



# The Oslerian

## *A Message from the President*

J. Mario Molina

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**President Mario Molina**  
**50<sup>th</sup> AOS President**  
**installed at the 2019 meet-**  
**ing in Montreal, Canada.**

My interest in Osler began in my pre-med days. My father was an internist who ran the emergency room in a community hospital. I spent many evenings with him in the ER, drinking coffee and playing cribbage while waiting for the next patient to present. My father had me slip on a white coat and follow him as he examined and treated patients. I was put to work running specimens to the lab, wheeling patients to and from radiology and sometimes turning or restraining patients on gurneys when a little extra muscle was needed.

My father used to spout aphorisms from Osler from time to time, but they didn't mean much to me. In my first year of medical school, I struggled. Neuroanatomy was over my head. I became convinced that I had been admitted through a clerical error. It would only be a matter of time before the error was caught and I would be called to the Dean's office and dismissed. I was in the library late one evening and as I strolled through the stacks, I came across Cushing's *The Life of Sir William Osler*. Since I thought my medical school days were numbered, I decided to check out the book and learn who this mysterious Osler was, that my father loved to quote. I couldn't put the book down; I was fascinated by Osler. Of course, this did not help me with neuroanatomy, but I did pass.

My father was impressed by how our Aesculapian forebears had been able to accurately describe disease using only their five senses. When I started medical school, my father gave his copy of the third edition of *Classic Descriptions of Disease* by Ralph Major, a Hopkins graduate who was inspired to study the history of medicine by Osler. Again, there was that connection to Osler. Inspired by Sir William, I began to collect, or more accurately, due to my penury state, covet books. The first book that I bought for my collection was a first edition of Cushing's biography of Osler purchased in New Hampshire for \$150 – probably a bit pricey at the time, but an irresistible book, nonetheless.

That book traveled with me to Baltimore where I had the good fortune to serve as an intern on the Osler Medical Service under Dr. Victor McKusick. At Hopkins my collecting continued as I acquired discards from the Med Chi library. My prize was a somewhat tattered copy of the first edition of Williams Obstetrics. Williams was the first head of obstetrics (Howard Kelly was not interested in delivering babies) at Hopkins and a contemporary of Osler. Spare time was spent in the stacks on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the Welch Library reading history of medicine.

## President's Message (Continued from page 1)

My fledgling collection traveled with me to California where I did my fellowship at UC San Diego. Like Erasmus, when I had a few extra coins I bought old medical books. It was during this time that I found a bookdealer in Wisconsin who seemed to have just the sort of books that I wanted to buy.

From San Diego I moved to Los Angeles where my wife and I settled in the suburb of South Pasadena about 3 miles from the Huntington Library. Each year there were two lectures in the history of medicine at the Huntington, one the Barlow lecture the other the George Dock lecture. Here I met Earl Nation, Garth Huston Jr and John C. Carson. One evening Dr. Carson showed up sporting a navy-blue tie with the Aequanimitas shield. He told me that the tie had been given to him by Dr. McKusick because they were both members of the American Osler Society. He encouraged me to join. At first, I could not imagine that I could be admitted to such an illustrious society, but Dr. Carson was persistent. Finally, offering up one last excuse I told him that I could not become a member because I would have to write a paper and I was just too busy. Dr. Carson looked me squarely in the eye and said, "We are all busy; write the paper."

I did and submitted it for the meeting held in Montreal over a decade ago. I was very nervous before I gave my talk. I was in my room rehearsing the night before when there came a knock on my door. I opened it and there stood my daughter, a medical student at Albany, who had driven up to surprise me and hear my talk. The next day, as I looked out over the sea of faces of Oslerian scholars, the room began to spin. I put my head down and presented my paper, "William Sydney Thayer, the Bard of Johns Hopkins. I managed to avoid tripping as I descended from the podium and was elected to membership.

Following John Carson's admonition was one of the best things I have ever done. I treasure my membership in the American Osler Society. I have made so many good friends and had the pleasure of listening to many talks on Osler and the history of medicine. I met that book dealer that I mentioned, Bruce Fye, and discovered that we are, in many ways, kindred spirits. I haven't missed a meeting and look forward with anticipation to rejoin my friends in the many interesting cities where we travel to for our meetings. I have had the privilege to visit the Osler Library, Osler's home in Oxford where I had tea on the terrace just as George Dock did over a century ago, visit Ewelme and Osler's beloved Bodleian library. I sat in the ether dome at the MGH, visited the College of Physicians in Philadelphia and toured a

civil war battlefield in Atlanta with my fellow Oslerians. Membership in the Society has been my delight. To have had the pleasure to serve as your president for the past year has been my great privilege.

