



The Oslerian

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Osler's Compass: I. Inspection

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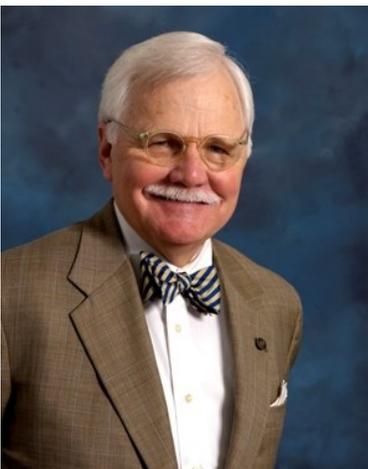
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Greetings, Fellow Oslerians!

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your forty-first president, and please let me know how I might serve you better. Although looking forward to the year, I doubt that anything professionally can surpass the pleasure of spending nine-years as secretary-treasurer, which put me in frequent touch with so many of you. I'll base my four messages loosely along the lines of the four points on Osler's compass (as depicted in a series of photographs taken circa 1903): inspection, palpation, auscultation, and contemplation.



*Greetings, Fellow
 Oslerians!*

**President Charles Bryan, 41st
 President of the AOS, installed
 at the 2010 meeting at the
 Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN**

Inspection (above) has two components: internal and external. What is the health of our American Osler Society? Where do we fit into the broader scheme of things?

Internally, we're in great shape.

The news from our fortieth annual meeting is all good. Our membership is growing. We added nine new members, all of them well-qualified, and on a personal note I'm pleased that two are past recipients of the William Osler Medal of the American Association for the History of Medicine given annually for the best essay submitted by a North American medical student. And speaking of students, we had 10 applications for the William B. Bean Scholarship Award, which may be a record. Our liquid assets have largely recovered from the last two years' setbacks. Meeting attendance was superb (nearly 125 registrants). The papers, selected from a surplus of submissions, were again excellent. I'm confident that the evaluations will bear out the oft-expressed impression that our fortieth ranked among our best meetings ever. We are indebted to Paul Mueller and his staff and also to Bruce Fye for the local arrangements (which included many "extras") that made Rochester, Minnesota, such a great experience.

Our sound internal condition allows us to take up again the question raised by recent past presidents, notably Lawrence D. Longo and Chester R. Burns, about how we fit into the broader interface between medicine and the humanities. To what extent, if any, should we strive to make a difference in the larger issue: promoting humanistic medicine as championed by William Osler?

A high point of this year's meeting was the John P. McGovern Award Lecture given by Nuala Kenny of Dalhousie University. She proposed that we are now in the midst of **a fourth major turning point in the history of medicine**, the three previous ones having been: (1) the beginning of

President's Message *(continued)*

the Hippocratic tradition in classical Greece; (2) the invention of the medical profession as we know it by John Gregory and Thomas Percival in post-Enlightenment Great Britain; and (3) the insistence on a scientific basis for medical practice after the 1910 Flexner Report. The **fourth major turning point** we now experience, she proffered, is an **epic clash of cultures brought about by the commercialization of medicine and the commodification of health care**. Potential consequences include:

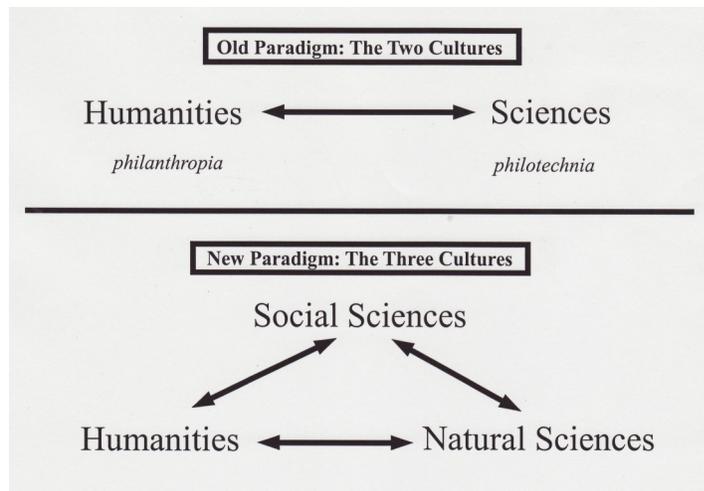
- Confusion regarding the respective roles of physicians and patients
- A complex web of conflicts of interests
- Reduced trust in the physician's judgment
- Erosion of the moral agency of the physician
- Loss of the ability of the physician to make recommendations based on benefit/harm calculations
- Devaluation of whatever cannot be measured
- Increasing emphasis on devices and procedures at the expense of thoughtful assessment that takes into account the entirety of the patient's well-being (not just quantity of life)
- Endangerment of the very possibility of medical professionalism

