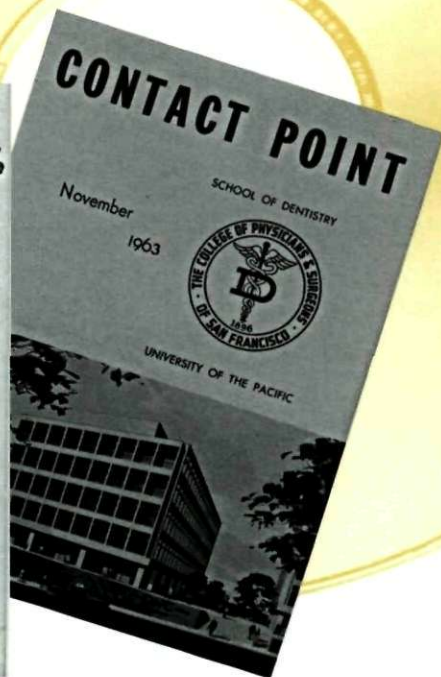
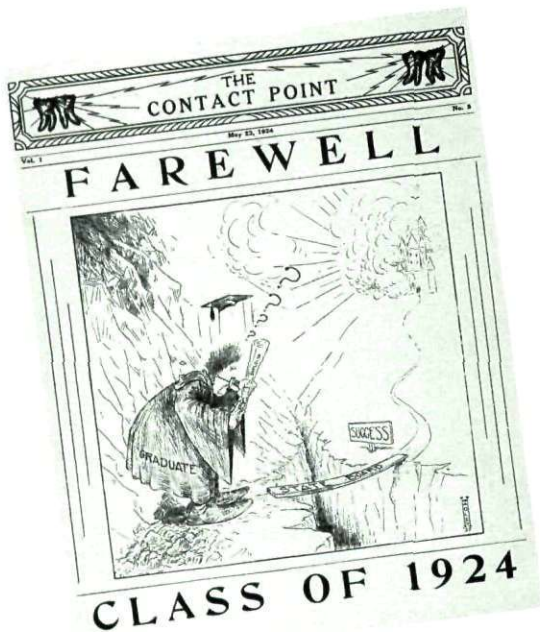


Contact with the world and to the Point

Contact Point Celebrates 70 Years

BY DR. ERIC CURTIS

Nineteen twenty-four was a good year for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of San Francisco. Postwar prosperity lifted spirits; the City's 1906 earthquake and fire, which had destroyed the school building, had long since been taken in stride. In fact, the fortunes of the twenty-eight-year-old school were looking up, its identity sharpened. Only six years had passed since the departments of medicine and pharmacy had been discontinued. Just the year before, loyal alumni of the dental department, determined to strengthen the program, had bought out co-founder, owner, and dean, Dr. Charles Boxtton, and set up a board of trustees to manage affairs as a non-profit institution.



On February 27, 1924, the Associated Students of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of San Francisco, School of Dentistry, gave pride a voice. It began with a modest paper circulated among the student body. "This small publication," read an announcement in tenuous typewriter script on the center column of the front page, "is the exponent of a big purpose — connecting ideas and a means of interchange of thought." The students called their twice-monthly publication "Contact Point."

Since that day, *Contact Point* has provided a unique window into the School of Dentistry. Through the years, through the pages of the magazine, through reporting on the development of programs, philosophies, students and alumni, is seen the forging of an institution. It's as if for seventy years the school has kept a diary.

As diaries go, the first entries were enthusiastically adolescent. From the school grounds at 344 Fourteenth Street, *Contact Point's* second issue sported an energetic nameplate decorated with molars broadcasting radio waves outward in narrow Zs. The text bustled with announcements and editorials. Reports of the doings of various clubs and classes boasted such snappy headings as "Freshman Froth," "Sophomore Snickers," "Junior Juice," and "Senior Sassiety." The culture of the College of the Physician and Surgeons was not that of a post-baccalaureate institution. DDS candidates were matriculated straight out of high school. Student activities were much the same as for a liberal arts school. "The Dramatic Club should be revived," argued one editorial blurb. Another called for the formation of a school orchestra.

