

## In defence of democracy

The BCMA is now and has always been a democratic organization and is in full compliance with the BC Society Act.

**Geoffrey Appleton, MB**

I am greatly concerned about many of the things Dr Caroline Wang says in her article. She asserts that she has a high regard for the democratic process in her submission to the *BCMJ*. However, some of the views she expresses have me questioning that claim.

By any definition, democracy as we know it and as it is practised in this country and others is predicated on the practice that the majority prevails. The democratic process has embedded in it the right to freely express opinion without retribution.

I simply reject Dr Wang's view that the BCMA Board does not operate under a democratic model and that dissenting views are not heard. As she well knows she has been afforded ample time to express her views at the Board table. To suggest the Board's Code of Conduct has "punitive rules" that stifle debate is simply not true. Also, the prohibitions she suggests exist on sharing information with members is again fully untrue.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges faced by any elected official is to accept the will of the majority when it does not represent his or her preference. Let me be clear: I am not advocating that elected officials simply follow the lemmings over the edge of the cliff. But an important distinction between anarchy and democracy is the ability to accept consensus.

I am unsure why Dr Wang implies

that the governance model under which the Board operates has changed into that of a commercial corporation. Again, this claim is simply not true. The Board operates under the same structure as it has since its inception. And this structure is in full compliance with the BC Society Act.

As members know, a proposal to change the governance model will be put before them shortly. If adopted, this governance model will not see the

Wang makes in her submission. Suffice to say, I am troubled that any elected official of the BCMA would knowingly circulate inaccurate and/or incomplete information as she has done. This clearly does not serve the membership.

Like me, I expect all of Dr Wang's colleagues on the Board would welcome her directing her energies toward working productively on the issues that are of importance to our

**Perhaps one of the greatest challenges faced by any elected official is to accept the will of the majority when it does not represent his or her preference.**

BCMA adopting a for-profit, corporate model of oversight.

The member survey results included in this issue of the *BCMJ* do not support the claim that members are not well informed about the BCMA's activities. Does the research show that there are areas for improvement? Absolutely, and that's exactly why the survey was conducted. And, if the BCMA was the secret society Dr Wang suggests it is, would the full report of the membership survey be available to all members? I think not.

I feel there is little value in responding to each specific claim Dr

members. Like all of us at the Board table she has a responsibility to provide you with the facts. At the very least this is what each member has the right to demand from their elected officials.

Finally, I want every member to know that their Board delegates work diligently on their behalf to produce the results you elect them to produce, and will continue to do so. I urge members to talk to their Board delegate on the issues that are raised here. **BCMA**

Dr Appleton is president of the BCMA and a general practitioner in Terrace.