

# The Oslerian

## A Message from the President Lehrbuch

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### Greetings, fellow Oslerians!

The German term *Lehrbuch* has a slightly different connotation when compared to the English term *Textbook*. The former could be literally translated as *teaching book* whereas the latter merely indicates the repository for a text. Much ink has been spread on paper about the question *cui bono?* Thus, one might ask for whom these books are written nowadays. I propose: mainly for our students but a not insignificant proportion rests on the desks and shelves of medical practitioners, unfortunately not infrequently gathering dust and slowly or fast becoming outdated. Wish one could insert a self destructing device making such books disintegrate once new additions appear. Old medical books can be outright dangerous, as splendidly pointed out by Weatherall and Ledingham under the appropriate title *On dinosaurs and medical textbooks* (*Lancet* 346:4, 1995). Here, they underscore the well known fact that the information in textbooks lags behind the cutting edge of our knowledge, often by years. I object

to the common practice of benevolently sending old medical books to areas in the world where books are scarce and I would only let some basic science books, for example, dealing with anatomy, cross the borders.

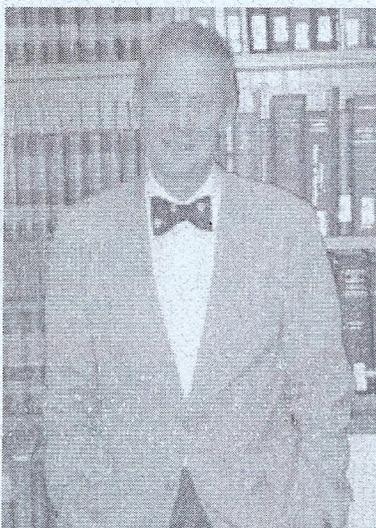
So, what to do with old books? Surely, one recycles. But I have my own way of augmenting this: I slice off the covers, treat the linen surface with gesso and thus create a perfect painting ground. Countless kids in our grandchildren's elementary school have benefited from these wonderful canvasses, smilingly donated to me by librarians. And what can we do to help our intellectually starving colleagues in parts of the world worse off than ours? We should see to it that they, like we, have easy access to electronically transmitted information, of which there is plenty. Thus they would truly have the same chance as us of finding the most up-to-date medical information. It is simply amazing how many journals and books are electronically available, so much so that one has to fear for their paper version.

Oh, I hope that there will always be newspapers, journals and books on paper, no matter how persuasive the version on screen might appear. Occasionally I smuggle my *Lancet* into the program notes at symphony concerts – but I would never dare to bring my handheld palm pilot into our *Orchestra Hall*.

Medically, I grew up in Germany with the textbook by *Cecil-Loeb*, so much so that it was not a big step for me to get really into American medicine once I came here in 1968. We liked the English medical textbooks since they appeared in fairly rapid sequence; one year *Cecil-Loeb* came out in a new edition, next year it was *Harrison's* turn. Yes, there were good German medical books, but it took too long before a new edition appeared (I wonder how bad the situation is for even less common languages; alas, they increasingly publish in English!). There have been attempts to translate medical books, but it is my impression that success is limited. Which brings me to my next topic:

Osler's monumental textbook not only appeared in numerous editions but was

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Claus A. Pierach

## Lehrbuch (continued from page 1)

also translated into many languages, beautifully scribed and analyzed by fellow Oslerian Richard Golden (2004). Amazing but not surprising that this book not only revolutionized medicine in English speaking countries but quickly found access and gained influence around the world. The German edition (2.14 kg) appeared in 1909 based on the 6<sup>th</sup> edition (1907) of Osler's book (2.02 kg) and while the title page (see illustration) has as is common practice the translator's name (Hoke), the cover of the book goes a step further and reads *Osler-Hoke Lehrbuch der Internen Medizin*, thus making the translator a co-author. Perusal of the book lends some justification to this aggrandizement, since he indeed augmented the book and added important information, for example in tropical diseases. In some regards Hoke was ahead of Osler when he repeatedly mentions roentgen rays,