The school in 1924 boasted ten departments. One comprised jurisprudence, English, history, ethics, and economics. The others were infir-

mary practice; orthodontia; oral surgery; prosthetic dentistry and crown and bridge; operative dentistry; bacteriology and pathology; physiology; hygiene, material medical and therapeutics; anatomy, histology and biology; chemistry, physics and metallurgy.

First-year preclinical courses were stacked not with anatomy but algebra. In an essay titled, "My First Impression of Physician' and Surgeons College," freshman Robert Sweetzer '31, described the debut of his dental career:

"We were told to go upstairs for our first class. It was English. Dr. McDowell explained to the class that it was a pre-dental course we were taking — a medium between high school and college proper — a medium that would easily enable us to become acclimated and oriented. Why we were taking the different subjects that seemed so alienated from dentistry was explained to us; that is, all except German, and that I cannot see."

The school was simply committed to providing a well-rounded education. Announcing that "sports are becoming more and more recognized at the college," the *Contact Point* sports page reported that "C.P.&S." was fielding teams in basketball, track and field, swimming, football, baseball, and golf. This first entry was recorded in a contest for a college yell:

MOUTH FULL OF PLASTER,
MOUTH FULL OF WAX!
PULL'EM OUT, YANK'EM OUT,
HIT'EM WITH AN AX!
VULCANITE, MUSH-BITE,
DISLOCATED JAW!
C.P.S.'FRISCO!
RAH! RAH! RAH!

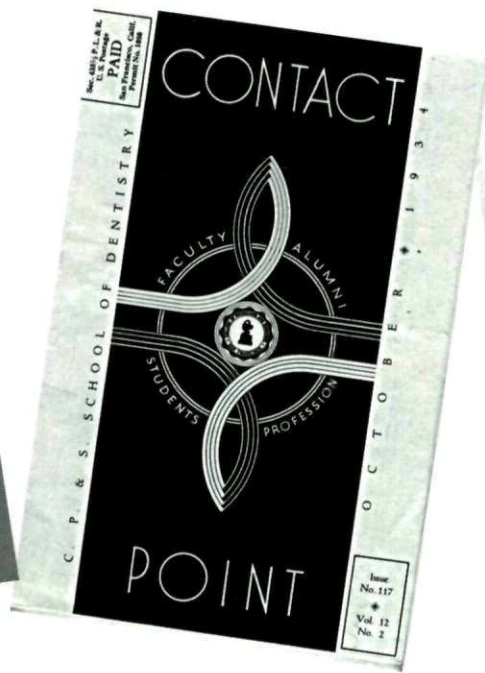
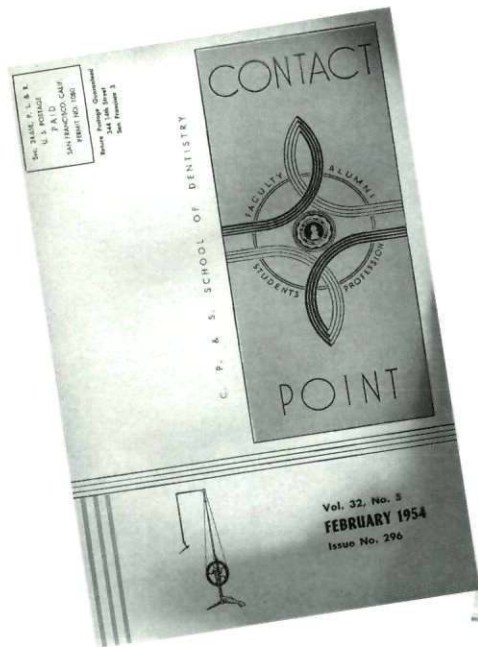
But even with football teams and German classes, there was no mistaking C.P.&S.'s mission. As if to celebrate the school's new identity as a nonpropriety educator solely of dentists, January 1925 brought a happy announcement in *Contact Point* of a sign. "Appearing across the front of the building in black and white attractive letters is: 'College of Physicians and Surgeons, a School of Dentistry.' It is quite an addition to efficiency, as in the past many times people were timid to enter a building which had no sign on it."

