

Dentists open wide to embrace green concepts



STEVE CAREY
Reduce, Reuse, Rethink
rethink@tc.canwest.com

Next time you go to the dentist for a filling, ask for all the disposable items to be put into a bag. You'll be astounded by how much is thrown out, says Dr. Ali Farahani, an Ontario dentist and proponent of sustainable dentistry.

"Dentistry just uses so much stuff in a single appointment, you have no idea," says Farahani, who has worked as dentist for a decade. "It's incredible ... so much more than even a surgery. In a hospital, a lot of the stuff they use is reusable, but in dentistry, there are so many disposable gadgets and widgets."

Practising dentistry with sustainability in mind is something Farahani has put a lot of thought into. In 2007, he co-wrote a research paper, Eco-Friendly Dentistry, in the hope that other dentists would be able to use it as a framework, as he does in

his own practice in Stratford, Ont.

Farahani defines sustainable dentistry as reducing use of such resources as water and energy, safeguarding the environment from such harmful chemicals as mercury, and promoting the well being of everyone in the office, from patients to staff.

Reuse is a big part of eco-dentistry. Anything that can withstand the heat of an autoclave — a machine that sterilizes by heating items to 121 C for more than 15 minutes — can be reused.

In an autoclave, items are wrapped in a plastic packet, which is thrown out after use. With more stainless steel and reusable items, higher volumes are cleaned, which means more autoclave packaging. But the plastic is recyclable, so a practice like Farahani's prevents more than 4,500 pieces of plastic per year from going to the dump.

Farahani also cuts down on plastic by bundling items such as bibs and suction tubes together in one autoclave packet, instead of wrapping each individually. It's a tip learned from hospitals and medical laundry companies, Farahani says.

Cutting down on paper bibs also makes a difference. In his research, Farahani found that more than 150,000 paper bibs are dis-



In his Saanich office, dentist Jerry Jacob uses a digital X-ray machine with remote control, which exposes patients to less radiation and eliminates development chemicals.

carded by a dentist over a 30-year career. Easily sterilized cotton towels can replace paper bibs.

Greener dentistry is spreading. The California-based eco-dentistry association (ecodontistry.org) offers support and resources to dentists, as well as a directory of participating clinics. There's only one B.C. dental office that's a member; none in Victoria.

But many practices are adopting environmentally friendly practices. Dr. Jerry Jacob and Dr. Furey Higgins moved their Saanich practice, Signature Dental, into the LEED-certified Raven Building in Royal Oak. The building has a green roof and geothermal

heating and cooling. The LEED design helps save on energy — passive solar lighting means the office can leave its lights off most of the day. The fixtures use LED bulbs. Marmoleum, a natural linoleum that is antimicrobial and anti-fungal, is used throughout the clinic. All clinic water fixtures are set up to reduce water — using timers or foot-controls to shut them off when not in use.

A big change in dentistry is the use of an amalgam separator. The machine removes mercury and other hazardous materials extracted during a filling procedure from waste water which flushes to the ocean. It's required for all

clinics in the capital region, Jacob says.

"Normally, when a dentist is drilling out a mercury filling, anything that gets sucked up just gets into the wastewater, which goes to the sewer system. Now, they're finding out a lot of mercury and lead is going into the sewer system and the ocean," Jacob says. "What [the separator] does is filter out any mercury and heavy metals, and collects it in a sedimentation tank. Once every six months or so a company comes by and recycles it."

The practice also uses a steam rather than a chemical autoclave. The office has implemented a recycling and composting pro-

gram, and cuts down on paper use with a database.

A digital X-ray machine reduces radiation patients are exposed to, and eliminates harmful development chemicals and materials. Even though the digital X-ray is less wasteful than film, the plastic sleeves used to wrap the sensors can't be sterilized and must be thrown out as medical waste. There's still less waste than in the past, Jacob says.

Farahani says eco-dentistry practices should be a standard, not an option or a gimmick. People don't go to his practice because he's "green," they go to him because they trust him as a dentist who happens to use sustainable, responsible practices, he says.

Though he spent an extra \$75,000 setting up his practice, Farahani is starting to see a return on investment. For example, instead of paying a little for disposable suction tubes and using thousands, he paid more for reusable stainless tubes.

"Now, after three years, those initial costs are all being recouped, because we're not throwing out what we bought three years ago," he says.

"That stuff we bought, we'll still be using 10 years from now, or more."

Read Steve's blog at timescolonist.com/rethink.

celebrating.com™ Share the joy. Tell the world.

