

A Time of 'Firsts'

AS THE New Year approaches, and I sit and develop this editorial, what strikes me most after several months of careful reflection is how many "firsts" both the *Journal of Prosthodontics* and the American College of Prosthodontists have enjoyed over the past few years. For the *Journal*, this is the first time since inception nearly 14 years ago that we've changed publishers. We selected our new publisher, Blackwell Publishing, from a large group of publishers who submitted proposals to a task force formed by Past-President Jonathan Ferencz to determine whether we were getting the most "bang for our buck" with the *Journal*. One of the initial decisions we had to make was whether to merge with one of the other Prosthodontics journals, or stay the course as the sole representative journal of the ACP. After a long and sometimes arduous task, we made the choice to remain a separate entity, and to solicit proposals from numerous publishers to continue to publish the *Journal of Prosthodontics*. Blackwell Publishing was selected as our second publisher for two reasons: first, because the financial contract we negotiated with them was incredibly favorable to the ACP (and an enormous improvement over our previous contract), and second, because Blackwell demonstrated incredible innovation to us in their publishing and world-wide marketing of our *Journal*, and in their dedication to our Specialty organization. I have to confess that I am most delighted by how seamless the transition has been between our publisher of 14 years (Elsevier Sciences) and Blackwell Publishing. I am confident that you will see the *Journal* reaching new heights in publication and scholarship, and that the *Journal* will continue to improve in quality over the next few years.

Another first for the *Journal* is that we're announcing our very first Editorial Review

Board (see below). I hope you will appreciate how diligently we have worked to identify a world class cadre of reviewers to serve on our inaugural Editorial Review Board, and I know their addition will facilitate the editorial review process, and shorten the turn-around times from submission to acceptance of your manuscripts. And finally, our Section Editors are beginning training on the *Manuscript Central* software program, which will enable us, for the first time in our history, to fully incorporate submission, reviews, and tracking of manuscripts *electronically* for our authors, Section Editors, reviewers, and your *Journal* staff. We hope to fully launch the *Manuscript Central* program by June of this year.

As for the ACP, for the first time in our history, we have developed several significant initiatives. First, you are aware of our huge success with the ACP Education Foundation, which has raised over \$5 million in the last three years. As a part of that success, we have given out 32 graduate resident scholarships for the first time in our history (previously, we would give out 4-6 per year).

Second, due to a highly successful House of Delegates initiative (in October of 2002), we have begun the first significant public relations initiative for our members in the history of our organization. And, since the House of Delegates, your Board of Directors, and your Officers realize that PR is a long-term commitment, we're beginning to see the results of our efforts and financial input.

Third, we have developed, for the first time in the history of our organization, an achievable Strategic Plan for the ACP. This has been a work in progress for several years now, and stems from our work with Knowledge Based Governance that our Board of Directors has embraced due to input

from Tecker and Associates, one of the leaders in training of this system of organization governance.

Fourth, on March 4-5 of this year, we will hold our first ever Educational Symposium, entitled "Creating a New Vision for Prosthodontic Education" immediately prior to the 2004 ADEA annual session. As of the time of this writing, our goal is to fund two full-time faculty members from every Prosthodontic department in the US to attend this seminal event. This symposium is the culmination of a very hard working and dedicated Subcommittee on Graduate Resident Recruitment, which has been active for nearly four years developing this meeting.

Fifth, the ACP has developed, for the first time in our history, a diagnostically driven Classification System. The first two parts of this work have been published in the *Journal* previously, and the final installment, the Classification System for the Dentate Patient, is scheduled for publication this year. Implementation of these classification systems into patient diagnosis, and into research projects that will measure outcomes of care will strengthen the role of the Specialty in providing optimum patient care well into this century. Our sincerest thanks to Dr. Tom McGarry and his committee for their tireless work in the development, beta testing, publication, and implementation of these exceptional classification systems.

Sixth, due to several years of diligent efforts, the ACP is beginning to have, for the first time in our history, a significant impact with organized dentistry. Our Officers attend numerous meetings with other specialty groups, and most importantly, with the ADA, and have for the past several years. Our efforts in fund raising, in changing the definition of our Specialty, and in modification of our post-doctoral Educational Standards have been recognized and applauded by numerous groups both nationally and internationally.

And finally, for the first time in the history of the College, we have elected our first female President, Dr. Nancy Arbree, which speaks volumes to the diversity of, and opportunities within, our organization. So, the next time you are sitting around asking yourself, "What has the ACP done for me lately?", I hope you'll pull out this editorial and read it a bit more carefully. My warmest and sincerest regards for a most successful new year, and to yet another year of "firsts" for the ACP and for the *Journal of Prosthodontics*.

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