

The Oslerian

A Message from the President A Web of Osleriana

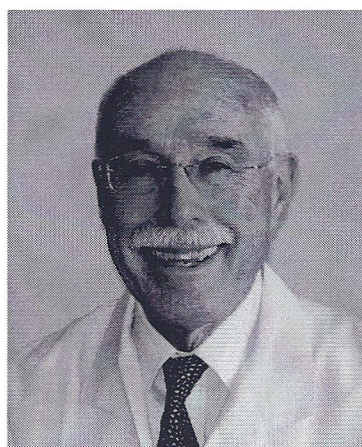
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Robert Austrian**

**Call for Abstracts—2008
Annual Meeting in Boston,
Massachusetts, 4-7 May**



Frank A. Neelon

Greetings, Fellow Oslerians!

Just yesterday I was listening to a Public Radio discussion about digitizing the world's libraries. I had heard before of Project Gutenberg (PG), but the program inspired me to look at the PG website (2 www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page) and I must say that I am impressed. PG has 20,000 electronic books in 51 languages available for free download and distribution. There was even one by Osler, *The Evolution of Modern Medicine*. This is already an auspicious undertaking but 20,000 volumes is just a drop in the bibliothecal bucket and many more await scanning and proof-reading even though the ever more stringent U.S. copyright laws may keep us from having a true "library of libraries" (which would make the entire corpus of human writing available anywhere, anytime—and free!).

Because, as Oslerians, we are interested in Osleriana, I looked at the John P. McGovern Historical Collections and Research Center at the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library in Houston, (mcgovern.library.tmc.edu/

data/www/html/people/osler/index.htm), which makes available a library of digitized images of many rare (and some not-so-rare) examples of Osler's works. It is certainly a tremendous resource for those who want to read original pages of Osler's writings, but it has its shortcomings. For instance, it took me nearly 10 minutes to download the McGovern version of Osler's essay *Aequanimitas*, and printing each imaged page was very slow. Furthermore, since each page of each text is formatted as a PDF document, you have to "turn" (with a click of the mouse, of course) and read many pages in order to find, say, a specific quotation that you were interested in—and you would have to know what you were looking for and where to look because I could not find any search function that seemed to work.

So, the promise and hope of digital information storage (to provide universal and nearly instantaneous accessibility coupled to a powerful search facility that would let the interested user locate specific—even dimly remembered—texts) remain alive but still unrealized, at least in regard to writ-

ings by and about William Osler. The good news is that copyright protection has expired for all of Osler's writings, and for many things written about Osler. This means that with a minimal expenditure of energy and money, it would be possible for a small cadre of volunteers to scan Osler's essays and books into digital format and thus make the corpus of Osleriana available to all who are interested. Motivated by that dream, Mike Jones and (to a much lesser extent) I have begun the process of assembling a searchable database of Osleriana. Members of the American Osler Society who were able to join us in Montreal (marvelous city!) and who were able to stay for the swan song of the annual meeting have heard Mike and me give our introduction to this project. To reprise what we said there, we have begun to assemble a web-based, searchable database (www.asksam.com/demo/osleriana/) that now contains the 22 numbered essays in *Aequanimitas and Other Essays* as well as *A Way of Life* and all of Cushing's *The Life of Sir William Osler* and a few of the abstracts submitted to recent annual meetings of the

A Web of Osleriana (continued)

American Osler Society. The difference between our database and what others have done is that ours consists of digitized *text* rather than scanned images. As a result, the entire database (or specified sections) is searchable using the built-in search function, and it is easy and quick to print out (or e-mail) any portion of the database.

We encourage all readers to look at the website, experiment with the search functions available, print out any pages that they wish—and most of all, to call to our attention any of the still numerous typos or other computer glitches that inevitably remain and await redaction. These errors are easily correctable if you will let me (neelo001@mc.duke.edu) or Mike Jones (mikejones01@nc.rr.com) know about them. And, of course, we want to know what you think of the site, how it works, what is good, what is not, and what it might become.

