

COUNTDOWN TO BOSTON

34 DAYS



"O" is for Ohio

Charlie Watts, the legendary drummer for the Rolling Stones, died on Tuesday. I never envisioned when I started out on this Countdown to Boston paying homage to Watts, or any other of the Rolling Stones for that matter. But, with the letter "O" for "Ohio" popping up two days after Charlie's demise, how could I not? Cleveland, after all, is home to both the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and the famed Cleveland Clinic, making use of one or the other as a metaphor available, if not quite inevitable.

Most senior members of the CNS have already guessed, and more than a few, I'm sure, may both dread and fear where I'm going with this. So, I'll put your mind at ease.

I'm not suggesting (although some might) that the Cleveland Clinic's dynamic duo of David Rothner and Gerry Erenberg are the Jagger and Richard of the CNS. Mick and Keith haven't earned that distinction....not yet, anyway; and time (no disrespect to Charlie) is not on their side.



Where I am going with this is looking at the letter "O" through the lens of that staple of rock 'n roll music: the 45 rpm record with its "A" side and "B" side. The first 45 rpm record I ever bought was in 1965 when, as an 11-year-old living in the cultural backwater of Rochester, Minnesota I felt sure my older brother and I were the only kids north of Chicago listening to WLS, and thus the first to hear the Stones' "Get Off My Cloud," the follow-up single to "Satisfaction" with Charlie's signature drum solo intro that, to this day, I mimic while waiting for a slow computer screen to refresh. That song has played over and over in my head through the years: always in April when abstracts come pouring in and the requests for deadline extensions pour in even faster, then again in September/October when requests are different in kind and tone and the available remedies fewer and feebler and their reception less friendly (or so it seems).



In most cases the “A” side is just that, the “B” side is often an afterthought. In many cases their comparative merits even out over time; sometimes their roles are even reversed. It might be hard for anyone in the CNS to decide between those two old friends from Cleveland, David Rothner and Gerry Erenberg, which is the “A” side and which the “B”. The correct answer is “either”; or “both”. Both were born in Chicago. Both received training from an “A” list of the giants, titans and gods of early child neurology. Both spent the better part of five different decades at the Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Rothner distinguishing himself as a leading expert in pediatric headache, Dr. Erenberg pioneering research and treatment protocols in Tourette syndrome. Both served the CNS in multiple capacities; Dr. Erenberg served on the Executive Committee as Councillor for the Midwest from 1977-79. Both are among the most respected and well-loved members of the CNS: as wise, witty and engaging in conversation as anyone you could hope to find, in or outside of the CNS. Both were honored with presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr. Rothner at the CNS Annual Meeting in Austin, in 2013, and Dr. Erenberg at the 2018 meeting in his native Chicago. Each introduced the other. Both had the audience alternately enthralled and in stitches.

There are many others in Cleveland worthy of note, too many to mention or show photos of, I’m afraid. But I can’t leave the shores of Lake Erie without at least giving a shout out to Wyllie, Scher, Wiznitzer & Bass, a group that, strung together, sounds a bit like the iconic Rock & Roll Hall of Fame “supergroup” Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, albeit with life-saving rather than the life-shattering echoes of Neil Young’s 1970 anthem, “Ohio.”



Traveling south from Cleveland, one quickly comes to Akron. If Cleveland has the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Akron has the Hower Award Dinner, making it tough, for child neurologists, anyway, to decide which is the “A” side and which the “B”. No city in the US has had a more sizeable or steadier stream of child neurology luminaries come to share what they have learned through decades of receiving and giving instruction, practicing under and alongside colleagues equally wise, compassionate and committed, if less well-known or celebrated; “B” sides to their “A”. Again, space prohibits including photos or mention of everyone, and I have touched on Dean Timmons and establishment of the Hower Award previously, but I feel compelled to include two CNS members from Ohio attending past Hower Award dinners: the aforementioned Mark Scher (a longtime friend; the first child neurology resident I met when I was hired at the University of

Minnesota, shown here with 2006 Hower Awardee, Mike Painter); and Margaret McBride, whose tireless contributions to the CNS on multiple committees is a model all should emulate, and whose knowledgeable enjoyment of reading history and attending Chautauquas all should aspire to match in retirement (shown here with Dean Timmons and 2003 Hower Awardee, Mike Cohen).



