

Dr. Allon Reddoch: the CMA's new president is a Yukon enthusiast

John Hoey, MD; Barbara Sibbald

Dr. Allon Reddoch, the CMA's new president, is a self-confessed Yukon enthusiast even though he was born a world away in Liverpool (see accompanying editorial p. 797 and annual meeting coverage p. 837). The son of a Methodist minister, Reddoch spent his childhood in Wales, New Brunswick and a handful of small Ontario towns, but plans to spend the rest of his life in Whitehorse.

He arrived there through happenstance — and a predilection for small-town life. After graduating from the University of Western Ontario in 1973 and completing a 1-year rotating internship at Ontario's Scarborough General Hospital, he and his new wife, Mary, decided a 2-month locum in Whitehorse might be fun.

Twenty-four years later they're still enjoying themselves. His wife has owned a gift store, among other things, while Reddoch has a thriving general practice. He says he loves delivering babies and then watching these new patients grow up.

He counts among his most influential teachers former *CMAJ* editor Bruce Squires and dermatology professor William Pace. "In one of his lectures Dr. Pace said it's criminal the way acne goes untreated. I've had quite a few teenage patients come in for other problems and I've asked if they wanted help with their acne. They've turned out to be some of the most grateful patients I've had. It was very sound advice."

Reddoch says he has wanted to be a doctor since public school and "I've never thought of doing anything else." But he admits he's a bit frustrated by his typical 70-hour work weeks. "It's difficult to get out and enjoy things," he says, adding that older physicians could learn from their younger counterparts. "So many of us have put in long hours and we've neglected other things that are important. Younger physicians have a healthier attitude. They work hard when they're working, but families and lifestyle seem to be more important than they were in the past. And that's a good thing."

The Reddochs have more than a few leisure-time activities they'd like to spend more time at. They're building a home on the shore of Marsh Lake, a renowned migratory stop-over for the magnificent metre-high trumpeter swan. And they like to sail their 7-metre boat, cross-country ski and hike. He and Mary have even hiked the world famous Chilkoot Trail, gateway to the Klondike gold fields of bygone days. The tour books say the 53-km climb up a 939-m rise should take 3 to 5 days; they made it in just over 2 days. Now they're looking forward to using their second-hand Zodiac — an inflatable boat with motor — to travel through hundreds of kilometres of Yukon waterways.

Travelling is an important part of their lives. In 1990 they literally went around the world: Australia, Europe, South America. They've also been to Nepal and Canada's Far North.

After the 1997 meeting, when Reddoch was named CMA president-elect, the couple went on a white-water rafting trip down the Tatshenshini River. Part way down he found an Eagle feather — a powerful and positive omen among First Nations people. "I took that as a sign of good things to come during my term as president," he says.

And yes, he says, it is Allon with an "o" — a legacy from a Scottish uncle. ?



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Dr. Allon Reddoch: it can get cold up here