

# THE EDITOR'S CORNER

## Looking to the Future

**A**s I write this column, we are living under the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic. The morbidity and mortality statistics are truly frightening at this point, and they are supposed to get much worse. “Self-isolation,” “social distancing,” and “stay at home” directives have pretty much put the entire global economy on hold. Orthodontic practices have not been deemed “essential services,” nor has regular dental care; emergency treatment only is the rule. Therefore, the worldwide practice of orthodontics is on hold. Although the temptation is to find a nice, sterile rock somewhere and hide under it until this scourge passes, I believe it’s “essential” to maintain as much of a semblance of normalcy as possible.

With that in mind, JCO continues its normal production schedule unabated. I have to commend our entire editorial and production staff for the incredible job they do every month, but especially for the job they are doing right now in the face of the greatest global crisis since at least World War II. Similarly, while the in-person AAO annual session, scheduled for May 1-4 in Atlanta, has been canceled, the association has resiliently devised a “Virtual Annual Session” for the weekend of May 2-3—open and free to all members. What a great idea! As I have mentioned in past Editor’s Corners, the annual session is always the highlight of my year and the highlight for practically the entire profession—an unparalleled opportunity for learning, networking, collaboration, brainstorming, marketing, and, yes, partying. We will all miss seeing one another in person, but we’ll still appreciate the virtual substitute.

For JCO, the annual session presents a chance to meet both our readers and our authors. Like a hunter, I am always stalking as many of the lectures and exhibits as I can, searching for new and interesting authors and topics for our readers’ benefit. Over the past five years, however, I have

developed a new favorite event: the presentation of our annual Eugene L. Gottlieb JCO Student of the Year award at the residents’ reception. To honor our late Founding Editor, who always had an eye to progress and the future, we select the graduate orthodontic student who demonstrates the best clinical skills.

Our award process is complex and almost tedious. Any American orthodontic department can nominate one student; this year, we had 25 nominees, any of whom would have been a worthy recipient. Each of the students received the same unpublished case records and was required to turn in a treatment plan within two weeks. After the field was narrowed to 12 finalists, each had to submit an ABO-style case report. You can read more details and a brief interview with the winner, Dr. Saro Atam of Stony Brook University, in this issue.

The months-long judging process always involves a panel of highly accomplished editorial board members who are widely recognized for their own contributions to orthodontics. For undertaking this endeavor on a volunteer basis, they have my sincere gratitude. I would also like to thank American Orthodontics—our lead sponsor since the inception of the award—and Dolphin Imaging & Management Services, both of whom provide valuable materials as part of the winner’s prize. The creative genius behind this award is our own Vice President of Marketing and Business Development, Phil Vogels, who is Dr. Gottlieb’s grandson. Speaking as a grandfather myself, I know Gene is very honored and proud of you.

With people around the world wondering what the future will hold after this pandemic, I remain confident that our specialty will not only survive but thrive. As I review the nominees for our 2020 Student of the Year award, my confidence in the future of our profession is even deeper.

RGK