

**AADEJ** &

Established 1951



Established 1921

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Working Together Again

Two Thousand and Twenty-One



# The Communicator



Official Publication of the American Association of Dental Editors & Journalists



## Summer 2021 Issue

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# The Nuanced and Tenuous Convincing Power of Truth

Daniel L. Orr II, DDS, PhD, JD, MD, CDE, Editor-in-Chief



Editors occupy what has been termed a “bully pulpit” and often attempt to convince their readers to do the right thing, in part, by writing truthfully. The more amorphous the issue at hand is, the easier the argument, i.e. “Be a good dentist” is likely to be even more acceptable to dentists than the 9/10 of us who reportedly recommend Colgate®.<sup>1</sup>

Specific issues tend to be a bit more controversial, such as the decades-long battle before anesthesiology became an ADA recognized specialty. As both an anesthesiologist and OMS, I had some unique insights into that battle that essentially involved organized OMS attempting to stop the recognition. For me, the question and optimal answer were always straightforward. I had a chance to formally express my opinion during a vote as a member of a house of delegates in 2011. The vote was unanimous in opposing a new specialty, save one vote. Uncomfortably, I cast that lone tally. But the issue was not controversial in my mind. I was asked to explain my vote and was happy to do so. (Figure 1)

As but one truthful proof supporting my opinion I referenced an organization formed in 2000, DOCS (Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation). DOCS was wildly successful from its inception. Tens of thousands of DOCS trained dentists, and their millions of patient treatments, all demonstrated that the need and demand for effective anesthesiology services in

dentistry were not being met. The argument about no need and demand proffered for my vote to deny the specialty was not true. So why was the vote 99 to 1 in spite of the factual nature of things?

Well perhaps, for the same reasons many truthful situations have always been controversial. At times, the truth simply does not matter to interested parties. Why would that be?

When selfish interest outweighs service to others, that interest often prevails. The ultimate prize for selfish interest generally equates to power. But power by its very nature is relatively limited, so why do so many people support the accumulation of power by others with no benefit to themselves?

An entry-level answer is that unscrupulous power-hungry individuals lie, on a big scale. Hitler formalized “The Big Lie” in *Mein Kampf* in 1925. Part of the theory is that no one would dare to promote a lie so huge, so it must be true. The Big Lie not only worked well in the short-run for Hitler, but also before he publicized the technique, and it works today as many still fall for the legerdemain. This is true even when supporting a big lie also predictably harms those supporters, at times through generations. This phenomenon is mind-boggling.

It is generally a straightforward exercise to differentiate truthful from deceitful individuals. Liars tend to lie frequently. (Lie: “Any communication intended to deceive.”<sup>2</sup>) In court, once

I appreciate the vigorous and collegial discussion in Reference Committee A regarding Resolution A-6. However, I respectfully disagree that the need and demand for anesthesia services in dentistry, excluding oral and maxillofacial surgery, are being met.

Respectfully Submitted,

Figure 1

a witness has perjured her/himself, all further testimony is highly questionable. Truth tellers usually have an accurate and factual historical record. Historical evidence for both is scripturally expressed as: “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”<sup>3</sup> It is important for ethical writers support their opinions with fact based references.

More esoteric analyses of why truth does not matter to some have been published. While selfish individual prevarications are generally volitional, the more problematic societal acceptance of lies may be secondary to something deeply ingrained in us from pre-historic times and not simply, for instance, politics.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

*Psychology Today* defines “confirmation bias” as “the direct influence of desire on beliefs.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, we are prone to believe what we want to believe. Of course, self-deception relative to the truth ultimately has devastating consequences. No matter how much we believe in Peter Pan or LSD, without technological aid, mortals cannot fly.<sup>8</sup>

Mercier and Sperber’s 2017 tome *The Enigma of Reason* offers some fascinating insights. Back in human hunter-gatherer days, the learned traits of reasonable, rational, and ethical thought had not been incorporated into our psyches. But survival was a real situation each day, and often depended on power. Even today, many reflexively want to align with the powerful, be it physical, political, wealth based, religious, etc., even junior high school clique power. Such alliances are how many feel they can optimize short-term survival, even at the long-term cost of ignoring truth or conscience.