Charles Roland gave a summary of the formative years of the Society in the Osler Library Newsletter number 93 in 2000. The AOS is the brainchild of Drs. Jack McGovern and Alfred Henderson. McGovern was the driving force encouraged by Wilder Penfield and Jack's mentor Wilbert Davidson. McGovern, Henderson and Tom Durrant met in Houston to plan the society. William Bean was drafted as the first president. The organization was incorporated February 6, 1970 in Texas followed by the first meeting of the board of trustees on February 22, 1970. There was an informal first meeting in Galveston followed by the first formal meeting held in Denver on April 1, 1971 with nine of the original 30 members in attendance. The Society was re-incorporated in Minnesota in 1974.

Shortly after joining the staff of JAMA in 1965, Charles Roland met McGovern on a trip to Houston. In 1967 they jointly began work on a project relating to Osler that culminated in *William Osler: The Continuing Education* published in 1969. It was Roland, then an editor at JAMA, that suggested that the Society not publish a journal reasoning that spreading the "gospel" of Osler could be more effectively done if members published articles in a variety of other journals. A separately published proceedings would have but small circulation and defeat the purpose. The wisdom of Roland's advice has been proven over time, but ironically, he became one of the first editors of the "proceedings" as the Society has published four editions of *The Persisting Osler* to chronicle the organization's meetings.

There were 30 charter members including Bill Bean, the first President, Jack McGovern, Charles Roland and Alfred Henderson. Some of the members were passive admirers of Osler and his ideals while others became noted Oslerian scholars including Roland and Earl Nation. In addition to the charter members, two notable Osler scholars who published were Richard Golden and Charles Bryan. Charley is the editor and driving force behind *William Osler: An Encyclopedia* to which many of our members contributed and that is currently in press. We number many bibliophiles among us, but none can exceed W. Bruce Fye who recently made a large donation from his collection to the Mayo Clinic. Rob Stone, a former actor and now director of documentary films, contributed in very special way by producing the video *Sir William Osler: Science and the Art of Medicine*, narrated by

**President's Message** (*Continued from page 2*)

Richard Dreyfuss.

The original purpose of the society as proposed by McGovern included uniting "as an organized group physicians, and others allied to the profession..." In this we have been somewhat successful, but I am reminded of the words of Will Rogers who once said, "I'm not a member of any organized political party.... I'm a Democrat." We have over the years evolved from a small and exclusive group of 30 men to more diverse group of nearly 200 members. We are an itinerant society traveling to a new city each year for our annual members. It appears that McGovern had in mind a group that would meet periodically to present and discuss papers "on the life and influence of Osler upon the profession...to continually place before the profession a reminder of the high principles of life and humanism in practice in Osler and to introduce these things to those entering the profession."

According to the Society's website, "The American Osler Society is a history of medicine organization dedicated to perpetuating the life, teachings, and ethical example of Sir William Osler." In these things we have been fairly successful. Renee Ziemer our administrator has held the group together. We meet annually and through the good work of Michael Malloy we continue to publish a quarterly newsletter The Oslerian, past copies of which, dating from November 2000 can be found on our website. Through the efforts of Alexander D. Jones, H. Michael Jones, and Pete Travers with assistance from Frank Neelon a huge body of Osler and Osler-related materials has been digitized and made available on the internet. I believe that the number of abstracts submitted by students has reached an all-time high, thanks in no small measure by mentors at McGill and the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Still, we need to do more. JAMA did not publish a special anniversary issue commemorating Osler on the anniversary of his death. Several articles were published in various journals in the past year, many of them authored by our members, but I wonder if we are doing enough to "continually place before the profession" reminders of who Osler was and the ideas he espoused. Do medical students really know to whom they are indebted for teaching at the bedside? Osler said of himself, "I desire no other epitaph - no hurry about it, I may say - than the statement that I taught medical students in the wards, as I regard this as by far the most useful and important work I have been called upon to do."