Contact Point, reflecting the boisterous proclivities of its young undergraduate editors, published such helpful items as lists of final examination review questions and an irreverent mix of satire, gossip, and jokes. In a blunt anthem of student exasperation, for example, this poem, attributed to "Uncle Walt," appeared in 1925:

THE PATIENT IS A FOOL —
WHEN THE TOOTH ACHES,
HE WANTS IT OUT.
IF IT WAS OUT,
HE WANTS IT IN.
NEVER SATISFIED WITH HIS LOT,
ALWAYS WANTING WHAT IS NOT;
THE PATIENT IS A FOOL.

From the magazine's beginning, however, even with strong doses of student tastes, an alumni emphasis was already present. An October 1924 editorial, "Support Your Paper," exhorted, "We wish to have some humor in it, and also give the doings of the students and the alumni their share of publicity."

Visitation of various graduates to the school were dutifully catalogued and published, and



grateful recognition given to alums out in practice who mailed in extracted teeth for the students to practice on. Soon, direct alumni pitches were being made: "Classmates of old have a monthly reunion by subscribing to the *Contact Point*."

Perhaps for the benefit of both students and alumni, a column called "Items of Interest" soberly noted: "There is one dentist to every 2400 people in the United States. In California there is one dentist to every 1300 people. This is the highest per capita ratio of any state in the Union." In the same issue it was hopefully disclosed that "some of the large insurance companies require their employees to have their teeth cleaned and examined at least twice every year."

The Alumni Association, began to use *Contact Point* to promote membership. Some ads appealed to the survivalist sensibilities that were the school's legacy: "Be Fair to Yourself by giving your diploma Assurance of Strong Parentage through membership in the Alumni Association Lecture and Post Graduate Foundation."

Other plugs were practical. The Alumni Association was particularly proud of its Lecture and Post Graduate Foundation, which sponsored an innovative idea — banding together to get good continuing education courses. In an era when continuing education was scarce, dentists interested in gaining new skills after graduation had to hire teachers privately. The association reminded potential members, "Five alumni or more can be served for the price of one post graduate instructor, because it costs less to bring instruction to you than for you alone to secure it. This is assured and provided for in the Alumni Association's Lecture and Post Graduate Foundation."

In 1927, with the appearance of a smaller, half-size format, came a new, more mature journalism. *Contact Point* was published now once during each school month. The magazine's playfulness was toned down; humor neatly labeled and confined to one page. Professional articles increased, such as a stern rundown on "The Basic Facts of Evolution," by chemistry professor Ingo W.D. Hackh, who later became the first faculty advisor for *Contact Point*.

Perhaps there was a new reason for circumspection. By 1927 there was talk of merging with Stanford. A Carnegie Foundation report that year read: "The union of the school with Stanford University, and its intimate coordination with the medical school and hospital in San Francisco, would seem to be a logical as well as desirable development in dental education in California...."

So the "Science News" column gravely briefed readers on the discovery of an ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, which was thought to be important for climactic changes and protection from radiation. It also passed along this warning: "The Chicago Dental Society has decreed against kissing of girls who are dieting. Dieting lowers the resistance of the individual to a certain degree. If Vincent's Disease is prevalent, there is naturally a susceptibility to the attack of the fuso-spirillary organisms which are thought to be the cause. Trench mouth results; osculation spreads the disease still further. Hence, kiss a girl who is on a diet and take your own chances."

In 1929, the year of the Great Depression, *Contact Point* ran a confident ad touting "Half-a-Dozen Reasons Why the *Contact Point* Offers Decided Advantages to Advertisers and Readers." The ad pointed out that circulation

was up to eighteen hundred licensed dentists ("Nearly all in California") as well as all students at the college. The ad also highlighted the magazine's unique appeal ("The *Contact Point* is read from cover to cover as it interests the group to whom it is sent") and its convenient size that catered to a new population of commuters; "fits easily into pocket and is suited to be read in transit, at home or in the office." Another selling point was integrity. "[*Contact Point*] has the courage to restrict its advertising space to 15% of its reading matter. This assures high quality and avoids padding."

