

The Oslerian

A Message from the President

“I will honor as my father the man who teaches me the art:” a meditation

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Greetings Fellow Oslerians!

The Hippocratic Oath obliges new physicians to honor their teachers, but says little about what teachers owe their students. Sir William Osler's life and work suggest much about what the honored 'father' can bestow on students. He considered his students not only as targets for 'information, skills and attitudes' but offered them affection as his progeny and prospective heirs. This, I believe, facilitated learning for many, and made it possible for some to adopt the same 'paternal' stance toward their own students.

He certainly felt that his teachers, Father Johnson, and especially James Bovell and Palmer Howard, were fathers to him. He dedicated his monumental textbook to the three of them and was effusive in his filial affection toward the latter two. Of Bovell, in whose home and library he spent many happy hours, he wrote, "the best the human mind has offered was on his shelves and in him all that one could desire in a teacher, a clear head and a loving heart. ... He made me realize the truth of these memorable words in the Hip-

pocratic oath, 'I will honour as my father the man who teaches me the art.'"¹ When learning that Bovell intended to remain abroad in 1870, he wrote, "I felt that I had lost a father and a friend; but in Robert Palmer Howard of Montreal, I found a noble step-father..." [and] "the ideal student-teacher."² He added later, "to learn what manner of man he was, read Matthew Arnold's noble tribute to his father" the poem, "Rugby Chapel."³ "We were weary, ... and we in our march Fain to drop down ... Still thou... gavest the weary thy hand O faithful shepherd! To come, Bringing they sheep in thy hand. And through thee I believe in the noble and great ... Helpers and friends of mankind..."⁴

A man who was known rarely to express 'sentiment' wrote these tributes to his teachers later in life. He felt affection radiating from his "fathers in the art" and he returned it to them in various ways throughout his career: with correspondence and with affectionate recognition of indebtedness in his own written works. He then passed it on to his own students.

Relations with students

were perhaps most a part of his daily routine before he left to become Regius Professor at Oxford. According to Michael Bliss, when Osler was a young professor at McGill:

Dr. Osler appeared to take a personal interest in the young men, their families, their work, mutual friends . . . whatever seemed to strike a spark. One student who thought he must be specially privileged to have Osler's friendship found that practically everyone in the class also felt singled out. 'I never knew a man who possessed this capacity for intimacy with his students in any degree measuring up to that possessed of Osler,' he remembered.⁵

Osler's personal engagement with colleagues and friends was similar to that with his students. Years after leaving McGill, he himself recalled:

After ten years of hard work I left... rich ...in treasures of friendship and good-fellowship... A good bit of [my heart]...

(Continued on page 2)



Joseph W. Lella

President's Message (continued)

stayed with the dear friends I left there my college companions, my teachers, my old chums, the men with whom I lived in closest intimacy, and in parting from whom I felt the *cordae tendinae* grow tense.⁶

In an address to Graduates of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, Osler stated with deep emotion and empathy, "I could have the heart to spare you [the advice in this speech], poor careworn survivors of a hard struggle, so "lean and pale and leaden-eyed with study."⁷

While a professor at Johns Hopkins as an older man, Osler continued what we might now call his 'paternal' teaching. He regularly invited students to tea and dinner. Saturday evenings at home were often devoted to senior medical students, and discussions of their patients.

He outlined our work for us; he advised us, loaned us his journals and books, took us with him to medical meetings... and sent us at his personal expense to distant medical meetings... He was exceedingly proud of any little achievement we might win... his note of congratulation was the first to arrive; if we mourned a relative, his telegram of sympathy was the first to come.... His motto seemed to be do the kind thing and do it first.... After he left Baltimore, interest in his former assistants continued.... Until the war each Christmas brought its little personal gift. His notes were brief, usually dictated, but at the end of each were a few personal words written with his pen.⁸

Osler's affection too was returned. On his departure from McGill, for example, students gave him "a handsome hunting-case watch, suitably inscribed, and... it was the watch he always wore."⁹ To me, this seems a gift from 'sons' to a father and treated as such, a token of what he had given. On a sadder note, in his farewell address to American and Canadian medical students before departure for England in 1905, Osler remembered:

... a shadowy group, a long line of students whom I have taught and loved, and who have died pre-maturely—mentally, morally, or bodily... I have cherished the memory of many young men whom I have loved and lost.¹⁰

Of course, Osler gave much more to his students than affection. He offered not only the "loving heart" but also the "clear head" and the example of the conscientious worker. He taught the knowledge, the skills, the craft and the art, the attitudes and traditions of medicine, through his curriculum innovation in basic science at McGill, through his historical and clinical writings, especially his monumental textbook, through his talks and perhaps mostly through his example in pathological work and ward based clinical teaching. But underneath it all was that abiding affection that enabled his lessons to be internalized fully, and made a part of their professional identities.

