

# The Oslerian

## A Message from the President Looking Backwards, Looking Forward

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John Carson

*Greetings, Fellow Oslerians!*

The Charleston meeting began with Frank Neelon's seminar on medical and humanistic topics. Started at our 2000 Bethesda meeting, it reconvened due to popular demand and is now a tradition. Gather any group of physicians together to discuss a common topic, and uncommon insights will result.

The Board of Governors, spurred on by the thoughts and actions of Mark Silverman and Charley Bryan during the preceding year, accomplished a number of things:

1. Welcomed six new members and one associate member: William Clyde Partin (Atlanta), Robert G. Mennel (Dallas), Lloyd W. Kitchens, Jr. (Dallas), Bruce J. Innes (Macon, Georgia), Conrad C. Fulkerson (Durham), Barry Cooper (Dallas), and Michael W. Cater (Santa Anna).
2. Applauded the valuable services of Clyde Partin in establishing a compendium of Oslerian papers which is now available on our Internet website, a real labor of love!

3. Discussed further augmentation of the American Osler Society's archives at the Osler Library at McGill, which Larry Longo had begun.
4. Heard from our historian, Charles Roland, of his continuing activity on the history of our society.
5. Accepted in toto the proposed Bylaws changes previously documented in the *Oslerian*.
6. Voted to abide by the Micawber Rule by increasing our dues to \$150/year (Micawber Rule: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen, nineteen six: Result, happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pound, ought & six: Result, misery.")
7. Noted with pleasure the presence of Osler Librarian Pam Miller, who also presented Bill Feindel's paper in his lamented absence.
8. Resolved that future meetings will in the main continue to be held in conjunction with the AAHM.

deviate in the event of a "special opportunity" such as that existing in 2003 in Edinburgh.

Our hotel in Charleston was the Embassy Suites, until 1926 the home of The Citadel—beautifully redone into attractive and comfortable quarters with good food, service, and genuine Southern charm.

Secretary-Treasurer Bryan provided name tags with home bases identified, and booklets of abstracts that also contained addresses of the attendees.

The papers were superb, with 15 minute presentations and 5 to 10 minute discussion periods. The meeting was kept on a tight schedule, aided immeasurably by the loan of Bruce Innes's red, green, and yellow Limitimer. With rare exceptions, there was adequate time for discussion.

Where else but the AOS does everyone stay for every paper?! Where else could Claus Pierach's strikingly original paper on Cover Art be discussed by Charles Roland, who in 1964 (when *JAMA* started cover art) was the youthful assistant to *JAMA* editor John Talbott? Where else could Peter Warren's paper on oxygen therapy for pneumonia include John West in attendance?

(continued on page 2)

## President's Message (Continued)

It was the consensus that Kenneth Ludmerer's McGovern lecture was as good as his *Time to Heal*—more than that could not be said.

Our banquet was at the Gibbes Museum of Art where President Silverman was William Harvey presenting *De Motu Cordis* and the Royal College of Physicians was represented by Arthur Hollman, archivist of the British Cardiac Society and one of the editors with Mark of

*British Cardiology in the 20th Century*.

The final day ended with a picnic at Middleton Place plantation with its lovely grounds and gardens on a lovely sunny evening.

Those of us staying for the AAHM meetings had two special opportunities: Philip Leon arranged for us to attend the Friday afternoon dress parade at The Citadel—an event full of tradition, patriotic music, and cadet recognition. Charley Bryan gave the Annual

Lecture at the AAHM that day with his paper on "South Carolina Monuments and the C's of Medicine: Of Sims and Hayne."

Finally, Kansas City, April 23-25, 2002. Robert Martensen, chairman of the Department of History and Philosophy of Medicine at the Kansas University Medical Center, is in charge of local arrangements. Those of us who know Kansas City, know the answer to the question: *Why Kansas City??*

The William Rockhill Nelson Gallery, the Linda Hall Museum of Science, the newly opened Stowers Institute for Medical Research, the Jazz Museum, the Spencer Library and Museum, the Clendening Library, the Negro Baseball Hall of Fame—Even Arthur Bryant's Bar-B-Que.

Don't miss it!

John C. Carson, MD

## 2002 Meeting Scheduled for Kansas City, April 23-25

Mark your calendars, fellow Oslerians!

The 2002 Meeting is scheduled for Kansas City, 23-25 April. We will meet again in concert with the American Association for the History of Medicine. Robert Martensen is chairman of the Local Arrangements Committee. A block of rooms has already been

reserved at the Westin Crown Center, and room rates will be somewhat less than this year (\$144 single occupancy, \$154 double occupancy). Reservation forms will go out with a mailing this fall. Meanwhile, information for abstracts is summarized on page 12 of this issue of *The Oslerian*.

