The CAG News Page

John Wallace PhD
President, Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

It is an honour to have been elected to serve the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) as its 38th president. I hope to provide the same quality of leadership as the previous presidents, some of whom I have had the pleasure of serving with when I held the posts of secretary and chair of the CAG Research Committee. Through this news page, which will appear regularly in the *Journal*, the executive of the CAG will provide you with updates on the various activities of the Association and on new initiatives that are being undertaken. This is one avenue of communication between the executive and the membership, but it is unidirectional. I ask each member of the CAG to take the initiative of providing feedback to the executive on what you think the CAG should be doing, what we are doing well and what we are not doing well. Listed below are the names of the members of the CAG executive, along with contact numbers and e-mail addresses.

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**CANADIAN DIGESTIVE DISEASES WEEK 2001 –
CHANGE OF DATES**

The Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW) in 2001 will be held from February 24 to 27 at the Banff Spring's Hotel, Banff, Alberta (the Fellow's course will be held from February 21 to 24 at the Banff Park Lodge). This shift in dates was necessitated by changes in the structure of airfares, as a result of the Air Canada-Canadian Airlines merger, making it very advantageous to the CAG to have the main meeting start on a Saturday. We regret any inconvenience this change may cause, but it was unavoidable.

Planning of the program for CDDW 2001 is well underway. Several changes in the structure of the meeting are planned to address concerns raised by a number of our members following the Quebec meeting this year.

Following a welcome reception on February 24, the meeting will be officially kicked off with the RD McKenna Memorial Lecture. This will be delivered by Prof Juan Malagelada, from Barcelona, Spain. Prof Malagelada has been a leader in the field of functional bowel disorders for the past 25 years, and has also made important contributions to our understanding of the regulation of motility and the pathogenesis and treatment of inflammatory bowel disease.

Also at CDDW 2001, a keynote lecture on the topic of "Medicine and Doping Control at the Sydney Olympics" will be given by Dr Daniel Stiehl, a gastroenterologist at the

Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, Australia and a key member of the Sydney Olympic Games Organizing Committee.

CDDW 2002 – CHANGE OF DATES AND VENUE

After the Quebec City CDDW meeting this year, several members commented that they would prefer to see more variety in the venues for our annual meeting (rather than just alternating between Banff and Quebec City). Acting on this suggestion, the executive has scheduled CDDW 2002 in Montreal, Quebec (Queen Elizabeth Hotel). Because the World Congress of Gastroenterology meeting will be held in Bangkok at the end of February 2002, the week when the CDDW had been scheduled, we have shifted the dates of CDDW 2002 to February 2 to 5, 2002 (with the Fellow's course running from January 31 to February 2).

We are very interested in your feelings with respect to venues for CDDW meetings beyond 2002. Is Banff a site where you would like to see the meeting continue to be held in alternate years? Are there other sites that the CAG should consider for its annual meeting?

WORLD CONGRESS BID

The CAG has 'been to the altar' on four occasions with respect to making a bid to host the World Congress of Gastroenterology (WCOG). Despite the considerable efforts of our members to this end, these previous bids were not approved. In 2005, it is the 'turn' of the Americas to host the WCOG. Because the previous two Americas-based WCOG meetings were held in South America and in the United States, this seems to be a golden opportunity for Canada to make a fifth (and successful!) bid to be the host country. One may well ask, 'why bother'? There are three main reasons. First, there would be a significant financial dividend for the host country. The WCOG will attract on the order of 16,000 delegates, with their overall spending estimated to be close to \$40 million. Of course, if the delegates are suitably impressed by what Canada has to offer, there would be additional financial benefits in the way of future tourist dollars. Second, there would be a significant financial dividend for the CAG. The recent Gastro '99 meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, having reached its target registration of 3000, yielded a return to the CAG of over \$400,000, which can be used to support the research and education activities of the

Association. Finally, successfully hosting the WCOG would provide a 'reputation' dividend to Canadian gastroenterology. Consider the following comments of Dr Eamonn Quigley, Secretary-General of the Organisation Mondiale de Gastroentérologie, with respect to Gastro '99:

This was truly a landmark event for gastroenterology in the Americas; the greatest testament to its success being the size and diversity of the attendance from all parts of the Americas ... Everyone was made to feel at home in Vancouver ... Visitors benefited from the involvement of truly outstanding Canadian faculty members ... We left Vancouver grateful for an outstanding educational experience – marveling at the natural beauty of our surroundings, but above all with warm memories of the tremendous hospitality of our hosts.

In short, there is very little risk for the CAG in making a bid for the WCOG in 2005, and very much to gain.

NEW NATIONAL OFFICE – NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the CAG has grown in membership and in the scope of its activities, it has become increasingly important to establish an infrastructure that can properly serve our membership. To this end, the CAG established a national office several years ago and, more recently, appointed an executive director. Thor Fredriksen has served as our executive director for the past two years and is now moving on to other opportunities. We wish Thor every success in these future endeavours. A national search has been carried out to select his successor for this increasingly important position. The CAG has also made arrangements for our national office to be situated in the same building as the publisher of our official journal, in Oakville, Ontario. There is now a full-time receptionist to answer your calls during normal office hours (Eastern time zone) and to put you in touch with the executive director or with an appropriate member of the executive.

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