This sort of teaching and mentoring bore fruit. Space forbids examining more than one example, but it is an excellent one. Although Maude Abbott never officially studied under Osler,

his influence upon her is well documented.

Maude Abbott was one of the first female physicians in Montreal. She had a difficult time getting herself established in a medical career and more particularly in an academic career at McGill for which she felt herself, and indeed was, eminently suited. Not accepted to study medicine at her baccalaureate alma mater, McGill, she graduated with great distinction from Bishops and did post graduate work for three years in London, Paris, Heidelberg, Berne, and Vienna. She passed the triple licentiate examination at Edinburgh in 1897. She returned to Montreal and made herself known at McGill especially through her work in pathology. The "brilliant and versatile" first professor of pathology at McGill, J. George Adami, was well aware of the great and still growing collection of specimens that Osler and his successors in pathology, Wyatt Galt Johnston and John McCrae, had left. It was clear that the museum needed someone with "energy and enthusiasm" to pursue the care and upkeep of the museum [as well as] the conservation, development and cataloguing of the collection." One professor noted that the museum "needed a lover" and the one who carried on her wooing with great persistence was Maude Abbott. Adami appointed her to do this work as curator of the museum.¹¹

Before beginning the important work of cataloguing, in 1898 Abbott went to Washington, DC to discuss the system to be used with other museum workers. On the way, she stopped off in Baltimore to visit the celebrated Dr. Osler. She carried a letter of introduction with her.¹² Abbott's description of the time she spent with Osler has an excited, enthusiastic, air of infatuation about it.

At Osler's dinner table, "one of Dr. Osler's student nights" with nine young men and three other women, Maude "sat there with heart beating at the wonderful new world that had opened up... he turned suddenly upon me. 'I wonder now if you realize what an opportunity *you* have. That McGill museum is a great place. ...Read the article by Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson on 'A Clinical Museum,' in London... the greatest place I know for teaching students. Pictures of life and death together. Wonderful. You read it and see what you can do.' And so he gently dropped a seed that dominated all my future work. This is but an illustration of how his influence worked in many lives."¹³

After this visit her correspondence and visits with Osler multiplied. The museum became a heavily used tool that she used in true Oslerian manner in the education of McGill students. In 1904, the students gave her a letter of gratitude signed by the President of the class expressing their "gratitude for the kindly interest you have taken in our studies.... for the unfailing courtesy you have shown us, for the many unselfish hours throughout this whole year that you have spent in our behalf... [giving] freely and unstintingly of your time and of your talents, and we have... profited much."¹⁴

With Osler's support and encouragement, Abbott later became a founder of the International Association of Medical Museums. The Association with its Bulletin was to become an important resource for the exchange of ideas and mutual support of administrators of medical museums in the English-speaking



Maude Elizabeth Seymour Abbott (1869-1940), pioneering pathologist of congenital heart disease, was posthumously elected to the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame (1994) and honored with a postage stamp (2000). Shown at right are Pamela Miller (Osler Librarian), Rick Fraser, and Joan O'Malley with the recently-discovered Eastlake portrait of Abbott, now at McGill University.

world. Again with his help, she developed her interest in congenital heart disease. He later asked her to write a section of his *System of Medicine*, which she did. On its completion, Osler wrote, "I knew you would write a good article but I did not expect one of such extraordinary merit. It is by far and away the best thing ever written on the subject in English—possibly in any language."¹⁵

In 1916, Abbott published a lecture on Florence Nightingale in her portraits. Osler saw it and reacted with his usual enthusiasm, "Stop pathological work at once and take to your natural vocation—biblio-biography! It is a splendid record."¹⁶ From time to time until the end of her life she would continue to publish in the history of medicine. Perhaps her most enduring and influential piece of 'biblio-biography' was her editorial work on the Osler Memorial Number of the *Bulletin of the Museums Association* (1926). With over 600 pages of tributes and reflections on Osler's life gathered from students and colleagues all over the world, it also included an extensive classified bibliography of writings by and about Osler. The book was the fruit of "six years of interminable labor and correspondence and costing many thousands of dollars."¹⁷ Since then, the work has helped foster the widespread appreciation of and dedication to Osler's memory and ideals that we know today.