The 2003 meeting is

scheduled for **Edinburgh, Scotland**, tentatively for May 21-24 and in concert with the Osler Club of London and the Japanese Osler Society. We are considering a post-meeting historical tour of Scotland, which would take us to sites such as St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Glasgow. It should be a memorable time.

The location of the 2004

meeting has not been determined. Strong sentiments have been expressed for **Houston, Texas**. Cleveland, Iowa City, and Rochester, Minnesota have also been nominated. The AAHM will be meeting that year in Madison, Wisconsin. *Let your officers know your preferences for the 2004 meeting.*

—CSB

## Oslerian Progress Notes

**Ken Ludmerer** has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. For *Time to Heal*, Dr. Ludmerer has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

**John West** has been elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**Marvin Stone** and **Jim Toole** have been elected Masters of the American College of Physicians.

**Jackie Duffin** has received the Jason A. Hannah

Medal from the Royal Society of Canada for her book, *To See with a Better Eye: The Life of R.T. H. Laennec*.

**Chuck Roland** has had published *Long Night's Journey into Day: Prisoners of War in the Far East, 1941-1945* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001) and also, with Jacques Bernier, *Secondary Sources in the History of Canadian Medicine: A Bibliography* (Volume 2, Waterloo and Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press & Associated Medical Services, 2000).

**Tonse Raju** has in press a book of translated proverbs from Kannada, a South Indian language, to be entitled *Don't Stand in Front of a Palace or Behind a Horse*.

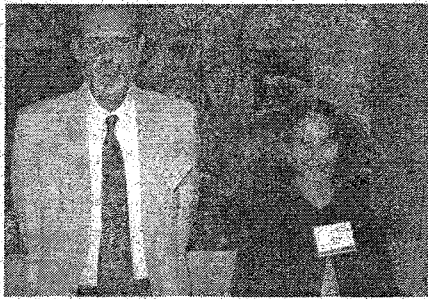
**Jerry Barondess** and **Chuck Roland** have in press *The Persisting Osler III: Selected Transactions of the American Osler Society, 1991-2000* (Malabar, FL: Robert Krieger Co., 2001).

**John Cule** has had published *The Timechart History of Medicine* (Rickmansworth: The Timechart Company Worth Press, 1900).

**Michael Bliss** received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from McGill University and delivered the Convocation address to the graduates in medicine on "Osler's family." He has also been awarded one of the 30 University Professorships available to the 1500 tenured members of the University of Toronto.

**Bill Feindel** has been honored with the creation of a chair at the McGill University. (for More Oslerian Progress Notes, see page 11)

# The 2001 Annual Meeting: Pictorial Highlights



Anand and Sally Date came the farthest—from Oman.



Earl Nation and Carolyn Guiditta brought cheer from California.



Arthur Hollman (shown here with Janet Murray) came from East Sussex with slides and a prayer for a program slot. He got it.



Dick and John Golden, father and son Oslerians

Charleston, known in South Carolina as “the holy city,” was at its glorious best for the 31st annual meeting of the American Osler Society. Fears of low attendance and unseasonably cold weather proved unfounded. Spillover attendance from the AAHM meeting resulted in up to 140 persons in the Colonial Ballroom at times, putting a premium on good seats. Submission of many good abstracts made the program a busy one, and moderators and speakers were exhorted to stay on time. And stay on time they did, thanks in large measure to a timing device hauled all the way from Macon, Georgia, by one of our newest members, Bruce Innes! Many were the highlights . . .

The first morning’s program, leaving us wondering how much more can be said about W.O., his pupils, and colleagues. . . Ken Ludmerer’s McGovern lecture, forcefully delivered without benefit of slides or notes, giving us a sweeping perspective on medical education. . . the student lecturers, Beth Preminger and Jennifer Keam. . . Mark Silverman’s impersonation of William Harvey at the banquet, held at the Gibbes Museum of Art on Meeting Street. . . A concluding picnic at Middleton Place, with ample time to stroll around the grounds.

W.O., with his fine sense of occasion, would, we think, have been proud.



Elizabeth and John Carson with Laura Gifford.



Sanchia Mitchell and Steve Hastorok worked behind the scenes to make it happen.



Attendance was high, participation lively.



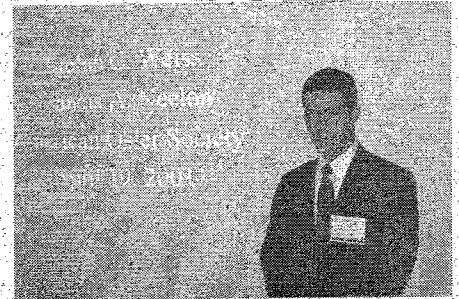
Larry Longo watches the green light as Cynthia Pitcock speaks. Bruce Innes’s timing device was a big hit, and there was even extra time for breaks.