My ultimate fantasy (is this just a pipe dream?) is a searchable library of all things by and about Osler. Such a library would always be years behind the times because of copyright restrictions, but those might change, and in the meantime, plenty of material is freely available, only lacking the personnel (or dollars) to bring it to fruition. So Mike and I are recruiting volunteers who would be willing to obtain and scan

in assigned essays of or about Osler (we need to have central assignment of tasks in order to avoid duplication of effort), to proofread the finished products, to find and alert us to available material, or who would be willing to donate funds for this purpose (commercial scanning enterprises will do the grunt work for us, for an modest fee). This may seem a daunting job, but I recall that the Lilliputians overwhelmed Gulliver by dint of numbers.

If you have any interest, we want to hear from you. Of course, if this electronic library is to be available to all, the website will need to be sustained. As I announced in Montreal, my presidential gift to the Society is to sponsor the website for the next year. If enough members find the website to be a useful and appropriate instrument, then we can make this project an official function of the American Osler Society—and make this the AOS's gift to the world. The dollar outlay for a year of web hosting is really minimal, particularly in light of the money that we have generously (and appropriately) contributed to the production of printed material. So I am asking all members and other interested parties to let me know what you think and where we should go. Hopefully, by the time we all congregate in Boston, we will be in a position to put this matter to the vote of the Society's members. In the meantime, go to the web address: look, use, enjoy!

Francis A. Neelon

neelo001@mc.duke.edu

Oslerian Progress Notes

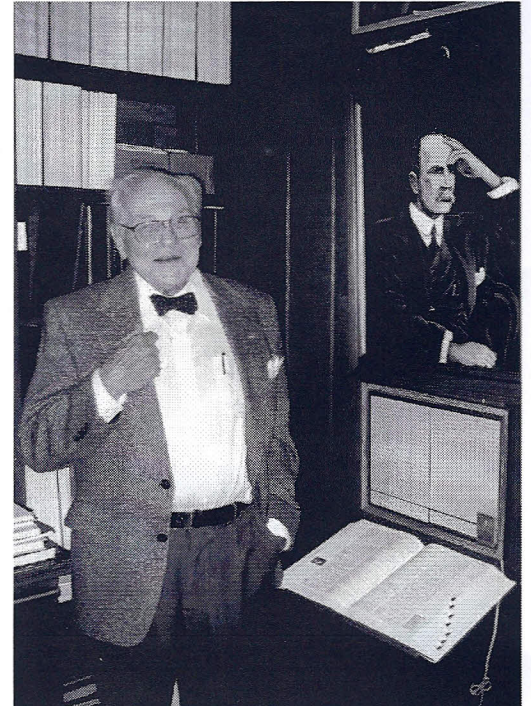
Herbert M. Swick and **John D. Stobo** were among the five inaugural recipients of the Gold Humanism Honor Society, established by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation to recognize sustained leadership in medical humanism and professionalism.

Mark E. Silverman, who has recently had published a new biography of his friend and mentor J. Willis Hurst, is spearheading an effort to bring out a revised edition of *The Quotable Osler*, which has continued to exhibit excellent sales with all royalties going to the Society. Mark would like for anyone with corrections (including typographical errors) or additions to notify him.

Philip W. Leon, who has just retired from teaching English at The Citadel after a distinguished career, has had published *Sir William Osler: Medical Humanist*, which consists of ten essays relating Osler to various figures in literature and art.

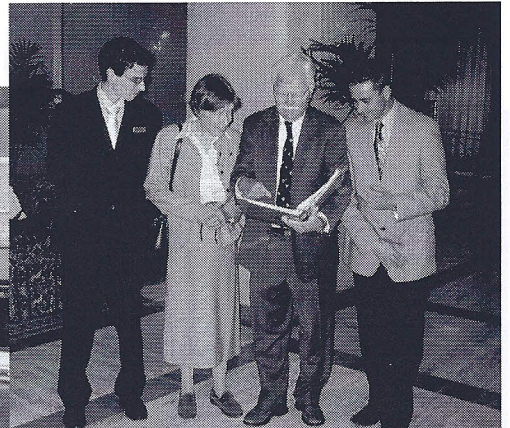
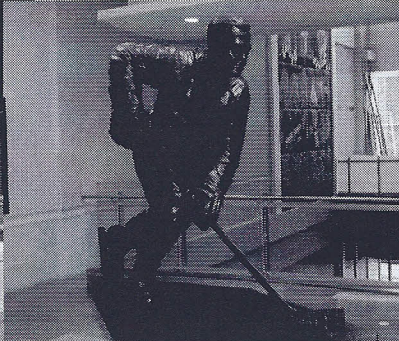
William Haubrich was awarded Mastership in the American College of Physicians at its annual meeting in San Diego, California. **Jock Murray** again organized two history of medicine sessions at the meeting and **Charles S. Bryan** presented the Nicholas E. Davies Memorial Scholar Award lecture.

