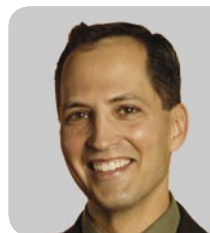


## Sacramento Diaries: A Two-day Journey Into the Heart of CDA

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**S** **ATURDAY 6:40 P.M.:** I can't relax. This editorial is due next week and I've got absolutely nothing. On an airplane, quiet except for the engines, you would think the ideas would just flow in. To top it off, I spent the last two days in Sacramento at the CDA Board of Trustees meeting. I should have been home working on this editorial; researching, reading, calling up one of my colleagues to see what they're griping about, anything to get an idea. Instead I'm off lollygagging in Sacramento. Well, of course I wasn't lollygagging. The CDA Board of Trustees meeting is really an enjoyable experience for me. It is, after all, where most of the real business of our state dental association takes place. There's a lot of interesting and exciting stuff that our association is doing. And I have absolutely no responsibility during the meeting. I get to sit in the back of the room and observe the proceedings. I even get to have lunch and dinner with everyone, too! Yes, it was a long and busy two days and I'm feeling the effects of it. As my eyes get heavier, I'm reflecting on the events of the last 36 hours. Let's see ...

**FRIDAY 3:45 P.M.:** Trustees have just flown in from everywhere. The meeting initiates them with a nearly two-hour finance report. If anyone would have told me previously that I would find a two-hour finance report interesting, I would have expected the next line to be a sales pitch for beachfront property in Temecula (or Chico for our Northern California readers). But Bob Spinelli did it. He is, in essence, the CFO for CDA and



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all of its entities. He leads us through a maze of graphs and numbers and looks all of about 28 years old while he does it. I thought I might ask Bob where he got his training and how he learned all this complex organizational financial stuff. Then I think this would be too embarrassing and tantamount to asking Tiger Woods how he learned to golf so well. They just know. Bob says our organization is doing financially well, but that we need to make some changes in the way we do business to make sure this is true 20 years from now. He knows the numbers too well. Believe him.

**FRIDAY 6:05 P.M.:** After a full 20-minute break following today's adjournment, we're on the bus to go to dinner. CDA Speaker of the House Matt Campbell has grabbed the bus's public address microphone and is broadcasting some instruction to us that is completely unintelligible. That is the job of the speaker, to sniff out the nearest microphone and start giving directions over it. This confirms my suspicion that we have selected a good one.

**FRIDAY 7:30 P.M.:** Ron Mead is our president. As such, he presides over the Board of Trustees meeting, which is no small task. He wears a suit, tie, and cowboy boots. At dinner, his traditional

"thank you for attending the meeting" speech lasts all of 10 seconds. Like a true cowboy, he is a man of few words, at least for now. The trustees know they will get their fill of him tomorrow. This evening, they don't mind his reticence. In all fairness, Ron lets others do the talking at the meeting. He is very good at facilitating discussion and debate without juxtaposing his own view. He is the reason the meeting is effective, not just productive.

**FRIDAY 10 P.M.:** The lobby bar at the Sheraton Hotel is buzzing with too many of California's dental leaders to count. These people are still talking about dentistry. Well, I think Butte-Sierra Trustee Ernie Garcia is talking a little bit about fishing, but still ... they're all nuts! I'm going to bed.

**SATURDAY 7:30 A.M.:** Santos Cortez, chairman of the Government Affairs Council, and Mark Kaufman, chairman of the Judicial Council, are sweating. So am I. We are in the gym at the Sheraton trying to work off last night's food and drink. We have been politely uninvited to the morning session of the BOT meeting. It is what they call "closed session." Some members might be suspicious of what the board is doing behind closed doors. What are they hiding from us? They

aren't hiding anything from us. There are simply matters that the association wants and needs to keep private from outside entities, like certain legal and financial matters. Trust them. They are, after all, trustees. Oh, and 7:30 is not an early start for the trustees. In fact, the member who was presenting at the closed session was up long before that in preparation. I could tell you what little else I know about closed sessions but, as past Trustee Rick Rounsaville used to say, "then I'd have to kill you."

**SATURDAY 10:30 A.M.:** We hear a report on CDA's membership recruitment and retention plan. It's very ambitious;

achieving 75 percent membership of licensed dentists in California by 2009. That is about a 12½ percent jump from where we are right now. Our volunteer dentist leaders and our staff have a tremendous amount of brainpower and passion for what they do, and I have no reason to believe they can't do it. Speaking of the staff, they get praised a lot by the leadership. It is unanimously held that they are all fantastic. Executive Director Peter DuBois sits at the president's left elbow during the entire meeting. As executive director he leads this staff. He listens to the praise they receive during the meeting and, upon hearing it, furrows his brow a bit deeper

and gives a subtle, yet discernable, nod. Very subtle, mind you. He does not want to appear too proud of the group he leads. After all, our leaders did not hire him to sit and accept recognition for all the jobs well done by our association. Or did they?

**SATURDAY 1:10 P.M.:** ADA Trustee Russ Webb is not here for his verbal report to the board. We learn that he is actually in flight to Chicago for the ADA Board of Trustees meeting. As an ADA Trustee, he is also an ex officio member of the CDA Executive Committee, and thus a crucial link between ADA and CDA. He is lucky. He has the privilege of attending the leadership meetings of both organizations. The next time anyone, who is not an airline employee, sees him, be sure to thank him — twice.

**SATURDAY 2:30 P.M.:** Dave Famili and Dave Humerickhouse are having a rather animated discussion about peer review. Dave F. used to be chair of the Council on Peer Review and is now a trustee. Dave H. used to be a trustee and is now Peer Review chair. Isn't it funny how life works? Together these two guys know more about peer review than anyone in the state and probably the country. I don't know what the heck they were talking about. Come to this year's House of Delegates if you want to get in on the discussion.

**SATURDAY 6:50 P.M.:** The whirring and bumping of landing gear descending a few feet below my seat jars me from near sleep. The Board of Trustees meeting was a great experience and I wish all CDA members could get a glimpse of what's going on in the heart of our association. But I have more important things to do. What the hell am I going to write about? ■■■■

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