In 1928, Maude wrote of Osler that his "keen interest in my work and broad human sympathy pierced the veil of my youthful shyness with a personal stimulus that aroused my intellect to its most passionate endeavor."¹⁸

Is such teaching possible today when less time is devoted to 'walking the wards,' and when teachers and students have little time for extended personal contact? We all know people who have made it happen, and we can all do it in one way or another with an openness to follow Osler's example using our own special talents and available opportunities. It can't be forced but perhaps it can be cultivated. Let's encourage each other and our students. This is perhaps the most important part of what our Society is all about.

Joseph W. Lella



NOTES

1. Osler W.. Introduction: The Collecting of a Library. In: *Bibliotheca Osleriana: A Catalogue of Books Illustrating The History of Medicine and Science*, collected, arranged and annotated by Sir William Osler, Bt., and Bequeathed to McGill University. WW Francis, RH Hill, A Malloch, eds., Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press; 1969: xxiii.
2. Cushing H. *The Life of Sir William Osler*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press; 1925: I: 69. Subsequent notes from this work are cited as HC, volume, page.
3. Osler W. The student life. In: Osler W. *Aequanimitas, With other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine*. 3rd ed., Philadelphia: The Blakiston Company; 1943: 420-21.
4. Bryson J, ed. *Matthew Arnold: Poetry and Prose*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis; 1954: 1978-201, *passim*.
5. Bliss M. *William Osler: A Life in Medicine*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 1999: 90-91.
6. HC, I: 229.
7. Osler W. *Aequanimitas*. In: *Aequanimitas...*, *op. cit.*, 3.
8. Emerson CP. Reminiscences of Sir William Osler. In: Abbott M, ed. *Sir William Osler Memorial Number: Appreciation and Reminiscences*. Bulletin No. IX of the International Association of Medical Museums and Journal of Technical Methods, 1926: 300-303.
9. HC, I: 227.
10. Osler W. The student life. In: *Aequanimitas...*, *op. cit.*, 441.
11. See: MacDermott HE. *Maude Abbott: A Memoir*. Toronto, MacMillan, 1941: chapters V and VI.
12. *Ibid*, p. 72
13. *Ibid*, p. 74
14. *Ibid*, pp. 77-79.
15. *Ibid*, p. 102
16. *Ibid*, p. 119
17. *Ibid*, p. 131
18. *Ibid*, p. 105

*In Memoriam***Mark E. Silverman (1939-2008)**

The passing of Mark Silverman from acute myocardial infarction on November 12, 2008, deprived the American Osler Society of one of its dedicated, energetic, creative, collegial, and far-sighted members.

