

COUNTDOWN TO BOSTON

33 DAYS



## "P" is for Pellock

Five years have passed since Jack Pellock died in the spring of 2016. It will be six years next month since we last basked in the sheer joy and exuberance of his company at a CNS meeting. Today's entry, "P is for Pellock" gives me a much welcome reason to re-post two classic photos of Jack in his late prime, along with a few photos from that last "appreciation" staged on Jack's behalf at the meeting outside of Washington DC in 2015.



I miss Jack. We all do. If there was one person I wish I could call for reassurance and practical advice in these trying days and weeks of planning the CNS meeting under gathering clouds of uncertainty, it would be Jack. His initials, "JP" aptly capture his core being and express one of his core contributions to the CNS: "Joyful Pragmatism". I remember him telling me once when facing headwinds different in kind, but not degree, compared to those we're all leaning into now: "It's not a question of if you can make it through to the other side even stronger and better, it's a question of whether you can find enough people who believe that and are willing to work together to make that come true, or at least start to come true."



I am always leery of reflex nostalgia, so rather than slip into that mode (or slip into it any further), let me re-post something I wrote about Jack “in the moment,” shortly after he died, published in the Summer 2016 *CNS Connections*:

## I Virginia

In June 1968, the ABPN issued its first set of certificates in Neurology with Special Qualifications in Child Neurology (Charles Barlow received Certificate #1, Arnold Gold #6, Isabelle Rapin #9). Less than a year later, an ad agency in Richmond launched one of the most iconic tourism marketing campaigns of all-time with the tagline, “Virginia is for Lovers.”

The connection might not seem obvious at first glance, but had you been with me at Jack Pellock’s funeral in Richmond the third Saturday morning in May, or driven north to Charlottesville that afternoon to stroll around Monticello with Rob Rust, two weeks after he retired, you might have spotted it. As different as these two squires from the Commonwealth of Virginia were in temperament and appearance, both nurtured and generously shared with colleagues a vast wealth of knowledge in the unfolding mysteries of neurological development and disorders, Both richly personified Ray Bradbury’s oft-quoted credo: “Do what you love and love what you do.” And, both are, or were, not “merely” respected and revered, but genuinely and unabashedly loved by their colleagues, as witness Larry Morton’s wonderful tribute to Jack posted on the CNS website, and Phillip Pearl’s splendid profile of Rob Rust, published in the October 2015 *CNS Connections* in tandem with his receiving the Blue Bird Circle Training Director Award (also

available on the website).

Physicians in general, and pediatric neurologists in particular, have a chronic tendency to communicate in acronyms. When texting and Twitter came along, they were ready for it. It should come as no surprise, then, that two three-letter acronyms spring immediately to mind when talking about Jack and Rob – JOY and AWE – with two more springing up along the way: PLA and PLW.

When I think of Jack, the word “joy” materializes almost unbidden: “joy” as in “a sense of well being,” “exuberance,” or “a source or cause of delight”. The acronym serves equally well: “JOY as in “Just Offer Yourself.” Jack didn’t wait for someone else to fill a void or need. If there was a role he could fill, or a service he could provide, he didn’t hesitate to make the offer and never failed to follow through and make good on it.

- As a respectful and well respected partner to and provocateur among pharmaceutical companies, Jack lobbied tirelessly and effectively for increased pediatric labeling and treatment options for children with epilepsy.
- As a past president of the American Epilepsy Society and past and present board member, respectively, of the Child Neurology Society and the Child Neurology Foundation, Jack generously offered his time, energy and vision to each in a manner that made plain to all that they were stronger standing and working together toward their complimentary missions than they were competing with each other and struggling apart.
- As the longtime friend and protege of Kiffin Penry, Jack carried on his legacy, enriching the epilepsy training of two generations of child neurologists, dating back to the mid-90s, by bringing together an impressive stable of experts in the field to stage a two-day epilepsy seminar for PGY5 residents immediately before the CNS Annual Meeting. Jack hoped that in time this would become a fully integrated feature of CNS annual meeting programming. And while he harbored no illusions that the transition from a pharma-funded satellite model to a Society-funded training and networking program might take time to fully evolve, he believed it was not merely worthwhile, but essential.

“These seminars aren’t just about competence,” he told me last year at what would, in fact, be his last CNS meeting. “They’re about networking and building community.” He didn’t say it, but I will: as an extension of Jack himself, they were about continuing to cultivate a “JOYful” community (“Just Offer Yourself”) of general and subspecialty pediatric neurologists including, but not limited to epileptologists. A community of “dual citizens” willing to remain fully engaged with each other, to stay in meaningful conversation with each other, to continue offering their time and talents to each other for the common good.

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I can’t speak for Ken Mack, but I have to think that, in looking back on his two years as CNS President (2015-17), he would regard as one of his proudest accomplishments negotiating a transition from the pharma-based satellite model Jack successfully staged for 20 years, to a CNS-staged two-day seminar for Junior Members of the CNS in their final year of residency. Ken was aided in this effort by the extraordinary creativity, resourcefulness, generosity of spirit and just plain Pellock-inspired “roll-up-your-sleeves-and-do-it” resolve of core organizers and faculty members Phil Pearl, Renée Shellhaas, and Elaine Wirrell, shown below. Below them is the founding cohort of residents gathered in Vancouver in 2016 for the 1st John M. “Jack” Pellock Resident Seminar on Epilepsy, and below that, the faculty overseeing the 2nd Pellock Seminar in Kansas City in 2017.





More than 300 residents have participated in the Pellock Seminar the past five years. Another 60 are signed up to participate this year in Boston, with another 12-15 registered to attend virtually. The program has been, as we hoped and as Jack would have greatly appreciated, a most welcome and, in an increasingly virtual world, a much needed personal, in-person networking platform, a seedbed for what may well prove to be career- and life-changing friendships and professional collaborations among a new, emerging generation of child neurologists.

This year's 6th Annual CNS Pellock Seminar will be staged across two afternoons, Tuesday and Wednesday, September 28 & 29. Residents attending will receive fee waivers for the full CNS meeting, as well as three paid hotel nights. It's an expensive commitment on the part of the CNS, one made possible in no small part by the generous support of a five-year grant from the Pediatric Epilepsy Research Foundation (PERF). It also involves a generous commitment of time and talent on the part of the more than 20 faculty members who have contributed in the past five years, largely *pro bono*, consistent with the "pay-it-back, pay-it-forward" spirit that is a central part of the CNS legacy, one that will be celebrated at this year's Kenneth F. Swaiman Legacy Luncheon on Wednesday.

The Legacy Luncheon on Wednesday is, in fact, built in to the Pellock Seminar this year as the official lunch/opening session on Day 2. This will give those attending a once-in-a-lifetime immersive appreciation of the child neurologists, including Jack Pellock, who built the framework and established the foundation that they all benefit from now and will all grow into and build on, working together with their new-found friends and colleagues in the decades to come.

Until tomorrow (The Letter "Q")  
Roger

Roger Larson, CAE  
Executive Director

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### **On-line Registration is Open!**

Registration is now open for the long awaited 50th Golden Anniversary Meeting of the Child Neurology Society in Boston. Registrants attending this milestone meeting live and in-person in Boston will want to register early (some sessions are limited and reservation-only). You will also want to book hotel rooms ASAP. A link and access code to the Sheraton Boston Hotel will be included in your registration confirmation email.

### **2021 CNS 50th Annual Meeting**

For more information, click button below.

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Register

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