

President's Column

WHAT A YEAR IT'S BEEN!



Dr. Tom Breneman

As I pen my final column, I am amazed by how quickly the last 11 months have flown by — months that were marked by many important achievements.

In response to findings in a recent survey of Canadian dentists, CDA has elevated its media profile considerably in the past year. All media requests were handled expeditiously during my tenure as president. The result is that CDA is increasingly being recognized as the national voice for dentistry in Canada and more articles on dentistry are appearing in mainstream Canadian publications than ever before. Besides the many feature articles published in daily newspapers across Canada, there was CDA's *National Post* dental supplement, taped TV messages broadcast during National Oral Health Month, and a series of dental segments for Global TV's *Body and Health* show. As we look to the future, these successes will act as stepping-stones in our quest for greater visibility

and more opportunities to get our message across to the public.

ITRANS presents us with tremendous opportunities. In the past year, this Internet solution for the safe and secure transmission of health industry transactions has progressed remarkably well. Continovation Services Incorporated (CSI), a for-profit subsidiary of CDA, has been established, and contracts were finalized with major stakeholders to use this technology for dental and other health claims transactions. CSI remains on the leading edge of this technology, and is aligning itself with other organizations that are in the technological vanguard; together, they will provide important and tangible benefits for CDA members. There may even be possibilities for global expansion of this technology. Details on the ITRANS implementation will be released as industry and security regulations and our obligations of non-disclosure permit.

This year also witnessed the first major overhaul of our governance structure since 1943. This new format will allow us to move from a political to a knowledge-based decision making model.

But with evolution and change, there is bound to be apprehension and there will be a learning curve as we adapt to the new governing system. As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change. You may have heard by now that Quebec is withdrawing as a corporate member of CDA. Although there will continue to be individual member-dentists from Quebec, the Quebec Dental Surgeons Association has made known to us its intention to withdraw from corporate membership in CDA as of May 27, 2004. In an era of globalization, a time when we must continue to ensure that dentistry is represented by one national voice, we intend to maintain an open and

cordial relationship with dentistry in Quebec.

As a further indication of relentless change, we are witnessing the end of an era, now that CDA's long-time chair Dr. Nick Mancini has announced his intention to retire after 26 years holding that position. However, Dr. Mancini will remain as chair emeritus and be available for advice and mentoring to succeeding chairs, who will be elected for 2-year terms by the Annual General Meeting. I'd like to offer a huge personal "thank you" to Dr. Mancini for his valued advice and many years of dedicated service to dentistry in Canada.

Other significant achievements of the past year include the Dental Academic Summit, the Oral Hygiene Shortage Forum, and our all-important government relations work. At this year's Days on the Hill event, CDA's executive met with 30 members of Parliament and 3 cabinet ministers, a pretty good indicator of the esteem in which our Association is held in the federal government's corridors of power.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the superbly organized and committed national office staff under the very capable leadership of executive director George Weber. I'd also like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of president-elect Dr. Louis Dubé, vice-president Dr. Alfred Dean and the interim Board of Directors, all of whom exhibited tremendous dedication and commitment to dentistry and to the public we serve. I look forward to being their biggest cheerleader and fan in the years ahead.

Many thanks for the support and guidance of so many and for granting me the privilege of serving my profession as your Association president.

Tom Breneman, DMD
president@cda-adc.ca