The **Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society** took place 30 April to May 3 in Montreal, Quebec. One hundred and six persons attended the sessions. Some representative pictorial highlights are shown in this issue of *The Oslerian*. Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting and of the Annual Meeting along with two proposed changes to the Bylaws will appear in the August issue. Pamela Miller chaired the Local Arrangements Committee. Special events in addition to the banquet included tours of the Osler Library and of the Montreal Museum of Archaeology and History.



Will Haubrich strikes a pose in the well-appointed study of his home in La Jolla, California, alongside his own original oil portrait of Osler, based on the 1905 photograph of Osler at age fifty-six. Will, whose father was a professional artist, obviously has considerable talent himself in that direction.

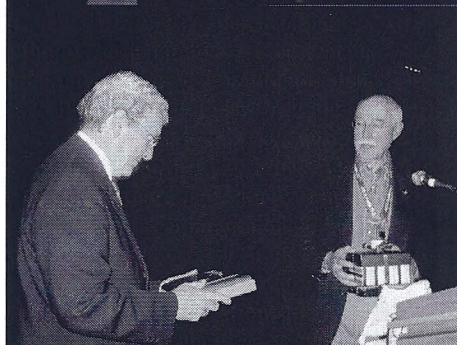
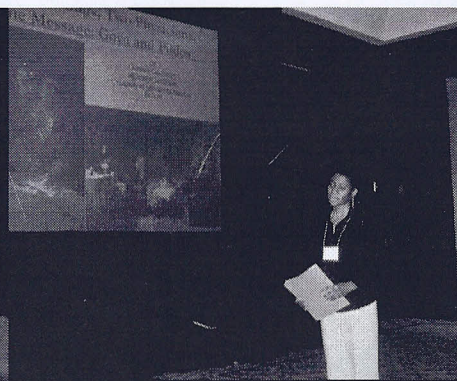
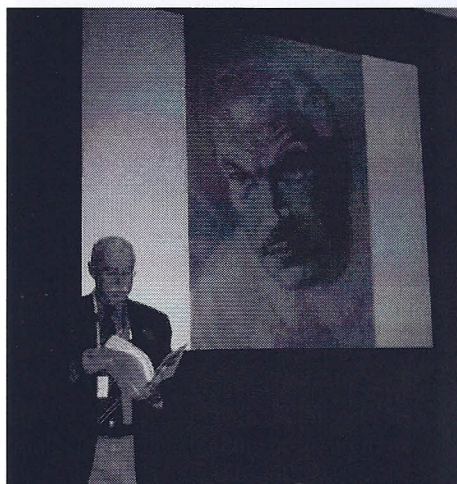
Our Thirty-Seventh: Montreal Memories



Clockwise from upper left: The array of outdoor sculptures greeting early arrivals included Raymond Mason's provocative *The Illuminated Crowd* (1985). Maurice (The Rocket) Richard greeted those who ventured into the labyrinthine underground shopping mall. Pamela Miller and Charles Bryan reviewed meeting arrangements with Eric Comeau from the Omni Hotel (left) and Johnny Buteau from the audiovisual company. Among those who came from faraway lands were Bill Smith (from active military duty in Afghanistan) and the Dates (Sally and Anand) from Oman. We were blessed by the attendance of four charter members: Bill Gibson, Alfred Henderson, Earl Nation, and Chuck Roland. Members of the large Galveston contingent, sponsored by the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch, found a good place to dine on Sunday evening; shown here are (from left-to-right) Osler scholars Joan Richardson, Barbara Thompson, and Alice Anne O' Donnell. McGill University's Bill Feindel, who came from the shortest distance, welcomed fellow Oslerians to his hometown. Earl Nation laughed about the time one of his sons shot the noisy neighborhood peacock—and cooked it!