What is "best" for the patient now often means what is "most aggressive" in an environment in which physicians are increasingly urged and rewarded to give patients what they *want* rather than what they *need*. She drew an interesting analogy: Is it ethical for a Wal-Mart salesman to honor an 80-year-old's desire to purchase ice-climbing equipment? Put baldly, we now run the risk of near-complete capitulation from a "professional model" to a "business model." The renewed emphasis of academic medicine on "professionalism" that began in the early 1990s may have been, in retrospect, an effete and doomed attempt to ward off the inevitable. Our medical schools, Ms. Kenny suggested, have already capitulated to commercial interests.

Various members of our Society have of course expressed these concerns for years. Unfortunately, our efforts and those of others have largely reflected medicine's unilateral efforts to enhance professionalism in a society inclined not to honor it. Writing in *The Lancet*, the French medical historian Danielle Gourevitch opined that (1) William Osler was the last exemplar of a "noble-minded general medicine," (2) that physicians will increasingly be cast in the role of technicians; and (3) that it is pointless to try to teach the humanities to medical students, as such efforts won't matter in the long run.¹ What, if anything, can the American Osler Society (AOS) do to help reverse this trend?

During the summer of 1960, my entering class at college was assigned C. P. Snow's *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. Snow's message—the need to reconcile the old humanities with the new science—has been in many ways the guidepost to my professional life and ca-

reer, and it indeed reflects Osler's exhortation to celebrate *philanthropia* and *philotechnia* (Figure shown)—love of humanity joined with love of science and technology.



Nuala Kenny's message exposes the flaw in this dyad. Another speaker at our annual meeting quoted the physician-historian Lester S. King to the same effect: "Medicine and health are problems of sociology and economics as well as science." In this context, I'm struck by a new paradigm: a triangulation of three cultures (rather than the previous two) whereby the sciences are split out as the natural sciences and the social sciences (Figure 3). Harvard's Jerome Kagan, a developmental psychologist, provides a compelling argument that the social sciences as they emerged in universities during the twentieth century now constitute a distinctive third culture that must be reckoned with.²

Thinking in terms of *three* cultures seems relevant especially to our relationship with the American Association for the History of Medicine (AAHM) and the potential contributions of these respective organizations to what Ms. Kenny characterizes as a fourth major turning point. Permit me to elaborate.

Although there is much overlap between the core memberships of AOS and the AAHM, and although neither organization discriminates along the lines of this or that professional training, the physicians belonging to the AOS and the professional historians belonging to the AAHM tend to see things a bit differently. Two influential AAHM members, Elizabeth Fee and Theodore Brown, frame these differences in terms of the ideals of William Osler and Henry E. Sigerist: Osler as physician/amateur historian and Sigerist as professional historian.³ Osler, they contend, saw medical history as "secular religion" (as evinced by his lay sermon, "Man's Redemption of Man") whereas Sigerist saw medical history as "romantic socialism." From his base at the Institute for the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins, Sigerist championed socialized medicine to the extent that he became its national symbol.

(President's Message Continued on Pg 3 →)

His identification with the cause of the Soviet Union prompted his departure from the United States, but not before he put his stamp on a rising generation of medical historians and mentored the Canadian politician Tommy Douglas toward what eventually became a national health plan for all Canadians. Fee and Brown aver: "The members of the Osler Society... generally distance themselves from the politically vaporized Sigerist and turn to Osler apotheosized as saintly clinician-teacher at turn-of-the-twentieth-century Johns Hopkins." More recently, Howard Kushner of Emory University unflatteringly and a bit unfairly suggests that the AOS is an elitist organization whereas the "academic historians view history as a contextual enterprise in which the past and the present are incommensurate."⁴

Kagan's "three cultures" paradigm (prior Figure) clarifies why the AOS and AAHM need each other if they are to have meaningful impact on *humanistic* health care delivery in the twenty-first century. Physicians lack authority in the social sciences because, by definition, we're anchored in the doctor-patient dyad. Our concern for the patient before us necessarily trumps concern for society as a whole, just as the trial lawyer's advocacy for his/her client must be unfettered by other considerations. Professional historians similarly lack authority in medical science, since with rare exception they do not have medical degrees and/or do not actively practice medicine.

