Strapped into a passenger seat of a twin-engine aircraft a few hundred feet above White Plains, N.Y., John Mazuzan, M.D.’54, certainly had no time to think of the next 50 years stretching out ahead of him. Having another 50 minutes guaranteed would have been more than enough.

It was the spring of 1964, and Mazuzan, who’d only recently returned to Burlington to practice anesthesiology, had joined a group of College of Medicine alumni that called themselves the “alumni raiders,” as they crisscrossed the nation soliciting their fellow graduates in the effort to raise funds to complete the College’s building program, which would eventually produce the Given Medical Alumni complex. On this particular evening, Mazuzan accompanied John Maeck, M.D.’39 and Win Eddy, M.D.’45, on a round of visits to alumni in New York City and Hartford. Their day done, the group took off from Westchester County Airport at midnight, bound for Vermont. One engine of the small plane soon sputtered, and their pilot skillfully turned back and landed safely. Assuring his passengers that it had only been an easily solved problem of water vapor in their fuel line, the pilot quickly made some adjustments, and they were once again airborne.

“Then I turned to John Maeck in the seat beside me,” recalls Mazuzan, “And I said ‘why is he yelling Mayday?’”

“Listen,” said Maeck. It was more a matter of what couldn’t be heard: the engine had now completely failed. They again turned back. After one harrowing missed pass, the plane finally bumped down safely on the runway. The shaken group switched to a car.

A few weeks later, on another fundraising visit, the team heard a fellow alumni complain that “the College only contacts me when it wants my money.”

“That’s not true anymore,” said Maeck, pointing at Mazuzan. “He’s going to start producing a College magazine to keep you informed.”

“And that’s how it all began,” says Mazuzan. “Within a few months I was laying out the first issue at the old Lane Press building on Pine Street, standing next to the Linotype machine.” Mazuzan wasn’t sure what to call the magazine so, as a placeholder, he slugged in the title “Hall A,” the name of the College’s main lecture hall. “I couldn’t come up with another name by press time, so we just kept it in,” he says. Fifty years later that magazine, now known as Vermont Medicine, stands as one of the oldest continuously published medical school magazines in the nation.

Mazuzan was the obvious choice to spearhead founding a publication since, as he puts it, “It was well-known that I had printer’s ink in my blood.” His father had owned and edited the Northfield (Vt.) News & Advertiser for many years, and young John had grown up running proofs in the shop, and writing short news and sport pieces from his early teens. He had even written at the Mazuzan kitchen table and laid out at a Pine Street print shop, the first issue of Hall A appeared in the fall of 1964.
covered General Eisenhower’s visit to Norwich University in 1946 for the paper, and had seen his write-up go national on the Associated Press wire. “I don’t know how I took on creating a magazine and still maintained a full-time practice,” he says. He soon began to receive some help from the University’s public relations office, but stayed on the magazine’s masthead as editor until the late 1970s.

Five decades after the first issue rolled off the presses, the magazine has gone through several editorial and production changes. Originally an 8-inch square, it moved up to a full size publication in the early 1980s. Color came to its pages in 2001, as did a name change, since the readership had broadened to include recipients who had never sat in the Hall A lecture hall, which itself became a thing of the past a few years ago. (The alumni news and notes section, in tribute, retains the old lecture hall name.)

In the following pages, and through articles available on the Vermont Medicine website, readers can get a glimpse of the changing life of the College of Medicine from the 1960s to today. Even more important are the clear indications of what hasn’t changed — the work to educate students and produce research that serves patients and the community.

— Ed Neuert
Editor, 1998–present

Students
More than anything else, alumni of the College always wish to be kept informed of what it is like to be a medical student today. Across all the “todays” of the last 50 years, the magazine has shown students throughout their daily life — navigating the worlds of the lecture hall and clinics, learning about the physician’s life, and having a lot of fun along the way.

Women
It seems almost impossible to realize now, but in the 1960s it was headline-worthy to state that “A Medical Student… is Not Always a ‘He’.” Women had first been admitted to the College in the early 1920s, but their numbers in the student body had never been large. Beginning in the mid-1970s that changed fairly rapidly.

One female student featured in the 1970s was Casja Nordstrom (later Casja Schumacher, M.D.’74), who went on to years of service on the Medical Alumni Association Executive Committee, including service as the first female president of the committee. Her two daughters also earned their M.D.s at the College. Today, as has been the case for many years, roughly half the student body are women.

Facilities
Over 50 years, the College’s campus has not only changed — it’s actually moved. Early issues of Hall A detail the plans for the new complex and, in 1958, the move to the top of the hill — including the last class in the old Hall A that had served the school for more than 60 years. Later years saw coverage of the construction to Rowell Hall, and the rise of the Health Sciences Research Facility and the Medical Education Center.

Curriculum
Change is a constant in medical education, and nothing has been more of an indicator of the constant refinement and improvement of the art and science of medicine than the continuing evolution of the College’s curriculum over the past 50 years. In 1967, the “new” curriculum introduced a radical change: early clinical experience. That spirit continued to inform the curriculum development process over the coming decades, eventually fostering the Vermont Integrated Curriculum’s development in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Read All About It!
See the full stories featured here, plus many added articles from the last 50 years. Go to: uvm.edu/medicine/vtmedicine
Technology

First and foremost comes the human dimension of medicine: the doctor/patient relationship. But augmenting that is the tremendous tide of technological innovation that has brought forth astounding new resources for better treatment and increased access to and sharing of information. Physicians are lifelong learners, and that has been apparent in these pages. Computers made an early appearance, the World Wide Web was born right before our eyes, and in the new millennium, the College of Medicine Educational Tools (COMET) became a 24/7 platform for medical student learning and sharing. Clinical simulation became a strong presence in the past decade.

Clinical Practice

The delivery of medical care has changed in many ways over the last 50 years. Medicare and Medicaid were introduced a year after the magazine was founded, and the huge changes over the years in practice structures, the introduction of new clinical fields such as emergency medicine, and the continuing need for more primary care doctors have been documented in Hall A and Vermont Medicine.

Research

One of the great stories in U.S. medicine over the last five decades has been the growth of the National Institutes of Health and other funding agencies, and the resulting growth of research work at medical schools throughout the nation. An article in a 1966 issue of Hall A told of the College’s winning one of the first five federal grants for regional heart disease, cancer, and stroke programs — an early effort at translating the latest medical knowledge into clinical practice. As the College’s research funding has grown, stories about those efforts have frequently appeared in the magazine.

Faculty

There is no recognized formula for a successful medical school, but if it had to be reduced to a mathematical equation, that would certainly involve adding an intelligent and curious student body to a dedicated, knowledgeable, and caring faculty. Many members of the College faculty have been celebrated in these pages through the decades — people who helped form the physicians of today, and whose reputations and influence continue.

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