All this means that writers run a risk for doing the right thing, which is writing the truth. Many journalists have lost positions for asking politically incorrect questions or for advocating

for an unpopular minority.<sup>9,10</sup> I was uncomfortable when casting my singular vote in 2011, and not because of significant peer pressure alone. There were relatively powerful individuals present in that forum that could have created “cancel culture” havoc for me professionally; but, that did not occur. My published opinion was somewhere within the spectrum of tolerated, respected, or even secretly agreed with<sup>11</sup> in hallway conversations. To the organization’s inclusive credit, I was asked to give the 2012 plenary session opening address in spite of my diverse thoughts, on the history of anesthesiology no less.

Potential editorial opposition has changed in 2021. While powerful individuals have never hesitated to cancel those they disagree with, today we have a vast internet-powered mobocracy composed of people seemingly looking to be offended, even though being offended is not evidentially probative of anything, including being right.

A recent editorial opining that the way someone walks on a sidewalk can be indicative of racism<sup>12</sup> is likely controversial to many. If so, circumpect critics will craft a letter to the editor to express the factual basis for their own opinions, pro or con, but will not mindlessly rant that the work be censured or the writer dismissed.

The bully pulpit, a seeming position of power, is in reality nuanced and tenuous. Journalists will field both warranted and unwarranted criticism and praise. Ultimately our best protection is fact-based truth, but truth will not predictably trump feelings.

Write on!

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*Lie: “Any communication intended to deceive.”*

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### About the Cover

AADEJ readership will notice this issue has both a volume and issue number. Thank you to Drs. Jenkins and Segelnick for their help in this effort.

# AADEJ Welcomed Back to the ACD

Brian Shue, DDS, CDE, AADEJ President



**D**ear AADEJ members, as we celebrate our 90th anniversary, it is with great anticipation of enhancing communication in the profession that we proudly announce our new status as a non-geographic section of the American College of Dentists. Although it has taken almost a

century before returning to the welcoming support of the ACD, the strength and opportunities in this relationship can be felt immediately. This reenergizes our basic purpose for being—helping dental organizations communicate with their members and publics.

The Board of Regents of ACD and the Board of Directors of AADEJ have approved a one-year trial affiliation, during which time we will work out administrative details. This is similar to the status of the American Society for Dental Ethics (ASDE), which operates in the best of both worlds; one, as an independently operating organization and two, with the benefits of being a section (non-geographic) of the ACD. Moving forward, you may not even notice any difference.

ACD fellows who belong to their own geographic sections will also have the opportunity to join AADEJ

based on their professional interests. Conversely, AADEJ dentist members who are on a trajectory to leadership in dental editing, writing, and communication can learn about ACD and become possible candidates for nomination to ACD fellowship. Our non-dentist members will be able to continue their membership with AADEJ, just as before. This partnership offers a clear win-win situation.

Our organization incorporated as the American Association of Dental Editors in the state of Tennessee on October 20, 1931 by William Gies and four other fellows of the college, who hailed from California to New York, as a result of the work of the ACD Commission on Journalism. We have always truly represented the national needs of promoting dental communication.

Our return is organic. The ACD and the AADEJ have a joint code of ethics on dental journalism created in 2001, which had already been available on both websites. It's a document with important words to live by. Ours is at: <https://www.aadej.org/aadej-bylaws>.

We welcome this opportunity. Let's continue to raise the level of communication in our profession.

