

# THE JOURNAL

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Sharing our pride. Shaping our future.

## Nancy Neily:

Career satisfaction means reaching beyond a job description

## Calling all sleeping beauties

Rest easy with tips to snooze soundly

## Leaders from the Past

Diane Pike is a jetsetter with her feet firmly on the ground

## Caught on camera!

Highlights from the Toronto Academy of Dentistry Winter Clinic

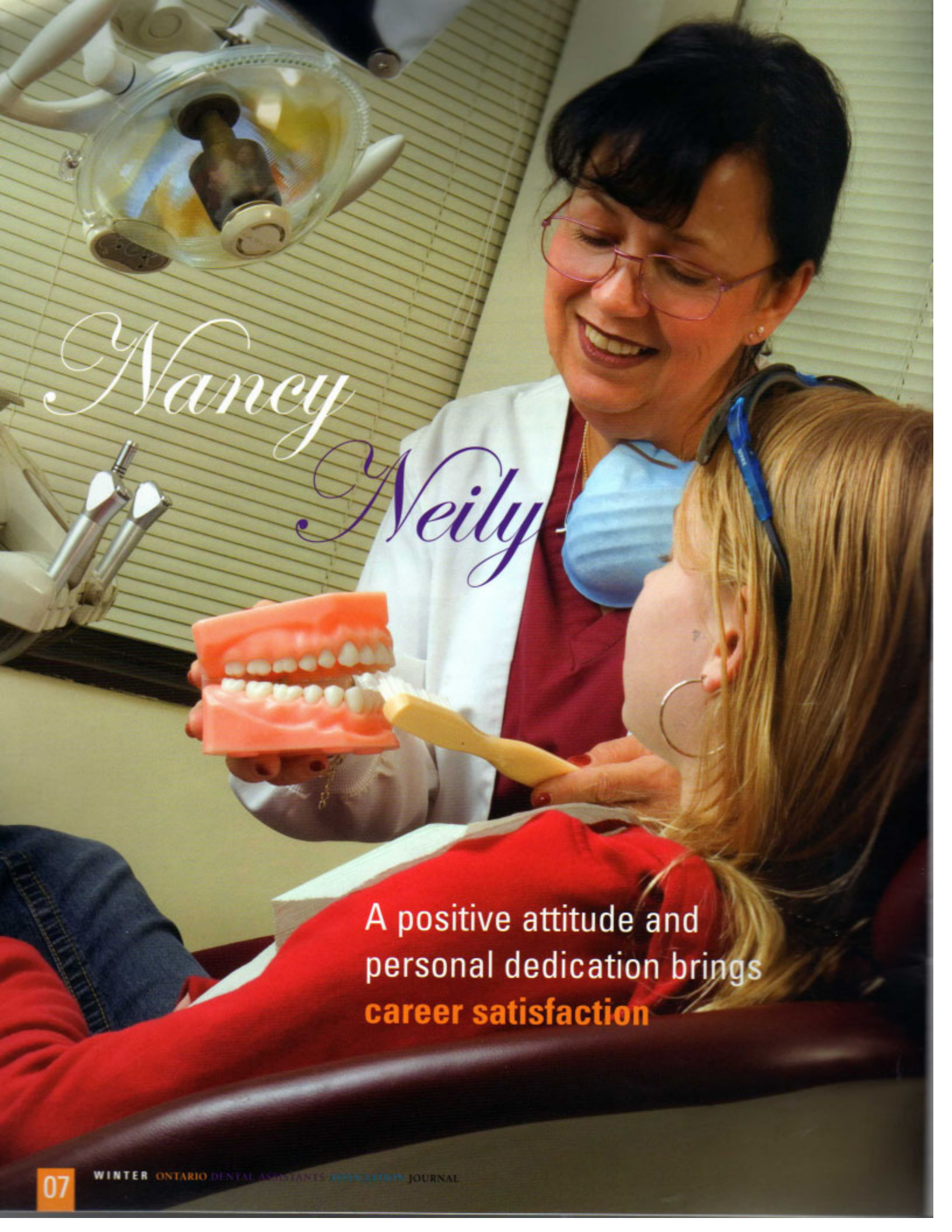


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*Nancy  
Neily*

A positive attitude and  
personal dedication brings  
**career satisfaction**

**Nancy Neily is a dental assistant (DA) who does her best to stretch the boundaries of her job description. While she takes a great deal of pride in her chairside work, Nancy also gets satisfaction from taking on other responsibilities in the dental office, thus enhancing her skills and adding professional value to her career.**