An Annual Braindusting...



Presiding over the Tuesday afternoon session, Frank Neelon checked the program to see whose misfortune it was to follow Robert Turk's informative paper on Norman Bethune (shown on the screen). Claus Pierach hammered home a point and later introduced his student, Oludare A. Odu-made, who contrasted Goya's *Self-portrait with Dr Arrieta* with Sir Luke Fildes's *The Doctor*. Richard Kahn made a new point about Osler's bibliomania, while Neil McIntyre listened attentively to the lively discussions. The Silverman brothers gamely fought sleep deprivation. Jock Murray presented the John P. McGovern Award Lectureship medal to a worthy recipient, the noted physician-writer Abraham Verghese. Tara Neubrand and Sandra Caldwell, second-year medical students at the University of Texas Medical Branch, had clearly rehearsed their paper many times and it showed. (Many recalled Osler's famous remark to Welch that "we're lucky we got in as faculty—we could never have made it as students!") Incoming president Frank Neelon had a gift and a plaque for outgoing president Jock Murray.



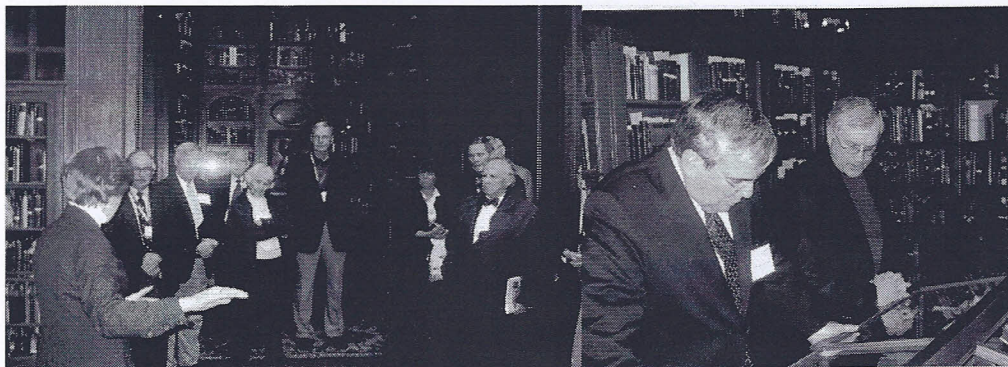
A Wide and Congenial Circle of Friends ...



