

# President's Column

## DENTISTRY IS WHAT I AM



Dr. Louis Dubé

I was recently asked to present a lecture on practice management to third-year dental students at Laval University. The request came at the last minute and such short notice tends to raise one's blood pressure a bit. But my involvement in "dental politics" for the last 15 years has helped me learn to react promptly to unexpected situations. You can bet that the next year will have its share of them.

CDA is at a turning point. Now that the new governance structure has been approved, we have before us the task of reviewing the entire committee set-up. To be more efficient and responsible to our members' needs, we must re-think completely the way we do business. The next steps for CDA will be to make sure that the way we

deal with issues is in the best interest of our members and the public. This will require the involvement of all stakeholders in our profession.

When I was nominated to represent Quebec to the CDA executive, I had very limited knowledge of organized dentistry politics, anglo-phone culture and the English language. Talk about a crash course! I am grateful for the understanding and support I received from the many CDA stalwarts I have had the pleasure to work with.

I feel very fortunate to be able to fulfill a dream that took shape when I was in the 8th grade. Of course, my dream was not to become CDA president, but a dentist. One day, as a youngster, while my dentist was filling a cavity (I ate a lot of sugar in those days), I asked him if he liked his job. He said he loved "being" a dentist. Right then, I told him that I would someday become a dentist and work with him. A few years later, with a lot of effort, I graduated in dentistry and almost did set up practice with him in Montreal. Instead, I ended up practising in Sherbrooke and never looked back. The key word here is "being" a dentist. My mentor didn't say he liked his job. He said he liked *being* a dentist. This is how I feel today. Dentistry is "what I am, not what I do." A small distinction in semantics, but this makes a huge difference.

I can't remember the last time I heard the alarm clock ring. Every morning, I'm up early, and I really look forward to starting my day and seeing my patients. What a great sense of accomplishment when I am able to treat a small child with a mouthful of cavities and after the appointment the kid runs back proudly to Mom or Dad in the waiting room with a "crooked" smile induced by the anesthetic. Our patients put their trust in

us. We must respect this, and never take it for granted. Dentistry to me is all about caring for our patients. The money we get for performing our treatment is one of the rewards of our profession, but not our ultimate goal.

I am about to embark on one of the busiest years of my life. I'm amazed sometimes at the level of work one can accomplish under pressure, provided that one enjoys oneself. Ten years ago, I was known as the "long-haired guy from Quebec" and now, before I know it, I'll be "on my way out." I look forward to the coming year. I would like to thank my predecessor, Dr. Tom Breneman, for all the dedication and hard work he gave to our profession and to CDA over his career, and especially in the past year. Tom and Janie will now enjoy a bit of well-deserved "normal life." Finally, I'd like to emphasize that I see the CDA presidency as being at the head of a team effort. The CDA staff, the Board of Directors and all the various stakeholders are dedicated to the cause of dentistry. This common cause will propel us forward in today's challenging world.

I believe in an open-door policy. You'll find that I am receptive to new ideas. Feel free to contact me anytime at the e-mail address below.

À la prochaine!

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