A New Year's editorial also remained upbeat: "A year of business and financial depression has passed. A year in which there has been much unemployment. A year in which the pessimists have held sway... we hear people say that every thing is going wrong; that the world is getting worse every day, morally, practically, and in general... What constitutes the world? We are the world... Think and believe in terms of advancement and improvement, and the world cannot be but better."

In 1934, *Contact Point* enjoyed a circulation of twenty-six hundred. CP&S School of Dentistry assistant professor of operative dentistry Dr. Hugh David Phillips made the case for a new concept — a freestanding, solo dental office — in his article, "The Dental Bungalow and the General Practice of Dentistry." Another article addressed "The Importance of Normal Occlusion in Personality."

A general interest column, "Contact with the World and to the Point," carried a review called "Movies and Morals," which detailed recent findings that motion pictures play an important role in developing the moral attitudes of children. Studies suggested that "young audiences



tend to approve of the actions of film characters, regardless of what they do," and concluded that "hero worship makes for greater laxity and encourages excuses."

While the most exciting local news concerned the construction of the "two largest bridges in the world," Alumni Association president Dr. F.W. Burlingame took to the pages of *Contact Point* to warn against government proposals to tinker with the health care system. "Inability to secure adequate medical services [in America] commensurate with average incomes, plus the depression, has laid the foundation for political tinkering," he wrote. "Tales of Panel Dentistry, Health Insurance, State Medicine, in fact, any bizarre panacea for the present dilemma, have been considered."

The December 1937 issue examined dental fluorosis and allowed that dentist advertising is acceptable, providing it is "not of a competitive nature but of an educational nature." Editorials worried about encroaching imperialism in such economically deprived lands as Germany, Italy and Japan.

In 1938, Dean Ernest G. Sloman mused in the pages of *Contact Point* that because of the development of the profession and subsequent tougher entrance requirements for dental school, the population of dentists in the United States had decreased by 8,000 since the 1920s. A house editorial fretted that "the future of our race, it seems, is dependent upon the whims of but a handful of men."

In 1940, *Contact Point* wondered if fluoride, the villain that mottles enamel, might in very small doses actually "retard or prevent caries."

By 1942 the war was on. In a *Contact Point* article titled "War and Dentistry's Role," Dean Ernest G. Sloman declared, "Dentistry and den-

tal education are just beginning the greatest task we have ever contemplated. We must recover the salvageable men lost through dental neglect . . . [we must have] healthy soldiers and a healthy people providing the wherewithal to fight. If one dentist rehabilitates one rejectee a month for one year he will have served his nation twelve times better than he could have by shouldering a gun." The nation would need more dentists for the war effort. To help keep the teeth of America's fighting men in fighting shape, the dean announced an accelerated, four-quarter per year schedule.

In July 1943, the whole student body was officially annexed by the U.S. Army. A military staff was stationed at the school, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons became Army Specialized Unit No. 3932. Wrote a circumspect *Contact Point*: "The war has crept a little closer to the college this past month."

In 1944, *Contact Point* was peppered with ads for war bonds. A special list paid homage to alumni in the military, and articles ran with titles such as "Wartime Aviation's Effect on Teeth."

With the war over, a new, energetic world emerged. *Contact Point* reported on an enterprising American G.I. who had dismantled and mailed home the contents of an entire Army dental office from the European front.

At P&S a fresh, international air prevailed. It was disclosed that *Contact Point* was recently referenced in the Egyptian publication *International Dentistry*, and that a subscription request had been received from library of Norwegian State Dental School. In 1954, Cold War sensibilities were revealed with such articles as "Dentists and Dentistry Under Socialism." On the cutting edge of technology, the school staged three one-day Television Educational Programs in oral