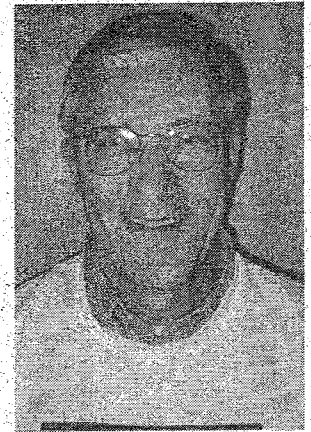
Mark Silverman in 17th Century English costume at the banquet. Cryptically entitling the presidential address "*De Motu Cordis*, by William Harvey," Silverman slipped away during the dinner to assume the persona of Harvey himself, then gave the address as though he were Harvey presenting to the Royal College of Physicians in 1628. His address was not only good theater, but also educational as Harvey's experiments were clearly demonstrated by an accompanying video. Future presidents have a very tough act to follow!



Mark Silverman transfers the latch key to John Carson (photo by Dee Canale)



Stefan Weiss discusses the promotion of humanities at Duke.



Is John Carson (left), our new president, squinting because of the South Carolina sun or the daunting challenge of following Silverman's address? Larry Longo (center), our new first vice-president, seems to be saying, "Who, me?" Phil Leon (right), a professor of English, wrote an Oslerian grace.



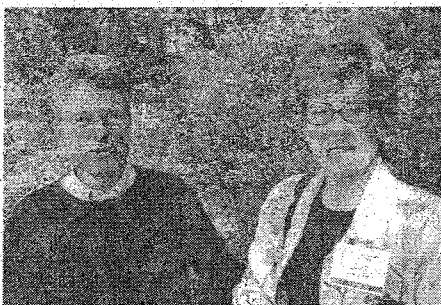
Neil McIntyre and Chuck Roland discuss serious matters during a coffee break.



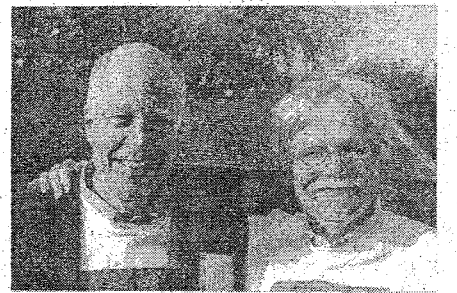
William B. Bean essayists Beth Preminger (from New York City) and Jennifer Keam (from Portland, Oregon) were all smiles after their presentations.



One of the largest groups of Oslerians ever photographed—and surely the largest group ever photographed wearing T-shirts—gathers on a warm April day at Middleton Place, America’s oldest landscaped gardens. The T-shirts were the inspiration of president Mark Silverman. The Vernon plaque adorns the front, while the back contains this Osler aphorism: *“Acquire the art of detachment, the virtue of method, and the quality of thoroughness, but above all the grace of humility.”* One was given to each registrant—hereafter they will be for sale.



Clockwise from upper left: Dee and Janet Canale, Bob and Susan Kimbrough, John West (getting a lesson in coopering), Donna Bryan (getting a lesson in basketmaking), Bill Roberts with CSB, Chuck and Lucia Wooley with Pamela Miller, Claus and Rosemarie Pierach, and Bruce and Fye—all enjoying Middleton Place.





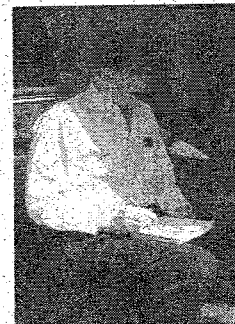
Dr. Sean Buller Murphy of Montreal, grandson of “the ophthalmologist who saved William Osler from ophthalmology,” sketches the scenery at Middleton Place.



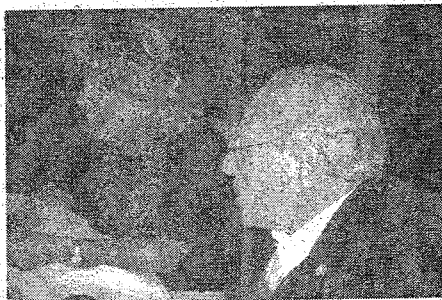
The meeting concluded with a picnic featuring barbecue, fried chicken, and various South Carolina delicacies.



Life goes on at Middleton Place.



