



ASSOCIATES IN PERIODONTICS

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DOCTOR'S NOTES

WHERE DID THE TIME GO?

Written by Brian D. Shuman, DMD

In the blink of an eye our building and offices at 247 Pearl were gone; destroyed in the fire.

Four and a half months later, we are back to work, in a brand new space, seeing a full schedule of patients. It feels as if nothing had ever happened.

Where did the time go?

I am often asked, as we've reconnected with our patients, "How does everyone feel?" An excellent and heartfelt question that honestly, I had not yet had the time to even think about. Now, as I reflect back, I have the answer. It feels like we ran an endless marathon with our eyes constantly focused straight down at the ground, observing every crack and nuance in the road, never for even a minute veering off course. Ever determined to make it to the finish line while striving for a personal best record time.

Having not looked up for so very long, we are suddenly shaken and startled as we break through the tape, cross the finish line and realize that the race is finally over.

Where did the time go?

Feeling physically exhausted, looking slightly pale (a classic Vermont look) with black rings under our eyes, yet emotionally elated beyond the wildest imagination. With deep contemplation of what we have accomplished and a realization of the goal that has been attained, a blanket of great warmth, and quiet satisfaction envelops our being. We can't help but smile a gigantic smile.

We did it! And when I say "we," I mean the entire AIP staff and their families, the wonderfully supportive Vermont dental community, our loyal caring patients, the gang at ICV construction, Tyler Scott Architects, Henry Schein Corp and so many others who were there for us when we needed them. We did it! A new family that ran the race and produced a personal best.

Now, it's our opening days. The schedule is full. Patients need our attention (this is why we did this!), X-rays to read, treatments to plan, problems to solve, docs to call...

Ahh, this is the life we had forgotten. We have returned to our "normal" and somehow, magically, it feels as if nothing had ever happened.

Where did the time go?



OUR NEW OFFICE AT 1775 WILLISTON ROAD

"HOW CAN IT POSSIBLY GET ANY BETTER?"

Just a quote from my heart... This entire staff is outstanding in every way! Their patients come first and they have amazing team effort. I feel so blessed and thankful and truly enjoy my visits!"

★★★★ (Judy's Book review, Joanne B., January 25, 2012)

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

This month's staff spotlight shines on Cyndee Lou, RDH.

This month's Staff Spotlight shines on Cyndee Lou, a Dental Hygienist and OSHA Coordinator at Associates in Periodontics (AIP). As AIP employees average 15 years of service, after a mere 9, Cyndee is still considered a "newbie" by her coworkers.

Before joining AIP she worked at the Vermont Department of Health as an Environmental Chemist. She enjoys coming to work each day because in addition to cleaning patients' teeth, she also helps them to manage their overall health. She would prefer to be called a "Periodontal Therapist," as she considers this aspect of her job to be the most fulfilling.

Her colleagues are what she describes as an "interesting and varied bunch coming from all walks of life." She added the "clinicians are open to new ideas and new products, constantly trying new equipment and lasers, as we want the most effective, efficient, economical treatment for our patients."

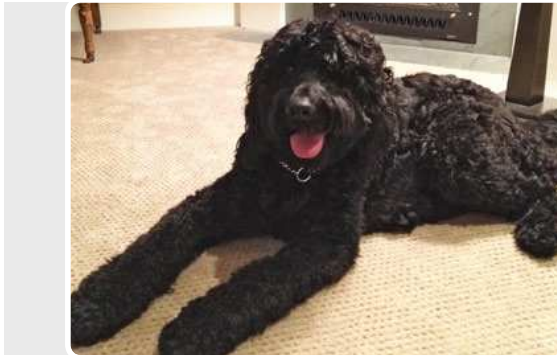
She describes her patients as "extremely caring and loyal." When she had her children, her patients became her extended family, sharing stories of child rearing and encouraging her through the process.

When she's not at work, she devotes much of her time to the Continuing Education Committee for the VT State Dental Society. She also enjoys watercolor painting and playing soccer.



CONGRATULATIONS, DR. LEVI!

We are delighted to let you know that Dr. Paul A. Levi, Jr. is the recipient of the prestigious **Yankee Dental 2012 Congress Clinician of the Year Award**. For the past 20 years, he has volunteered his time at the annual Congress to teach participants at his standing-room-only seminars. Along with caring for his patients at Associates in Periodontics, Dr. Levi also teaches periodontics at Tufts' and Harvard's Schools of Dental Medicine and continues to speak at dental conferences worldwide. Additionally, with his love of teaching, he has mentored many dental students, starting with those currently in dental schools to those who have gone on to successful careers in a variety of dental fields.



RECALLING EARLY RECOVERY TIME

The days of recovery from the Labor Day fire which destroyed our building continue apace. Slowly more of the practice is being drawn in to handle various pieces of the puzzle. Largely, our task consists of contacting the daunting number of patients whom we will have to postpone temporarily until our interim clinical space is ready. Stress runs high. But some compensation is of great help in our cadre's battle to maintain sanity. It manifests itself in two forms:

First, the physical setting: We are working out of the second floor den in the Boss's home, a wide, open room, with top to bottom windows facing a calming view. We catch a few moments breath watching the foliage change in front of the deep blue and steel grey backdrop of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack sky.

