

Vice-Presidential Greetings

continues to grow and increase its activities and impact. My gratitude goes to the numerous members who volunteer their time serving on our committees. Your input is invaluable and very much appreciated. Our committee chairs have many ambitious plans and their commitment ensures success in our efforts. I would like to personally thank Gunnar Kraag, Jamie Henderson and Art Bookman for their support and responsiveness to all my emails, and Christine Charnock for keeping it all together.

Best wishes to our membership and I hope that we will all find plenty of time to spend with family and friends during the holiday season.

– Michel Zummer, MD, FRCPC
President, CRA



We've Come A Long Way

This is the “Holiday” issue of the *Canadian Rheumatology Association Journal (CRAJ)* so let me start by extending best wishes to everyone. I hope that you have plenty of time to enjoy family and friends. I might also add that a copy of the *CRAJ* would make an excellent stocking stuffer. There is a small charge for copies signed by the editor; otherwise they are free!

Several people have asked me why I took on the position of Vice-President.

The quick answer is that it seemed like a good idea at the time. I had given up almost all of my hospital and university administrative roles so I thought this would be an opportunity to stay active for an extremely worthwhile cause. Moreover, since I love all the people involved at the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA)'s executive and board levels, I looked forward to the interaction. Besides, Dr. Arthur Bookman has been telling me what to do for over 30 years, for gosh sakes! I would feel rudderless without him. Furthermore, I was honoured that the nominating committee even thought of me...so how could I refuse? I have since learned that this committee was immediately disbanded and no longer has any role in the executive.

Since then, reality has set in. The CRA executive is no longer a cozy little group that gets together once or twice a year for a little chit-chat. Dr. Michel Zummer, as well as Dr. Bookman, and Dr. Dianne Mosher before him, have worked tirelessly to develop a vision and business plan with a solid infrastructure of committees that has transformed our organization into a first-class operation. Communication occurs almost daily via e-mail and conference calls, as well as annual retreats, including meetings of

the Industry Council. If there is an issue of importance, a meeting that needs to take place, the CRA flag to be waved, Dr. Zummer is either there himself or makes sure someone is there representing him. You are all aware of the mammoth job Dr. Janet Pope does to assure a superb meeting and Dr. Jamie Henderson has taken over from Dr. Carter Thorne to assure that the management committee keeps our organization financially healthy. Sponsorship is at an all-time high. I still recall the last meeting I attended when the CRA was held in conjunction with the Royal College—there were three members in a large room listening to a superb presentation by a visiting speaker. We've come a long way since then. No more occasional chats, a few drinks and a few laughs. This is serious business and the members have come to expect excellence.

What was I thinking?

My role at present is to observe, listen, and follow orders. Unless someone wises up, I will be president and expected to match Dr. Zummer's work ethic, dedication and obvious skills. A daunting challenge! Fortunately, the CRA has a superb executive assistant, Christine Charnock, without whom most of us would immediately resign.

I will end on a personal note. I am proud to say I have become a grandfather for the first time. It is one of the few experiences in life that is not over-rated. What a thrill! Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays!



– Gunnar Kraag, MD, FRCPC
Vice-President, CRA