Continue south and west and you come to Columbus, home of The Ohio State Buckeyes and Nationwide Children's Hospital, which once again begs the question: which is the "A" side and which the "B"? ("B" is for "Buckeyes," obviously, and surely "A" is for Anup, as in Anup Patel, incoming President of the Child Neurology Foundation.) I could go on and on about Steve Roach (and I will at a later date). Steve doubled the size of the Nationwide program as its longtime former Division Chief. He raised the impact factor of *Pediatric Neurology* after succeeding Ken Swaiman as editor. As CNS President (2011-13) he hired me in 2012 to succeed Mary Currey as Executive Director and made up for that with a half-dozen dazzling and substantial initiatives. And he continues to leave his impress on the future of child neurology by performing a labor of love on the closing afternoon of each CNS Annual Meeting since 2016, organizing and teaching the Biomedical Writing Workshop. Again, the best I can do in the space I have is mention names: Dara Albert, Emily de los Reyes (photo posted 8/21 along with two dozen other so-called "kickass women"), Warren Lo (CNS Executive Committee 2009-11), John Mytinger (author of numerous past award profiles, carrying on the tradition of his mentor, Rob Rust), Pedro Weisleder, and Jorge Vidaurre.



With Jorge we are presented with yet another “A” side vs “B” side case study. Few states are more solidly or classically midwestern isolationist (think Robert Taft), than Ohio. And yet, within the CNS, no state has offered up anyone or anything to match Jorge’s energy and global vision. His leadership as chair of the CNS International Affairs Committee has been breathtakingly broad and substantial. We’ll get to that in a few weeks when “I is for International” comes up.

Finally, one cannot leave Nationwide behind without bringing up Jerry Mendell, this year’s Sachs Award Lecturer. Whether you are in Boston, attending the 50th Anniversary Meeting live (we hope you join the 625+ registered for the meeting thus far), or tuning in virtually, you will not want to miss his lecture on Friday morning, October 1.

Columbus also figures into “A” side vs “B” side conversations in at least two other key instances, presenting in reverse order: “B” is for “before coming” and “A” is for “after departing.” Before coming to Columbus in 2014 for the CNS Annual Meeting we had still not made the \$1 Million goal for endowing the Phillip R. Dodge Young Investigator Award. We both met and celebrated meeting that goal at the Friday evening closing gala in Columbus, the actual moment caught on camera (below) when Roy Elterman, President of the Pediatric Epilepsy Research Foundation (PERF), handed the new CNS President, Nina Schor, a check for \$170,000 that pushed us across the finish line.



Before coming to Columbus, the Child Neurology Foundation was in crisis; it met on the last day of the CNS Meeting to decide whether, in light of recent, troubling trends, it should close down or chart a new path forward. The board voted to take the latter track. After departing Columbus, incoming President, Don Shields and newly hired Executive Director (and dynamo) Amy Brin took on the challenge, turning things around and making the CNF the truly creative and impactful outreach and advocacy partner the CNS has always needed to fill out its mission of serving the larger child neurology community. Matching the movement from the 50th CNS meeting in Boston to the 51st in Cincinnati, the CNF Presidency will transfer at the end of this year’s CNS meeting from Massachusetts (Scott Pomeroy) to Ohio (Anup Patel).



Two final “A” vs “B” notes, and then I’ll let you get back to work:

If this year’s 50th Anniversary Meeting ushers in the full 50th year of the Society’s history (the “A” side), next year’s meeting in Cincinnati is “Where the Next 50 Years Begins” (the “B” side). I wish I had more time and space available to touch on Don Gilbert’s contributions to the CNS, including his service on the Executive Committee from 2017-19, but I’ve gone on way too long already; that may have to wait for next year’s countdown.

Finally, let me say a word about “A” vs “B” along the lines of symmetrical pairs, first and last as bookends, so to speak. The first CNS President I served under, albeit indirectly, was Bob Eiben. Dr. Eiben was the first child neurologist in Ohio (Dean Timmons was the second). Notably, this year in particular, his early work in medicine before turning toward child neurology was spent studying infectious disease, combating and controlling poliomyelitis.

Dr. Eiben was the first CNS President to serve a two-year term, succeeding Ray Chun in 1983, the year I started processing abstract submissions while working as a part-time student in the peds neurology division at the U of M. The last CNS President I will serve under is also closely identified with Ohio: Bruce Cohen from Akron Children’s Hospital. There may not be two more straightforwardly honorable and estimable individuals in the CNS: Past, Present and Future. Closing out with a nod to recent Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees, Dire Straits, Bruce has been a “brother in arms” through the many ups and downs of the past 8 years during his successive terms as Councillor, Secretary-treasurer, and President-elect. I can’t think of any better or more fitting way to bracket my years with the CNS than to begin (“A”) and end (“B”) with Bob Eiben and Bruce Cohen, two of Ohio’s finest.



Until tomorrow (The Letter “P”)
Roger

Roger Larson, CAE
Executive Director

On-line Registration is Open!
Registration is now open for the long
awaited 50th Golden Anniversary Meeting

2021 CNS 50th Annual Meeting
For more information, click button below.

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.

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