

President's Column

REFLECTIONS



Dr. Richard D. Sandilands

This is my last president's column for my term of office. It goes without saying that it has been my privilege to serve as your president for the past year.

Someone recently asked me to describe the highlights of my year and I had to say that the whole experience has been a highlight. There is no downside when you are president of the Canadian Dental Association.

It seems like yesterday that I sat down to compose my first column and here I am today, writing my last! Those of you who know me on a personal level will understand that I am usually never at a loss for words, but when it came to creating thought-provoking columns for the dentists of Canada, there were times when writer's block prevailed.

It would be redundant to recapitulate all the issues of the past year, but I would like to touch on some of what I consider to be some of the key events of my year as president.

This year marked a shift from a management committee to that of a management team. A major shift in concept, but one which I believe is very important. The information flow at the highest level is so great that all members of management need to be equally informed, and in fact to act as one body, interacting frequently on issues and

decisions. A fine example of this interaction was the quality of the various meetings held with corporate members across the country over the course of this past year. The bottom line, of course, is that the management team was able to deal quickly with critical issues and to activate CDA's response.

In an environment where change is almost a byword, CDA is once again at the forefront. The new vision statement, *Vision 2010*, will translate into a strategic plan for the next several years, and will mean major new concepts in the way CDA interacts with its stakeholders and its publics within the oral health care environment. Both external and internal changes in CDA signal its transition from a "mature" association, to a new, revitalized twenty-first century professional organization that will serve its members even more effectively than in the past. It has been exciting to have participated in this very important process within Canadian dentistry.

As president, there are the seemingly endless meetings, long discussions and many key financial decisions to be made. Financially, while CDA is very sound there is a realization that we must be much more aware of how we spend our revenues, as well as how we control our expenditures. Our financial relationships with corporate members and the dental regulatory authorities are under discussion as evidenced by the first tripartite meetings held this August. I am confident that the ensuing discussions will lead to new and progressive financial solutions within CDA. I am pleased to have played a role in initiating and sponsoring these events.

There are numerous other events which marked my term of office — the CDA/CDSPI Task Force, ongoing discussions with Medical Services Branch, Dentistry Canada Fund resolutions, meetings with the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association and the Canadian Dental Assistants Association are but a few of the interactions which took place over the past year.

To conclude, I want to express my heartfelt thank you to all who made Marjorie and me feel welcome as we toured the annual meetings of our corporate members across the country. I will never forget standing with one foot in the salt water bucket, and kissing the capelin, in Grand Falls, Newfoundland. You folks know how to have fun!

My management team, Dr. John Diggins, Dr. Burton Conrod, and Mr. Jardine Neilson, worked very well together and we accomplished a great deal on behalf of Canadian dentistry. Thank you for your support, and I wish you well in your upcoming years. I would also like to thank my executive council, Dr. William Blair, Dr. Tom Breneman, Dr. Alfred Dean, Dr. Louis Dubé, Dr. Garry Lunn and Dr. George Sweetnam for their support throughout the year.

In volunteer-based organizations, the success of the president depends on excellent relationships with administrative staff. I have been fortunate to have had the full support of CDA staff at the highest level. There is insufficient space to name all of you, but let me express my thanks for all your help and support over the past year — you are a great staff. I want to give a very honourable kudo to CDA's retiring executive director, Mr. Jardine Neilson. You were my "right arm" especially during the tough moments of my year. It has been my pleasure to work with you over the past year.

To all of CDA's members who supported this management team and our work over the year, I would like to express our combined gratitude for your support. Dentistry is an honourable profession, and you are the professionals who maintain that honour. I salute you, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president.

Richard D. Sandilands, DDS

President of the Canadian Dental Association