Because this is the archival issue of the American Journal of Occupational Therapy (AJOT), let’s review the public images of occupational therapy from a number of sources. What do the 2004 official papers of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) which are published in this issue reveal about the profession? Position papers on the scope of practice (p. 673) and psychosocial aspects of occupational therapy (p. 669) reiterate our broad domain of concern. Guidelines regarding the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and those being supervised in the delivery of occupational therapy services (p. 663) clarify appropriate arrangements and procedures in such a relationship. Finally, this issue also includes Ruth Zemke’s 2004 Slagle Lecture on the topic of time, space, meaning, and occupation; this is a scholarly perspective that furthers our understanding of the nuances and far-reaching effects of occupation.

A number of other image clarifying efforts this calendar year have included attendance of an AOTA delegation at national political conventions of both parties, a new definition of occupational therapy in a future edition of Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, and availability of AJOT on the Ovid full-search database. Not only can the general public access an accurate definition of the profession, now other professions can integrate our literature with theirs. Of all these public relations opportunities however, one very public image of occupational therapy came from an unusual source—a nationally syndicated cartoon strip. On 8/1/04, Garry Trudeau’s Doonesbury, provided major exposure for the profession by featuring an occupational therapist (http://www.doonesbury.com/strip/dailydose/index.htm?uc_full_date=20040801).

In the cartoon, B.D. is being shown around “Fort Independence” (the ADL [activities of daily living] training area) by his enthusiastic occupational therapist. B.D. sustained a war injury that resulted in an above knee amputation, and the conversation proceeds as follows:

OT: This is where occupational therapy takes place, where we help you maximize daily life functioning. While some people may think OT lacks the glamour of physical therapy, the life skills we work on here are critical to successful reentry. For instance, we’ll show you how to get in and out of a tub or shower on your own . . . and lots of other everyday tasks. For example, what if your wife asks you to remove the trash can from under the counter? What’s your strategy?

B.D.: I say “You do it. I lost a leg in Iraq.”

OT: No, I mean biomechanically.

Trudeau says in a recent issue of Rolling Stone magazine that he went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, to talk with amputees and “get the details of his [B.D.’s] recovery right.” Trudeau told reporter Eric Bates about the bad days experienced by veterans making the transition to a new body image, but went on to say “It’s not as depressing as you might think. In fact, it’s uplifting and inspirational. Part of it has to do with the fact that guys are wrapped in a culture that is very positive, very can do. Their whole mind-set is: This is a problem I can overcome (http://www.rollingstone.com/news).” Kudos to the occupational therapists at Walter Reed! Their attitude is an accurate portrayal of the profession’s enthusiastic and affirmative attitude. Although we still have far to go, the face of occupational therapy is becoming more familiar to the general public through a combination of efforts.