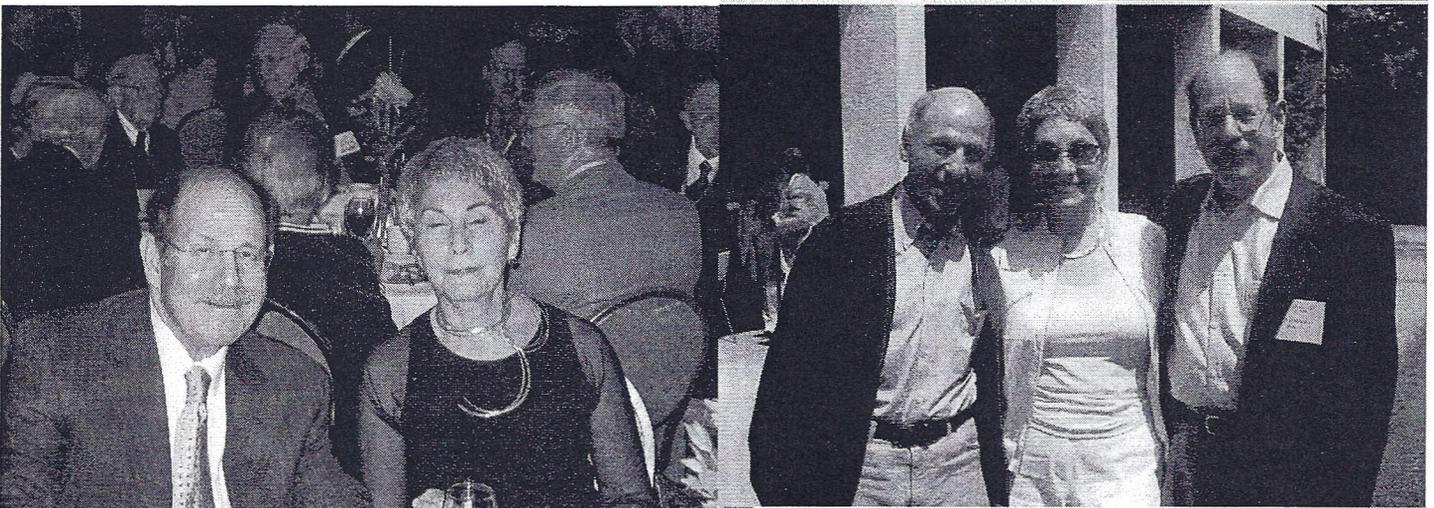
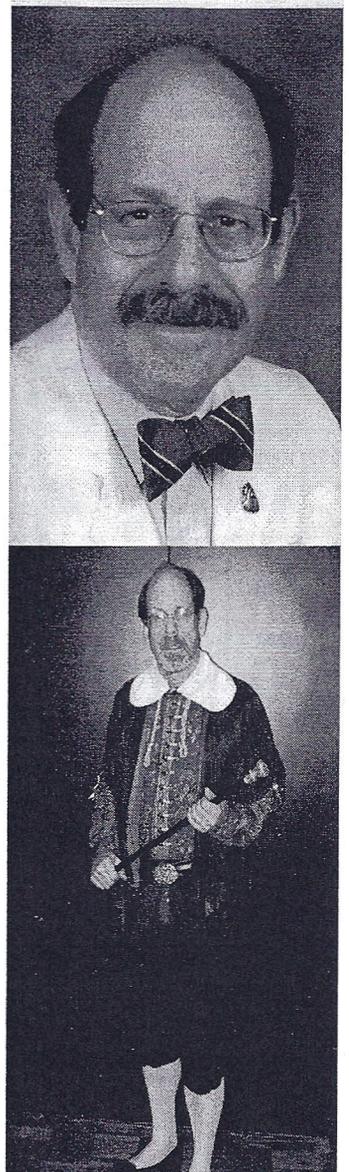
A native of Springfield, Ohio, Mark graduated from Ohio State University and the University of Chicago School of Medicine. He returned to Ohio State for a residency and did a cardiology fellowship at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, where he became a protégé of J. Willis Hurst. Returning to Atlanta after two years in the United States Air Force, he took a position at the Emory-affiliated Piedmont Hospital, where he would spend the rest of his career. As the founding cardiologist at Fuqua Heart Center, he developed a center of excellence in patient care and medical education, teaching legions of nurses, medical students, residents, and some 75 cardiology fellows. At Piedmont he developed a close friendship with Atlanta internist Nicholas E. Davies, who enthused him with becoming a member of the American Osler Society. Thus began what amounted to a second career as a prolific contributor to medical history and especially to the history of cardiology.

Mark's first major contribution to the AOS, in addition to his participation in meetings, was to design a new necktie, which was unveiled at the 1996 meeting in San Francisco, California. With Mary Kingsbury he researched the heraldic symbolism in the Osler coat-of-arms, which he combined with latchkeys in the tie's final design by the Ben Silver Corporation. In his presidential year (2000-2001), he led a revision of the Constitution and Bylaws and, for the 2001 meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, designed a Society T-shirt and performed as William Harvey at the annual banquet. He subsequently proposed the *Quotable Osler* project, which engaged numerous AOS members in mining nearly all of Osler's writings for suitable aphorisms. This volume has been by far the Society's most successful publishing venture to date, as by arrangement with the American College of Physicians the AOS receives all royalties. It is now available as a revised paperback edition and also as a deluxe leather-bound edition. And it was Mark who suggested that past presidents meet each year as a Long Range Planning Committee to chart the Society's directions.

