



Dr. John P. O'Keefe

A Can Do Attitude Pays Off

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About 4 years ago I was approached by Dr. Susan Chow, a respected member of the Vancouver dental community, to discuss a project she had just embarked upon. As our conversation progressed, it seemed that she had taken on a lost cause — to rescue from closure the clinical teaching facility housed in the same building as the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia and the British Columbia Dental Association (BCDA).

This space had been used for many years by dental study clubs in the Vancouver area. However, the time had come to either perform major renovations or shut it down. The prospect of closure clearly upset Dr. Chow, who firmly believed that an updated and revitalized facility was both necessary and feasible. She wondered why Canadian dentists had to travel to institutes south of the border when we could build and sustain comparable facilities in Canada.

Dr. Chow realized that a significant fundraising campaign would be required if she was going to attain her dream of creating a new, modern study club facility. Over the years, she kept me informed about the efforts of the Study Club Alliance of British Columbia, a group composed of herself and fellow colleagues Drs. Robert Elliott, Chris Hacker, Don MacFarlane, Craig Naylor, Doug Neilsen, Mark Norris and Garry Sutton.

This dedicated group of dentists reached out to the College, the BCDA, individual dentists, dental companies and those involved in the dental industry and trade, to help raise support, awareness and funds for the project. Through regular updates from Dr. Chow, I learned that the group's goal of creating a world-class clinic that could provide continuing dental education on site and worldwide through the power of new technologies was close to being realized.

However, I was not fully prepared for the excitement surrounding the opening of the new Sirona Learning Centre last month, when I was in Vancouver for CDA's annual convention. As described in more detail on page 176, Dr. Chow and her colleagues, by dint of sheer determination, have created a wonderful centre that should prove to be a great resource for our profession for years to come.

I was particularly grateful to attend the opening of the learning centre because it gave me an opportunity to meet with many colleagues who are deeply involved in the study club movement. One of my goals is to involve more study club members as contributors of clinically relevant material for *JCDA*. I am convinced that very practical and valuable clinical information is transmitted on a regular basis in study club meetings. If we can devise new methods to “bottle” this information for broad transmission through *JCDA*, we can help make this publication even more compelling for readers. I hereby would like to invite members of study clubs all across Canada to open a dialogue with me about how we can help each other achieve our respective goals.

I cling to the dream that *JCDA* will be widely recognized as a world-class knowledge translation publication that readers and authors will be fiercely proud of. Like Dr. Chow and her colleagues, I was told that our publication faced insurmountable odds some 10 years ago. However, I believe *JCDA* is the “Journal with the Can Do Attitude,” and by reaching out in new ways to new partners, we can help move our profession forward.

A few years ago, the *Economist* magazine predicted that adult continuing education will be one of the biggest growth industries in the world over the next 30 years. For dentistry to survive and thrive as a knowledge-based profession, we must embrace continuing education as never before. I believe we need credible Canadian institutions like our dental schools, the Sirona Learning Centre, our dental associations and *JCDA* to work together to foster our knowledge-based profession over the next decades. Yes we can do it, and the public we serve will benefit from such partnerships.

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