retired Strategic Petroleum Reserve employee. Next, Zelda Gillan explained that everyone has a Bic lighter and they should “flick their Bic” whenever they hear “fire” during the presentation. And so began...“LIGHT MY FIRE”

Dottie explained that the conditions necessary for fire are 1) a combustible source, such as a need for knowledge; 2) a temperature high enough to create combustion; and 3) presence of enough oxygen to enable the rapid combustion to start and continue, such as interested members. Fire can be produced by friction; fire can be produced by percussion such as striking flint; fire can be made by a lens, a curved reflection to condense the rays of the sun on combustible materials. Fire developed in four stages. First, it came naturally as volcanic eruptions or lightning striking trees during a storm. Next people took this natural source and developed it into warmth, light, and something to be used as protection from predators. People eventually learned to make fire based upon their needs for it. They controlled it for smelting ore, making pottery, and other technological or comfortable lifestyle ways. The control of fire influenced the ending of a nomadic existence and influenced the existence of the social and political institution.

The program began with the first nomads: caveman and cavewoman. In the skit, we see Ugg drag Jugg into the room dressed in their loincloths and wielding long bones of dead animals, to the delight of the audience. As the cavepeople were cold, they began rubbing things together to see what developed; after rubbing sticks together they created sparks, then fire, then HEAT!

Many millennia later, Ugg and Jugg's far, far, far-removed cousin Inez Awty Schaeffer was frustrated with her job with Humble Oil in New Orleans and

wanted to meet other women who worked in the industry. She wanted to have a party to meet others with similar jobs – and they partied and the flames began to rise – you could even say there was an explosion. The ladies, all secretaries and administrative assistants to oil company executives, decided to form a club and meet every month. They thought maybe they could even give the group a catchy name.

Dottie then took us back to 1827 to meet Ugg's far-removed cousin Lugg, still living in a cave. Civilization had not yet made it to his corner of the world. But, he had somehow discovered the match, which makes fire through friction from striking the chemical-covered tip onto a rough surface. FIRE – When you're hot, you're hot!



We returned to 1951, where the talk-of-the-town in New Orleans was igniting more heat about this group of women who were meeting once a month to find out what each other did at their jobs. "JR Ewing" entered the scene to greet Inez as the fire for energy industry knowledge was burning out of control in New Orleans. The fire was spreading to Los Angeles, California; Houston, Texas; and Jackson, Mississippi. (Our friendly local firefighter doused the flames throughout the room amidst laughter.) The organization became known as the Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs of North America (now the Association of Desk and Derrick Clubs – ADDC).

In 1975, there was a burning desire of women who lived on the Westbank to not have to cross the Mississippi River Bridge every month. Members of the New Orleans Club, Vonette Edwards, JoAnn Brown, Dean Mehle, and Dottie Moore, sent out letters of interest in early March 1976 and held two planning meetings. By March 31st, an interest meeting was held at the local Travel-Lodge. Just a few weeks later, on April 21st, the spark that was flickering on the Westbank landed on Belton's Restaurant where it ignited more than 80 women at the very first meeting of what would soon become the Desk and Derrick Club of the Westbank. The kindling of education and knowledge was starting to burn on the Westbank and burn it did. Initial officers of the Westbank Club were Vonnette Edwards, President; Dottie Moore, First Vice-President; Dean Mehle, Second Vice-President; JoAnn Brown, Recording Secretary; Audrey Casso, Corresponding Secretary; Pam Whisenant, Treasurer; and Jonel Dewhurst, Parliamentarian. The Westbank Club received its charter on June 23rd, 1976 and its regularly scheduled monthly meetings were set.

Two days after the club's first meeting, the Region III Meeting was held in Lafayette, LA with a theme of Reflections, Rebirth, and Resolution, under Region Director Elaine LeBlanc. And yes, the Westbank Club was represented at that meeting. The Spirit of St. Louis themed 1976 ADDC Convention was held in St. Louis, MO with ADDC President Lilly E. Wright presiding.

Dottie acknowledged three still very active members of the Westbank club – Vonnette Edwards, Dean Mehle, and JoAnn Brown; Dottie Moore is no longer active but recognized her as an honorary member. Dottie also pointed out that

the club continued to spark second generation hotspots with children, spouses, siblings, and friends of our members.

The Westbank Club has always been a leader, never a follower. Lightning struck as the club began going on industry sponsored field trips and publishing a club bulletin. It was unnamed at first, but in 1977 Edna Ritchey won a contest, and the name Westbank Oil Patch (the name still in use in 2020) was chosen. Josie Territo was the first bulletin editor and served on the committee for many years.

Lightning struck the Westbank Club again in 1985 when Dottie Moore served as Region III Director. She was followed in 1991 by Vera Ledet, in 1993 by Alice Gros, and in 1976 by Theresa Adams.

In 1977, the club won its first region Awards of Merit – a second place for program and bulletin and a third place for D&D orientation. In 1978, we won first place Awards of Merit for a field trip to the Texaco Lafitte Field and for best D&D orientation. It was 1980 when we won our first AIMEE for a D&D orientation program. In those early years, we had membership numbers around 180 and 21 committees. Many of the original 21 committees have changed or been eliminated; even the history committee is now history. Dottie pointed out many of the other changes we've experienced over the years, such as the first Boss' Night was attended only by members and their boss. Dean Mehle was Vonette's boss, so during the first Member/Boss dance, they danced – and they danced at the meeting that night too.

The 1979 ADDC Convention was the first one to be held in Canada. And this was the first trip to Edmonton, Alberta for many of our members. In 1999, history will repeat itself when we go back to Edmonton. In 1980, Convention was held in New Orleans and we had Governor Edwin Edwards judging "best oilfield" costume contests.

Dottie told us that, as high winds flew, sparks spread out across the United States and Canada; there were seven other region infernos burning. Sparks were still flying, lightning was still striking, and at one time 127 individual club fires were stoked. Today, almost 50 years later, Desk and Derrick still burned, a bit more in control, but constantly fed by renewed oxygen aka members desiring knowledge. As we approach the millennium, many embers extend from the Westbank Club, which will soon start an inferno in the year 2000. This is when we enter the 21st century and we'll host our second Region III meeting. We have some red hot coals and we are ready to cook.

New members have gotten very involved and are extremely enthusiastic. They are writing blazing bulletin articles. They are combustible about meetings and conventions. They are volunteering for committees. They are running for offices. Our brightest, hottest fire so far is Theresa Adams, smoldering in the wings, waiting for the year 2000 when she will be ADDC President. This year, keeping our club's flames burning is our own white hot angel, club president Gabriella Hunter.

In closing Dottie told us that the Westbank Club inferno continued to rage out of control and our energy continues to engulf everything we contact. Membership is up; activity is up; enthusiasm is up. Our fire has been lit and it roars across the Westbank; we want to take you with us. BURN BABY BURN.!

I was there that night and remember how much fun it was – how everyone enjoyed the mixture of fun and education. Members from the Houma, Morgan City, and New Orleans clubs attended. We handed information packets out on the club's history and the history of ADDC and prospective members and guests were given brochures and membership forms. We never missed an opportunity to recruit new members.

Despite the challenges we met in 2020, there was still a bright spot in November. Using a combination of technologies – video camera from the 1990s, film to DVD transfer in the early 2000s, USB stick transfer to new all-in-one desktop PC with no DVD drive, high-tech video editing to improve audio, and Zoom meeting technology in 2020 – we were able to view the video. The video will be posted on our club website to share with our club members and the entire ADDC.