

What's To Do when It's all Been Done?

It's customary, almost pefunctory, to praise the accomplishments of an outgoing editor and congratulate that person in print for a job well done. Because it is expected, it often doesn't mean much. Critical readers tire quickly of vague plaudits while the uninformed and enthusiastic are too easily accepting of superlatives — even if the editorial praising the past editor appears in a poor issue of the publication!

In June, Stephen Wei resigned as the first editor of *Pediatric Dentistry*, much to the dismay of the Academy. Rather than add another soon-to-be-forgotten editorial to the dental literature, we'll let Steve's accomplishments speak for themselves:

- Within 2½ years, a respected scientific publication with a circulation of 3,000 worldwide, reaching many countries and countless libraries
- In a similar short span of time, two awards for excellence in dental journalism
- A publication with the prestige to have attracted enough quality manuscripts so that all of the upcoming issues through the summer of 1983 could be filled today
- In two years, publication of three special issues — all totally funded by outside sources
- Providing the membership with timely topics of clinical and research interest available nowhere else
- Attraction of almost \$20,000 per year in advertising to help defray the cost of the journal to the Academy.

In dental journalism, there is no analogy to put these accomplishments in perspective. It's roughly like walking into a vacant warehouse and emerging three years later with an *Atlanta Constitution* or *New York Times*, garnering a couple of Pulitzers along the way.

Thanks, Steve.

After reading the above, it seems *Pediatric Dentistry* has achieved all it can. But a change in leadership means changes in every aspect of journal operation from philosophy to type style.

A new editor will have more than enough challenges:

- Maintaining quality and excellence in the face of personnel changes, increasing costs, and increasing accountability
- Dealing with a growing backlog of excellent manuscripts that merit publication
- Satisfying a membership wanting pertinent and useful articles
- Working with a board of directors asking for greater accountability, efficiency, and communication within the Academy
- Accomplishing all of the above, maintaining a creative approach to scientific journalism, and keeping a full-time career in practice, education, or research

Many of these challenges are being addressed. Quality assurance is being met through reorganization of the journal's production process to prepare for a likely long distance relationship between editor and managing editor. The referee system is being overhauled to speed evaluation of manuscripts, insure acceptance of only the highest quality articles, evaluate referee performance, and make the review process an educational one for both author and referee.

The growing backlog of pertinent, timely, and desirable manuscripts is being addressed by looking at changes in layout to permit publication of more case reports and clinical techniques in the available space in each issue. Small changes such as tighter editing and limitations on figures and illustrations as well as reduction in type size will help make each issue more complete. The time is also ripe for canvassing the membership to help *Pediatric Dentistry* stay responsive to its readers. Finally, the new editor will be meeting with the publications committee to find ways to increase communication so that the journal can continue to improve and to insure that the newsletter will provide timely and substantive information to the membership.

Forward.