Ms. Kenny argued that the growing commercialization of medicine and commodification of health care will strip physicians of the autonomy necessary to help patients navigate complex ethical and clinical quandaries, to make the difficult benefit-versus-harm calculations requisite to serving the patient's *best interests* (as opposed to mindless application of available technologies).

Physicians and professional historians, working together with our separate yet potentially synergistic competencies, might just conceivably make a difference. It's in the public interest, most if not all of us agree, for patients to be served by physicians (and other health care workers) informed at least in part by the humanities. Osler spoke of "the silent influence of character upon character."

Ms. Kenny argued that the growing commercialization of medicine and commodification of health care will strip physicians of the autonomy necessary to help patients navigate complex ethical and clinical quandaries, to make the difficult benefit-versus-harm calculations requisite to serving the patient's *best interests* (as opposed to mindless application of available technologies).⁵ As the first McGovern lecturer, Albert Jonsen put it, "The ethic of *noblesse oblige* falters when the power of the noble is , "The ethic of *noblesse oblige* falters when the power of the noble is attacked."⁵

Charles S. Bryan cboslerian@gmail.com

References

1. Gourevitch D. The history of medical teaching. *Lancet* 1999; 354: SIV33
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3. Fee E, Brown TM. Using medical history to shape a profession: The ideals of William Osler and Henry E. Sigerist. In: Huisman F, Warner JH, eds. *Locating Medical History: The Stories and Their Meanings*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; 2004: 139–64.
4. Kushner HI. The art of medicine: Medical historians and the history of medicine. *Lancet* 2008; 372: 709–10.
5. Jonsen AR. "Our Lords, the Sick." In: Longo LD, ed. "Our Lords, the Sick." *McGovern Lectures in the History of Medicine and Medical Humanism*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company; 2004: 9–27.



WELCOME RENEE ZIEMER !

All who attended the memorable Rochester AOS meeting became familiar with the talents of our new administrator, Renee Ziemer (aosrenee@gmail.com). She directs the Mayo Historical Unit and her prior experience includes seven year stints in cancer research and in the Dean's office of the graduate school of medicine. She's married to a Minnesota farmer and they have two teen aged sons, James and Joel. They live in Dover, about 20 minutes away from Rochester. Renee and AOS Secretary Paul Mueller team up to serve us all.

The minutes of the Board of Governors and of the 2010 Annual Business Meeting at Mayo will be published in the next issue of the *OSLERIAN* (August 2010).

OSLERIAN PROGRESS NOTES: In March, 2010, THE OSLER SOCIETY OF BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA was inaugurated as the first Osler Society in the Spanish speaking world. The key note speaker was Juan Jose Alva, MD, FACP, one of the founders of the Osler Society of North Carolina. Dr. Alva spoke about Osler's essay, "A Way of Life," and honored three Argentinean Nobel Prize physicians: Don Bernardo Houssay (Medicine and Physiology 1947), Luis Federico Leloir (Chemistry 1970) and Cesar Milstein (Medicine 1984). He presented to Professor Alfredo Buzzi, Dean of the School of Medicine, a copy of the John Singer Sargent Portrait at Johns Hopkins, and a facsimile copy of Sir William Osler's 1892 Textbook.

Highlights of the Rochester Meeting April 26-29, 2010



FRANK NEELON introduced a new twist in the **READINGS & RECITATION** session held on Monday afternoon: **POETRY!** His innovation was quite well received. In advance, he established ground rules that readers should recite from memory, with preference given to original verse by AOS members. Seated in a hollow square, about 30 AOS members recited poems, some they had written, others by a variety of favorite poets, including Emily Dickenson, W.S. Merwin, W.B. Yeats and others. (On page 5 of this newsletter we've published three original poems.)



Approximately 15 people attended an **informal 'creative writing discussion session'** on Sunday evening moderated by David Cooper. Allen Weisse opened the discussion by presenting personal experience of difficulties writers meet today in getting their work published. Then members read brief extracts of their unpublished work (three works of fiction, three of non-fiction) and valuable constructive criticism was offered by the group. The consensus was to do it again next year!



