

President of the Medical Staff's Report

The last year I had the privilege of serving the Board as the President of the Medical Staff. This followed a year as the Vice-President and a year as the Secretary of the Executive. It seems strange to think of three years now coming to a close.

As I look back on these years, it is hard to remember any momentous events. Of course, Dr. Bell's fine work last year finalizing the Bylaws and Rules had great merit. I fully expect these documents to be approved by government any day now. Attending the various meetings involved with the position, including chairing the Medical Advisory Committee and observing the goings on at the Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee was an education in itself.

The regional hospital debate came to a head this year, but then seemed to fizzle with the Comox-Strathcona Regional Hospital District Board's decision to reject the idea, take our money and go home. I believe this will resurface in the coming year or years. At some point I expect to be at the new regional hospital. Probably as a patient, rather than as a doctor.

As I took on the executive responsibility, I was worried that it would drag me into difficult and unpleasant conflicts with the administration and doctors alike. I am happy to report however, that this has been a quiet year for conflict. I cannot recall a single, particularly unpleasant moment. There were some issues relating to the new enthusiasm for forcing congeniality on the staff. This is a laudable initiative, but will require careful application. As I have said to the Medical Directors this year, *"we are running a pirate ship here and we must take care that we don't have our best rapers and pillagers walking the plank"*. We have staff members who are isolated and under tremendous pressure to manage unmanageable work loads with limited resources. It is not surprising that occasional harsh words will be uttered.

On a lighter note, it has been especially interesting and enlightening to be a regular member of the Board of Directors, if only a mere bystander-type member. I was greatly impressed with the dedication and expertise of the Board members. As volunteers looking after such a large organization they were interested, enthusiastic and wise. The opportunity to see the various members of the hospital administration presenting their reports gave me a new, elevated appreciation of their role in the delivery of health care with limited resources. *(Of course, come July I can go back to idly complaining about the nameless, faceless administration).*

For me, the highlight of the year was the president's ball, hosted by my wife (Dr. Wiens) and myself. The event was well attended and allowed the medical staff to relate on a social level. I believe this kind of interaction goes a long way towards promoting congeniality and cooperation amongst the medical staff. I would hope that a similar event could continue in the years to come.

I want to end by thanking the Medical Staff and the Board of Directors for the opportunity to see, in a small way, how the organization runs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Engman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard T. Engman, M.D. F.R.C.P.
President, Medical Staff