Mark's pleasing and upbeat personality, his enthusiasm, his originality, and his genuine concern for others inspired made him, as one Atlanta colleague put it, a giant in his chosen circles. He continued to be upbeat in recent years despite a painful neuropathy that kept him from his favorite physical activities, tennis and cycling.

Mark is survived by his wife, Diana, by two sons, Joel and Adam, two brothers and a sister, and two grandchildren. Farewell, dear friend! *Lacrimae rerum*.

—CSB



Clockwise from upper right: Portrait photograph of Mark Silverman circa 2000, wearing the American Osler bow tie of his own design; in costume as William Harvey at the 2001 meeting, Charleston, South Carolina; with brother Barry and wife Diana at the 2005 meeting in Pasadena, California; and with Diana at the 2007 meeting in Montreal.

Income, Expenses, and Liquid Asset Balances, 2002-2008

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
START BALANCE, 1 JANUARY	447,236.97	377,566.91	477,546.88	522,103.45	524,372.87	543,221.51	550,592.91
<i>Income</i>							
Dues and initiation fees	14,865.00	14,535.28	15,661.92	10,723.44	15,531.31	16,449.92	20,508.10
Meeting income	39,060.85	49,547.88	48,098.31	28,091.00	31,633.83	55,261.60	56,932.81
Latchkeys, ties, T-shirts	805.00	1,303.55	960.00	603.00	475.00	771.00	846.50
Book sales and royalties	5,831.50	15,247.45	4,732.12	2,908.36	2,091.00	2,186.90	3,584.87
Educational Endowment Fund	540.00	1,320.00	1,895.00	1,075.00	1,170.00	1,065.00	1,425.00
Friends of 13 Norham Gardens	185.00	345.00	680.00	425.00	230.00	505.00	400.00
Friends of Osler Library	160.00	195.00	1,065.00	700.00	255.00	855.00	700.00
McGovern lectureship/contributions	10,000.00		12,500.00	12,500.00		5,640.00	
Miscellaneous income		750.00	15,273.90	243.71			
Appreciation of equities	-48,670.55	91,610.34	34,966.62	28,405.24	51,463.64	25,689.55	-134,920.10
Total Income	22,776.80	174,854.50	135,832.87	85,674.75	102,849.78	108,423.97	-60,522.82
<i>Expenses</i>							
Administrative assistant	4,500.00	4,500.00	9,500.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	6,000.00	8,000.00
Supplies and postage	1,247.87	4,514.71	1,651.86	1,259.00	1,119.35	3,078.26	1,697.86
Printing	1,566.28	1,038.01	1,030.05	1231.22	1,105.71	1,328.63	1,494.99
Latchkeys and other merchandise							849.82 ¹
<i>Persisting Osler I, II, and III</i>	3789.58						
Meeting expenses	30,835.87	43,510.82	45,566.15	35,139.02	51,401.41	50,441.84	59,263.14
McGovern Lectureship Account	4,830.00	3,740.00	2,780.27	8,797.79	8,079.45	5,209.94	3,381.08
Wm. B. Bean Educational Endowment	3,309.05	2,738.07	139.99	4,500.00	5,736.42	4,322.73	3,941.58
Deposits for future meetings	19,457.03		500.00	718.75		3,800.00	1,000.00
Friends of Osler Library			505.00		950.00		
Friends of 13 Norham Gardens			380.00		625.00		
Subventions for books	17,000.00	7,294.71	16,530.12	12,026.88		20,851.79	
Web site	600.00		500.00	500.00			359.40
Refunds	1,630.00	45.00	2,345.00	1,960.00	1,610.00	440.00	2,950.00
Money management fees	1,661.18	3,107.87	6,201.25	3,874.47	4,119.84	4,300.43	4,082.46
Miscellaneous expenses	2,020.00	4,385.34	5,016.25	5,398.20	1,253.96	1,278.95	2,463.53 ²
Total disbursements	92,446.86	74,874.53	91,276.30	83,405.33	84,001.14	101,052.57	89,483.86
END BALANCE, DECEMBER 31	377,566.91	477,546.88	522,103.45	524,372.87	543,221.51	550,592.91	400,586.23

AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

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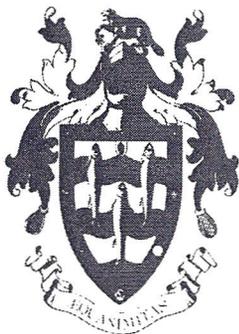
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Spend the last half-hour of the day in communion with the saints of humanity.