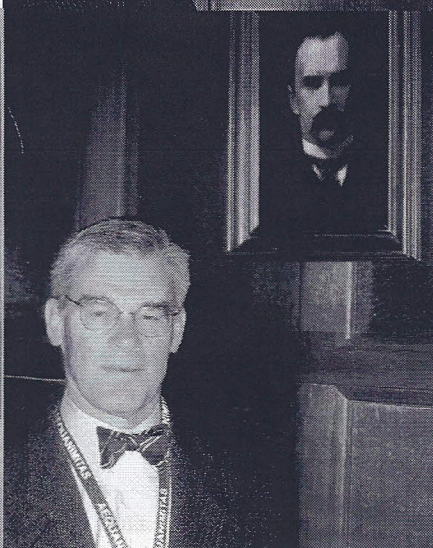
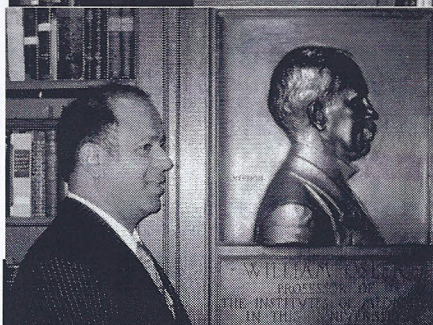
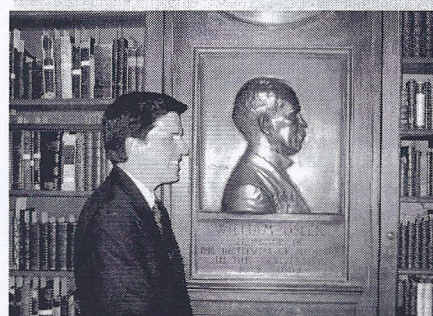
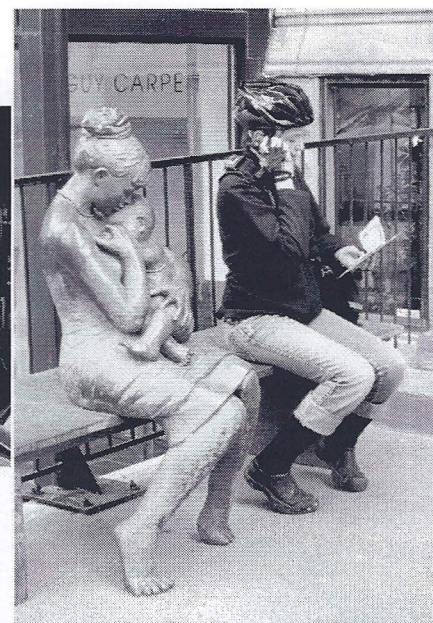
Joe Lella compared notes on humanities programs with Robert Martensen, who has recently become chair of the medical humanities department at East Carolina University School of Medicine in Greenville, North Carolina. A refreshment break found Dookies Frank Neelon and Conrad Fulkerson feeling chipper. Arthur Holman, Charlie Wooley, and Bruce Fye held an impromptu international cardiology summit. Sanchia and Irene Mitchell found time to see the sites of Montreal. Elizabeth and John Carson enjoyed lunch with Simon Hanft, a former Bean Award recipient who plans to enter neurosurgery. One hundred and fifty-six people attended the banquet on Tuesday evening, the highlight of which was the inaugural showing of Rob Stone's video on the life and significance of William Osler. Cynthia Pitcock and her Scottish friends, Ailsa (left) and John Blair, were inseparable. Enjoying each other's company at the banquet were Mark and Diana Silverman, Claus and Rosemarie Pierach, and Wendy and Neil McIntyre. William B. Bean Award Student Lectureship recipient Makini Chisolm-Straker, at 23 the youngest attendee, posed with Earl Nation, who at 97 was the oldest.



And a Reluctant *Au Revoir*



Pamela Miller conducted a tour of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine at McGill. Steve Greenberg and Jim Young admired the exhibits. Donna Bryan's lens captured life unconsciously imitating art on Sherbrooke Street. Paul Mueller and Abraham Verghese compared their profiles with William Osler's on the Vernon plaque, while John Noble preferred to pose in front of a canvass likeness of Osler. Bruce Fye, whose collection of rare medical books is probably the largest west of London's Wellcome Centre, struck a pose alongside one of his role models, Sir Henry Wellcome. Oslerians greatly enjoyed the reception and tour at the Montreal Museum of Archaeology and History. Rob and Marvin Stone said goodbye at the airport; Rob's video was no doubt the hit of the entire meeting. Oslerians took one last wistful look at Montreal through their airplane windows, perhaps hoping to see where E.Y. Davis allegedly drowned in the Lachine Rapids of the St. Lawrence River.



In Memoriam

Robert Austrian (1916-2007)

Robert Austrian, an emeritus member of the American Osler Society whose relentless pursuit of the pneumococcal vaccine may prove to be one of the most useful medical achievements of the twentieth century, died on March 25, 2007, in Philadelphia. He had worked in his laboratory serotyping pneumococci as recently as two days before his fatal stroke.