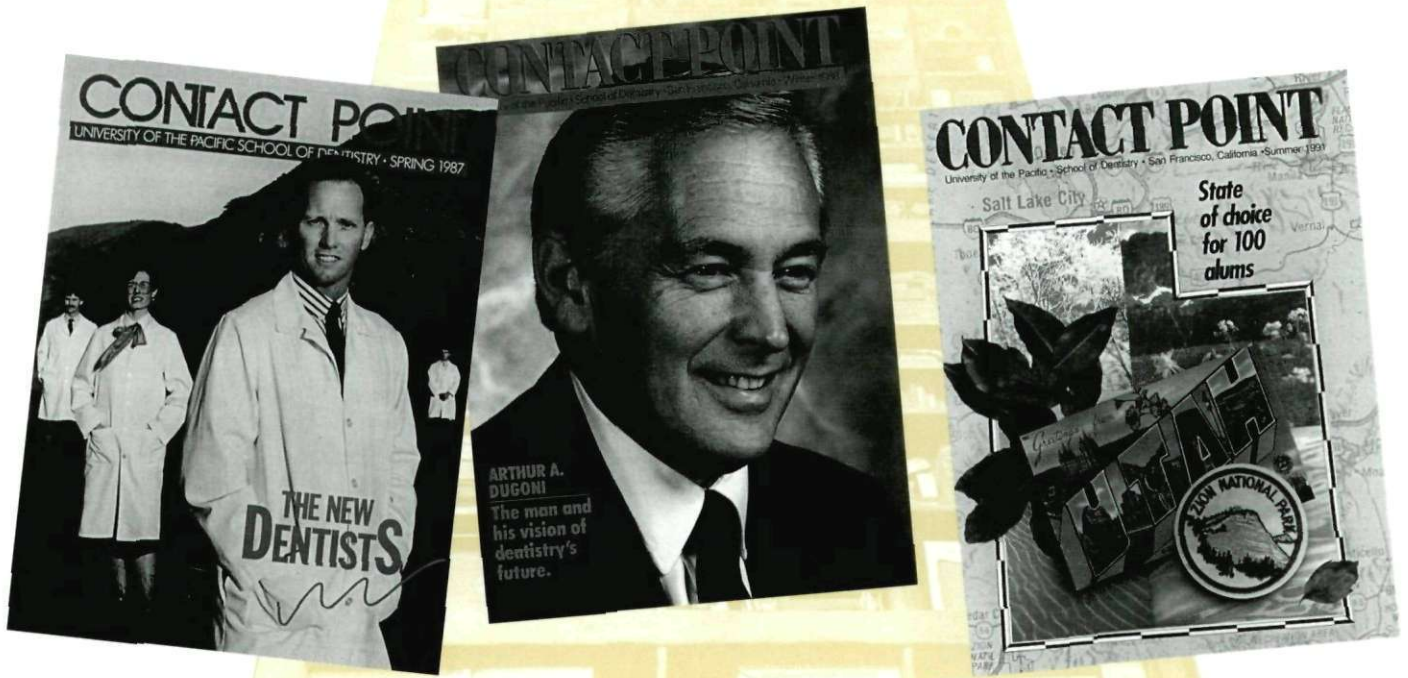
surgery in May 1955.

Cutting edge, indeed. With research and development no longer commandeered for the war effort, civilian inventiveness was flourishing. By the late 1940's, for example, diamond and carbide bur were being developed for dental use. Such burs but more efficiently at higher speeds than the 6,500 RPM that were standard for dental handpieces in 1950. The race was on for a faster drill. In 1958 an air turbine handpiece, called the Airtor and boasting a speed of 250,000 RPM, was introduced by the Ritter and S.S. White companies.

Amid fears of damaging teeth and pulps with such a startlingly powerful instrument, there was hesitation among dentists to embrace the new technology. But within a year, a young P&S faculty member was coming to his own conclusions. In 1959, *Contact Point* reported the Assistant Clinical Professor of Operative Dentistry Arthur A. Dugoni had arranged with manufacturers to equip the senior amalgam clinic with demonstration units of the air turbine handpiece.

"The impact upon the dental profession, and the public acceptance and demand for increased speeds has aided in motivating the expansion of our teaching program," Dr. Dugoni explained to *Contact Point*. "However, the prime reason for including increased speeds in undergraduate teaching is the advantage of producing the highest quality dentistry with increased comfort to the patient."

In October 1963 *Contact Point* published an artist's rendition of a new five-story school planned for construction at the corner of Webster and Sacramento streets. In 1964, issues pictured the building-to-be with a sixth floor, along with a new logo, and a new name: UOP.



