

NORTH OF THE 401



This morning I came upon the very first article I wrote for Ontario Dentist Magazine over 35 years ago.

Thinking back, I admit that I was young and naïve.

The article was titled “North of the 401”.

The article came to me while sitting on a rock overlooking a pristine northern freshwater lake. I had just met with Dr. John Wilson in Timmins Ontario, and decided to take a break on a beautiful sunny day.

The article promoted the remarkable Northern Ontario environment as a wonderful place to live and practice dentistry, and in it I pondered ‘why don’t more dentists choose to live and work in this environment’?

I criticized young graduates for choosing the big city lights and ignoring a remarkable career opportunity.

I spoke about how overhead in this area is far below our national averages. Northern Ontario offers low-cost housing and lower-than-average rent and employee wages, which, from my perspective, should be enough to draw new dentists away from the big city lifestyle.

I thought it such a shame – they could be living in some of the most beautiful areas of the country while earning an above-average dentist income working from 9-5 in a safe, clean town.

Plus, they could enjoy a lot of vacation time! Many of our rural and remote clients take 6 to 10 weeks of vacation each year, and some brag about how they hire a driver to take them to big airports once a month so they can take off for a week! While they are away, other local dental offices cover for each other without “poaching” patients, and everyone gets along swimmingly.

I now understand that young graduates desire the pleasures of the urban centers. I was once a young man and drawn to the urban rhythms myself.

I was naïve to think that money was the prime motivator.

35 years later, not much has changed. . .

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