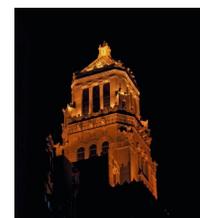
The AOS 2010 McGovern Award lecturer was Dr. Nuala Kenny, professor emeritus of Bioethics at Dalhousie University. Her lecture, entitled "**Selling Our Souls: Commercialization and Medical Professionalism**" was stimulating and provocative, and is alluded to in Charlie Bryan's address on page two of this newsletter. We are at a major turning point in the history of medicine, an epic clash of cultures brought about by the commercialization of medicine and the commodification of health care. Her talk was well received, and discussed with vigor at the luncheon that followed.



Oslerians had a special treat at the reception Tuesday evening, April 27 at the Rochester Art Center, which featured an exhibit of superb prints and engravings on a broad range of medical subjects. The works, which spanned five centuries, are part of the superlative collection of **Lois and Bruce Fye**. Bruce is currently AAHM President. Enjoying wine and delicious hors d' oeuvres, members were encouraged to wander through the exhibit and take in Bruce's commentary on many of the displayed works.



Another treat occurred Wednesday afternoon, when bell master Jeffrey Daehn gave a tour and a concert of the Rochester Carillon, situated in the top of the Plummer Building. He played a 56 bell unit on a special keyboard console connected to the bell clappers by a system of wires that lead upward to the belfry. Concerts at the Clinic occur thrice weekly.



One of the most interesting facets of the Clinic was the Mayo Historical Suite which attendees got to tour. Besides the attractive, diploma-encrusted Board of Governors Room (where the AOS BOG met), offices of the Mayo Brothers on display were, with Charlie's motto an echo of Sir William: "There's no fun like work." Here are some of the AOS officers at the BOG meeting. →



SOME ORIGINAL POEMS BY AOS MEMBERS (from the Recitations Session @ the Mayo Meeting)**MAKING LEMONS OUT OF LEMONADE**

by Clyde Partin

In writer's circles they talk about the curse
Of growing up in a loving family
If your coming of age
Was not daily enhanced by gall and wormwood
How can your poetry have an unraveled edge?
If your childhood was lemonade
How can you write about the pithiness
Of lemons?

My father rarely drank
And then just some
Never beat anyone
Except in a game
Just once did I hear him curse
Home was a place
To look forward to coming back to.

Maybe those authors who claim
You need an unmeasured
Unrhymed childhood
To produce iambic pentameter
Celebrating the joy of life
Have overstated
The harmonic muses
Of childhood bitterness
And dissonance.

JOEY

Joe VanderVeer shared this poem, written for his wife in 1968, six weeks after the birth of their second son (a first son was stillborn).

Writhing, wriggling, curious one,
Demanding and fulfilling,
Flesh of my flesh,
Love of my love,
Transmuting all the baser, tarnished
Griefs of our relationship
Into mysterious gold.

The ever-changing visage captivates
The one who holds, or rocks, or coos;
Rudimentary traits of mom or dad
Appear, but fleetingly, and pass,
Mere glimpses of whence you came
And whither you progress.

Could you but know the proud possessiveness,
Amalgam of the heaped up past,
Would you have chosen such a path,
Engendered part in grief, and part in hopeful fear,
And born at last amid exultant joy?

CLYDE PARTIN ASKS ANY MEMBER

TO PLEASE e-mail him (clyde.partin@emoryhealthcare.org) if they recall having been contacted to help out and advise some professors at an off-shore island medical school about forming an Osler Society.

GIWAYDIN BOOZHOO

by Laurel Drevlow

(With all due acknowledgment and apologies to Emily Dickenson, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, Robert Frost, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Clement Moore, Edgar Allan Poe, and William Shakespeare.)

Long before a northern state fierce Norsemen dared to navigate
cross Gitchigumee's stormy swells or Mississippi's languid dells,
great snowy drifts on grassy plains exalted glacial rock moraines
from limestone quarries tall and steep past woods so lovely, dark
and deep,
whose loons on Lake Superior's shore quoth the raven nevermore
and tips of ev'ry conic tree still pointed toward eternity
as showy Lady slipper flowers whiled away the summer hours,
petals pondering passively, whether to bee or not to bee,
was Hiawatha's big sea water, shining ere Duluth had sought her,
waiting for the skillful etching of the prairie people fetching
broken earth and thundering hoard and dancing for great lakes'
reward
found late beneath Aurora's light - a blessing said and to all a
good night
'til old Polaris, leading forth, gave comment from his noble north,
"Words, words, words! The time grows late. Just bid them wel-
come to our north star state."