### **CERTIFICATION WAS "JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO"**

With over 25 years of experience in the dental field, Nancy knows that certification goes hand in hand with great oral care. A graduate of the Career Academy in Toronto, she became certified in 1981. In 1985, she left the dental profession to pursue another career avenue, and her certification lapsed. Upon returning to dental assisting in 1989, Nancy knew that certification would be vital to her ongoing career. Determined not to be limited by what she could and couldn't do on the job, she rewrote the exam. This was a fundamental stepping-stone for Nancy; without it, she feels she would not have had the same opportunities. "Without certification, I wouldn't have the confidence to advance in my career, or to volunteer in my association. As a certified DA, I have the chance to take on as much responsibility as I am able to and the knowledge to confidently voice my opinion. That makes me feel good about my job."

### **PROUD TO BE A PART OF AN ORGANIZATION THAT CARES**

Joining the ODAA has given Nancy a sense of belonging. "The support I get from the ODAA is something I value very much. Any questions I have, whether it's concerning wages, employment standards or anything else related to our field are always answered within 24 hours or less."

Nancy cites a time when she had an issue with a co-worker. The ODAA was there to lend a helping hand. "Lynne Brandon was very helpful during that stressful time. She offered support and recommended that I document everything. If it wasn't for the ODAA, I don't know where I would have turned."

As an active member and an avid supporter of the ODAA, Nancy believes in the organization's work and goals for the future. "The ODAA is striving to create pride, unity and comradeship among its members, and to make DAs better known to the public, stressing the importance of our role. I am 150 percent in favour of regulation. With regulation, DAs will have the opportunity for uniform salaries and a real sense of value in their role."

### **POSITIVE CHANGES AT THE AFFILIATE LEVEL**

Last fall, the ODAA created new guidelines for affiliate meetings. A volunteer at the affiliate level—first as treasurer, then as president for the past two and half years—Nancy has seen a refreshing shift in the atmosphere as a result. "In the past, members felt that they had to go to the meetings just to get their credits, but now, I believe our members are attending because they really enjoy it."

Under the new guidelines, all affiliate meetings must be dental or medical-related and one meeting must be focused on infection control. The intent is to promote pride in the dental profession and to facilitate fellowship and unity among its members. "Our meetings are more relaxed and more interesting! We've had great speakers who have inspired everyone. There's a sense that we're all in this together."

### **TIME WELL SPENT**

Nancy currently divides her time between two dental offices.

She works for Dr. Mel Perlmutter at Bramlea Dentistry in Brampton as an office manager, treatment coordinator and manager of the children's program. "I love the challenge and variety that this job brings." She also dental assists for Dr. Robert Carmicheal in Toronto at the Bloorview Kids Rehab Centre. "We help children with special dental needs, such as kids born with cleft lips or palates. It's extremely rewarding."

She hopes to further her career by getting involved in governance at the dental assisting College that the ODAA is planning to establish once regulation is achieved.

With her three grown sons—Jason, a systems programmer in the IT department of an energy savings corporation; Aaron, a certified chef; and Ryan, a semi-professional golfer—well on their way, Nancy has more time for her other pursuits. When she isn't working, she knits, reads, bakes, watches movies and attends the theatre.

### **INSPIRING OTHER DAS TO FOLLOW SUIT**

Nancy feels it is a great time for DAs to become certified and start making their mark in the world of dental assisting. "There are exciting changes in the air. Now is the time to be on board. Focus on the positive and believe in yourself!" 