—SIR WILLIAM OSLER

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Aequanimitas

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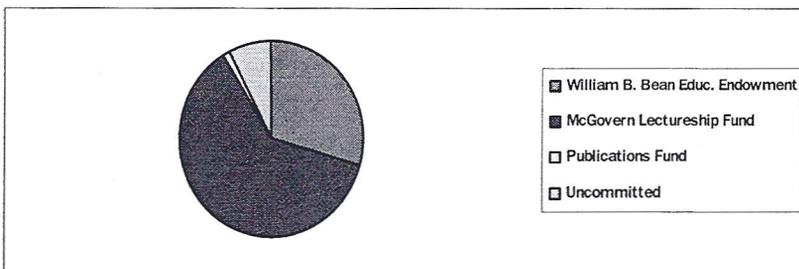
Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Shown on the previous page is a breakdown of AOS income and expenses for the calendar year 2008.

1. The disaster that befell global financial markets affected the American Osler Society, as it did nearly everyone else, with the results that our year-end liquid assets stand at a six-year low. Our investment account with Fidelity Investments, despite a conservative portfolio, declined by \$149,230.44 (one \$5,000 withdrawal; the remaining \$144,230.44 reflects depreciation of these equities—a 27.7% decline from the 2007 year-end balance of \$525,980.38. Paul Dyment supervised our investments most of the year, and then turned this responsibility over to Marvin Stone.
2. Distribution of our year-end balance is as follows: \$245,721.77 in the McGovern Lectureship Fund (hereafter, "McGovern Fund"), \$118,905.00 in the William B. Bean Educational Endowment Fund (hereafter, "Bean Fund"), \$5,600.00 in the Publications Fund, and \$30,359.76 in uncommitted assets. This distribution is shown in the figure below.
3. Barring a rapid recovery in the stock market, I foresee that the Society will need to withdraw assets from the McGovern Fund and/or the Bean Fund in order to meet expenses. Recall that the above balances reflect the distribution of our assets for internal accounting purposes. I deemed it prudent *not* to add the customary 6% (McGovern Fund) or 12% interest (Bean Fund) from the previous year-end balances in order to maintain sufficient funds to cover our meeting and other expenses in the near future.
4. The purchase value of our year-end inventories is \$12,989.06, consisting of the following: 14 copies of *The Persisting Osler II*, 6 copies of *The Persisting Osler III*, 51 four-in-hand ties (39 gray, 12 red), 42 bow ties (32 gray, 10 red), 182 posters, 49 McGovern medals, and 45 lifetime achievement medals.
5. Footnote 1 on the previous page refers to purchase of the remaining Society neckties from the Ben Silver inventory. Miscellaneous expenses (footnote 2) include \$1,250.00 for review of financial records and preparation of a tax return, \$15.00 banking fees, \$95.00 to the American Association for the History of Medicine as a constituent society.
6. A more detailed report will be presented to the Board of Governors and will be summarized at the Annual Meeting in Cleveland, April 2009.

Respectfully submitted

Charles S. Bryan, Secretary-Treasurer



Dates for Future Meetings

1. The **2009 meeting** will take place at the Cleveland Renaissance Hotel, in Cleveland, Ohio, 20-23 April, in tandem with the AAHM meeting (23-26 April). James Young chairs the Local Arrangements Committee.
2. The **2010 meeting** will take place in Rochester Minnesota, 26-29 April, in tandem with the AAHM meeting (29 April-2 May). Bruce Fye and Paul Mueller will co-chair the Local Arrangements Committee.
3. The **2011 meeting** will take place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 25-28 April, in tandem with the AAHM meeting (28 April-1 May).