Sean Murphy was found sketching in the Embassy Suites entrance way right up until departure!



Chaco and Ranger Boy reluctantly stayed at home.

Clockwise from upper left: Michael and Elizabeth Bliss; Nancy Moore Thurmond, Bob Oldham, and Larry Longo; Wendy McIntyre and Will Haubrich; and Frank Neelon with Conrad Fulkerson.

## The Formative Years of the American Osler Society (concluded from November 2000 (volume 1, number 3))

Charles G. Roland

Among Palmer Futcher's inherited Osleriana was one of the original latch-keys to 1 West Franklin Street, the Osler home in Baltimore. The key was given to Tom Futcher when he with other residents lived at 3 West Franklin, so that they could have access to Osler's library at will. And it is that original key that served as the model for the large-scale key that adorns the neck of the current president on formal occasions, and that, in miniature, appears on many jacket lapels today, and as a motif on the Society tie.

Another Charter Member, William C. Gibson, in a recent somewhat cryptic postcard said, "I think you. . . Thought I should be the anchor (a poor one) on the Pacific. Your idea is a good one but St. Alzheimer may be in the ascendant here!"<sup>17</sup> Relative to Gibson's last comment, referring jocularly to himself in 1969, I should just point out that in 1998—just short of three decades later—he had published not one but two books. Alzheimer indeed!

A word should be said here about the name of the organization. One possibility discussed was the William Osler Society of America.<sup>18</sup> Though a serious suggestion, by the time it surfaced the organization had become a legal entity under our present name. Another proposition

was the North American Osler Society, a move that might more fully have recognized the always strong Canadian presence in a society honoring a man who remained a Canadian citizen all his life. But this—obviously—did not happen either.

Jack McGovern arranged for the Society to be incorporated in the State of Texas. This acquired legal validity on 6 February 1970, with the document naming the initial five officers as a Board of Trustees, and signed, as incorporators, by Jack and two other (non-Oslerian) residents of Houston. Ultimately incorporation was revoked because the annual fee was not paid by the then treasurer.<sup>19</sup> In 1974 I took over as Secretary-Treasurer and re-incorporated the AOS in Minnesota.

On 22 February 1970, the Board of Trustees had its first meeting. It was at that time that the Board of Governors and the Charter members were all formally elected.<sup>20</sup> A constitution was drawn up at this time. And the three Rhodes scholars who had been Osler's students at Oxford—Davison, Holman, and Penfield—were named Honorary Members, though the formal announcement of this was postponed until it could be done with them present, at the April symposium in Galves-

ton, Texas.

The 1970 Galveston meeting on Humanism in Medicine was seen by McGovern, Henderson, Davison, and others as a "trial run" for an Osler Society. Planning head begun in November 1968, when Jack McGovern and Grant Taylor decided to organize a symposium; originally it had been scheduled for Houston for late 1969, to be part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Osler's death in 1919. For various reasons this timing did not work out. But McGovern had been discussing the concept of a meeting with Chester Burns and Truman Blocker, at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. When the Houston plans floundered, President Blocker suggested coming to Galveston.<sup>21</sup>

The speakers who were selected for Galveston were seen as a potential core of members for the new society. This meeting played a significant role in the organizational *Zeitgeist*; at least one aspect of this was the opportunity of many members and prospective members to meet or to become better acquainted with the three men who were our initial honorary members—Drs. Wilburt Davison, Emile Holman, and Wilder Penfield.

All three achieved prominence in medicine. All had been Rhodes Scholars and Osler's students. And they all revered the man, even into their eighth decades. Penfield has described himself as "one of the hardy perennials who knew him in student days."<sup>22</sup> As Jack McGovern wrote, in this case regarding his relationship with Davison: "This influence of teacher upon student may well be the most realistic avenue to immortality—not an immortality of mere name but rather of spirit and philosophy."<sup>23</sup>

Dean Davison knew Osler well; he saw him frequently between 1913 and 1915 and then, as his intern, essentially daily, 1915 through 1916.<sup>24</sup> Davison has written about his first meeting with Osler, in Oxford. He had been sent to Sir William to present his unusual request for an heretical alteration in an Oxonian tradition. Of course, Osler was supportive. Davison's trepidation vanished as he found the Oslers "so charming and friendly that I soon felt I had two friends at Oxford. My awe immediately turned to adoration and devotion."<sup>25</sup> That feeling never disappeared.

The initial formal meeting of the AOS was held in Denver on 1 April 1971. Bill Bean, the first and outgoing president, presided; nine of the original 30 members attended. Membership diplomas were presented at the business meeting, at which A. McGehee Harvey was elected secretary.