The old CP&S, by now P & S, was about to expand again to a three-digit acronym. The school had found its university.

In 1964, Director of Development Edward Harris issued a declaration defining both the school and its magazine. In "Our Goal for *Contact Point*," he wrote, "What are the basic characteristics by which our school is set apart from other schools of higher education, and which our publication, *Contact Point*, must communicate? The School of Dentistry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, University of the Pacific, as its chief occupation, deals with the human intellect in the specific art and science of dentistry, not with the by-product 'success in the marketplace.' We...are the custodians of man's accumulated knowledge of dentistry, responsible for extending the best of our heritage to succeeding generations of students and scholars in this healing art. P&S is a center of creative search for that which dentistry does not yet know. In short, schools such as ours represent the highest aspirations of our culture... These qualities should be manifest in everything we print."

By 1969, *Contact Point* had a professional editor. In November 1970, when the original, bigger format was re-established, its cover pictured UOP dental school senior Braden Beck, who was also a kicker for the San Francisco 49ers. A noon-time series of rap sessions at the school began with retired longshoreman-philosopher Eric Hoffer. And Dr. Richard Rutter, chair of the orthodontics department, announced that applications were being accepted for a new post graduate certificate program in orthodontics, to begin in the fall of 1971.

By 1974 *Contact Point* had scaled back to quarterly issues and already had won three International College of Dentist journalism

awards (1971, 1972, 1973). The new Union City clinic had been opened and UOP was operating an outreach program for the elderly.

Said Dean Dale Redig at commencement exercises for the Class of 1974A, whose historic speech was printed in *Contact Point*: "A most significant evening, this one. You, on the threshold of a life's career; the institution, taking the final step in a changed one. As you completed your course work recently you ended the traditional four academic, four calendar year program of the School of Dentistry, and we now are completely engaged in a year-round three calendar year program."

In the first three-year class of 1974B, new alumnus Dr. Marie Skelly would be the eleventh member of her family to graduate from the school.

In 1980, circulation had risen to fifty-two hundred. Under Dean Arthur Dugoni, a student housing project on Post Street was announced. A 1981 issue ran a story describing the new Oral Medicine and Facial Pain Clinics. Another article celebrated the school's tradition of volunteerism. In 1983, a comprehensive patient care model of teaching was introduced. A photo-feature pictured Director of Development Al Gilmour's personalized license plate: DONATE.

By 1993, now serving some sixty-five hundred readers, *Contact Point* has garnered eleven national journalism awards. Its greatest attraction, like the school it has chronicled, is its people. In seventy years of change, one defining quality remains constant at UOP — a personalized sense of caring.

It comes through clearly in the pages of *Contact Point*. Declared freshman Edward Sweetzer '31: "The College of Physicians and Surgeons seems to be easy to become oriented in; the boys take away that stranger feeling that

any student is bound to have when first entering a new school. They soon become acquainted, and the teachers are always ready to answer any questions or settle any controversies that arise in a new student's mind. I like its system of teaching, its teachers and its pupils."

Agreed first-year student Alyson Edgerton, '85, half a century later: "I felt like everyone knew me as soon as I walked in the door. Everyone had obviously read my application carefully and was very warm and friendly. I met with students, talked with four faculty members, was given a good tour, and even when I took time to walk around by myself, people came up and said, 'Hi, are you interviewing?' and talked to me."

Explains *Contact Point* Editor Dr. David Chambers, "At UOP we are focusing on the complete dental practitioner. Our graduates are trained to go out and practice dentistry excellently, both from a technical standpoint and in every other way. Our strength lies in our commitment to humanism."

Humanism, Dr. Chambers says, translates into concern about people as well as procedures. "We want students to treat patients well, and be the best they can be. That's reflected in *Contact Point*. We are as good as any publication in dentistry. People pick up the magazine and see its technical quality right away — the colors, the graphics, layout, design, and photography. And at the same time, they are pulled in because they realize we are people oriented. *Contact Point* draws people together, makes people feel good about the profession. Readers see the best people can be. That's UOP. And that's *Contact Point*."

That's some diary. □

Dr. Eric Curtis class of '85 is a regular reader of, and writes for Contact Point.