As a Society and individuals, we have been accused of being "idolaters;" we have been accused of shameless hagiography in our interests in the history

of medicine by more professional historians of medicine. I for one am guilty as charged. However, I remember it was Osler who said, "It helps a man immensely to be a bit of a hero-worshipper, and the stories of the lives of the masters of medicine do much to stimulate our ambition and rouse our sympathies." So it is with stories about Osler. It would be hard to find a better role model for physicians. In this, I think we all agree.





## Preview of AOS Pasadena Meeting

The 50<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the American Osler Society will be held at the Westin Hotel overlooking the historic city center in downtown Pasadena from Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup>. There are two major airports serving the area, the larger one is Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) located about 20 miles from the hotel. The other more-convenient airport is the Burbank Bob Hope Airport. LAX offers more direct flights, but Burbank is easier to get in and out of.



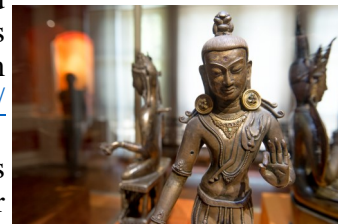
Preceding our meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, the Huntington Library is hosting “New Histories of Medical Technology” convened by Dr. Jeremy Greene from Johns Hopkins and Dr. Jaipreet Virdi from the University of Delaware. The two-day colloquium will feature speakers on diverse topics related to medicine and technology from a historical standpoint. <https://www.huntington.org/conferences>

On the Sunday preceding the meeting we have made arrangement for those interested to visit the world-famous J. Paul Getty Museum (it didn't burn down) in the hills near UCLA. The Getty Center in Los Angeles houses European paintings, drawings, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, decorative arts, and photography from its beginnings to the present, gathered internationally. Admission is free but we must charter the buses to take us across town. <https://www.getty.edu/museum/>



The USC Pacific Asia museum, established in 1971, is one of few U.S. institutions dedicated to the

arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific Islands, and is just a 5-minute walk from the hotel <https://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu/>. Also nearby is the Paseo shopping center with restaurants and a movie theater located only about a 15-minute walk from the hotel. <https://www.thepaseopasadena.com/>



For those in need of even more culture, the Norton Simon museum is in Pasadena about 2.5 miles from the hotel. If you've watched the Rose Parade, you've seen the Norton Simon as the parade route takes the floats right past the museum. <https://www.nortonsimon.org/>



We have a robust program with 57 abstracts that were accepted for presentation. Students are well represented this year. On Sunday night the Past Presidents will host a reception for new members and on Monday night will be the annual banquet. Wear your “Sunday best” to the banquet as we plan to memorialize the event with a group photo.

On Tuesday evening we will travel by bus to the Huntington Library and Gardens for a reception and tour of the “Beautiful Science” exhibit [<https://www.huntington.org/beautiful-science>] as well as show-and-tell hosted by Joel Klein PhD, curator of the history of medicine. <https://www.huntington.org/staff/joel-klein>



Dr. Klein will share some of the Huntington's treasures with us. The Huntington Library is home to the rare book collection of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, to whom George Dock left his books and papers, and Bern Dibner's Burndy Library containing 47,000 rare monographic and serial volumes and 50 archival collections. <https://www.huntington.org/collections/science-medicine>

Wednesday morning will kick off with the annual business meeting followed by more presentations. We will conclude at noon on Wednesday.

We have a few surprises in store, among them a special keepsake gift and the unveiling of the long-awaited book *Sir William Osler: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Charley Bryan. Many of you have contributed to this effort that resulted in a magnum opus of 996 pages extensively illustrated with a double-sided frontispiece that includes a new portrait of Sir William Osler. We will not sell the books at the meeting, but you may pre-order and receive your copy at the meeting.

The meeting is still a work in progress, but on behalf of the local arrangements committee, we look forward to seeing you in Pasadena.



