

# I Believe It Is Time to Go



**A** commentary with the above title first appeared in this space some seven years ago. The phrase is not the brainchild of this writer. As a matter of fact, it was “birthed” by one of our mentors, former CDA President and Associate Executive Director, J. David Gaynor. It was on the occasion of Dave’s 1997 retirement as CEO of the predecessor company to 1201 Financial, “The Dentists Company,” that we used

this phrase in this column for the first time.

Dave was the mentor who started me on my journey in organized dentistry way back in 1969 when he appointed me as program chair for Los Angeles Dental Society. He was also responsible for moving my name forward for consideration for CDA council service several years later. The two of us have had many opportunities over the years to discuss people and events important to the progress of our professional organization. Sometimes these discussions were serious in tone, and sometimes they were lighthearted. I believe it was the latter type of moment when discussing one of CDA’s volunteers during Dave’s era of volunteerism, that he first pointed out, “I believe it is time to go!” Dave never beat around the bush. He believed in making a critical analysis and then standing by his judgment, whether the topic was a person or an initiative. The concept and formation of TDIC remains at the top of the list of his many sterling contributions to this association.

So when Dave made his decision to leave his role with CDA, we believed that his catch phrase, “I believe it is time to go” was most appropriate in commenting about his contributions and his departure. It is a phrase that really does have universal application. Most of us must make that kind of decision at some point in our lives relative to some facet of our life activity. There are some who unfortunately because of illness or other unexpected events, don’t have the privilege to make such a decision, but for those of us who have no constraints upon our decision making such as a specified term of service, it is a reality that eventually we must face.

So thus it came to be, about 18 months ago, that I came to that fork in the road and decided, “I believe it is time to go” at the end of 2004. This seemed like the right time and the right thing to do. There is only one important factor that really weighed in our decision at the time. We believed (and still do) that this is the right time to provide the *CDA Journal* the opportunity to bring forth some new ideas and directions for the future.

It has been a great privilege and an honor to serve the profession in the role of editor for 21 years and eight months. That tenure was not by design. It happened because we have achieved a level of satisfaction in providing regular communication to the membership of CDA and in attracting contributing editors and authors willing to share their expertise with their colleagues through the vehicle of a respected professional publication. As an ex-officio officer of the association, satisfaction also

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came from the opportunity to listen to and contribute to the formulation of policies that have made remarkable contributions to the progress and strength of this organization over these many years.

Our longevity is testimony to the outstanding staff that has been engaged in producing the *Journal*. Their professionalism, creativity, and hard work are key to the product that readers see every month. We have enjoyed working with each and every one of the five individuals who have served in the managing editor role with the *Journal*. Jeanne Marie Tokunaga and Patty Reyes continue to serve in the Publications Department, providing irrefutable evidence that the publication is in good hands and will continue to demonstrate excellence. Susan Lovelace, who preceded Jeanne Marie, continues to demonstrate her commitment to our profession as executive director in San Diego. The support they have provided us has been outstanding and very much appreciated. We may never be able to find the right words to describe the commitment and high quality of the CDA staff that we personally have had the opportunity to work with throughout this association over these many years.

Then there is the legacy that has been spun by “Dr. Bob” Horseman, our venerable contributing editor. His remarkable record of contribution started shortly before our arrival as editor with his participation in a column titled “Your Turn” that alternated with other writers. When we attended our first journalism workshop for new editors, a respected journalism

professor who evaluated a 1983 *Journal* issue emphatically convinced us that Bob was a gifted writer who we should never let get away! While we have always kept that challenge foremost in mind, we credit Bob for his joy of writing and spirit of giving to his profession that has kept him sharing his humorous stories with all of us these many years. It should be mentioned that when former managing editor Doug Curley paired the artistry of Charlie Hayward with Bob Horseman’s columns, they became really special as Charlie captured Bob’s persona in his illustrations. Humor that is appropriate to a professional journal is difficult to craft. A number of dental editors have tried to institute similar offerings in their publications without success. We have been blessed to have Bob and Charlie as a featured part of the *Journal* team and know that their collaboration will continue.

For all of these reasons, we know that our successor Alan Felsenfeld will enjoy excellent support from staff, from Bob Horseman, and future contributing editors and authors who will want to contribute to an outstanding professional journal. We wish them all the very best for the future. We would be remiss if we did not express our appreciation to the countless contributing editors and authors who have supported us over the years.

It has been a fantastic journey of service in the profession. As we leave after 35 fast-moving years, it has been more than half a lifetime of memorable friendships and not-to-be missed opportunities to work closely with some of the most giving

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individuals in the dental profession, the elected officers of this association. Every president has brought a unique set of skills and a strong commitment to serve the membership. It has been an honor to serve with, and learn from, each of them. We will always believe that we have gained far more from our experience than we have been able to contribute. That has been the true benefit of our service.

We have experienced the increasing complexity of managing a contemporary practice due to the increasing regulatory guidelines and other requirements that have come forth in the past few decades. Similarly, we have seen elective officers of the association undertake an increasing time commitment in order to deal with an increasing menu of issues facing the profession. It has also become more difficult for elected officer leadership, volunteer leadership, and the staff who represent us, to always achieve the results on association initiatives that would be considered the preferred first choice of all of our colleagues. But we have never seen that reality stifle the commitment or the quality of effort to achieve the best for dentistry and the public we serve.

There remain many important initiatives facing CDA. New initiatives will continue to arise requiring the attention of the leadership of the association. We are confident that the outstanding "people" resources of this association now and in the future will continue to successfully address these challenges.

With all of this said, "I believe it is time to go!"

CDA

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