Brian K. Shue, DDS, CDE

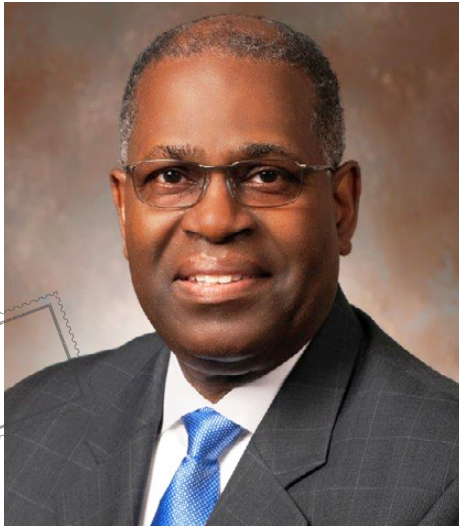
President, American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists

*Although it has taken almost a century before returning to the welcoming support of the ACD, the strength and opportunities in this relationship can be felt immediately.*

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# ACD Welcomes AADEJ

Leo E. Rouse, DDS, President, American College of Dentists



**G**reetings to the AADEJ—our newest section of the American College of Dentists Family.

We are delighted to welcome our 53rd section—the American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists (AADEJ) to our ACD Family. The AADEJ was chartered in 1931 and is composed of dedicated people specifically interested in improving communication within the dental profession and in elevating the standards of dental journalism. The organization is deeply committed to the establishment and encouragement

of responsible editorial policy. Prior to its founding, the AADEJ was organizationally aligned with the ACD Commission on Journalism and there was a shared mission to advance communication efforts in order to elevate the standards in the profession of dentistry.

The AADEJ provides a unique cohort of professionals committed to communication and open dialogue related to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Inevitably, technology will make communication more frequent, but new technology does not necessarily make communication more effective, more persuasive, or more ethical. Throughout history, oratorical persuasion or rhetoric has been an integral component of civic dialogue. The study and teaching of rhetoric has adapted to the particular exigencies of the time and venue. It is said that the hard work of communication is ensuring that it has indeed occurred. For this reason and so many more, I believe that each of us should strive to continually improve our communication skills and this takes resolve and commitment to do so.

Today, we view this collaboration with AADEJ as more crucial than ever before. We seek a broad audience to listen to and to learn from. We share a common belief that listening is the foundational tenet of communication that is often overlooked, and we intend to more fully engage in active listening. Of this we are certain, organizations of the future will need to understand and be able to use a rapidly expanding array of emerging technologies. These technologies are designed to extend the individual's and organization's communication capacities.

The ACD enthusiastically encourages and the AADEJ invites all those interested in enhancing communication to consider active membership in this non-geographic section of the college. For more information, please visit <https://www.aadej.org/introduction-to-the-aadej>.

Leo E. Rouse, DDS

President, American College of Dentists



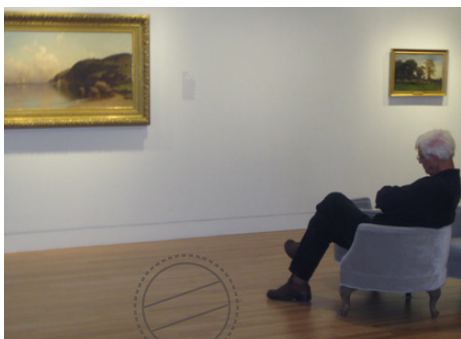
*The AADEJ provides a unique cohort of professionals committed to communication and open dialogue.*

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# The Editor as Host

David W. Chambers, EdM, MBA, PhD, AADEJ Executive Director



I want to make the case that the first modern editor was a woman known as Madame de Staël. She lived for several decades on each side of 1800.

Her salon in Paris was a social exchange. The best minds were seen there, discussing politics, manners, and the shortcomings of those who had not been invited. She guided conversation with small nods, questions, and compliments. The salon was where individuals of recognized or rising distinction made their appearance, where issues were framed and ideas tested before being made public, where one heard the emerging fashionable way of saying things, and where one moved his reputation up or down.