These sessions and dinner were followed by an open



**Our historian, Chuck Roland, completes his story.**

Meeting attended by about sixty interested members of the American College of Physicians. Bill Bean and Chauncey Leake spoke, very well, and my journal closes, "All in all, a good first session."<sup>26</sup> This early, though completely informal, relationship with the American College of Physicians provided a nurturing environment. Our initial Secretary-Elect, Ed Rosenow, who was then the chief executive officer of the ACP, assisted greatly in establishing this relationship.

The next year we met in Montreal in conjunction with the American Association for the History of Medicine. The ACP and the AAHM have continued to be friendly neighbors for the AOS. And as the Montreal program of 1972 shows, we had already begun to grow. Instead of two papers there were four, including Harrell's presidential address on Osler's practice in Baltimore. Obviously, Harrell had begun to look at Osler historically.

In 1961, Robert Merton published a magisterial study of multiples—instances in the humanities, the arts and sci-

ence, where two or more people discover the same thing simultaneously and independently.<sup>27</sup> The impetus to create the American Osler Society seems to be yet another instance of this phenomenon.

Both Al Henderson and Jack McGovern participated fully in the early deliberations that resulted in the healthy birth of the American Osler Society. The record amply supports this observation. But I would go one step further and suggest that the key might well be Jack McGovern's boundless energy and focus, and, administratively, the dedication of his facilities in Houston—telephones, secretaries, meeting space, and so on—that made the creation happen. Without that drive we might well have remained merely a good idea unrealized. This opinion is widely supported, one of those in agreement being the other original planner, Al Henderson, who, in discussing the creation in a recent letter to me, stated that its existence was "much more to John McG.'s credit than mine."<sup>28</sup> The weight of the documentation is convincing: John P. McGovern was indeed the principal founder of the American Osler Society.

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18. John P. McGovern, TLS to C. G. Roland, 11 February 1970.
19. Secretary of State, Austin, TX. Determination of Foreiture, 1597-D, 8 May 1972.
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21. Grant Taylor, "Preface," in: *Humanism in Medicine*, John P. McGovern and Chester R. Burns (eds.), Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1973: ix.
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**"The weight of the documentation is convincing: John P. McGovern was indeed the principal founder of the American Osler Society."**

AN UNCATALOGUED PAPER PUBLISHED BY  
WILLIAM OSLER IN 1907. . . . . WILLIAM B. BEAN  
Introduction of the Speaker. . . . . ALFRED E. HENDERSON  
PHYSICIANS AS POETS. . . . . CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE  
Introduction of the Speaker. . . . . JOHN P. MCGOVERN



## A Visit to the Osler Library: Osler, Elvis, and the Backstreet Boys

By Clyde Parin

Buoyed by an unrestricted grant from the Davis and Phyllis Clock Fund of Emory University, I ventured north to Montreal for four days of unfettered research at the Osler Library at McGill University. Strictly an amateur historian and neophyte scholar at best, I had a clear notion of what questions I needed to answer, but was a bit unsure how to go about it. First lesson: Wayne LeBel, Assistant Librarian, handed me two ordinary looking black notebooks, identified on the spine as accession numbers 356 and 417. Within 10 minutes of arriving, I was seated at a table within the shadow of Osler, perusing three or four hundred pages of archival listings. While it may have been a painstaking search, no pain was involved, only pure delight as I gradually encountered useful data. Out of these notebooks, I discovered perhaps 80 items that captured my interest. Each desired article of curiosity required a requisition to fill out, the surrendering of my driver's license and the labor of a librarian to procure. Some of the items I quickly dispatched back to the desk, having deemed them irrelevant to my purposes, however promising the description may have been in the notebook. Other folders contained unexpected nuggets of biographical gold. Not accustomed to the archival system, I quickly learned to keep careful notes with attention to the accession

number, the folder number, and the item number, all of which would be important for citing purposes. I became a bit curious as to why some of the items were identified with pencil notations at the top and other folders contained unnumbered artifacts, making it a tad more difficult to find the sought after report. For example, 417/18/78 meant accession number 417, folder 18, and the 78th object in that folder. If a folder contained perhaps 183 unnumbered documents, it became a bit tedious finding the 93rd one even if they were in order. The librarian advised me that those items enumerated in pencil were already entered in the computerized data bank. Those not yet anointed in lead were waiting funding for the labor intense task of being properly archived, a project in progress by some graduate students of library science. I noted with passing interest that some of Cushing's files contained letters on blue papers, some pink, some yellow, and some white. I learned that Cushing had several secretaries working for him transcribing the letters about Osler that he received from hundreds of people. As Cushing described it to his wife, in 1920, "This is the kind of stuff we're working on—blue [paper] for biog [graphical] notes, yellow for book notes, pink of varia, white for letters. It's getting to be a complicated job and my folders which used to sit