CELEBRATING

WEDDINGS • ANNIVERSARIES • ENGAGEMENTS • BIRTHS • BIRTHDAYS • SPECIAL OCCASIONS • IN PRINT & ONLINE



Martin – 65th Nelson and Myrtle

Celebrating 65 Wonderful Years Together.
Nelson and Myrtle were married on May 25, 1945 - The Salvation Army, Victoria, BC.
Thank you for the excellent example of Christian love
- With love from June, Dave, Tracey, Dan, Abbey and Nate

—587835

Congratulations
Devin and Rhianna!
Cheers to a long and happy life together.
Best wishes from your Classy friends

—588901



Stafford – 65th

Ernie and Betty Stafford (nee McFetridge) are celebrating 65 years of marriage on May 25, 2010. They were married in Coleraine, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland while they were both serving in the Royal Navy. Betty and Ernie continue to have a wonderful and full life together, raising 5 children, traveling all over the world and living in Ireland, California and finally in Duncan for nearly 50 years. Congratulations and sincerest best wishes to both of them on this very special occasion from Family and Friends near and far.

—588943



Hvozdzanski – 50th

Celebrating 50 wonderful years together!
John and Helen were married in
Calgary, Alberta on May 14th, 1960.
Congratulations and love from your family

—5876325



Noels – 70th

George and Julie were married in Wolseley, Sask. on May 20, 1940. Mom and Dad, you have been loving and caring parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. Congratulations and love to you both. From your family.

—588473



Happy 80th May 17, 1930 Bob Kirker

"Absolutely fantastic"
Love from your wife Flora and daughter
Heather and Darrin Leek.

—588890



Hinrichsen

Eric and Tricia Hinrichsen are thrilled to announce the arrival of our baby girl, Chelsea Kate Hinrichsen, born in Victoria on April 21st, 2010 weighing 8 lbs. 5 oz. Proud big brother Justin, and grandparents Doug and Barb Fieldhouse of Campbell River, Henry Hinrichsen of Quadra Island and Maureen Hinrichsen of Campbell River are all excited.

—589328

Robinson – 40th
Gordie and Janice (nee Pollard) were married May 16, 1970 in the Church of St. John the Divine in Victoria and celebrated their anniversary on a Hawaiian cruise. Blessings and love from Kyle, Carin, Aidan, Lily, Darren, Nicole and all your family and friends.

—587549



Happy 85th Gwen Fussey

(AKA: Mum, Gran, GG, Big Grandma, Friend)
With love, The Whole Gang

—588902



Karen Herriott (Hughes)
Pretty nifty - now you're 50
Love from Mom & Dad

—588907



Can you believe, the Grand- dam (aka Diamond Lil)

Has finally made it!!!
May 25 Happy 80th Birthday Mumsy!!
Love your kids!!
(aka The Ugly Family)

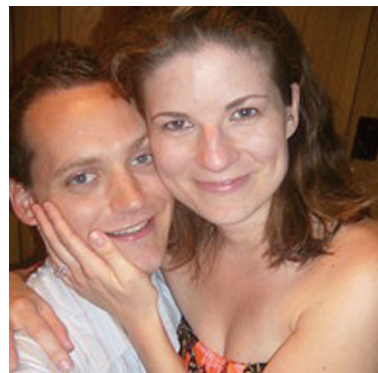
—588736



Jocelyne Spears (Little Legs Daycare)

Grandma dear you are the best. But now it is your time to rest. You've taught our children these many years. You've heard their laughter and calmed their fears. You've helped them learn with care and love. You are an angel from above. The toys are neatly put away. It's your turn now to go and play.
Wishing you a lifetime of happiness
in your retirement years.

—588504



Myette – Turner

A romantic proposal at the Burton cabin and a summer wedding planned for 2011... congratulations to Brittani Renee Myette, daughter of Larry and Ardis, and Kevin William Turner, son of Barry and Sandi, on your engagement. "May you find home in the hearth of your souls." Love from us all.

—588911



Karen Herriott

Happy 50th Birthday Karen
With all of Our Love, Don, Ashton and Jeremy

—586977



JOIN THE CELEBRATION ONLINE @ www.celebrating.com

• SHARE A STORY

• SIGN A GUESTBOOK

• CHECK THE GIFT REGISTRY

• VIEW MORE PHOTOS

**CELEBRATE YOUR
SPECIAL OCCASION
WITH US – Every Sunday
in the Times Colonist**

TIMES COLONIST
(250) 386-2121

Just call us before 4pm Tuesdays
with details of your special
occasion and let the celebrations
begin. Prices start at \$28

Photos can be emailed as a .JPG, .EPS or .TIFF, min 150 DPI to classified@tc.canwest.com