Print journalism was just beginning then. Its two most prominent forms were pamphlets and “gentlemen’s” reading. The first vehicle was violently political. Individuals such as Thomas Paine paid print shops to run copies of their targeted points of view which were then distributed as flyers. One did not need political connections to play this game. Paying to express one’s opinions was sufficient. The modern academic equivalent is predatory journalism and advertising, or what is now politely known as pay for blind peer review and “sponsored

content.” The other, then new, form of circulating print media was the “news-letter” for gentlemen who could afford the subscription. Reviews of plays where one should be seen, gossip and rumor, and the odor of politics were mentioned in fashionable style. This is what those in the know needed to know to maintain that designation. Benjamin Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanac is perhaps the best remembered of this genre. The equivalent today is the organization’s newsletter with pictures from the golf tournament or Fox News.

The difference between the salon and the pamphlet, or gentleman’s quarterly, was the role of the “editor.” Mme de Staël controlled who participated and the tone of the conversation. She did not, in her capacity as hostess, push out content. Writers and pamphleteers were not editors; neither were publishers of quarterlies. The first was the champion of a cause; the second was trying to earn a living. Today we see these two forms of journalism in the form of bloggers and publishing houses such as Elsevier that runs JADA as a business venture.

There is certainly variability in what editors do today. The title editor of an organization, such as editor of the

American Association of This or That, identifies a person who sits on the board and advances the mission of the organization by appropriate means. “Editor-in-chief” has come to signal the person managing a large publication, usually with a clause in the contract that the publication must show a profit. The “in-chief” part of the title means that they are expected to get others to write or serve as topic editors. At the state or component society level, the editor in this sense is often the managing editor or executive director of the organization whose top priorities are membership and finances. Today many editors are elected to one-year terms on their way up the chairs who recruit their replacements from guest editors who do ad hoc duty. Long-service, impactful editors like William F. Buckley, Dan Rather, or H. L. Manchin are becoming scarce.

Dental editors today are best recognized as the person who writes a little something at the front of each journal or newsletter. It is often an introduction, like Mme de Staël greeting you at the door, making you feel important to be there, “Isn’t the current pandemic just awful. And somebody should do something about the terrible state of politics

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*Journals and newsletters did not exist until a century ago; it is unlikely they will still be around a few decades from now.*

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these days (wink). And you absolutely must be sure to talk with Dr. von Nosebleed over there on page 34. He is an expert in his field you know.” It is the rare editor who ventures a strong opinion on something readers need to change. It is the other folks who are supposed to be changing. The style in vogue now is liberal use of qualifying terms, indirect references, and compelling sentences that end in question marks. This was not the case a century ago. If there were editorials at all, they were often written as letters, came from several contributors, and appeared at the end of the publication.

Madam S did indeed also write in the sense of the pamphleteer because she was well enough healed and politically protected to afford to express her dislike of Napoleon. But her work as an editor in hosting the salon makes one more point about modern dental journalism. It is not the message or the medium that matters in our work. It is who we invite to participate, the comfort of the salon, and what kind of network we create based on who listens to whom. There were no journals in the sense we know them today when de Staël held the floor. Nascent scientific societies published “proceedings.”

I prefer not to use the term “publication” to describe the vehicle of dental communication. “Platforms” is a more appropriate and durable term. Journals and newsletters did not exist until a century ago; it is unlikely they will still be around a few decades from now. Digital is not an electronic alternative to print. It is a new way of letting everyone who is interested in topics of their own fluid choosing to function in multiple roles as contributor, critique, and consumer. Wouldn't we all like to be Madam de Staël, playing host to a gathering of the most distinguished individuals to discuss the most important topics of our time? The emerging model is more like the block party with its open invitation and its short longevity and shifting locations.

## Pandemic Correlated Retirement of Dental Editors

Stuart Segelnick, DDS, MS, AADEJ President-Elect



In many dental journals and newsletters one of the first articles readership may discover is the chief or associate editor's editorial. Opening the pages of current Journals of the American Dental Association (JADA) the first article is usually an editorial or guest editorial. This too is seen in *General Dentistry*, the Academy of General Dentistry's Journal, and the *Journal of the American College of Dentists*, among many others. These editorials are usually informative, timely, thought-provoking, and hands down my favorite part of the journal. Issue after issue, I look forward to sitting down and enjoying my favorite editors' editorials. Historically, dental editors have maintained their position for many years bringing intriguing, stimulating, and transparently inspiring editorials to the dental community.