Dr. Austrian was born in Baltimore the son of Charles Robert Austrian, who was one of the first full-time clinical faculty members of the Department of Medicine at Johns Hopkins and for whom the chest clinic at the Johns Hopkins Hospital was named, reflecting his long interest in tuberculosis. Like his father, Robert Austrian obtained both his undergraduate and his medical degrees from the Johns Hopkins University. His experience as an intern and resident on the Osler Service at the Johns Hopkins Hospital sparked a lifelong interest in pneumococcal pneumonia. He directed the outpatient clinic at Johns Hopkins until 1962, when he left to take a position at the State University of New York College of Medicine in Brooklyn. Although the advent of penicillin therapy had disinterested most people from serotyping pneumococcal isolates—which had been the basis for serum therapy prior to antibiotics—Dr. Austrian systematically typed pneumococcal isolates associated with pneumonia and bacteremia at Kings County Hospital. He was disturbed by the persistent mortality from invasive pneumococcal disease and also by the apparent lack of impact of therapy on the survival rate during the first several days of illness (See Figure at right). He began to promote the concept of a polyvalent pneumococcal vaccine.

In 1962 Dr. Austrian left Brooklyn to become John Herr Musser Professor of Research Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, he supervised the development of a vaccine consisting of polysaccharide from the capsules of those serotypes most commonly associated with invasive disease. Clinical trials conducted in South African gold miners established the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. He demonstrated that of the 83 known serotypes of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, 14 were responsible for about 80% of cases of invasive pneumococcal disease in humans. These efforts led to the development of a vaccine against these 14 serotypes. The vaccine was later expanded to include 23 serotypes. Initial efforts targeted the vaccine toward populations at increased risk of death—those over 65 years of age and those with chronic illnesses predisposing to pneumococcal pneumonia. More recently, a conjugate pneumococcal vaccine has been introduced into the practice of pediatrics. The effect thus far has been dramatic.

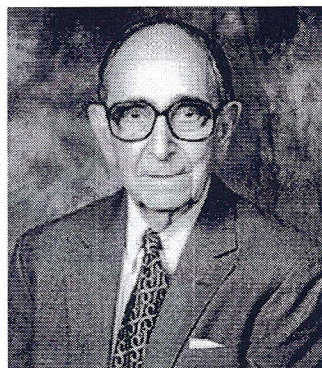
Dr. Austrian's numerous awards included the Albert Lasker Clinical Medicine Research Award, the Maxwell Finland Award for Scientific Achievement from the National Foundation of Infectious Diseases, the Bristol Award from the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and election to the National Academy of Sciences. The auditorium of the University of Pennsylvania's Clinical Research Building was named in his honor.

Although admired throughout the medical world and revered in Philadelphia, his adopted hometown, Dr. Austrian was a modest man who, when asked, spoke of his research as "old-fashioned." He was an accomplished clinician who exemplified the scholarly approach to the patient at the bedside. His hobbies were classical music, Broadway musicals, and ornithology.

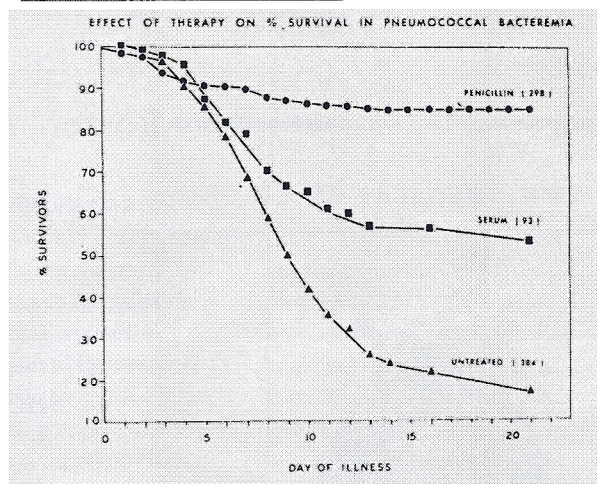
From his father Dr. Austrian inherited highly valuable Osleriana including the original drawing of *The Saint* by Max Brödel. He donated these materials to the Alan Mason Chesney Archives of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.

Dr. Austrian was predeceased by his wife of 37 years, the former Babette Friedmann. He is survived by a sister and by two stepdaughters.