OPPORTUNITIES TO PUBLISH YOUR WORK

Several new opportunities have arisen for Oslerians to publish their material:

The Supercourse - This is a global repository of lectures on public health and prevention that targets educators and students around the world. If you have a lecture/power point presentation on a History of Medicine subject that you would like to share with a wide audience, contact Jonathan Erlen at 462-648-8927 or erlen@pitt.edu to see if it might qualify.

The Persisting Osler IV: Selected Transactions of the American Osler Society 2001–2010, will consist of papers presented at annual meetings over the past decade; manuscripts of AOS presentations will be accepted and must be received by 15 September 2010. They will be reviewed by the Publications Committee. Send completed manuscripts **in triplicate** to: Jeremiah A. Barondess, M.D., New York Academy of Medicine, 1216 Fifth Avenue—Room 454, New York, NY 10029. Contact Jerry at jbarondess@nyam.org if you have questions.

Doctors of Another Calling (Tentative Title) David Cooper is compiling brief bios of physicians with other careers that will become chapters in a new book about doctors who've had second careers (as writers, musicians, explorers, etc.) or are best known for other reasons (as sportsmen, revolutionaries, criminals, etc.). If you have a favorite, or possible names, contact him at cooperdk@upmc.edu. Volunteer contributors please contact David if you have not heard from him since the annual meeting.

New AOS Officers and Committees

President: Charles S. Bryan
First Vice-President: Michael Bliss
Second Vice-President: Sandra Moss
Secretary: Paul S. Mueller
Treasurer: R. Dennis Bastron
Oslerian Editor: Joseph B. VanderVeer, Jr
AOS Historian: Richard Golden

Board of Governors (Year Term Expires)

R. Dennis Bastron (12)
Paul Berman (12)
Michael Bliss (15)
Charles S. Bryan (14)
Anand Date (13)
Laurel E. Drevlow (12)
Conrad C. Fulkerson (11)
Richard Golden, *ex officio*
Mike Jones (13)
Philip W. Leon (11)
Sandra Moss (16)
Paul S. Mueller (12)
Barry D. Silverman (12)
Allen Weisse (13)
James B. Young (11)
Joseph B. VanderVeer, Jr, *ex officio*

Recent Past Presidents

John Noble (13)
Joseph W. Lella (12)
Francis A. Neelon (11)

AOS Officers and Committees (continued)

AOS Committees(2010-11):

Wm B. Bean Award:
Chair: Laurel Drevlow
Clifton Cleveland
Scott Podolsky
Robert Kimbrough

J.P. McGovern Award:
Chair: John Noble
Joe Lella
Francis Neelon

Lifetime Achievement Award
Chair: Clyde Partin
Richard Kahn
Michael Bliss

Nominating:
Chair: John Noble
Joe Lella
Francis Neelon

Membership: (BOG)
Chair: Charles Bryan

Publications:
Chair: Clyde Partin
Francis Neelon, Joe Lella
Mike Jones, Joe VanderVeer
Pam Miller, Paul Mueller

Annual Meeting Program:
Chair: Michael Bliss
Philip Leon, Pam Miller,
Sandra Moss, Paul Berman

Finance:
Chair: Marvin Stone
Dee Canale, Barry Cooper
Daniel Morgan

SNAPSHOTS OF AOS MEMBERS FROM THE MEETING AT MAYO



CLOCKWISE from upper left: Incoming and Outgoing Presidents Charley Bryan and John Noble; Steve Peitzman; Bill Jarrett; Preston Reynolds and Paul Mueller; Richard Kahn; Allen Weisse; Claus Pierach; Poetry Recitation Session participants Cynthia Pitcock, Dee Canale, John and Elizabeth Carson; Kerstin Betterman; Paul Berman.