The AADEJ for many years has had Dr. Michael Glick, former editor of JADA, lecture to our group on statistics. I personally found those lectures very educating in terms of how editors need to assess statistical

information when reviewing manuscripts before accepting them. I'm pretty sure he wouldn't agree with my statistical analysis. However, when we look at such great editors who have announced their retirement during COVID-19 such as Michael Glick (JADA) with 15 years of service, Roger Winland (AGD) 24 years, David Chamber (JACD) 26 years, Damon Adams (*Dentistry Today*) 13 years, Brian Shue (Facets) 16 years, I can't help but feel a COVID correlation.

It is a shame that dental organizations fail to understand one of the best member benefits, at least for me, has been reading their editorials. It saddens me to hear when one of my favorite editors retire, although this past year seeing almost all of them leave has really hurt! The pandemic has seen a documented increase in mental health issues. I cannot imagine anything more depressing during this pandemic crisis (well I can, however I don't want to depress you any further) than to see so many people I have come to respect, and await their stimulating ideas, retire. I will very much miss their editorials and articles and sadly feel like I'm losing many of my mentors and friends, though most of them I have barely met in person.

I look forward though to the new editors and wish them many years of success (as long as I enjoy their editorials). We at the AADEJ welcome our new editors and retiring editors to begin and maintain their membership.

Not to leave this editorial in a low ebb, consider, great editors may retire, but the positive impressions they made on their readership never fades away.



# AADEJ 90th Anniversary History, Part II

Dan Jenkins, DDS, CDE, Former President and Editor-In-Chief



October 20, 1931—the American Association of Dental Editors (AADE) was incorporated by a small committee of men delegated by the board of the American College of Dentists (ACD) in 1928 “To survey the present situation in dental journalism.” Those gentlemen formed the AADE outside of the ACD as they were directed. But, certainly, the ACD was responsible for the creation of the AADE.

The ACD Commission on Journalism wrote that “The purposes of the organization were, broadly, to advance the cause of non-proprietary dental journalism and to make it practicable for the editors of these aforementioned journals to cooperate with each other for the benefit of all concerned. The Commission on Journalism stated that they were acting purely as the initiating body in forming the American Association of Dental Editors and that upon completion of the work of organizing this meeting, the Commission on Journalism would cease to have

any relationship with the Association.” (Meeting notes: 1930 ACD meeting in Denver)

The above statement that the editors should “cooperate with each other for the benefit of all concerned” might seem puzzling for a professional organization as sharing knowledge is a typical trait of a profession. However, even in the early organization of the *American Journal of Dental Science*, Dr. Horace Hayden, (first president of the American Society of Dental Science formed the following year), did not really support sharing his practice information with other dentists through a publication. (See AADEJ President, Brian Shue’s article in the AADEJ *Communicator* #47-2, Spring of 2016.) Certainly, at that point it was also obvious that the ethics of publishing accurate information was of importance for this young AADE organization.

In 1931, the first AADEJ President was, Robert S. Vinsant, the Editor-Secretary

of the American Association of Dental Schools. (The precursor to the ADEA.) He practiced dentistry in Memphis, TN. In 1936, the president was none other than, William J. Gies, Editor of the *Journal of Dental Research*. Dr. Gies had written a report on dental education in 1926 and had been the editor of JDR since its inception in 1919. ([https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177\(14\)63466-8/fulltext](https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177(14)63466-8/fulltext)) Dr. Geis was succeeded by Charles N. Johnson, a dean of the dental school in Indianapolis and a former ADA president.

In 1938, the tenth AADEJ president was a periodontist named Grace R. Spalding. She was the first woman president of the AADE. I think you will find her bio in Wikipedia interesting: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace\\_Rogers\\_Spalding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_Rogers_Spalding).

