

## Southern regions

I've recently returned from a month in Thailand, and I thought that an editorial about how important Thai caddies had been to my personal health maintenance program would be in order.

Unfortunately, before I could start putting down some nonsensical words about Thailand's highly skilled, beautiful, young female caddies on my computer I received a call from my friendly surgeon's office to inform me that they had a cancellation and I was booked for a bilateral inguinal herniorrhaphy in 5 days. I had waited a fair amount of time for the procedure and did not want to be recovering during the summer, so I rearranged my schedule and remembered how much it itched the last time I had a prep for the same (unilateral) surgery 25 years

ago. I also started to think about the oft-repeated editorial theme of the doctor as a patient and how many times various editors have written about their experience as a patient and basically how different it is when you're the one on the receiving end of a really sharp knife.

The surgery took place 13 days ago and although I was looking for something negative to rant about, everything went smoothly and I was left without anything contentious or negative to shout about. The only difference from the pre-op prep from 25 years ago was the opportunity to do it myself, and although I am now experiencing the same amount of itching, the process of mechanical self-depilation was much less embarrassing. The only downside to the surgery

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was the expected impressive amount of bruising and swelling on the recurrent side secondary to the extensive amount of sharp dissection necessary. However, gravity has an interesting roll to play in where all that tissue fluid goes, and up until 24 hours ago after studying my southern regions in the mirror it was clear that I would probably get a call back if I decided to audition for a starring role in the adult film industry.

I have been back to work for about seven days with only minor physical impairment, and I keep trying to come to terms with where the negatives are that I had planned to be writing about. Everyone, in fact was great: the nursing staff, the anesthetist, and even the surgeon were not only friendly but also helpful. Nobody was dismissive and the professional staff universally treated me like a real patient. God, how boring is all this? The system worked really well, I was well cared for, and for the life of me I can't find one single negative in the whole experience.

I think I should have stuck with my original intention to discuss the importance of Thai caddies to overall personal health planning. Maybe next month.

—JAW

## Not just another committee

When asked if I would be interested in being a member of the *BCMJ* Editorial Board in 1994, my first reaction was, “Oh no, not another committee.”

I was told that it was one of the most enjoyable committees to be on and that the once-monthly meetings were something to look forward to. I was flattered to be asked, and after some deliberation I agreed. I joined at the same time as Lindsay Lawson. It had been decided that there should be more female representation on the Board (prior to this, Pat Rebbeck had been the only female). I hoped Pat would welcome some female support, although clearly she had done a fabulous job representing us during that time.

She wrote an editorial for the 25th anniversary of the journal about her first Board meeting, and I echo her

sentiments. I didn’t know what to expect either, having never been on an editorial board before. At my first meeting, I mainly sat and listened to how things were done, but distinctly remember a lot of laughs, mixed in with the serious business (what do you expect with two Irishmen, an Aussie, and a Brit in the same room!). It was thoroughly enjoyable as well as informative. There was no shortage of dry and wry wit, humor, and bantering at these meetings, and this made me want to attend.



I was and continue to be impressed by the calibre of clinical and scientific material submitted for review. The theme issues are very comprehensive and informative. The fact that busy clinicians are willing to take the time to write articles for the journal indicates a real interest in contributing to a good, close-to-home, peer-reviewed publication. As well as the scientific component, according to an Ipsos Reid survey (2005), the journal is the most popular source of information used to find out about issues affecting medical practice in BC. There is really something for everyone in each issue.

Last year we on the Editorial Board were asked if we might be interested in doing a CME cruise. Novel idea. This would be a very different format from the standard courses in that instead of one or two speakers, we would all contribute. It would involve each of us giving talks in our respective areas of expertise, in addition to discussing our experiences in the editorial process and why we were doing it. It turned out to be a very rewarding experience.

Interestingly, many of the attendees were from the US and although I’m sure many were initially just looking for a good place to travel, they were very impressed by our journal. So much so that we are doing another cruise to the Galapagos in 2009, so we hope to spread the word further afield.

Over the past 14 years there have been a few changes in the Board membership, all of which have been positive. Once Pat retired from clinical practice she continued on as editor emerita, providing invaluable counsel and input from the College perspective. This continued after she formally retired and Heidi Oetter came on board. Heidi brought a wealth of experience, not only as a general practitioner, but as a former BCMA president, well versed in the politics of medicine. She has now moved on (again), but we maintain our College connection now that Bob Vroom has joined our Board.

The journal would not be what it is without the excellent leadership of our editor, Jim Wilson. He has been on the Editorial Board for 28 years and editor for 14 of those. He dedicates countless hours to the journal, especially behind the scenes — writing and responding to letters and soliciting articles, opinion pieces, and theme issues. This is in addition to reviewing the sometimes heavy load of incoming articles, keeping order at our meetings, and writing an editorial each month.

Finally, a special word of thanks to Jay, our managing editor, Kashmira, our production coordinator, and Tara, our editorial assistant. Without their sage advice we would probably not be where we are.

Why do I stay on the Editorial Board? Because I feel privileged to be part of an excellent team that strives to maintain our journal as a first-class publication, and I’m proud of it!

—SEH