on the desk have grown to about a yard in thickness."<sup>1</sup>

I had previously notified the head librarian, Ms. Pamela Miller, of my visit and advised her of the nature of my quest. She had unearthed a few intriguing tidbits quite pertinent to my project. As I tracked down these data, some of it, on one-quarter sized nondescript pieces of paper, not infrequently in Cushing's own handwriting, created in me a certain degree of awe and reverence I had not anticipated nor contemplated. Realizing that some of what had been mined was unpublished data added to my excitement. It was no less rewarding to encounter some of the original letters to which Cushing had referred in *The Life*.

The staff of the Osler Library is limited in number and the demands on their time is unrelenting. Nonetheless, they were generous with their knowledge and their energy. In just the few days I was there, the Canadian Broadcasting Company utilized the Osler Room as a backdrop for a documentary concerning philosophy. Students and other researchers wandered in. Information was found, problems were solved.

As an expression of my appreciation, I offered to take the staff to lunch. Though one stayed back to man the desk, the others accepted my invitation and off we traipsed down

the precipitous Promenade Sir William Osler. At lunch I learned that Michael Bliss had donated to the library his files on his biography of Osler. The gift consisted of twenty computer discs with a linear shelf space of about three inches. Unfortunately, government regulations and other factors demand that the material be printed out and therefore Bliss's files will occupy much more shelf space. This seemed to me to be quite stark and sterile compared to the hundreds of linear feet that the Cushing files inhabit. The rich tapestry of Cushing files, including yellowed newspaper clippings, typed and handwritten notes, many in Cushing's own moderately legible handwriting, signed letters from Osler, Osler's autopsy report and vital sign chart from his final illness I do not think can be matched by word processed notes downloaded from discs but the latter sure will be easier to read and archive. This latter blessing I am sure is not lost on librarians.

As we finished lunch I asked the librarians what irritated them most about visiting scholars. Poor note taking and incorrect citations was the answer, since it created lots of work trying to find the right source, especially when other researchers showed up unknowingly looking for the wrong reference. Eighty years have passed since Osler's death, yet Osler societies exist in four countries, a new biography has appeared, and physicians, historians, and others still find plenty of original things to write about Osler. He is paraded forth as an unparalleled example of humanism in medical care, a shining beacon

for medical students beset by the fog of market forces and overly exuberant technology shrouding their medical education. The day before I had asked the head librarian to think about what figure in history, in or out of the medical field, could boast such ongoing international immortality. At lunch I awaited her response. There was a Willis Club (of Willis's Circle fame); but it was not even near the same plane as the Osler societies. The Samuel Johnson Society was the only thing I could think of but I really did not know much about it. "Elvis" was her next idea but he died only about 20

years ago. We had a good laugh at the thought of Osler and Elvis. We suspected that this was the first conversation that had ever included Sir William and the King of Rock 'n Roll in the same breath. I do not recall much about Osler's taste in music but I would imagine that it was quite sophisticated. I believe that Grace once mentioned a concert they had attended at a cathedral. Just that morning I had made my way to the roof of the hotel to get on film a panorama that included McGill's athletic fields, the medical school, the Osler Library, and the Royal Victoria Hospital. The hotel manager

and the head of hotel maintenance kindly gave me permission to get on the roof and they accompanied me. Neither had ever heard of Oler. Had anyone else ever asked to get to the roof of the hotel to take some photos? I wanted to know. As the question was translated for the French-speaking maintenance man, he started laughing and said he had taken the Backstreet Boys music group up there to get a picture.

My research trip to the Osler Library was more productive than I would have imagined. My paper was deeply enriched by the information I found with the assistance of the librarians.

As I exited Canada, the customs officer inquired as to the purpose of my trip. I replied that I had been doing some research at a library. "How boring," he replied. "Not at all," I said. The hours flew by. I wish I could have stayed longer.

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## Osler's daughter (!) (?)

*It is easier to buy books than to read them, and easier to read them than to absorb their contents.*

—W.O.

W.O. would most certainly endorse Joseph Sapira's book on physical diagnosis. Laced with practical tips, allusions to classical art and literature, common sense, and—yes—humor, this is a book to be absorbed.