not only as a diagnostic tool but also as therapy for leukemia, convincingly documented with an illustration (p 529) showing the precipitous drop of the leukocytes from 250,000 to about 5,000 in a little more than a month. Hoke also mentions the precise roentgenographic diagnosis of an esophageal stricture with the help of a swallow of a bismuth slush. Hoke warns that roentgenograms are not that reliable in the diagnosis of pneumonia and, as Golden points out, it was not until 1938 that roentgenography as an aid to the diagnosis of pneumonia was mentioned in Osler's textbook. The only X-ray photo in the German edition is of an arm with the arterial shadow of arteriosclerosis. A chapter by Dr.E.Rihl on cardiac irregularities states in a footnote that electrocardiography is not yet ready to be considered of additional help.

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## Oslerian Progress Notes

**Jill Stone (1938-2004)** has been honored posthumously with the naming of the *Jill Stone Elementary School at Vickery Meadows* on the basis of her years of volunteer teaching and her selfless dedication to children, especially underprivileged children, in the Vickery Community of Dallas, Texas.

**Michael Bliss** has had published *Harvey Cushing: A Life and Surgery*. Similar in size, organization, and publishing houses (jointly, the University of Toronto Press and Oxford University Press) to Michael's magisterial *William Osler: A Life in Medicine*, this volume is clearly a "must have" for all Oslerians.

**Herbert L. Fred** has been named the 2005 recipient of the TIAA-CREF Distinguished Medical Educator Award. The chairman of the steering committee proclaimed, "Dr. Fred is a national treasure in medical education." Herb has received at least one teaching award during each of his 50 years as a full-time medical educator—a record almost as impressive as his national age and age-group records for 50-km, 100-km, 100-mile, and 24-hour runs.

**Mark E. Silverman** reports that he and Diana attended the *Osler Centennial at Oxford* on September 24. Michael Bliss gave a highly praised keynote talk on "Osler at Oxford", followed by an excellent program in which various Oxford professors discussed diseases in their specialties as understood by Osler and as understood today. Everyone came away with great admiration for Osler's insights. That evening, there took place an impressive black tie banquet for 600 people at the Great Hall at Christchurch College. Mark reports that he and Diana sat with Tony McIntyre, the great grandson of Osler's brother, Edmund.

**John A. Kastor** has had published *Specialty Care in the Era of Managed Care: Cleveland Clinic versus University Hospitals of Cleveland* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

**Kenneth M. Ludmerer** has been made a Master of the American College of Physicians. Ken continues to address issues in medical education with articles such as "Learner-centered medical education" (*New England Journal of Medicine* 2004; 351: 1163-1164) and "Reforming graduate medical education" (*JAMA* 2005; 294: 1083-1087, with Michael M. E. Johns).

**Charles S. Bryan** has been named the 2007 recipient of the Nicholas E. Davies Memorial Scholar Award for Scholarly Activities in the Humanities and History of Medicine from the American College of Physicians.

— CSB



**Mark Silverman, Michael Bliss, John Walton (Lord Walton of Detchant), and Neil McIntyre at the Osler Centennial at Oxford**

## On Heroes and Hero-Worship: William Osler, a Good Medical Hero

R. Dennis Bastron, M.D.

An Address Given on 12 July 2005 at the Texas A & M University School of Medicine

I was introduced to Thomas Carlyle's essays "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History" as a college freshman. I was not at all sure what message Carlyle was trying to get across, but what I took away from the essays was that there are certain people whose lives are worth emulating. Since then, I have had a number of heroes, living and dead, in both my personal and professional lives. My introduction to Sir William Osler came in the summer of 1959, as I was about to begin medical school. My father, one of my professional heroes, gave me his copy of Osler's famous book "Aequanimitas and Other Addresses" which he had received when he graduated from medical school 24 years earlier. Later I gave that copy to my daughter when she entered medical school. I missed it so much I had to buy myself another copy.