More recently in AADE history, in 2001, Richard Galeone, who we see each year for the ICD Awards presentations, became AADE president. It is so nice to see him still involved with the AADEJ as

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*In the early organization of the American Journal of Dental Science, Dr. Horace Hayden did not really support sharing his practice information with other dentists through a publication.*

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an ICD award presenter—and of course, each award recipient is happy to see his smiling face!

In 2002, Eric Curtis became president and developed the Certified Dental Editors program to designate the training AADE members have attained. He also held an AADE meeting in Arizona for members that was well attended and educational while entertaining.

In 2006, Canadian Dental Association editor, John O’Keefe became president. He is a very progressive editor and has developed many innovative programs for the CDA. He is always a favorite to speak at AADEJ meetings.

The year 2011 brought us Shelly Fritz who dealt with a closer association with the international editor members of the ICD through Skype online conversations between Dov Sydney and Dan Jenkins. Eventually, with the digitalization of *The Communicator*, the AADEJ newsletter is sent to Dov so it can be shared online with ICD dentist editors around the world at no expense to the AADEJ or ICD. Shelly also directed conversations between the ACD editor, David Chambers and Dan Jenkins to consider a closer relationship through a shared membership.

Dan Jenkins became AADE president in 2013 in San Francisco. We experimented with short, 45-minute meeting presentations while Ray Cohlmlia videoed them in hopes of putting them on the AADE website. Three of the speakers had to cancel due to emergencies. AADE editor-in-chief, Mike Nash had advised me to get a back-up speaker as that happens often. He volunteered to be a back-up. But, Mike had a heart attack just before leaving for the meeting! Fortunately, we had enough back-ups to fill the schedule. Another issue that year was the ADA wanting to reduce the size of the library due to recommendations by a company the ADA had hired to cut costs. The AADE, along with many members, wrote letters to the ADA President and Executive Director expressing our

concerns about a lot of lost literature. Dan Orr and Ray Cohlmlia wrote an editorial, “Dear ADA House of Delegates,” against the closure of the ADA library. ADA trustees were also contacted. A compromise was worked out, and many valuable historical publications were retained. Others were either donated to the University of Illinois Medical School Library, or organizations with interest in the publications were notified and could receive them. The AADEJ was able to receive many bound volumes from the ADA that are now being digitally copied. Hopefully these will be available this year for those with an interest in having a copy—it’s only electrons!

The next year, 2014, Daniel Orr II, our current editor-in-chief, became president. Just prior to his taking the gavel at the business meeting the resolution to add “journalists” to the AADE name was presented to the members by outgoing president, Dan Jenkins. This was to emphasize to potential journalist members that they are welcome to join and participate. The resolution passed. Daniel Orr II dealt more with the ADA library issues as well as instituting an insert on open topics involved in dentistry being placed in the newsletter. He also addressed and educated our members on the Dentist Anesthesiologist specialty issue going on at the ADA House of Delegates that took many years to be passed.

In 2015, Ray Cohlmlia, another favorite speaker at the annual meetings on new technologies, became president. Ray was highly organized and worked on reorganizing the AADEJ bylaws. Ray, (presently the chosen ADA executive director) was a co-author with Daniel Orr II on an editorial opposing the closing of the ADA Library. AADEJ Editor-in-Chief, Mike Nash resigned his position due to his health and Dan Jenkins was chosen to take the position. The newsletter was named the “*The Communicator*” and digital copies started to be sent to Dov Sydney to forward to the ICD dentist editors around the world.

In 2017 Richard Roadcap, now the International College of Dentists USA editor, became president and did such a great job in lining up speakers for the annual meeting that the next year’s president, Clifton Simmons, proposed that Richard should be made the “program director.” That was a great decision.

In 2018, Clifton Simmons became president and AADEJ worked on developing a way for member publications to be certified as peer-reviewed dental publications. The board was working on this when Clifton became ill and succumbed to his illness before this could be put into place. The board decided the man power involved in the project would be too much at this time. At the DEU meeting in Chicago, it was discussed about holding the DEU in a warmer climate and a better time of year to encourage more attendees.

