

Dr. Lester
(Gluck & Morganstein)

Dr. Jim Lester has a suburban dental practice that suits him just fine. He lives in a midwestern community consisting of a city of 60,000 with surrounding suburbs of approximately 40,000. He works 5 days a week for 40 hours and has time for his family and his current passion, creating a bird sanctuary outside town. His hobby is environmental protection, and he and his wife are active members of the local Sierra Club.

Dr. Lester's community has been hit hard by the economy. Two years ago, two manufacturing plants laid off large numbers of workers. Efforts have been made to attract new businesses, and many workers have stayed in the community hoping some new opportunities will develop. Many are still drawing unemployment, but medical and dental benefits expired some time ago. Several dentists have started a program through the local dental society to contribute time – mostly nights and weekends – at a downtown clinic to provide emergency and preventive care. They ask Dr. Lester to join. He refuses. He points out that he is already contributing to the community through the Sierra Club, that he feels personally fulfilled through his current practice, and that his personal goal has never been to become that involved in organized dentistry. He does a good job with suburban children and that is his interest. He has always believed that he is the kind of person who does better with a wider range of commitments.

“But, Jim,” his friend Dr. Al Felding argues, “your lack of professional involvement means the rest of us have to contribute more, and lack of cooperation for this project makes us look bad at the state meetings. You're the third suburban dentist to turn me down this week.” “Look, Al,” Jim counters, “you chose to do this. I'm not proselytizing you to become a member of the Sierra Club. To each his own. You're fulfilling your mission in life. I'm just choosing a different track for my extracurricular activities. Come off it, will you?”