A few months into medical school, I met Dr. William Bennett Bean, Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine at Iowa, later the Osler Professor of Medicine. Dr. Bean's father was a student of Osler at Johns Hopkins and Dr. Bean had published his father's collection of Osler's "Aphorisms" a few years before I met him. In addition, that year I bought Harvey Cushing's Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Osler. Because of the influence of Dr. Bean and those books, Dr. Osler became one of my medical heroes and I would like to give you an idea why I think he is a good physician to emulate. I will tell you a little about Osler's life, and why he is revered as a teacher and as a physician.

William Osler was born in Bond Head, Canada, on 12 July 1849, the eighth child in a missionary's family. As Dr. Osler later said, "I did not have an auspicious financial outlook." A mischievous child, he was expelled from at least one school. He eventually wound up in Toronto where he came under the influence of Reverend W. A. Johnson, a naturalist who introduced young Osler to the microscope and the natural sciences, and to Dr. James Bovell, a physician and naturalist who later entered the ministry. Both men had extensive libraries and Osler became a dedicated bibliophile. His first book purchase was the single volume works of Shakespeare and his second was Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, which became one of Osler's favorites. Originally studying for the cloth, Osler soon decided on medicine, which he studied for two years in Toronto before finishing at McGill in Montreal. At McGill he came under the influence of the "ideal student-teacher," Dr. Palmer Howard. After receiving his M.D. degree, with the help of an award from the medical school and financial help from an older brother, Osler studied for two years in Europe. During that time, he described blood platelets while working in the laboratory of Sir John Burdon Sanderson, and met some of the giants of medicine, including the great German pathologist Rudolf Virchow.

Osler returned to an academic appointment in the institutes of medicine at McGill and he volunteered to do all the autop-

sies as well as become the physician for the small pox hospital. He was determined to become well grounded in pathophysiology and to improve his teaching and clinical skills. After ten years at McGill, he took a position at the University of Pennsylvania and remained there for five years until he was invited to be the Physician-in-Chief of the new hospital and medical school at Johns Hopkins. In Baltimore Osler wrote his *Principles and Practice of Medicine* and his reputation as a teacher and physician continued to grow. His final move was to become the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. In 1911, he became Sir William Osler, only the second Canadian baronet. Sir William died, broken hearted on 28 December 1919, two years after his only child was killed in action in France during World War I.

By the time Osler finished medical school, through the influence of genes and his three mentors, young William had developed six character traits that allowed him to achieve greatness.

*Concentration:* Even at a young age, William Osler had developed his extraordinary power of concentration. When he was in a room full of fourth form boys with the Master out of the room, pandemonium ensued. In the midst of this turmoil, young Osler sat with his thumbs in his ears oblivious to everything but his book until a paper dart hit him and roused him to revenge. When that was exacted, he resumed his pose, what the other boys called "the deaf adder." The remarkable thing is that his classmates respected the pose.

*Curiosity about natural history:* By the time Osler entered McGill he had developed an intense curiosity about natural phenomena and especially what could be seen with the microscope. He used those skills to collect and examine pathologic specimens for his senior thesis and after he returned from Europe, he continued to perform his own autopsies and correlate those findings with the clinical findings.

*Seeing the best in everyone:* As a youngster Osler intuitively looked for the best in every one. This became one of his credos to live by as an adult. Wilburt Davison, a pupil of Osler's in Oxford and later the dean of the medical school at Duke, wrote that whenever he said something unkind, Wilder Penfield, another Oxford student and later a pioneer Canadian neurosurgeon, would admonish Davison by saying, "Sir William would not have done that." Osler's creed was to like and sympathize with everyone. His face would cloud up when someone repeated a bit of scandal or criticism.

