

## Comments by Marsha A. Cunningham, RDH, MS, Editor, *Communique*

When I attended my first AAPHD meeting in 1981, Joe Doherty was the person who explained to the group that the association would be bankrupt within the year if the contract with a management firm was not terminated. In the next two years, Joe adopted the financial management for AAPHD and slowly, but steadily, brought the cash reserves into the position where we are today. Much of what AAPHD has accomplished in the past 16 years can be credited to Joe's control of the purse strings. Now, Joe wasn't paid for his efforts; he did this because of his deep commitment to dental public health.

Helen is also deeply committed to dental public health—by marriage. I met Helen in 1984 when I agreed to become the AAPHD newsletter editor. In 1984, Helen had somehow been convinced to become AAPHD's executive secretary on a part-time basis. I think she was just trying to free up some of Joe's time from all his AAPHD duties.

The newsletter was four pages in length at that time and then Myron became president. Myron announced to the AAPHD Assembly that the newsletter would be expanded to 10 pages per issue. Anyone who has ever worked with Myron knows that he

sometimes delivers surprises like this. Helen and I got to know each other as we responded to Myron's many requests over the next year.

In April of 1990, when I was eight months pregnant, I was admitted to the hospital and it became clear that I would not be leaving for a few weeks. At my office, the May issue of the newsletter was in various stages of editing and proofing and adjusting margins. I had to call our departmental secretary and ask her to take the pile of newsletter stuff in the middle of my desk and send it to Joe and Helen to finish. They were able to sort it all out and get the newsletter done on time. One of Helen and Joe's grandsons was born at about that same time and so we have enjoyed sharing stories about the various stages of childhood with my twin sons and their grandson.

Helen and Joe are always positive and upbeat in their response to any new challenge. Their frustrations with AAPHD are rarely noticeable, but I do recall one Executive Council meeting in the late 1980s when we were discussing the addition of a computer for the National Office. After a long discussion, Joe pounded his fists on the table and said "Helen does not want a computer, she doesn't have time to learn how to use a computer." Eventu-

ally, the National Office did purchase a computer and fax and Joe has become quite adept at e-mail.

Many of you in this room work 10- and 12-hour days, and you struggle to find balance in your lives with work and family and recreation. Have you ever heard Joe's motto for the AAPHD National Office? It is, "We doze, but we never close." Every morning, they have been working for several hours before the people on the West Coast even wake up. At dinnertime in the Doherty household, the East Coast calls and faxes and e-mails have slowed down and the West Coast calls are just hitting peak. The questions from outside the United States pour in overnight. The rush hour is continuous at the Doherty residence.

At one time, the family car had personalized license plates that read AAPHD. I don't know if that is still true. I have never been to the National office headquarters in Richmond, Virginia—but I'm sure that as soon as they can get all of the AAPHD boxes and materials out of their house and garage, their children and grandchildren will once again have bedrooms to sleep in when they come to visit.

I feel very fortunate to have Helen and Joe as friends and I wish them the best in their retirement.