For palpation of the epitrochlear lymph nodes,

Sapira recommends the politician's handshake. The examiner grasps the patient's right hand with his/her own right hand, then curls the fingers of the left hand in or near a groove of at the brachialis muscle just above the medial condyle of the humerus. Sapira then elaborates:

I was told that the [this] type of handshake was invented by Sir William Osler when he was Regius Professor at Oxford. Supposedly,

he would shake hands in this way with young men who came to call on his daughter, in order to search for epitrochlear nodes sometimes found in the systemic lymphadenopathy of syphilis. Additionally, from this position the palpating fingers can slip a short distance to feel for the bounding Corrigan pulse of luetic aortic insufficiency at the brachial artery.<sup>1</sup>

Sapira playfully asks his read-

ers, "What's wrong with this story?" Surely, no Oslerian will miss the point about W. O.'s daughter! (Also, W.O. would not have palpated through a jacket; and this examination would be neither sensitive nor specific for any form of syphilis.)

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## Happy Birthday, John P. McGovern!

Chuck Roland, in his history of the formative years of the AOS (concluded in this issue), makes it clear that Jack McGovern was the indispensable person, the driving force. It gives us great pleasure not to note that Dr. McGovern celebrates this month his eightieth birthday.

Meanwhile, our Texas informants tell us that Dr. McGovern has recently been honored in two significant ways: the **John P. McGovern Lake**, and the **John P. McGovern Medical Center Commons**. The latter is situated between the M.D. Ander-

son and Baylor campuses. One of our informants tells us that Dr. McGovern is the best-known physician in Houston. That's saying a lot, but we're not surprised!

Included in this mailing for AOS members, courtesy of **Earl Nation**, is a facsimile

program of the symposium on Humanism in Medicine, held at the Flagship Hotel, Galveston, Texas, 21-22 April 1970, courtesy of **Earl Nation**. It was this symposium that led to the formation of the AOS. Happy Birthday, John P. McGovern, and many happy returns!

## Obituary

## Saul Jarcho (1906-2000)

In a long and accomplished life, Saul Jarcho excelled as a physician, an historian, a linguist, a translator, an editor, and a humorist, among many personae. Aside from several periods of study elsewhere, he was a New Yorker all his life, having been born there 25 October 1906.

At Harvard, where he took his baccalaureate, Jarcho had a predictive experience (easily recognized in retrospect). At a freshman reception held by Harvard's president, A. L. Lowell, he and Jarcho had their sole, brief conversation. Jarcho told the great man that he intended to study medicine and was planning much emphasis on science courses. When the president responded that this was not what he would do, Jarcho listened and acted. As he wrote many years later, "[p]erceiving that this was important advice, I escaped from the reception, ran back to the lodging house, tore up all the plans, and changed to a concentration in English literature."<sup>1</sup> He received his degree *magna cum laude* and laid the foundation for the wide-ranging erudition that so characterized his career.

There followed a Master's in Roman Literature at Colum-

bia (1926), a summer at the American Academy at Rome (he returned to America speaking Italian), and then medical school. He graduated M.D. in 1930 from Columbia University. Jarcho trained in tropical medicine in San Juan, pathology at Johns Hopkins, and internal medicine. Then, late in the 1930s, he established a practice in internal medicine in New York City.

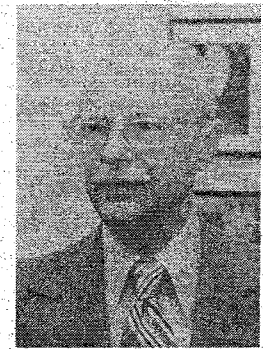
World War II found Jarcho in the armed forces. As early as 1940, thinking that the army might need someone who knew Arabic, he borrowed books and taught himself—an impressive feat that, even more impressively, was repeated for several other languages during his work with the Medical Intelligence Division. By the war's end he had risen from captain to lieutenant-colonel and commanded the unit.

He married an army colleague, returned to practice, and began his ongoing devotion to medical history, medical translation, and publishing. It is difficult to select from Jarcho's 500-plus bibliography, but especially useful and typical of his scholarship is *Quinine's Predecessor: Francesco Torti and the Early History of Cin-*

*chona* (1933). Like much of his work, this volume combined careful, original scholarship with translations of long-forgotten texts and perceptive editing. Other important contributions include *The Clinical Consultations of Giambattista Morgagni* (1984) and *The Concept of Heart Failure from Avicenna to Albertini* (1980).

A member of the American Osler Society since 1972, Jarcho was also active in the American Association for the History of Medicine (president 1968-1970), the History of Science Society, and the New York Academy of Medicine (editor of the *Bulletin*, 1967-1976).