And then there is Thunder. No, not the rolling bass frequencies of Wagnerian boom that can accompany strong storms on the lake. Nor even the amusing vision of Irving's Dutch Dwarves rolling nine-pins along the Hudson River Valley. This Thunder is a black mop of curly hair that surrounds the most gentle framework of the Boss's Standard Labradoodle.

He is the epitome of a good host, graciously and quietly accepting a raft of boisterous strangers into his home. In doing so, he has never complained. For all of us, and especially for me as a "doggie person," Thunder is a panacea beyond worth.

He is ever attuned to the frustrations of the group, having that innate sense that tells him when we need his attention and affections. He soaks up anger and ennui in a coat softer than cashmere, and after a reassuring nose nibble, he looks at you with the largest, liquid brown eyes that let you know that he understands, empathizes, and if he only had thumbs, he'd be glad to do some of your job and take the weight off your shoulders.

I very easily fell into looking forward to seeing T-man (as I called him). The best part of my days were walking him out for pee breaks and romping with him in the backyard. Now we are in larger interim space, a move that by any standard would be counted as an improvement. But I miss my canine companion. Maybe we could hire him as a Therapy Consultant. All Power and Glory to The T-man! Thunder Rules!

RUMBLES OF THUNDER

On guard time, late green season: Something is wrong. The human pack I care for is distressed. Especially the male. There is much talk. Now he is leaving at an hour he is usually at rest. I do not know what the problem may be. I am not sensing any danger near our den, but I will remain on highest alert to be sure nothing intrudes here. Rest easy my pack, I am on duty. I am Thunder, Canine in Charge.

Next sun time: I have learned the cause of the distress. My human male has lost something he calls "office." I have tried to cheer him up by bringing him things to replace office. But not my bones, my ball, or even my best retriever shot bag seems

PROLOGUE:

Almost six months ago, I turned over to our HR a most unusual manuscript concerning our recovery from the fire that destroyed our 247 Pearl Street offices. I'm sure its publishing has languished due to being thought of as a lighthearted practical joke. As I could hardly believe the source myself, I blame no one. I deduced from some of the pieces' later rhetoric that there would be no further musings. I was wrong.

A few days ago, I received an email asking that the url not be revealed, a request I will honor. It read:

"I know you know. I should not risk this. Tell it anyway. Be aware that even if someone were to begin to believe you, my soulful stare and mute demeanor would dogmatize them into forgetful bliss, and you might very well look like an idiot. I chose you again because you are good at that part. No Offense, just fact."

Being the idiot that I am, I present to you the following narrative. There are several glaring malapropos and anachronisms involved in the manuscript which would be simple to fix. I have chosen not to, as they are easy to decipher, and changing them would ruin the charm.

I take personal responsibility for titling it.

—Peter Harrington, RDH, Scheduler

to make him happy. I will have to try to find out more about what office is so I can make things better. Meanwhile, the best I can do is to lay my head in his lap and let him tell me his trouble so that he might have a little peace of mind.

Several sun cycles past: Never has the den been this busy! Even the gatherings of the female pup are less frenzied. Of course, those are more concerned with play. These, though I don't fully comprehend them, are more serious. But today I found out something about the human male in my care I never knew. He has another pack. What is more, he appears to be the Alpha.

I am so proud. Obviously, I have taught him well. It will be interesting to see how this pack operates together.

Many more sun cycles: Well, at first, my human's second pack was more like a bunch of Omega's chasing their tales than they were a functioning pack. But I have to say they learn quickly, and level assignment was rapidly implemented. The number here at my den has come down to a consistent threesome who seems to be friendly with each other and operate co-operatively.

I have been able to easily train them as to my needs regarding attention in general, and walkies in particular. All of them are very astute in acknowledging my higher status. One of them calls me "T-man" all the time. It is undignified, of course, but he means it respectfully, so I let it be. It amazes me that they can remain in approximately the same place, doing the same thing, for hours on end. I guess humans are more trainable to repeating tricks than I ever imagined. I'm not sure that I personally would ever let on that I could do that. If I did, it would be expected all the time.

Nearing color tree time: Many several sun cycles have come and gone. In the last three to four sun cycles, the members of my male human's pack who have been using the den most consistently have been moving their toys. I am not sure where they are going, but I think they are very excited about it. Much of their barking starts with "I will be so glad when...". It sounds like they are moving to a new den. I will be glad to get my den back to order. However, I am happy for them. Funny, but I think I will miss them.

One last on guard time: I discovered what office is! Office is that thing that gives my male human his purpose. It is also the thing with which he supports his pack and vice versa. No wonder he was so sad about losing it. Now he is working hard to restore it. Having learned that kind of dedication makes me proud to have been his pack leader.

