

## Endings and Beginnings

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I told Jack Conley I wanted to do a brief review of the last six editors of the *Journal of the California Dental Association*. Jack corrected me and said that they were not the last but the first six editors. Before unification in 1973, the state had two associations, the California Dental Association (composed of the northern regions) and the Southern California Dental Association. Each state association had its own *Journal* and newsletters. Unification brought an end to the old publications and a beginning for the new *Journal*.

Dr. Steve Yuen of southern Alameda County served from July 1973 to June 1975. He was the first editor to head the *Journal of the California Dental Association* we know today. He was followed by Drs. Jack Saroyan (July 1975 to April 1977), Keith Blair (July 1977 to June 1980), Robert Sachs (July 1980 to January 1983), Jack Conley (July 1983 to November 2004), and Alan Felsenfeld (December 2004 to November 2008).

I was able to reach some of the editors and asked about changes they witnessed in CDA and in the *Journal* itself during their tenures. Each of their first editorials provided a snapshot of the period and/or the direction they wanted to take the *Journal*.

Those first issues must have been an adventure. Not just a composite of the old journals but something new to reflect the beginning of a new united association of California dentists. Dr. Yuen described his encompassing vision of the *Journal* in his first editorial, “these pages are open to all



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of you ... We encourage thorough and fair examination of the varied texture of our professional fabric ... We look forward to the future ... with you.”

Dr. Saroyan, a native of San Francisco, wrote in his first editorial “A good professional publication has to reflect the vested interests of the membership as well as inform the members of current events in their profession.” He proposed the inclusion of self-scoring quizzes and human-interest stories of members.

The third editor, Dr. Blair, hailed from San Diego. Thirty-one years ago, his first editorial was titled, “*Political Action: The Alternative to Wringing Our Hands*.” He described a turbulent time when the FTC was taking legal action against the ADA for purported restriction of trade. He also provided a prescient warning of the dangers of attempting to address *access to care* issues with *midlevel provider* scenarios before those labels had become commonplace. He appealed for grass roots political action and encouraged dentists to become more involved in the decision-making process.

Dr. Sachs, an oral surgeon from San Francisco, wrote his first editorial in July 1980. His direction for the *Jour-*

*nal* emphasized a shift toward greater scientific content. “A significant attempt will be made to introduce more quality scientific articles, primarily ones of clinical interest.” He also reminded me he had published the first of “Dr. Bob” Horseman’s features.

Dr. Conley, of Los Angeles, became editor just before the CDA headquarters was moved from Los Angeles to Sacramento in 1983. His first editorial described a tide of change at CDA and in the insurance environment. During his 22-year tenure, the family of CDA publications changed and grew. The *Update* was added and became the medium of association news, departmental reports, and member profiles. The current scientific orientation and the creation of theme-based issues was part of his editorial legacy. Jack also reminded me that Bob Horseman became a regular contributing editor shortly after he assumed the helm.

Dr. Felsenfeld, an oral maxillofacial surgeon from Los Angeles, took up the daunting task of following Dr. Conley’s 22-year term. His first editorial recounted the selection process for the position of editor (which remained the same this

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time). He also described the editor's duties above and beyond those associated with the publication. As a member of the executive committee (ex-com) he was gratified to see changes in CDA that came as a result of research on the wants and needs of our members. It gave focus of purpose and made CDA a much more member-driven organization. As far as changes in the *Journal*, Dr. Felsenfeld increased its content with regard to basic science and traditional research.

Endings and beginnings in the succession of the editor are really no more than transitions. Like another thread in the fabric, the whole cloth is what is important. The *Journal* will change not in a revolutionary manner but will evolve in a manner that best serves its members. The *Journal* is accessed in many different ways. Some peruse the entire issue. Some readers skim the abstracts, some read the current topics, (some even read the editorial), but after this review and consulting with others, it is clear to me that the most consistently enjoyed feature is "Dr. Bob."

It is my goal to work with staff, contributors, and volunteers to perpetuate and enhance the legacy of excellence the *Journal* embodies. ■■■■

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