

## October musings

It has been a busy few months since the June annual general meeting and the release by the BCMA of two important papers—our submission to the Conversation on Health and the prescription drug policy paper *A Prescription for Quality* (available at [www.bcma.org/public/patient\\_advocacy/APrescriptionForQuality.htm](http://www.bcma.org/public/patient_advocacy/APrescriptionForQuality.htm)). Each garnered a lot of media and member response. Following this was the CMA's annual meeting in Vancouver and the installation of our own Dr Brian Day as its president. He gave an excellent inaugural speech richly deserving of the standing ovation he received. I look forward to working with Brian over the next year on our common goals.

The fall in northern BC has always

been, for me, a time of mixed feelings—sad to see the end of summer, but still lots to do. The early fall brings with it excellent fishing and hunting, if you are so inclined, and hiking and camping are still possible.

But then comes November. To me, at least where I live, November is the dreariest month of the year—too miserable to be outdoors and too early to ski. That is why many years ago my wife and I decided this would be the ideal month to take a warm vacation. About 15 years ago we visited the beautiful island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean and fell in love with both the island and its people. We totally shocked a villa sales representative by walking in one day to ask about purchasing a time-share; not surprisingly

he agreed. Ever since, most years we have returned to St. Lucia for 2 weeks in November.

St. Lucia, for those who have not had the opportunity to visit, is a small tropical island with lush vegetation because of the periodic heavy rainfall. Since gaining independence from Britain, and therefore the protection of Commonwealth trading, the island has become quite poor. The value of its main crop, bananas, has declined and now the nation's main economy is centred on tourism. Although very poor by our standards, the locals are happy, outgoing, and extremely welcoming of the tourists who arrive there from all over the world.

While the health care system is free and universal to residents, it is accessed at your own risk. I have not experienced it myself, but at our resort, an English tourist once asked me for a second opinion. He had sustained a significant laceration of his forearm in a boating accident and had been sutured at the local hospital. He gave a hilarious account of the experience, including having to maneuver between the chickens in the open-walled emergency room. The suture used looked like 00 green nylon in large mattress sutures—but I assured him the end result would be fine.

The break will be nice, but I always look forward to returning to the office at the end of November, fully replenished by a 2-week dose of vitamin D. I hope many of you are able to avoid the winter blues and find the time to get away—whether it's somewhere warm and sunny, or somewhere clear and crisp. The break will be good for you.

—Geoff Appleton, MB  
BCMA President

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