

# Arthur E. Guedel Memorial Anesthesia Center

## What's Happening in Anesthesia History?

*By Selma Harrison Calmes, M.D.*

**A** lot is happening! This article reports briefly on national activities related to anesthesia history.

1. Mike Scott, the ASA's Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs and well known to most CSA members, has established a museum on anesthesia history in his Washington office! Nicknamed "WLM East," it opened in mid-May and is already attracting visitors. This should help present the achievements of our specialty to the many and varied political visitors to Mr. Scott's office. The idea for the museum came from Mr. Scott, and the material was gathered by Dr. George Bause, Honorary Curator of the WLM at Park Ridge, and WLM Curator Judith Robbins.
2. The Anesthesia History Association (AHA), a group that works together with the Wood Library-Museum (WLM) to stimulate interest in the history of anesthesia, met in Boston April 30-May 1, 2003, immediately before the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine. The first day's events were a tour of the Ether Dome at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), site of the first successful use of surgical anesthesia, and a visit to the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, where most of the physicians involved in the introduction of surgical anesthesia are buried. Dr. Elliott Miller, of MGH and previous president of the Board of Trustees of the WLM, arranged and led these interesting tours.

The second day was devoted to papers. The plenary speaker was Dr. David Waisel of Boston Children's Hospital, who spoke on "Lt. Kornfield, World War II Physician-Anesthetist: Why His Story Matters," an expansion of his recent paper on a WW II physician (see *Anesthesiology* 2003;98(4): 995- 1003). Individual papers followed. Enough research papers were submitted to run two rooms simultaneously; one entire session was papers by residents. Interesting topics included reminiscences of Stuart Cullen, the history of ambulatory anesthesia and the use of dextran during the Korean War. The lunch program featured two training films of pediatric anesthesia teaching. Both were made by Dr. Digby Leigh, one (silent) at Montreal General Hospital and the second at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. This featured an incredibly young George Lewis, now retired from Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

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Also shown at this meeting was a poster featuring Dr. Virginia Apgar. This poster is the first of a series of posters featuring famous anesthesiologists, designed to attract interest and membership in the AHA. The posters will be mailed to all training programs in the country. Finally, a pamphlet by Dr. David Lai of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, *Barrell of Lunatics: Places Associated with the First Public Demonstration of Ether Anesthesia*, describing all the sites related to anesthesia in Boston, was distributed. *The Boston Globe* newspaper wrote an excellent article on this pamphlet.

Other AHA activities include a dinner meeting on Monday night during the ASA meeting and publication, with the WLM, of a quarterly newsletter, *The Bulletin of Anesthesia History*. You can join the AHA by sending \$50 dues to the Secretary-Treasurer Doug Bacon, M.D., at 2121 Northview Lane N.E., Rochester, MN 55906-6905. The AHA web site is at **[www.uab.edu/anes\\_thesia\\_history\\_association.htm](http://www.uab.edu/anes_thesia_history_association.htm)**.

3. The WLM program, the Laureate of the History of Anesthesia, is seeking nominations for the 2004 award. The deadline is July 1, 2003. This position is for an internationally known scholar on the history of anesthesia. Information on nominations can be found on the ASA or WLM web site.
4. Internationally, planning is underway for the Sixth International Symposium on the History of Anaesthesia, to be held in Cambridge, England, September 15-18, 2005. Housing will be in the Queen's College dorms, a rare opportunity for Americans. This meeting is sponsored by the History of Anaesthesia Society (UK) and the Department of Anaesthesia at West Suffolk Hospital (UK). More information is available from Dr. Neil Adams, Honorary Secretary HAS, at **[adams118@keme.co.uk](mailto:adams118@keme.co.uk)**. The proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on the History of Anaesthesia, held in Santiago, Spain, in 2001 were just released.