



Dr. John P. O'Keefe

Something Old, Something New

In this edition of *JCDA*, the principal authors of the “Point of Care” and “Clinical Showcase” articles are speakers at the Ontario Dental Association’s Annual Spring Meeting, to be held in Toronto at the beginning of April. I am thankful to both the authors and the organizers of the event for giving us the opportunity to work together, helping to promote one of the finest events of the Canadian dental calendar.

The ODA Spring Meeting often doubles as a venue for graduates of the Ontario dental schools to come together for organized or informal class reunions. Such gatherings allow people to renew friendships and see how classmates are faring on the journey of life. I admit that I have even experienced a tinge of envy that such a spirit of community can be kept alive, especially since my own dental school class had never held such a reunion in the 25 years since my graduation.

That situation was rectified last October in Dublin, when my classmates held such an event over a weekend. Of our 41 graduates, many of whom I hadn’t seen for over 20 years, 34 came together to reminisce, catch up on progress and speak about our hopes for the future. Most agreed that while we should definitely meet again, we could not allow another 25 years to lapse or a much smaller venue would suffice!

This enjoyable weekend proved to me that members of my graduating class are as fine a group of people as you could meet anywhere. Many are justly proud of the contributions they are making to advance their communities and our profession. Such professional contributions were evident as 5 classmates gave entertaining and informative presentations at a continuing education program we ran during the reunion weekend. One classmate’s contribution to his community and profession was particularly impressive.

In catching up with Dr. Philip Christie of Waterford, Ireland, I discovered he had recently

published a book called *Something to chew on: a mouth map to health*. Written for the public, the book explains in easy-to-understand language how mind, body and personal motivation are key to one’s health. Philip outlines how every individual can become a true partner in his or her own health care. Without a hint of paternalism, he explains how people can prevent the major oral diseases and conditions themselves and how good oral health is an essential element of good general health.

When I read the book, I found myself nodding in agreement with many of the concepts put forward. Besides the content, another aspect was intriguing. Philip mentioned that he had self-published the book, working with a Canadian company offering an “on-demand” publishing service. The more I learned, the more I was impressed by the creativity and determination displayed by my classmate.

My curiosity brought me to the website of Trafford Publishing (www.trafford.com), where I discovered more about their self-publishing process. In my opinion, a visit to this website is worthwhile, especially if you have ever harboured a desire to publish a book. The company claims to provide an innovative and unique service, having published over 8,000 titles from over 7,000 authors in 105 countries since 1995. The fact that even a print run of one copy is possible sounds pretty revolutionary to me.

The company’s operating principles (accessed through a link in the ‘About Trafford’ section of the website) show how innovation and perseverance, combined with such seemingly old-fashioned values as courtesy and civility, can be key ingredients to success in business. These were particularly inspiring and I believe that they could serve very well as operating principles for any customer service business, including a dental office.

My reunion in Dublin reminded me that such get-togethers provide a great opportunity to learn from those with whom you share a common bond. Sometimes looking back at the road travelled can lead you to new and exciting paths in the future.

John O’Keefe
1-800-267-6354, ext. 2297
jokeefe@cda-adc.ca

“ Reunions allow people to renew friendships and see how classmates are faring on the journey of life. ”