During this year, our long-time and beloved Executive Director, Detlef Moore, resigned for health reasons. Meg Plummer had worked with Detlef and agreed to take the position.

In 2019, Dan Jenkins (Dan I) resigned as editor-in-chief of *The Communicator* and Daniel Orr II (Dan II) accepted the position.

Mike Diorio became president in 2020 and, of course, the chaotic political responses to COVID-19 became the main problem for Mike and the rest of the world. The AADEJ annual meeting was done through the internet conferencing program and we survived.

Brian Shue is the current AADEJ president and had a great Dental Editors University program lined up in Anaheim, California for 2020, but it had to be cancelled. Dr. Shue did spearhead a first of several planned webinars in March and recently announced the AADEJ is now a component of the American College of Dentists, thanks also to new Executive Director and former ACD Editor Dave Chambers. Perhaps we’ll be able to meet in 2021 live? We know Editor-In-Chief Daniel Orr II will be in Las Vegas, ADA and/or AADEJ or not!

# State Your Opinion and Write a More-Effective Editorial

David Foe, MA, CDE

**A** guide for dental editors published by the ADA a number of years ago stated this basic tenet of editorial writing: “Tell them what you’re going to tell them; tell them; and then tell them what you told them.”

Former ADA executive director Dr. Harold Hillenbrand, quoted in the same publication, expressed the view that the obligation of a dental editor in writing an editorial is twofold—first, to inform the members of dental issues by a presentation of the facts; and second, to comment on those facts in order to urge members toward a consensus that can be reflected in the development of policies and attitudes for the dental profession.

In general, the above advice still holds true. The problem is, how do you do it effectively? And how do you get readers to pay attention? Here are some basic tips to help you write more effective editorials.

## What to Write About

A common dilemma for dental editors is coming up with subject matter. The good news is, there’s plenty to write about. Start by keeping a close eye on what’s happening in your dental society, or in the profession in general. What are the big issues? What are your colleagues talking about? Ask them what’s on their mind. Make note of interesting articles pertaining to dentistry. And for the most part, keep your editorials focused on dentistry and the concerns of your readers. After all, you are writing for a dental publication.

## Follow a Structure

Most editorials would be greatly improved if they followed the simple format of stating an opinion, backing it up with pertinent facts, and then finishing with a strong call to action. There are, of course, variations on this general pattern, but if in doubt, stick to it.

Do your research: Never, ever, back up your opinions with “facts” that actually aren’t. Avoid the fatal temptation to write an opinion piece off the top of your head, thereby revealing your lack of knowledge about a particular topic and seriously eroding the credibility of your publication. This is an important lesson for new editors to learn. You

## Six Different Types of Editorials

### Argumentative or Persuasive

This is the most-common type of editorial, where a clear opinion is stated up-front, supported by factual evidence, and ending with a call to action. Comparing and contrasting both sides of the story can often strengthen this type of editorial.

### Explanatory

The explanatory or interpretative editorial does exactly that: The author interprets or clarifies a particular issue for the reader.

### Negative criticism

The negative criticism editorial is similar to the argumentative, but this type always speaks against an issue or situation. The author definitely should include a remedy or solution in his or her conclusion.

### Commendation

The editorial that commends, or praises, is still an editorial. It is the author’s opinion, not straight news. This is often confused in dental publications. Remember that anything other than completely objective reporting is classified as commentary, and should be labeled as such in a publication.

### Commemoration

The commemoration editorial is similar to the commendation type. However, this editorial is often written upon a dentist’s retirement or some notable achievement, and cites specific examples of his or her outstanding service over the years.

### Humorous

The humorous editorial is probably the most difficult to write. Unless you are a professional writer or a professional comedian, your “humorous” articles will tend to fall flat. Have an objective reader go over your editorial if you insist on attempting to make your point by using satire.

need to do the research—ideally, before you’ve formed an opinion.

