

The Board, the Journal... and clods.. (the lump of earth type)!

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No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne 1572 - 1631

With the threat of Global Warming becoming more and more evident, the famous words by John Donne are assuming a meaning closer to the literate ... we are indeed fearful that the "clods will be washed away". As I write this I look out over the ocean. It is passive on this pristine day in the Cape... and it is difficult to focus on the awesome potential which could be released. The prudent will nevertheless take heed and prepare for what many now identify as inevitable.

Der Spiegel in March 2008 published these data: there has been a 42 times increase in the rate of melting of the Antarctic Polar Ice cap over the last 5000 years. The estimated loss over the last 4,700 years was 3,8cms per year... BUT... between 1992 and 1996, 1,6 metres were lost every year. And of course the reason for Global Warming is that it is human activity that has produced the steady rise in temperatures. The burning of fossil fuels has been a major contributing factor. How long before the coastline is markedly altered... the climate significantly

affected... plant and animal life desperate to seek relief?

Mankind is of course nothing if not resourceful and some progress has been made in curtailing the use of oil... by greatly enhancing vehicle efficiency and by increasing the use of biofuel. Cellulosic biofuels are being produced in major plants in Brazil and the USA and do so " without consuming a kernel of corn" (Union of Concerned Scientists, Oct, 2014).

Every member is surely deeply aware of the issues of Global Warming... the debate and the dire warnings are everyday commerce in our interactions ...this is a massive problem and one in which our individual contributions may appear insignificant... but John Donne said it for us.... every fragment has its role and its value. Every small action and every tiny advance makes a contribution.

So it is that one tears oneself away from the broad ocean vista and focuses on more immediate concerns... appearing in this issue are salivary glands and root canal files, radiology and amalgam, angio-oedema and ethics... and the challenge is to not lose sight of either perspective, whether towering over us as a world concern or optimistically awaiting attention as a contribution in the Journal! For it is incumbent that we remain alert to the minutiae of our discipline, but that simultaneously we also respect and make contribution to the wider fields of endeavour. Perhaps that observation should also be considered by our students who are facing their final assessments... the detail is important, but the concept

is crucial! Every good wish for papers laced with common sense!

The October Report of the Board of the Association bears witness to the complex duality of our focus:

"In the process of business planning, it was noted that SADA is navigating various challenges in the oral health environment, including:

- unsustainable fees/tariffs (regulatory attempts at introducing tariff schedules)
- managed healthcare (margins affected by the reimbursement rates of schemes)
- impact of health care reform
- increased litigation
- escalating costs
- poor public perception
- lack of disposable income for dentistry
- oral health not a priority for scarce state resources

The profession in South Africa is, however, not on its own in dealing with these challenges. Health reform is a worldwide reality, and the global question is how to position the profession of dentistry in the context of transformational change..."

Here is clear evidence that the Association is alert, has a focus on the real issues and has the commitment to progress. The warp and the weft of the Association is woven by the members but designed by the Board.... to whom and of whom it may be said... "No man is an Island..."

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