*Sympathy for others:* Osler had a gentleness of heart towards the suffering. Many stories illustrate this generosity, particularly to children. His cousin told this remarkable story of when Sir William was a struggling young professor at McGill. "We were dancing along St. Catherine Street hand in hand, when an old and very seedy-looking man accosted us and

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asked for money. Uncle Bill looked at him with his penetrating brown eyes and said with a laugh—‘You old rascal, why should I give you money to drink yourself to death?’ ‘Well Sir, it lightens the road going.’ ‘There is only one thing of value about you and that is your hobnailed liver.’ ‘I’ll give it to you, Sir. I’ll give it to you.’ Dr. Osler laughed and putting his hand in his pocket drew out some silver which he gave to the old man saying: ‘Now, Jehosaphat, promise me you will get some soup before you start in on the gin.’ The old fellow eagerly agreed and went away with infirmity in his step. The doctor looked after him with a thoughtful expression. ‘Pretty cold for that poor fellow,’ he murmured and then I found we were running after the beggar. ‘Here, take this. I have a father of my own,’ said the doctor pulling off his overcoat and putting it on the astonished old man. ‘You may drink yourself to death and undoubtedly you will, but I cannot let you freeze to death.’ ‘Tell me your name, Sir.’ ‘William Osler, and don’t forget to leave me that liver.’ With a wave of his hand we continued on our dancing way. Virtue was rewarded two weeks later. The old man, before he died in the hospital, made his last will and testament, leaving his ‘hobnailed liver and his overcoat to his good friend William Osler.’”

*Singleness of purpose:* Largely from the negative example of Dr. Bovell and the positive example of Dr. Palmer Howard, William Osler had a singleness of purpose that nothing or no one could distract. While still in Toronto Osler read a sentence from Thomas Carlyle that became his life-long obsession: “Our main business in life is not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to do what lies clearly at hand.” When he started in academics, he was determined to be in the company of the best physicians and teachers North America had to offer. He confided that his aim all along had been “to be ranked with the men who have done so much for the profession in this country—to rank in the class of Nathan Smith, Bartlett, James Jackson, Bigelow, Alonzo Clark, Metcalf, W. W. Gerhard, Draper, Pepper, DaCosta, and others. The chief desire of my life has been to become a clinician of the same stamp with these great men.” Sir William had a knack for not letting others waste his time while not offending them. One day Sir William was walking down the hallway at Johns Hopkins when a former student from McGill stopped him. Dr. Osler had not seen the student for ten years and he had not stood out in the class. The young physician introduced himself as MacD--, and then said apologetically, “Of course you don’t remember me.” “Remember you?” Osler beamed: “You’re *Arthur J. MacD--*, McGill, 1882. Come with me, I’ve something to show you and then we’ll go to lunch.” Hardly missing a stride, Dr. Osler took the former student by the arm and embraced him into his own schedule.

*Staying young at heart:* Finally, as one former student said after Sir William’s death, “The boy remained in the man til death.” Osler loved children as patients and as friends. Often when he visited friends, he would be found upstairs with the children. Wilder Penfield tells the story of two youngsters who came to see “William” as they called Sir William. “To amuse them, he took them up to a second story porch which overlooks the garden, and from there he threw water down on Lytle and

Davison... then when Lytle put up a lady’s umbrella, which lay there, he poured a whole pitcher full of water on him, while the kiddies screamed with delight.

Dr. Osler’s reputation was based on a number of attributes, but I think he is primarily revered as a teacher. Teaching, lecturing, and writing did not come naturally to him; he worked very hard to hone his skills in those areas. He believed his greatest accomplishment as a teacher, and the one of which he was most proud, was that he took medical students out of the lecture hall and into the wards. He wanted his epitaph to read: “He taught students at the bedside.” By doing this, he revolutionized medical teaching in North America. In addition, he is remembered for the character and achievements of many of his students, who all revered him. These included Davison of Duke, Penfield at McGill, the pioneer neurosurgeon Harvey Cushing of Harvard and Yale, George Dock of Michigan and St. Louis, Lewellys Barker of Chicago and Hopkins, and a host of other great physicians in North America and Great Britain. To these students, particularly at Baltimore and Oxford, Osler opened his home freely. While in Baltimore, Osler provided keys to his home to special students and house staff, e.g., Harvey Cushing, so they could use his magnificent library at any time. These students became known as “Latchkeyers” and the key is the symbol of the American Osler Society. The Osler home in Oxford was fondly known as “The Open Arms.”

