MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE STUDY OF THE LIVER

It has been a busy year for The Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver (CASL) and I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our activities. First and foremost, we are proud to have The Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology as our official journal. It will serve us not only as a journal to publish our original work, reviews and symposia, but also as a vehicle for keeping our membership informed of upcoming events within our organization. The Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW) conference just held in Banff, Alberta was once again a great success. Dr Roger Butterworth delivered the Canadian Liver Foundation Gold Medal Lecture on hepatic encephalopathy, which was the most succinct and clear dissertation I have ever heard on the subject. The CASL symposia on steatohepatitis and on liver transplantation were both well attended, and the abstracts, both poster and oral presentations, generated lively interaction. Plans for next year's CDDW, again in Banff, are already underway.

After many years of running the activities of CASL through various member's own offices, we have established a central secretariat. Our new secretary is Réanne Bélisle, who joined us last summer and has already had a huge impact on CASL activities. She job-shares equally between CASL and the Canadian Liver Foundation. She is an excellent point of contact for any CASL-related matters and can be reached at: 1500, 2235 Sheppard Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M2J 5B5, telephone 416-847-0053, fax 416-847-0054, e-mail rbelisle@liver.ca. Réanne is assisting us to standardize some of our activities that occur on a regular basis, thereby establishing a means to run many of our activities on ‘auto pilot’. This will free up the time of the Executive and the Committee Chairs, to fine tune as well as to spend their energies on innovation and new initiatives.

The CASL will be sponsoring a Single Topic Conference on Hepatotoxicity, to be held at Niagara on the Lake, at the White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa on June 15 to 18, 2003. Dr Pierre Haddad together with his organizing committee has arranged an outstanding program on various aspects of hepatotoxicity with excellent speakers both from Canada and beyond. There are three state-of-the-art talks, a strong plenary session, and plenty of opportunities for close interaction in a very relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. It promises to be an excellent conference and further details can be obtained either from the CASL office or from the Web page <www.lhsc.on.ca/casl/> (click on ‘What’s New’). We are also organizing a Consensus Conference on viral hepatitis. This will encompass both hepatitis B and hepatitis C because there have been substantial changes in the management of both infections. This will be the fourth Consensus Conference that CASL has held on viral hepatitis over the years, and these have been well received.

The CASL/Industry Fellowships were awarded at the Annual Awards Ceremony at CDDW, which is always a pleasant and happy event. This year’s Award Winners and training institutes are as follows:

- **Axcan Pharma Fellowship**: Dr Douglas Thomburn, University of Western Ontario (Supervisor, Dr P Adams);
- **Schering Canada Fellowship**: Dr S Joshi, University of Toronto (Supervisor, Dr Heathcote);
- **Hoffman-LaRoche Fellowship**: Dr A Inoor Ramji, University of Toronto (Supervisor, Dr Heathcote); and
- **Glaxo SmithKline Fellowship**: Dr Scott Fung, University of Michigan (Supervisor, Dr A Lok)

It is never too early to start thinking about next year’s Fellowships. We are grateful to Industry for making these Fellowships possible, as well as to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, who provides matching funds. They provide the opportunity for us to train the next generation of hepatologists and scientists interested in liver disease. Further details can be obtained from the CASL Web page or the CASL office. Dr Florence Wong is to be commended for her hard work in administering these awards.

Finally, I am proud to report that the CASL Membership is up by 40 members over last year, with total membership now totalling 167. This is an unprecedented jump in membership, and our thanks go out to the herculean efforts of Dr Eric Yoshida in Vancouver, British Columbia. With the increased activity now possible with our central secretariat, we hope that interest in membership will continue to grow. If there are any new initiatives, or different ways of doing things that you would like us to consider, please be in contact with me or any member of the CASL Executive.

Vince Bain
President, CASL