## American Osler Society Committee Membership 2019-2020

COMMITTEE	CURRENT CHAIR	CURRENT MEMBERS	NEW CHAIR	ROTATES OFF	NEW MEMBERS
Bean Award	J. Wright	S.Podolsky, B.Thompson,	B.Thompson	J.Wright	R.Mennel
McGovern Award*	L.Drevlow	P. Mueller, J.VanderVeer	C.Partin	P.Mueller	None
Lifetime Achievement Award	C.Pierach	J.Barondess, B.Fye, R.Mennel	No Change	B.Fye	D.Canale
Nominating*	L.Drevlow	P. Mueller, J.VanderVeer	C.Partin	P.Mueller	None
Finance	M. Molina	B. Cooper, M. Stone	No Change	None	J.VanderVeer, F.Bernadett
Membership#	M.Jones	C.Boes, W.Evans, C.Fulkerson	R.Mennel	M.Jones	J.Wright
Publications	M. Jones	M. Malloy, H. Travers	P.Travers	None	C.Bryan, R.Stone
Annual Meeting† – Program Committee	M.Molina	G.Frank, M.Jones, E.Matteson, M.Trotter	M.Jones	None	J.Bailey, C.Partin, M.Moran
Annual Meeting – Local Arrangements Committee	R.Fraser	P.Miller, R.DelMaestro, M.Yearl, D.Lanska (ExCmtLiason)	M.Molina	R.Fraser, P.Miller, R.DelMaestro, M.Yearl	F.Bernadett, D.Lanska (ExCmtLiason)

\*Chaired by most recent living Past President, includes 3 most recent living Past Presidents. #Second VP. †First VP

### **13 Norham Gardens and the Centenary of the Death of Sir William Osler.**

To celebrate Sir William's centenary five daylong seminars were held at 13 Norham Gardens from September to December 2019. The theme of these was "*Health and Well-being : Science and Humanity are One*", a title arising from Osler's last lecture, "*The Old Humanities and the New Science*" and taken up by John McGovern. It was C P Snow in his 1959 lecture who expressed the view that these two cultures rarely combine as one. For the purpose of the seminars the interpretation was that "Care technology must be applied with Care attitude." Professor Terence Ryan introduced each seminar and had an international cast of speakers. The introduction to each session emphasised the components of care attitude and what Osler said and wrote about it. Along with these some recent work by Professor R I M Dunbar of the Oxford Institute of Experimental Psychology was quoted in which studies of the amygdala, the emotional centre of the brain, showed that **Friendship is the single most important factor influencing our health, well-being and happiness.** (Dunbar R I M, 2018. *The Anatomy of Friendship*, Trends Cogn Sci, 22, 32-51). Osler repeatedly described the importance of cheer and friendliness and advised that "It is an unpardonable mistake to go about among patients with a long face." In *The Evolution of Modern Medicine* he attributed such emphasis to Confucius, Hippocrates, Galen, Burton, Browne and others; thus in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* of 1661 one reads "Find a friend who makes you laugh."

In the first seminar on 26<sup>th</sup> September Professor Zhaofan Xia, a Chinese naval surgeon, described the great advances that science has made in the treatment of burns in her hospital in Shanghai. The heart, lungs, liver and kidneys of the severely burned are well looked after by contemporary machinery and after a few weeks the use of manipulated stem cells has made it possible to survive even 100% burns. This is care technology at its best. The subsequent question was whether care attitude matched these advances after dis-

charge to a different environment. Connor Campbell, Director of Osler Diagnostics, Oxford then spoke about his new invention of a tool that can give rapid information on many blood components from a single drop of blood. Such information needs care attitude to help with the patient's response to it.

Following these presentations on Science the first presentations on Care Attitude were given. These focused on the introduction of the concept to school children in Asia. The organisation ACTAsia ([www.ACTAsia.org](http://www.ACTAsia.org)) was set up to teach children in China to care for animals but has advanced to care for the environment and human beings in need. Additionally it now has a programme in Pakistan and Nepal. This seminar launched iCare, the academic branch of ACTAsia's Caring for Life Education (CFL) programme, providing a digital programme for educational initiatives in collaboration with universities and industry. CFL was developed from UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education and is a foundation course in learning to Live Together. The programme promotes compassion and kindness in Asian societies and enables children to develop emotional intelligence.

The second seminar was on 8<sup>th</sup> November and dealt with traditional and complementary medicine's new partnership in global healthcare, where community health workers (CHWs) are a source of knowledge in resource poor settings. Oxford was a pioneering centre in dermatology. In the 1960s it developed research into leprosy; in the 1970s research into the management of leg ulcers and in the 1980s the foundation of the Oxford Wound Healing Foundation, which provided leadership in international efforts to provide skin care for all. Early recognition that patients use complimentary medicine and that in resource poor areas of the world traditional health practitioners are first on call led to Oxford's dermatology department adding Global Initiatives for Traditional Systems of Health to its portfolio. Osler's interest in Oriental Medicine and his use of compassion, friendship, science and bringing of cheer was used as a template for discussion of the im-



## OSLERIAN VIEWS

portance of Care Attitude over-riding Care Technology.