Sir William’s other major achievement was as a physician. His textbook “Principles and Practice of Medicine,” published in 1892, was translated into German, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese, and was the most influential medical text in the world until after the Second World War. The 24<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by E.J. Benz and Jack Stobo, the President of UTMB, was published in 2001. If that isn’t enough, Osler’s text was directly responsible, through Reverend Frederick Gates, for the establishment of the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research, the first of its kind. Osler was a renowned diagnostician and a great humanitarian physician.

He taught his students, “Above everything, gentlemen, come to the study of the diagnosis of disease with all the modesty at your command. Positiveness and dogmatism are inevitable associates of superficial knowledge in medicine... The motto of each of you as you undertake the examination and treatment of a case should be ‘put yourself in his place.’ Realize, so far as you can, the mental state of the patient, enter into his feelings...scan gently his faults.”

He also told them, “You must always be a student. You must treat the man as well as the disease. The poor you will always have with you and you must consider them beyond all others.” In addition, he quoted Sir Thomas Browne: “No one should approach the temple of science with the soul of a money changer.”

Osler was a great believer in the importance of professional organizations for the sharing of information as well as promoting good will. In the end, he had been a member or founder of many medical organizations, and had published 14 different books and monographs, some 350 journal articles, and over 1000 shorter items. He is remembered as “the young man’s

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friend" and "the world's greatest doctor." Eli Lilly Co gave Sir William's book "Aequanimitas and Other Addresses" to every medical graduate in North America from 1932 until 1952. Osler societies exist in Japan, England, and America to honor his memory and the humanitarian practice of medicine.

The dedication of Harvey Cushing's Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Osler reads: To Medical Students

In the hope that something of Osler's spirit may be

#### *In Memoriam*

### G.S.T. Cavanagh (1923-2005)

It is with much regret that The American Osler Society announces the loss of one of its Charter Members. Terry Cavanagh died after a long illness at home in Athens, Georgia on June 26, 2005. Terry is survived by his wife, Susan Carlton Smith, an accomplished artist, and a brother, Ronald Cavanagh of Williams Lake, British Columbia, Canada. Terry, a Canadian, graduated from the University of Manitoba and subsequently McGill University in Montreal. He first worked in the Osler Library under the direction of Dr. W.W. Francis then Osler Librarian. It was here that he must have been introduced to the Oslerian lore, furthering his interest in medical history and book collecting.

After leaving Montreal, Terry became Director of The Clendenen Medical Library at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Lawrence, Kansas. In 1962 he was called to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, as Director of the Duke University Medical Center Library and Curator of the Trent Collection of old and rare books in the history of medicine. Soon after his arrival he opened a brown paper bundle and saw a set of four engravings with superimposed flaps. As the supposed discoverer of this intriguing document he called this remarkable and apparently unique series, "The Four Seasons". The four sheets of paper conveyed an entire system of Medical Lore with the progression of the seasons used as an analogy for the course of life; *SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, and WINTER* corresponding with *CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE, MIDDLE AGE, and OLD AGE*. He began twenty years of research and investigation of the prints and it became apparent the set of four engravings was the only set known to exist. In 1991 he was invited to bring the original sheets to the University of Leiden to join an interdisciplinary group of scholars for a workshop. A team of 12 researchers began their Long-prolonged labours, resulting in the production of a book "The Four Seasons of Human Life". This handsomely illustrated folio with quotations in half a dozen languages was published jointly by Duke and Erasmus Publishing Company in the Netherlands in 2002.

In his early years at Duke he was responsible for and aided in the design and creation of the Seely G. Mudd Building to house the Duke Medical Center Library. While at Duke Terry issued occasional lists of antiquarian medical books to collectors under the name of Old Galen Books. After 27 years at Duke he retired and he and Susan moved to Athens, Georgia. Terry continued to be active in all things related to books and art, issuing

conveyed to those of a generation that has not known him; and particularly to those in America, lest it be forgotten who it was that made it possible for them to work at the bedside in the wards.