I have to stop doing this now. I think the female pup is beginning to suspect I am up to something. She is nearly as smart as I am. I am sure there will be many difficult sun cycles ahead. But that is what I am here for. As my male human comes back to the den, I will be sure to be close by to provide guidance and comfort. Perhaps I can see to it that wherever he sits, he has a copy of Steinbeck, or Dickens, or perhaps Twain near to hand. After all, as one of the humans of the breed known as "Groucho" once said: "Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."

REVERBERATIONS OF THUNDER

Several cycles after the Cold Crazy Kissing Night: Back at the end of the Green Time, just before the Time of Colored Trees, my human pack went through a most distressing time. I learned much about my Alpha Human, his direct pack, and the secondary pack that he heads. Some of this I have archived elsewhere.

There is much that has occurred since those first observations. A great deal of it is very mundane. But that, in itself, is a most amazing thing about the Clan of Two-Paws. They display a sense of hang-on-ness that would make my Terrier cousins whine with envy.

Cycle passed cycle where everything seemed to be exactly the same as it was the cycle before it. And the pack held its ground.

Slowly over those many rise and sets, I learned that things are on a different level for the Clan of Two-Paws. Things called business, and meetings, and plans. I don't understand them, but they are, to the Two-Paws, as strong as any prey instinct could be to us Four-Paws. It is what they live by, and for, and with. And all of this just to replace the thing called "office."

One cycle back, my Alpha Human took me to a place of newness. It took me a while to comprehend, but I know I could not have misheard or misunderstood the meanings. This place was "office". In shape and being, it is like a very fancy den. But the force it contains!

The Life Spirit that lives here is of the pack that inhabits it, they have strove for it, and it sustains them. Intuitively, I know it will be a good place where the pack will thrive.

But Great Cainus, it is a funny place!

It has many little dens, all the same. They are set out with what I have come to know as 'chairs' (I recognize them, because I have been told to get off so many of them) yet they look much more like 'beds'. (DITTO!). Make-brights in strange places, Water tubes and deep-catchers with more hold-thing holes than any three dens should need.

Then there is the big room which is all little chairs. Some sort of visiting pack gathering space I guess. Kind of smart. That way you get all your unknowns in one place. Also smart is that my Alpha Human's secondary pack members are protected by a high, very difficult-to-leap ledge.

I had to stand fully up on my hind legs just to see over it. Which was a little dangerous on my part. I am pretty sure my Alpha Human captured me with his Time Freezer that is a part of his Talk-Me-Listen-You. I think the youngest female pup calls it a 'chimera'.

If there is one thing I find a little unsettling, it is that even though it smells wonderfully like new, there is a little underlying scent that reminds me of the go-to-get-prodded-and stuck-with sharp-things den I have to go to when I am feeling not good me.



NOTE: On the final day of transition from Dr. Shuman's house to our new base of operations at 1775 Williston Road, I was sent to pick up the last of supplies and equipment. As I entered the empty house, I noticed there were some rather strange anomalies. For one, the computer was up, and running a voice recognition application that was set to some of the weirdest parameters I have ever encountered. Also, the floor was littered with printer paper covered with random letters in all lower case. I wrote it off to a failed experiment concerning our fresh attempts to go to electronic records.

Then, the other day as I was cleaning out my car, my wife (a word search aficionado) said to me, "If you put dividers in the right places, you get text out of this."

We spent the next several hours poring over the documents and emerged with the following story from a most amazing and unexpected source.

While the author did not tag the piece, I have taken the liberty of titling it.

I hope he has no objections.

—Peter Harrington, RDH, Scheduler

But the pack seems to see it as a good thing, and it appears to do them no harm.

On the whole, I think that office is a good thing. It seems to comfort. It has a good aura where the pack plays together as one. And they are proud of it and proud to share it.

As some wise Two-Paw once said : "All for one, and one for all, and two for ten, and three for a quarter!"

And I am proud to have been allowed to be one of the first to see it.

Next light-cycle after the visit: I will never understand the Two-Paws! Only one day after going through all the badness of having to rebuild office, my Alpha Human comes home talking about the challenge it is going to be to rebuild office again, only back on the place where old office was taken from him.

It makes little or no sense to me. It seems like digging up a bone to bury it in a different place, then as soon as it is buried, go dig it up and rebury it in the place you buried it the first time.

And none in the family pack or the Secondary pack seems in the least surprised by this.

This is part of the Two-Paw ritual mysticism I simply will never understand. It must be some sort of nesting instinct. That is the only thing I can relate it to that even comes close.

But I can feel from the strength of purpose and the good will that is already running into the process, it is a good thing. It will happen. It will be a happy for all the pack members.

I also know that, after watching them learn from doing it this time, that the next time will be easier from all they've learned.

After all, practice makes perfect. Haste makes waste. All work and no play make life not a run and fun in the yard chasing squirrels.

So, if you're working all the time, when do you get the chance to enjoy it?

WOOF !