

Undertaking *JRheum* and Navigating the 2008 Economic Crisis

By Dr. John Thomson, CRA President, 2008-2010

When I first joined the CRA Board, I never imagined that I would become President. But there I was in early 2008, my new BlackBerry in hand, taking over the helm of what was to be a very busy but mostly enjoyable and satisfying two years.

The work of President of the CRA was like a second job. Emails of all levels of urgency arrived during the day and were dealt with on the fly between patients. Another couple of hours each and every night was spent dealing with more complex issues through emails, phone calls, and teleconferences. For the most part, my term was relatively uneventful, and much of my time was of an important housekeeping variety.

My term did, however, include the year 2008. As you may recall, and as we have been reminded of during the current COVID-19 crisis, 2008 had a major worldwide economic crisis all its own. This crisis paralyzed much economic activity globally, and the world economy was fraught with great uncertainty not dissimilar to that which we are currently experiencing. In the midst of this crisis, the CRA had to decide whether to proceed with a very major undertaking: The purchase of the *Journal of Rheumatology* (*JRheum*). After a great deal of fretting, hand wringing, and discussion, bravely and (as it turns out) wisely the CRA proceeded with the transaction.

More than anything, it was the people. Membership on the Board tends to select out for individuals with a sense of volunteerism and personality strengths of collaboration and professionalism. As the President, I felt greatly supported and never alone. We worked together for the greater good of Canadian rheumatologists. This was truly a great honour and privilege.



I can't write about these years without special acknowledgment of a few people who helped me make it through: Christine Charnock, our Executive Director at the time; Gunnar Kraag the immediate Past-President; Michel Zummer, the *past* Past-President; Arthur Bookman, the *past past* Past-President; and Jamie Henderson, Vice-President.

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