In this seminar Dr Gerry Bodeker, the editor of the WHO Global Atlas for Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, gave his perspective on traditional medicine at the community level and CHWs and their role in primary health care. Speakers from Vietnam and Singapore reflected on the Buddhist monastery tradition of free medical care for rural communities and their present role in health delivery. They highlighted how training in modern scientific method combined with traditional Asian care led to more efficient health delivery. There was also a presentation of work with the aboriginal population in Australia.

In the third seminar on 14<sup>th</sup> November the swollen leg, a common symptom and sign was used to illustrate that management only succeeds when advanced care technology is supported by care attitude. Dr S R Narahari from Kerala, India reported on filariasis in rural communities and its treatment by biomedicine, the herbal components of Ayurvedic medicine along with yoga to mobilise the lymphatics. Counselling to gain patient confidence was emphasised. The Gates Foundation is to introduce this to four other states. Paul Matts then spoke of Podoconiosis in Ethiopia, caused by irritant soil in the shoeless. This leads to foul-smelling oedema and exclusion. Low technology care involving washing, restoration of skin barrier function and provision of shoes is providing success. Comparison with the frail elderly in the UK suggested that in the third world more attention was being paid to patient social and care need.

The fourth seminar on 28<sup>th</sup> November was co-hosted by the Osler Club of London (OCL) and dealt with proposed revisions of the World Medical Association's Declaration of Geneva and WHO's definition of health. The Dutch government's adoption of Dr M Huber's definition, of health as "The ability to adapt and self-manage, in the face of social, physical and emotional chal-

lenges" was noted. Raanon Gillon, the noted ethicist and current President of the BMA, wished to add to the current medical oaths a commitment to practise fairly and justly. His views were discussed by Daniel Sokol, an ethicist and barrister, and by Dr Noah Rosenberg with his experience of the ebola epidemic and casualty care in Ruanda. Input also came from the Oxford philosopher, Rebecca Brown. Graham Kyle, the current President of the OCL discussed recent concerns that the passage of time might make judgements on William Osler misguided. Osler himself said "The philosophies of one age have become the absurdities of the next, and the foolishness of yesterday has become the wisdom of tomorrow."

The fifth seminar on December 5<sup>th</sup> dealt with contemporary nursing care technology and care attitude. William Osler's views on nursing and nurses were on their complimentary and companion roles rather than on their scientific contribution to medicine. Several leading figures in the practice and teaching of nursing in the UK described and discussed current efforts to produce compassionate, competent and adaptable nurses who can work effectively within multidisciplinary teams across complex health systems.

These seminars at Osler's home have been a great success and intellectually invigorating. In the centenary year of his death Sir William was with us in spirit and his qualities on display.

*John W K Ward*



## MEDICAL HUMANITIES

**Thoughts on Medical School –  
Year One - Halfway**

From the University of Minnesota  
School of Medicine

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“The Fivers” are a group of first year medical students at the University of Minnesota who meet weekly throughout the year to learn patient history and physical examination skills, medical ethics and humanities. They were dubbed “The Fivers” by none other than Oslerian, Claus Pierach, simply because the assigned group was #5. They now number over 150 and many maintain strong bonds with each other because of the teaching of Dr. Pierach and Dr. Laurel Drevlow. The following are responses from two students in the Group :

*It's something like the feeling you get halfway through a hike of that four-thousand footer you always wanted to finish.*

*Short of breath, dripping sweat, aching muscles, heart pounding in your chest.*

*Just close enough to see the summit, just far enough to know you've still got quite a bit of work to do.*

*But every sore muscle fiber, every drop of sweat, reminds you of the loose rocks that nearly gave way beneath you, the difficult steps you completed to get to where you are standing now.*

*You're cautiously proud, acutely aware there is much of your journey left ahead of you.*

*More treacherous tracks, more loose earth quivering below your feet.*

*The air gets thinner and harder to breathe, the path is twisted and unfamiliar.*

*But you remind yourself that it also gets more beautiful.*

*You remind yourself to just take it one step at a time, that it isn't going to be easy but it will be worth it.*

*You collect your thoughts and step on the stony ridge just ahead — a gentle tap to see if it's safe, sturdy — and you march on.*

Zarin Rahman

*Huge weight on my shoulders, doubt.  
Have I overestimated myself?  
Am I capable?  
Only one way to find out.*

*A true test of will,  
But perhaps more of cognition.  
Recognition of limits,  
Pushing towards the finish.*

