



From the Director of the Office of Staff Wellbeing



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY
Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine

Sue's News: June Newsletter

— Hello everyone,

Welcome to all the OR nurses, RTs, medical students, residents and staff physicians from several specialties who have recently joined our Wellness Newsletter subscriber list.

Just a reminder that anyone can access the Wellness Newsletter archive on the Anesthesiology [website](#) Wellness pages.



Tim and I have been away enjoying the spectacular Oregon coastline. First real vacation in a while with no agenda, conference, family obligations etc. We had a great time walking the beaches, visiting art galleries and every independent bookstore I could find. I noticed that I felt different on this vacation. When I tried to pin it down, I realized that I was content. I didn't need to micromanage our time. I didn't need to go everywhere and see everything, (except every independent book store, obviously!) Seriously though, I wonder if writing down what I was grateful for in the May newsletter was a factor. One definition of being content: "A state of peaceful happiness". It felt good to me.

And although Tim went deaf in one ear (for some unknown reason, lol!), we had lots of conversations. Sometimes one sided. And sometimes not with me. At the Oregon Aquarium he tenderly asked "Are you Ok?" I said I was fine, and then discovered he was talking to a truly miserable looking fish!

Conversations matter. Listening and paying attention matter. Perhaps especially when the content is difficult. Susan Bryant, the courageous wife of Australian gastroenterologist Dr. Andrew Bryant, started a tough conversation by sharing details of her husband's recent suicide.

Dr. Eric Levi, an ENT surgeon in Brisbane, responded to the letter on his website and through social media. He also wrote three thoughtful pieces which I suggest are essential reading for us all. The comments sections are revealing and heartbreaking.

<https://ericlevi.com/2017/05/13/the-dark-side-of-doctoring/>
<https://ericlevi.com/2017/05/17/the-dark-side-awakens/>
<https://ericlevi.com/2017/05/20/restoring-hope-and-humanity-to-health-care/>

In the third piece Dr. Levi suggests 3 paradigm shifts to consider and discuss.

Change your **Hierarchy**. Change your **Habit and Habitat**. Change your **Heart**.

Following up on this Dr. Geoff Toogood came up with the CrazySox4Docs campaign.

#Crazysox4docs happened on June 1st, encouraging physicians and other health care workers to wear crazy or mismatching socks to Remember, Raise awareness and to Reshape the culture of healthcare.



Wear odd socks tomorrow

1. To **Remember** the many Health Professionals who have died by suicide or in the line of duty.
2. To **Raise awareness** of physical and mental health issues among Health Professionals, and
3. To **Reshape the culture** of the Health Care Industry with Hope and Humanity, so that health care workers are given the space to care for each other.



Of course it's fun and cute to dig out your crazy socks and post pictures as we did along with ORs across the world..... but the real point is to open up a conversation about mental health and wellness in healthcare. Hopefully we made a start. Hopefully these conversations continue. Hopefully we can move forward together to change the culture.

As I was putting this together feeling all chuffed that we had done our bit, talked and Tweeted sock pics like crazy (!)

I read this piece on Twitter. All I can say is it reduced me to tears. Please [click here](#) to access it.

And in case we are tempted to think it's OK here at home in Canada, here is the latest from the University of Toronto. Entire issue devoted to physician health ([link](#)).

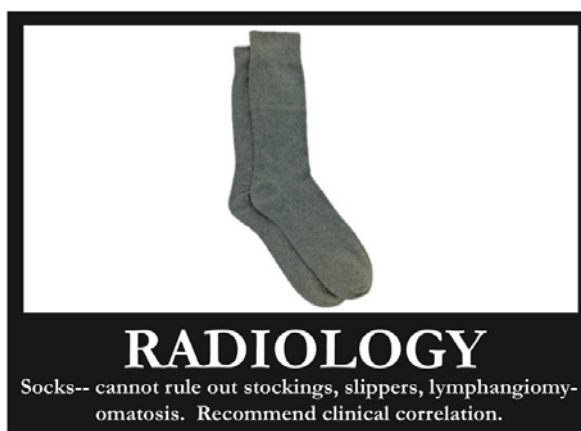
I can't come up with a good way to segue from this, except through humor.

So [click here](#) for a funny blog.

A "satirical news website created by a bunch of wannabe stand-up comedians who ended up in healthcare." One post is about medical specialty stereotyping by socks! Would be grateful if our psychiatrist subscriber could explain the Psychiatry example to me.

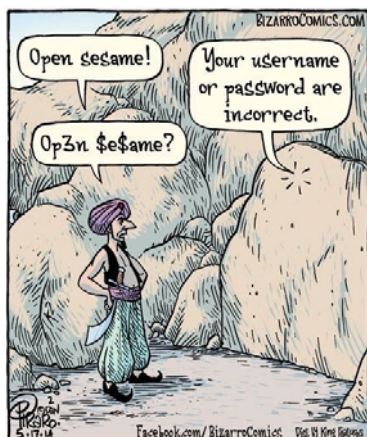
Seriously. Or someone else?

Please [click here](#) to check it out!



Lots of dark humour on [this site](#). If you enjoyed The House of God by Samuel Shem and are short of CME check out their House of God Rules quiz. My score was a pathetic 7/10 so clearly need to review my copy of the book!

I can't post it here, but my unshockable anesthesia colleagues might also like Anatomy of a Stupid Pyxis machine which you can find on the website.



Back from vacation I had forgotten all my passwords for Pyxis, Netcare etc. etc. So liked this cartoon.



Finally, a reminder that **June is Pride Month!** Lots of events in Edmonton. Check out this [link!](#)

Our daughter Ellen is in a committed relationship with a wonderful woman who I loved as soon as we met. Ellen is fortunate to be a teacher at an inclusive, supportive school. But our LGBTQ medical colleagues may find it much tougher to be openly themselves in the medical environment.

I asked Ellen if I could write this. She said yes, but why write about me? It's because I believe that honest sharing of all kinds of personal stories can help us to connect. Not shiny, curated, perfectly Photo shopped Facebook posts. Messy, confused, human stories.

Recently I received an email that said something like "Thank you Sue. I thought I was the only person that felt like this." Connections matter. When we feel connected to each other we also feel safe to ask for help when we need it.

"What a child needs, what we all need, is to find some other people who have imagined life along lines that make sense to us and allow some freedom, and listen to them. Not hear passively, but listen. Listening is an act of community, which takes space, time, and silence. Reading is a means of listening." Ursula Le Guin

Thank you for reading and thank you for being part of this conversation and this community,

All good things, Sue

Sue Reid
Director, Office of Staff Wellbeing
Department of Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine
Twitter: [@susanjeanreid](#)