A less well known attribute was Jarcho's sense of humor and incisive wit. Showing carefully modulated assessment, he once ended a discussion of hoaxes in the medical literature by referring to the satirical writings of a certain S.N. Gaño. This author had recently published a gloss attributed to the Hippocratic school. Jarcho noted that the editor of the journal that published these essays claimed that the author actually was the pseudonym of a New York physician:



Saul Jarcho  
(1906-2000)

"Since I know of no New York physician who is conspicuously (or even slightly) interested in Hippocrates, I cannot guess who S. N. Gaño might be. If he is a student of the history of medicine, he is probably a medicine of this Association [American Association for the History of Medicine]. If such is the case, perhaps he is somewhere in this room at this moment. Certainly his fellow-members have the right to expect that he will come forth and disclose his identity to them."<sup>2</sup>

What Jarcho neatly avoided saying was that he had perpetrated these satires himself. What must be said here is that Saul Jarcho will be much missed, for all these many reasons, but mostly for the pleasure of his urbane, witty, and generous friendship.

—Charles G. Roland

## More Oslerian Progress Notes

Richard Kahn observes with pardonable pride that 2 of the 3 articles in the April 2001 issue of *The Journal of History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* are Oslerians, which may be a first, and that his AOS presidential address has come out of the dark. "Powerpoint to the

People!" Richie has received a Wood Institute Research Fellowship at the College of Physicians in Philadelphia to continue his work on Noah Webster's medical writing.

Preston Reynolds writes (well, e-mails—like everyone else!) that her book on Lincoln

Hospital in Durham is at the publisher. This month, she's giving a presentation for DHHS staff that will be videotaped for future use, on "The Racial Integration of Health Care in the United States: How History Can Inform and Shape Current Policies and Priorities."

1. Saul Jarcho, "An Abbreviated account," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Science* 1998; 75: 90.
2. Saul Jarcho, "Some hoaxes in medical literature," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1959; 33: 347.

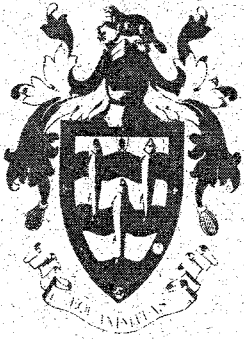
## AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

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### Aequanimitas

*The Oslerian is published approximately four times a year by the American Osler Society, Inc., a non-profit organization. Members of the American Osler Society are encouraged to send news items of interest, including but by no means limited to their personal activities and accomplishments and accompanied by photographs or other illustrations. For distribution of reprints and other materials of possible interest to AOS members, please send 155 copies. Your ideas for The Oslerian are of course most welcome! Direct all correspondence by mail, fax, or e-mail to the Secretary-Treasurer.*

The American Osler Society has been founded for the purpose of bringing together members of the medical and allied professions who are, by their common inspiration, dedicated to memorialize and perpetuate the just and charitable life, the intellectual resourcefulness and the ethical example of **William Osler** (1849-1919). This, for the benefit of succeeding generations, that their motives be ever more sound, that their vision be on everbroadening horizons, and that they sail not as Sir Thomas Browne's Ark, without oars and without rudder and sails and, therefore, without direction.

## Abstracts for 2002 Meeting Due November 15

For several years the AOS has had a pleasant problem: more quality submissions for the annual meeting than can be accommodated. The Program Committee is now chaired by the First Vice-President, and this year's chair is Lawrence D. Longo. Please note the following guidelines (some of these are required for Continuing Medical Education credits):

1. Abstracts must be **received** by the Secretary-Treasurer by November 15, 2001. **FAX and e-mail transmissions will be accepted only from overseas members.** Members and invited guests are encouraged to submit their abstracts well prior to the deadline; receipt will be acknowledged by e-mail and/or postcard.
2. The abstract should be no longer than one page.
3. The abstract should begin with the complete title, the names of all co-authors, and the corresponding author's mailing address, telephone number, FAX, and e-mail address.
4. The text of the abstract should provide sufficient information for the Program Committee to determine its merits and its possible interest to membership. The problem should be defined and the conclusions should be stated. Phrases such as "will be presented" should be kept to a minimum.
5. Three learning objectives should be given after the abstract. Each learning objective should begin with an active verb indicating what attendees should be able to do after the presentation (for example, "list," "explain," or "outline").
6. The curriculum vitae of each author should accompany the abstract ( a one-page synopsis is acceptable).
7. A covering letter should state the authors' opinion of the paper's potential interest to members and the date of the senior author's most recent presentation to AOS (some preference will be shown to prospective members and to members who have not presented in recent years).

Please send five copies of the abstract, a computer diskette containing the abstract (not required but encouraged), curricula vitae of all authors, and a covering letter to: Charles S. Bryan, Secretary-Treasurer, American Osler Society, Two Medical Park, Suite 502, Columbia, SC 29203. Thanks!