*Though I suppose there is no finish.  
More of a lifelong journey.  
Honored for this chance,  
Won't waste this opportunity.*

Alyssa Axelrod

**Thoughts on Medical School –  
Year Four - Halfway**

From the University of Texas  
Medical Branch

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*Practicing medicine can be like trying to run a marathon while carrying two cranky toddlers on your back and running through quicksand.*

*If you want to be stressed, you don't have to look far, and you'll see patients that don't have insurance or aren't documented within a system that makes it harder to give them a hand.*

*While the system is flawed and isn't always just, the small changes and impacts on the patients, makes everything feel more hopeful and warm*

*The hospitals and clinics are for patients to get help, students to be inspired and learn, and practitioners to do their duty with benevolent charm*

*The joy of medicine comes from holding a toddler's hand when no one else is around and the baby is in distress,  
With him looking up at me for comfort and squeezing my hand tight from all the stress*

*You can find it when your patient meets their goal of stopping smoking after trying for 13 years*



## MEDICAL HUMANITIES

(Continued from page 8)

*And when a long-term patient had their hemoglobin A1C go down from 9.3 to 6.7 and after hearing the news, having their eyes full of happy tears*

*Or when an encephalopathic woman calls you back to the room while you're walking out to tell you that she loves you after trying to understand her and listening to her cry*

*Or when a gay patient tells you how comfortable they are talking to you about their problems after seeing the shiny rainbow ally pin*

*And when you develop enough rapport with a patient that they can laugh at your jokes and say, "I love your personality as a doctor" and how you seem to be full of zen*

*And when a severely depressed and anxious woman is ready to start antidepressants and therapy to help balance her brain chemicals*

*And after a healthy 64-year-old man with high blood pressure finally has health insurance and can stay up to date with all of his screening tests and yearly physicals*

*Or when a challenging patient finally opens up to you about why they have been upset with their care*

*And it's always nice to see a patient again and see how much better they are doing this time, it's really not that rare*

*Even when it is looking grim for their future, being present in the moment with the patient means the world to them and makes all the difference*

*And once you see all of the love and joy in medicine, it is impossible to stay away, and to keep going when it gets tough, here are some helpful hints:*

*Do no harm and do what you can.  
Put yourself in your patients' shoes so you can see how far they have ran.  
Care to love and love to care.  
Have hobbies outside of medicine so you get some air.  
Read a lot and stay up to date.  
Look at the patient as a person and look at their overall state.  
Keep your mind fresh by finding ways to cope.  
And don't ever lose all of your hope.  
With these tips, it shouldn't be hard to find all of the wonderful joys and thrills of practicing the amazing field of medicine for life.*

Kara J. Jencks

## POETRY CORNER

## Tic Toc

By  
Andrew Merrill

Tic toc tic toc  
heart's quick, I sit,  
Just staring at the clock.

Tic toc tic toc  
I'm here, great fear,  
Is he ever gonna knock  
Tic toc tic toc  
That's him, come in  
Are my hopes about to  
drop.

Tic toc tic toc  
shut up, enough  
Pay attention to the doc.

Tic toc tic toc  
Bad news, black shoes  
Did he say they found a  
spot

Tic toc tic toc  
White wall, he's tall  
How much longer do I  
got.

Tic toc tic toc  
Can't think, won't blink  
Sev'ral months isn't a lot

Tic toc tic toc  
You're wrong, I'm strong  
I could beat it if I fought

Tic toc tic toc  
Won't work, some jerk  
Doesn't think I have a  
shot

Tic toc tic toc  
Takes time, live life  
It's okay to be in shock.

Tic toc tic toc  
Will die, why try  
Cause I never had a shot  
Tic toc tic toc  
This weight, my fate  
Failing even if I fought.

Tic toc tic toc  
Good luck, it sucks  
Sure that he says that a  
lot

Tic toc tic toc  
He leaves, just me  
My disease is all I got  
Tic toc tic toc

Can't see, can't breathe  
And I'm frozen in this  
spot.

Tic toc tic toc  
Mistake, can't take  
Why did I go to the doc?

Tic toc tic toc  
Can't win, room spins  
I feel like I'm gonna drop

Tic toc tic toc  
Death won, I'm done  
Why'd he ever have to  
knock

Tic toc tic toc  
I sit, can't quit  
Staring at this stupid  
clock

Andrew Merrill is a follower of Christ in his first year of medical school at UTMB. He has been writing poetry since he was in elementary school and loves the way that words can come together to create stories and convey emotions.