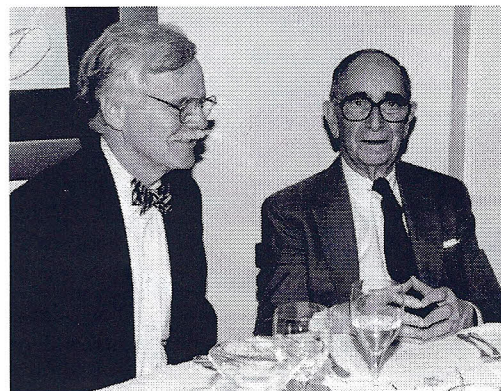
—CSB



Robert Austrian



Percent survival from bacteremic pneumococcal pneumonia versus day of illness (zero to 21), showing the effect of penicillin (top line) or serum containing type-specific antibodies (middle line) versus no therapy (bottom line) (Austrian and Gold, *Ann Intern Med* 1964; 70: 759). Although penicillin, compared with no therapy, lowered the case-fatality rate from 82% to 17%, penicillin had no effect on mortality during the first 3 to 5 days of the illness. These data stimulated Dr. Austrian to redouble his efforts to develop an effective vaccine against *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.



CSB with Dr. Austrian in 1994 at the Manhattan Ocean Club, the occasion being a symposium on the pneumococcus in Dr. Austrian's honor.

AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

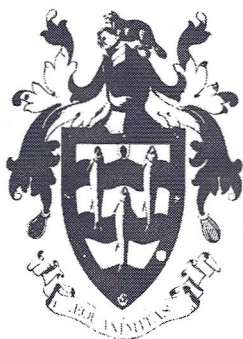
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Spend the last half-hour of the day
in communion with the saints of
humanity.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.AMERICANOSLER.ORG



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 180 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

Call for Abstracts for 2008 Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, 4-7 May

The Board of Governors will meet on Sunday, 4 May. Assuming that we once again have a surplus of abstracts, we will meet through noon on Wednesday, 7 May.

For several years we have received more quality submissions that can be accommodated. The Program Committee will be chaired by the first vice-president, Joseph W. Lella. Please note the following guidelines for submission of abstracts (some of these are required for Continuing Medical Education credits):

1. Abstracts can be sent by e-mail to: smitche@gw.mp.sc.edu or by regular mail. If sent by e-mail they must be **received** by 1 November 2007; if sent by regular mail, they must be **received** by 15 November 2007. Early submission is encouraged. Abstracts submitted by e-mail will be acknowledged. However, we will not be responsible for lost e-mail submissions.
2. The abstract should be no longer than one page. It 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. This should be followed by a two- to three-sentence biographical sketch indicating how the author would like to be introduced (This will probably be your entire introduction. Don't be modest!). The text should provide sufficient information for the Program Committee to determine its merits and possible interest to the membership. The problem should be defined and the conclusions should be stated. Phrases such as "will be presented" should be avoided or kept to a minimum.
3. 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," "discuss," "examine," "evaluate," "define," "contrast," or "outline"; avoid noncommittal verbs such as "know," "learn," and "appreciate"), which is required for Continuing Medical Education.
4. Standard audiovisual equipment will consist of a computer and an LCD projector. Presenters should request additional equipment only if absolutely necessary on account of the additional expense that must be incurred by the Society.
5. All presentations except the special lectures will ordinarily occupy a 20-minute time slot. Our experience has been that 20-minute slots, with the papers carefully rehearsed and timed to 15 minutes, work quite well for nearly all presentations and allow time for discussion. Presenters should justify requests for additional time.
6. A cover letter should state whether any of the authors has a potential conflict-of-interest such as direct financial involvement in the topic being discussed, and whether there will be any mention of off-label use of drugs or other products during the presentation.

Abstracts will be accepted by e-mail up until 1 November 2007 (smitche@gw.mp.sc.edu) or by regular mail up until 15 November 2007. If submitting by regular mail, please send five copies of the abstract, a computer diskette containing the abstract (ideally in Microsoft Word format), and a cover letter to: Charles S. Bryan, Secretary-Treasurer, American Osler Society, Two Medical Park, Suite 502, Columbia, SC 29203. Again, the deadline for receipt by e-mail is 1 November 2007 and by regular mail 15 November 2007.