NINE NEW OSLERIANS INDUCTED IN ROCHESTER (SEE BIOS BELOW)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Pres. Noble)



1 = Christopher John Boes, M.D.
 Assistant Prof. of Neurology, Mayo, Rochester, MN. MD U. Nebraska, '96. Sponsored by Bruce Fye and Paul Mueller.
boes.christopher@mayo.edu
 >

2 = Thomas Wayne Frank, M.D.
 Assistant Prof. of Medicine, HS Univ., El Paso, TX. MS,MD Tulane '89. Colonel USAMC. Sponsored by William A. Smith and Cynthia Pitcock.
twfmd@hotmail.com

3 = George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H.
 Clin, Assoc.Prof. Anesthesia Case Western Reserve University, OH. MD,MPH J Hopkins '81. Sponsored by Dennis Bastron and K. Garth Huston, Jr.
UJYC@aol.com

4 = Kerstin Bettermann, M.D., Ph.D.
 Assistant Prof. of Neurology, Hershey Medical Center, PA. MD PhD '95 Heidelberg. Sponsored by James Toole and Claus Pierach.
kbettermann@hmc.psu.edu

5 = Vivian C. McAlister, M.D.
 Professor of Surgery, London, ON MB Trinity, Dublin, '79. RCS Ireland Sponsored by Michael Bliss and Jock Murray. Daughter Chryssa AOS.
vmcalist@uwo.ca

6 = William N. Evans, M.D.
 Prof. Pediatrics, U. of Nevada, Las Vegas. MD UC Irvine, '76. Sponsored by Bruce Fye and Paul Berman.
wnevans50@aol.com
 >

7 = Thorne Winter, M.D. (Ret.)
 Atlanta, GA. MD Harvard, '58 Cardiology & Hematology, Emory & NCI. Sponsored by William Jarrett and Robert Latham.
thornewinter@charter.net
 >

[8 = Pictured below]
Scott Harris Podolsky, M.D.
 Boston, MA. Ast. Prof. Global Health, Dir. Ctr. Hx. Med. Countway Library MD Harvard, '97. Sponsored by C. Bryan and Richard Kahn.
scott_podolsky@hms.harvard.edu

[9 = Pictured below]
James R. Wright, M.D.
 Calgary, AB. Prof. of Pathology, U. Calgary. MD OH State, '84. Wash. U. Pathology. Sponsored by Michael Bliss and Jacalyn Duffin.
jjm.wright@cls.ab.ca

WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY!



PLEASE MEET AND GREET THESE NEW OSLERIANS IN PHILADELPHIA!

AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

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**Aequanimitas**

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. Its OSLERIAN is published quarterly.

We're on the Web!
√ us out at:
www.americanosler.org

Call for Abstracts for 2011 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA, May 1-4, 2011

Abstracts should be sent by e-mail to: aosrenee@gmail.com with a copy to mueller.pauls@mayo.edu and must be **received by 15 November 2010**. Abstracts submitted by e-mail will be acknowledged. The abstract should be no longer than one page. It should begin with the complete title, the names of all co-authors, and the corresponding author's mailing address, telephone number, FAX, and e-mail address. This should be followed by a two to three sentence biographical sketch indicating how the author would like to be introduced. (This will probably be your entire introduction. Don't be modest!). The text should provide sufficient information for the Program Committee to determine its merits and possible interest to the membership. The problem should be defined and the conclusions should be stated. Phrases such as "will be presented" should be avoided or kept to a minimum.

Three learning objectives should be given after the abstract. Each learning objective should begin with an active verb indicating what attendees should be able to *do* after the presentation (for example, "list," "explain," "discuss," "examine," "evaluate," "define," "contrast," or "outline"; avoid noncommittal verbs such as "know," "learn," and "appreciate"). The learning objectives are required for Continuing Medical Education credit.

A cover letter should state: Whether any of the authors have a potential conflict-of-interest such as direct financial involvement in the topic being discussed, and whether there will be any mention of off-label use of drugs or other products during the presentation.

Standard audiovisual equipment will consist of a laptop computer and LCD projector. Presenters should carefully weigh, and justify, requests for *additional* AV equipment since this will add substantially to the cost of the meeting. (*Specifically request additional equipment.*)

Each presenter will have a 20-minute time slot, which will be strictly enforced. *Presenters should rehearse and time their papers to 15 minutes*, in order to permit brief discussions and to be fair to the other speakers. Although 20 minutes might seem quite short for a paper in the humanities, our experience with this format has been overwhelmingly favorable.

Abstracts will be accepted by e-mail up until 15 November 2010. Send with objectives and cover letter to: aosrenee@gmail.com with a copy to: mueller.pauls@mayo.edu. Please make submissions in Microsoft WORD format.

AOS Members — Please forward to the editor information worth sharing with one another for MEMBERS IN THE NEWS column, including awards and publications for yourself or other Oslerians. - JBV