## OPINION

## Osler and a Conundrum

Recently Frank Nealon contacted me with a “conundrum” concerning the meaning of a “cryptic sentence” in Osler’s essay *A Way of Life*. Here is the quote that provoked Frank’s quandary:

“Every man has a philosophy of life, in word, or in deed, worked out in himself unconsciously. In possession of the very best, he may not know of its existence; with the very worst he may pride himself as a paragon. As it grows with the growth it cannot be taught to the young in formal lectures.”

Frank goes on to say: “There is a lot to ponder in those three brief sentences, but I am here concerned by what Osler might have meant by “As it grows with the growth . . . “ For instance, does Osler use “As” in the sense of “during” or in the sense of “because”? And what is it that grows? And what does it mean to grow with the growth? These words are provocative and mystifying; I would be grateful for any thoughts about them.” Please send Frank your ideas [frank-nealon@gmail.com](mailto:frank-nealon@gmail.com)

I agree with Frank, that these are provocative words and ideas and I would like to offer my interpretation of their meanings and applications to several issues that confront our professional lives in medicine as well as our individual lives. I would argue that the “As” of the sentence might be construed as the “process” of growth and that the “it” that “grows with the growth” refers to the individual’s “philosophy of life”. Growth can refer to any number of characteristics possessed within the human frame. Of course there is our biological growth to biological maturity, there is our growth in knowledge from our educational and life experience exposure, there is our spiritual growth which may or may not be attached to a religious tradition, and perhaps there is our growth in wisdom that helps us to discern what is important in life. All of these growth buds contribute to the growth of a whole individual and perhaps, if one is lucky, discerning enough, or wise enough, can synthesize all of this growth into some overarching “philosophy of life.” Thus, in the “process” of growing these individual characteristics, “buds”, growth of the total individual and their overarching “philosophy of life” may occur.

Allow me to present a couple of examples of

Articles expressing opinions on contemporary issues related to the medical humanities, ethics, and practice of medicine will be presented in this section.

manifestations of this growth within growth and how as Osler states, relative to medicine, “it cannot be taught to the young in formal lectures.”

Within this issue of the *Oslerian*, there are several contributions by medical students that illustrate students’ medical knowledge growth and personal growth in the process of their medical school educational experience that may ultimately contributes to their total understanding of the world they inhabit and perhaps to their philosophy of life that is evolving.

In *Thoughts on Year One* (p.8) Zarin Rahmin metaphorically relates his experience of the first year of medical school to climbing and hiking through mountains, exhausted and anxious, but proud of the accomplishments (growth) he has made, but understanding that more steps (growth) are required. Alessa Axelrod feels the “burden” and the “doubt” that accompanies her on the journey, but is “honored” for the “chance” and “opportunity” for the experience (growth).

In *Thoughts on the Fourth Year* (p.8-9), Kara Jencks demonstrates the growth that occurs between the first and fourth years. No longer is the experience quite so self-absorbed, but now the “Other” has entered into the student’s vision and the joy from encountering that “Other” human being becomes a major motivating factor to continuing the “marathon” that she perceives the practice of medicine will metaphorically be like at the beginning of her dissertation. We see she has encountered cognitive growth in her understanding of practicing medicine, experienced the technology now so prevalent in the practice, and is developing a vision of the system and its problems within which she and the rest of us have to practice. She ends with a litany of reflections on what she has learned and how that “growth” in knowledge (both content and personal) may sustain her through her life and career. I would say that what she has revealed is growth within growth in understanding where she has come since her entry into medical school and has begun her evolution of a “philosophy of life”. And as Osler understood the path to this ultimate growth “cannot be taught in formal lectures,” but must be an experiential process.

Michael H. Malloy

## LETTERS –OBITUARIES–NOTICES

**Announcement****William B. Bean Student Research Award  
Supporting Research by Medical Students  
in Medical History & Medical Humanities**

Candidates must be current students at accredited medical schools in the U.S. or Canada.

- The research award is \$1,500.
- Successful applicants may be invited to present his/her research findings at a subsequent meeting of the American Osler Society (expenses paid, see below).
- The deadline for submission of applications is March 1, 2020.

