

Decisions are made by those who show up

This edition of the *BC Medical Journal* coincides with the BCMA's annual election process. By now the call for nominations for BCMA officers, Board members, and vice-delegates will have been distributed to all physicians. If this year is anything like previous years, I would anticipate that the rush to stand for election will be less than overwhelming.

I have been a member of the BCMA Board of Directors for 18 years, and for most of those years I have heard recurring complaints from the membership that state the BCMA Board, its officers, and indeed its major committees are populated by the old guard—a group of elderly, usually male, and by inference rather narrow-minded individuals who are out of touch with the membership at large. Other less flattering descriptions have crossed my computer screen of late.

It's too bad this is the perception of a number of physicians in the province. In my humble opinion, this depiction is not accurate of most of the physicians who take time away from their busy practices and families to contribute what they can to the profession by way of the BCMA. Let's take me as an example: I'm energetic, innovative, humorous, and only 44 years of age—well, that's when I stopped having birthdays anyway. But seriously, your president-elect, Bill Mackie, is a former Olympic athlete, and the chair of the General Assembly, Brian Brodie, routinely flies down to Honduras to play in the mud while building wells in local villages. During my tenure on the Board I've come across numerous interesting, dedicated, and lively physician Board and committee members that I am proud to call my friends and colleagues.

If, however, I have failed to sway

your perception, allow me tell you what I used to tell my son years ago when he was a teen and wanted to join the debate club, but wouldn't because "nerds" were the only members—if you join the club, perhaps other cool kids will follow (he never did join the club and as far as I know, nerds still reside there).

I very much hope you will consider getting involved. You can invest as much or as little time as you choose in a committee that interests you. Or, perhaps you might prefer to run for a Board or vice-delegate constituency seat. The association welcomes all members who would like to contribute some time, energy, and a bit of joviality in an effort to improve the profession.

At any given time, hundreds of BCMA members from around the province are involved in the Association's activities via their participation on more than 70 educational, medical, and policy development committees, councils, and working groups. Partic-

ipating physician members volunteer their valuable time working toward a common goal, often with government, university educators, and other health care stakeholders. Most serve from a sense of duty; some because of specific knowledge or attributes that they have and can contribute to a common goal. Some continue moving upward within the Association (as I and all your past presidents have done), and others contribute even further by volunteering on the CMA Board or one of its many committees.

If you're unsure or have questions about what's involved, please contact your local district Board member—currently we have 39 across the province (a list with e-mail addresses can be found at www.bcma.org in the members' section) and he or she would be more than happy to talk to you. At the end of the day, your Association is as good as you make it.

—**Geoffrey Appleton, MB**
BCMA President

Vote for a new BCMA governance structure!

After an exhaustive review by the governance committee, the Board of Directors is recommending moving to a more accountable, better representative structure that allows members greater input into BCMA affairs.

Please take the time to review the materials and vote!

Ballots will be sent to you this month.

Deadline to return your ballot is 14 May.

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