

Words That Matter

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We celebrate the ODA's 150th anniversary with a selection of favourite editorials from our *Ontario Dentist* archives. We will feature other columns from past editors in upcoming issues of *Ontario Dentist*.

When I asked a close colleague what she thought an editor of a professional journal does, she remarked, "they lead." Editors, it appears, set the intellectual climate of our conversations about our profession and what interests us. If this is the case, then I am honoured and humbled to have the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of our past leaders. In celebration of the ODA's 150th anniversary, *Ontario Dentist* asked past editors to submit their favourite editorial — the vehicle through which they set the direction of our discussions about who we are as professionals and about our concerns as a profession. The ODA and *Ontario Dentist* thank these leaders for stewarding our ideas over time.

Toasting the Journal

Decades of toil have made *Ontario Dentist* what it is today

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A professional journal is like fine wine. It takes decades of cultivation to produce a *Premier cru classe*. With *Ontario Dentist*, the situation was no different.

It was during the Roaring '20s that the ODA President of the day, Dr. Frederick Conboy, decided the association needed its own publication — the first issue of *The Booster* rolled off the presses in January 1926. It was modest both in size — the pages were not much wider than a bookmark — and content. The reading material comprised less than 10 pages, mostly minutes of meetings and exhortations to ODA members to attend the annual convention. This, however, soon changed. The magazine grew so quickly that by 1931 the Association had to increase the publication's size, the number of pages, and even its name, which became *The Journal of the Ontario Dental Association*.

For more than 90 years, the ODA has attracted an unbroken line of dedicated editors. Dr. Edmund Grant followed Dr. Conboy (who served for 16 years — a record for editorial masochism that still stands). Under his editorship, the ODA enlarged the journal's page size to a standard six-by-eight inches. This led to an increase in advertising revenues as ad layouts could now fit the journal. With more ads, there was more money for editorial content. Soon, scientific articles began to appear.

Editorial standards rose steadily over the next three decades under Drs. S. Lee Honey, Ashley Lindsay and Joseph H. Johnson. All of them were remarkable dentists

as well as editors. Lee Honey led a program that produced a 50 percent drop in dental disease in children in just two years. (Honey's young Editorial Assistant was none other than Wesley J. Dunn, the future and founding Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario). Ashley Lindsay built China's first dental hospital and invented the direct approach mandibular block. Oral surgeon "Joe" Johnson was a dental historian and writer, praised as the "best pen in dentistry."

In the early 1970s, under Dr. Filip Cappa and later Dr. Neil Munro, the ODA upgraded the journal's format. Covers sported Canadian art, and pages were now a full-size, eight-by-eleven inches. The name changed too, to a more contemporary, *Ontario Dentist*. The vintage was now world class. In 1971, Fil Cappa won a William J. Gies Editorial Award for his editorial "Should We Be Tooth Carpenters?" Three years later, under Neil Munro, *Ontario Dentist* won Honourable Mention in the International College of Dentist's Journalism Awards, the judges praising our journal for the text design of scientific articles, and for excellent photography.

In 1978, the ODA carried out its first readership survey under erudite Editor, Dr. Marvin "Marv" Klotz. Interviews revealed that the ODA's journal was the most valued dental journal in Ontario. Forty-nine percent of dentists said, if limited to one journal, their choice would be *Ontario Dentist*. Seventy percent said the journal was their "most important" source of dental news. *Ontario*

Dentist reached another high-water mark under Marv's successor, Dr. Dave Kenny. In 1983, Dave decided the journal needed to lighten up, so he started an annual lampoon issue. Although it didn't last, due to fears that dentists might actually attempt to perform the farcical procedures, for years afterwards *Ontario Dentist* received requests to bring back the issue.

In 1987, typesetting moved from the print shop to the desktop, a move that saved money and gave journal staff the freedom to experiment with layout and design. Results were spectacular. In 1988, the American Association of Dental Editors awarded *Ontario Dentist* second prize in the competition for North America's most improved dental journal. In 1992, the International Association of Business Communicators presented *Ontario Dentist* with an Award of Excellence. The year 1994 produced another *Grand cru*. *Ontario Dentist* scooped up two Apex awards for publication excellence (for best non-profit journal, and best feature writing); a first-place award in the International College of Dentists Journalism Awards; and the prestigious Kenneth R. Wilson "Gold" Award for Outstanding Achievement in Canadian Business or Technical Publication. (If memory serves, one of *Ontario Dentist*'s competitors that year was *Maclean's* magazine.)

Beginning in 2003, and for the next 11 years, master vintner Dr. Brian Norman Feldman served as editor. Brian brought extensive experience to the position. For nine

years before he assumed the editorship, he authored the "Healthline" column in the journal. In it he brilliantly and succinctly summarized studies of interest to dentists from medical, dental and scientific journals. In his first year as Editor, Brian launched a re-design of the journal, which earned *Ontario Dentist* two more awards from the International College of Dentists. In addition, Brian introduced a groundbreaking "Wreaths and Arrows" column, published every December, which highlighted the wise and the foolish in our profession. Brian's editorials stand as models of enlightened reasoning and professionalism.

Today, as the Ontario Dental Association enters its 150th year, *Ontario Dentist* continues to yield the finest of vintages under the expert eye of accomplished researcher, respected educator, and passionate advocate, Dr. Carlos Quiñonez.

To mark the ODA's sesquicentennial, *Ontario Dentist* asked some of its editors "emeriti" to choose their favourite editorial from years past to mark our celebration. We hope you enjoy our selection.

Salut! ☺

Dr. James Shosenberg was the Editor of Ontario Dentist from 1987 to 2002. This introduction is based, in part, on an editorial published in March 1993.