Sir William has been a role model for generations of physicians around the world. I have been inspired by him as a person and as a physician. I hope you agree he is a worthy medical hero and that you will be inspired to emulate him.

lists under the name of Emeritus Books, and publishing books in the name of two private presses which he founded, Sacrum Press and Gazebo Press. In the last two years of his life he started and published *Crust Magazine*. With Dr. Earl Nation's permission, The Sacrum Press republished "Men and Books" originally collected and edited by Dr. Nation in 1959 and long out of print. His finest effort has to have been his scholarly and artistic "The Panorama of Vesalius: A Lost Design From Titian's Studio" published in 1996. Terry first outlined his plans for this work in 1983 in a presentation given before The International Congress for the History of Medicine in Paris.

In addition to the *A.O. S.*, Terry was a former member of the Grollier Society of New York, an active member of the Medical Library Association and The American Association for the History of Medicine.

On a personal note, I first met Terry around 1978 when I attended a workshop on care and restoration of antiquarian books organized by the Cleveland Medical Library and directed by Genevieve Miller and Glen Jenkins as I recall. Terry attended this small group. I had just sent out my first and rather pitiful list of medical books for sale, having been encouraged by a Memphis book dealer with no interest in medical books. I didn't know of Old Galen Books at the time. Terry, of course I soon learned, knew most of the important book people here and abroad and was a learned medical historian. He suggested we try mailing out lists together and along the way teaching me most of what I know about important medical men and books. Soon we were traveling together to AAHM and later to AOS meetings. Perhaps our most memorable time together was a wonderful symposium "Osler Revisited", organized by Nicholas Dewey in the fall of 1984. It was an Oslerians delight, a week rooming at Merton College visiting all places associated with Sir William's Oxford period. I felt especially fortunate to be with many of the senior Oslerians from America and the UK also attending. Nicholas had arranged for the group to see many of the treasures at the Bodlian and Christ Church libraries. Terry with Susan along patiently tutored me in the importance of the great tomes in medicine on exhibit. A friendship extending over almost forty years is my reward for knowing Terry Cavanagh, a gentle and scholarly bookman who touched many lives.

D.J. Canale

## AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

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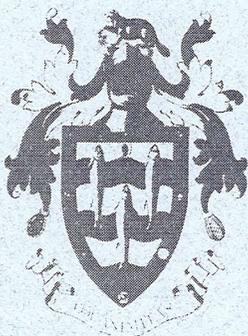
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*Spend the last half-hour of the day in communion with the saints of humanity.*

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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 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 direction.

## Participants' Evaluations of the 2005 Annual Meeting

Nearly all participants were enthusiastic about the quality of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society in Pasadena, California, 10-13 April 2005. Eighty percent "agreed strongly" to "I would recommend this activity to others," as did 72% to "The activity made me want to learn more," 67% to "The Activity met my needs," 67% to "The activity was valuable to me professionally," and 63% to "The format facilitated learning." "Agree" made up nearly all of the remaining responses; there were only three "neutral" checkmarks. One respondent replied that it was "one of the most interesting and best AOS meetings that I have attended." Many participants felt a continental breakfast should be offered the first day and early morning coffee service on the other days. Suggestions for improvement included more time for discussion, limiting papers on Osleriana to one half-day or reducing 25% of the papers, and keeping all speakers on time. Topics suggested for future meetings included more history (as opposed to biography), epidemiology-versus patient-centered care, and the role of technology and genomics in medicine.

## Halifax Meeting, 1-4 May 2006 Taking Shape

A large number of abstracts have been received for the Thirty-Sixth annual meeting, which will take place in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Board of Governors will meet at 6 PM on Monday, 1 May, followed by two days and one half-day of presentations. (Please note again that the meeting was moved forward by one day in order to allow for an overlap with the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine.) Room reservations should be made directly with the Prince George Hotel, 1725 Market Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3 3N9. The toll free number for North America is 1-800-565-1587. The regular telephone number is 1-902-429-6048; the fax number is 1-902-492-7834; and the e-mail address is [www.princegeorgehotel.com](http://www.princegeorgehotel.com). Our sales director is Lesa Griffin, whose e-mail address is [lgriffin@princegeorgehotel.com](mailto:lgriffin@princegeorgehotel.com).