### Keep it Short

Many dental editorials are really just too long. In general, anything longer than a page of type is too long, and it would be better to keep your editorials shorter than that. Some say 500 words should be the limit. Sadly enough, your readers are busy, and attention spans seem to be growing shorter by the minute.

### Stay Focused

Also, keep in mind that in most cases you’re writing an editorial with the purpose of directing thought in a particular direction. You are not writing an essay, or a treatise on some subject, or the other that happens to be of interest to you. (It may not be of interest to your readers.) Nor is this the time to delve into anecdotal storytelling or other personal observations that have little to do with your publication, your dental society, or your members’ concerns. That’s better material for your blog, or another type of article in the publication.

### Look for Feedback

Have a colleague review your editorial after you’ve written it but before publication. Does it make sense? Is the “tone” right? Are the facts presented logically? Is it clear and unambiguous? Is it tightly written? In general, will it be helpful? Then, when you publish your editorial, provide your email address so that readers can contact you with their thoughts. Encourage personal feedback, other opinions, and letters to the editor. They can be hard to come by, but when you get one, you’ll know you scored.

### Have Courage

An editor must be reasonably fearless. He or she can’t be too self-conscious or overly preoccupied with what people will think. A judicious stirring of the pot can be a good thing—without being too controversial. If you’ve done your homework, presented a reasonable opinion based on facts, and perhaps run it by the “higher ups,” you should be okay. The most useless thing in a world is a namby-pamby editorial that tries to cover all the

bases and essentially says nothing. Remember, it’s your job to be a thought leader.

Much could, and has, been written about editorial writing. There are other types of editorials besides those of the persuasive variety (see box on page 9), and all rules are sometimes meant to be broken. But probably 90% of editorials fall into the pattern described above. So, keep these tips in mind as you write. Very likely your editorials will improve, your readers will notice, and you’ll find more satisfaction in your editorial writing.

*Source: American Dental Association, Publishing the Professional Journal or Newsletter: An Editor’s Guide, Christine Nolen, editor.*

### About the Author

*David Foe is the director of print and e-publications for the Michigan Dental Association and has served as managing editor of the Journal of the Michigan Dental Association for the past 30 years. He has a master’s degree in journalism from Michigan State University and is a Certified Dental Editor. He is a former board member of the AADEJ.*



Celebrating  
AADEJ's  
90<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary!



Helping dental organizations communicate with their members and publics

# Summer Webinar

## Communication and Membership: Are We Connecting?

Thursday, 15 July, two hours begin at 7 PM Eastern time

**Keynote from Drew Eason followed by working session in breakout groups**



Drew Eason is the executive director of the Florida Dental Association. Prior to joining the FDA eight years ago, he spent 17 years with the Michigan Dental Association with the last seven as its executive director. His focus and passion has been on member service and working to create a member-focused culture on his team. Drew has a Master's Degree in Administration from Michigan State University and a Bachelor's Degree from Ferris State University.

Drew says, "I have been privileged to work with very smart and caring leaders. The biggest challenge usually surrounds communication. Those who master it well tend to make the biggest difference in moving organizations forward."

**Registrants will then participate in small breakout groups, organized by the editor, managing editor, executive director, and staff. We will share challenges and successes on these issues:**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Market</b>      | <b>Who do you need to communicate with?</b>                |
| <b>Message</b>     | <b>What do you want them to hear or do?</b>                |
| <b>Medium</b>      | <b>How do you get the message out?</b>                     |
| <b>Measurement</b> | <b>How do you know this mix is optimal and is working?</b> |

Registration is accepted until Wednesday, 14 July at [dchamber@pacific.edu](mailto:dchamber@pacific.edu). Please state your name, the name of your organization, your role (for assignment to breakout groups). You will receive a confirmation and Zoom link. There is no fee for this program and CE credit will not be available because of the large participatory component. Questions: contact David W. Chambers, AADEJ ED; [dchamber@pacific.edu](mailto:dchamber@pacific.edu); (707) 225-5967.