The Bean Award Committee will consider the following criteria in evaluating proposals:

1. The project should represent scholarship in medical history and/or the medical humanities
2. The goal should be realistic and stated clearly
3. The project should be original and conducted with a scholarly approach
4. The applicant should demonstrate familiarity with the relevant literature, in part through appropriate citations

A letter of support from a faculty sponsor outlining the applicant's qualifications to conduct this research, as well as the sponsor's interest in the project and willingness to provide guidance and ensure completion of the project within the proposed time period, must accompany the application form, which can be obtained at the American Osler Society's web site: [www.americanosler.org](http://www.americanosler.org). Contingent on submission of a paper acceptable to the Bean Award Committee, the American Osler Society may make available additional funding to pay for travel to (not to exceed \$750), and expenses (including hotel, meals, etc.) at the annual meeting. Please send application materials via email to Renee Ziemer, AOS Administrator at [aosrenee@gmail.com](mailto:aosrenee@gmail.com). Go to the AOS website link here for the application: <http://www.americanosler.org/bean-award.php>

**AOS Fiftieth Anniversary  
Commemorative Membership  
Roster**

Dear AOS Members:

In honour of the fiftieth year of the origin of the American Osler Society that we will be celebrating in Pasadena in April 2020, the suggestion has been put forward that a Commemorative Membership Roster be published that will include pictures of the membership. Renee Ziemer has requested that each member submit a passport type photo in jpeg format to her that can be incorporated into a digital publication that will provide contact information of the member as well as the picture. The digital publication when complete will be made available to all members. Hard copies will be made available to members upon request. Please do not miss this opportunity to put together this valuable publication so that finally we can put together the names with the faces that we see annually at our meetings.

**Deadline for submitting photos to Renee Ziemer ([aosrenee@gmail.com](mailto:aosrenee@gmail.com)) is March 8, 2020.**

**Notice**

"The Board of Governors has adopted a policy for the display and sale of publications at annual meetings of the American Osler Society. The policy will be effective for the 2020 AOS meeting in Pasadena. The policy requires those who wish to display or sell their works to apply at least a month in advance using a standard application form. Application instructions and forms may be obtained from Renee Ziemer at [aosrenee@gmail.com](mailto:aosrenee@gmail.com)."





## AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

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Douglas Lanska

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**The AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY** exists to bring together members of the medical and allied professions, who by common inspiration are dedicated to memorialize and perpetuate the just and charitable life, the intellectual resourcefulness, and the ethical example of Sir William Osler, who lived from 1849 to 1919. The OSLERIAN is published quarterly.

**We're on the Web!**√ us out at: [www.americanosler.org](http://www.americanosler.org)

## Looking Ahead to Pasadena, CA



The 50th meeting of the American Osler Society (AOS) will be held in Pasadena, California, from April 26-29. We anticipate a significant level of interest in this meeting as we will be celebrating a Golden Anniversary with remembrances of the origins of the AOS. We enthusiastically await your arrival. The weather in Pasadena is usually perfect at this time of year and the meeting will be preceded by the American College of Physicians meeting occurring in nearby Los Angeles. Save the date now!

### Call for Art for 2020 Annual Meeting in Pasadena, California - April 26-29

William Osler once said that *"no man is really happy or safe without a hobby."* He also counseled doctors to *"have a hobby and ride it hard."* Many Oslerians do indeed have artistic hobbies, and in Montreal will have a chance to show their stuff. Again this year at the Annual Meeting, Herbert Swick has organized an Art Exhibit where we can share our creations. Please use the form below to contact him to arrange to show your work when we meet in Pasadena, CA.

### 2020 AOS Art Exhibit Application Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of work: (please check)

☐ painting/drawing (medium: \_\_\_\_\_)☐ photography☐ sculpture (material: \_\_\_\_\_)☐ other art form (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of work: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ (Dimensions in inches)

Brief description of work (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Special exhibition needs, if any \*\*

### Deadline for applications is March 27, 2020.

Please submit applications to: Herbert Swick, 4 Brookside Way, Missoula, MT 59802 or by e-mail to [hmlswick@msn.com](mailto:hmlswick@msn.com). Please direct any questions to him at that address, or call him at 406-542-6560. \*\* It may be possible to accommodate special needs, depending upon the nature of the request and the exhibit space.

**AOS Members** — Please forward to the editor information worth sharing with one another as well as *"Opinions and Letters"*. - MHM  
([mmalloy@utmb.edu](mailto:mmalloy@utmb.edu))