

COUNTDOWN TO BOSTON

46 DAYS



"E" is for Elections and Effort

Timing is everything. I didn't plan on posting and sending out notice of the upcoming election of officers on the day "E" came up in the rotation. Nor did I cynically and manipulatively search for a random quote about "Effort" to add ballast to today's entry. I actually used the William James quote below in last year's special Election and Awards Nomination issue. And I'll probably use it again next year, if I'm still around.

We measure ourselves by many standards. Our strength and our intelligence, our wealth and even our good luck, are things which warm our heart and make us feel ourselves a match for life.

But deeper than all such things and able to suffice unto itself without them, is the sense of the amount of effort we can put forth...S/He who can make none is but a shadow; s/he who can make much is a hero.

– William James



"What we are talking about then," I wrote, announcing the upcoming 2021 On-line Election of Officers, August 20-September 19 ([Click here for Special Summer 2021 "Connections"](#)), "is the Jamesian sense of "effort put forth." Let me be clear about this: every child neurologist I have known in my 30+ years with the CNS is, in my mind, something of a Jamesian "hero". And while relatively few have been nominated to run for office and only half been elected, no child neurologist caring daily for patients or probing the diseases and disorders besetting the brain could ever be accused of making no effort or be dismissed as a mere shadow.

Still, some do stand out for expending extra effort, as this year's cluster of deadlines for electing new officers and nominating award recipients reminds us. It is one of the quiet glories of the Child Neurology Society that it has always openly and democratically left it to the members to decide who would be nominated to serve as its officers or be honored with one of its awards. Doing so has required some effort on the part of its members; minimal effort in the case of voting – it takes less than a minute, really – a little more when submitting nominations honoring career- and lifelong contributions.

At bottom, what is really being asked of each member in terms of effort is relatively simple, if not necessarily easy: it is an exercise in self-reflection and self-knowledge. In voting for officers or nominating someone for an award, each member is essentially asking themselves why they went into child neurology, why they remain so passionately committed to it, what tangible and intangible personal rewards they have reaped, what hopes they might have sown. That latter question is particularly crucial this year as those elected will determine how – and how well – the CNS pivots from its first 50 years to its next 50 years. By submitting a nomination or casting your vote in the election you are putting forth the effort to honor and support those colleagues and mentors whose efforts reflect and project, embody and extend your own at this pivotal point in time where past, present and future so critically, and creatively, hang in the balance.

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What is required, at bottom, is “putting forth the effort” to seriously ask yourself two questions:

1. Who in the past put forth the effort needed to make child neurology a calling that I felt drawn to?
2. Who among these candidates will put forth the effort needed to help me continue on that path with the kind and level of passion, commitment and sense of fulfillment that will compel the next generation – a truly diverse generation – to put forth the effort needed to follow after me and chart new hope-filled paths in an emerging new age of daunting challenges, dazzling opportunities and dizzying uncertainties?

The on-line election portal opens August 20 and closes September 19. The awards nomination portal will remain open until October 20. The choice is yours. The chance is yours to put forth the effort to honor the past and shape the future.

"E" is also for Elterman

In thinking about “effort”, it struck me that it would take real effort – and it would be wasted effort – to draw up a list of private practitioners elected to serve on the CNS Executive Committee. If Roy Elterman is not the only one (although I think he is), he is definitely the last one; “last” meaning “most recent,” not “last ever” (hope springs eternal).

As previously noted, “some do stand out for expending extra effort.” Few stand out more than Roy Elterman. I had the pleasure and privilege of working closely with Roy when he served on the Executive Committee from 2002-2004, as well as when he chaired the Legislative Affairs Committee in what might aptly be called “the pre-Bennett (Lavenstein) Era”. I have also, and more recently (and frequently) had the pleasure of cashing checks Roy signed as President of the Pediatric Epilepsy Research Foundation, the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization Roy founded along with Don Shields in the wake of work done and rights owned by the two of them in clinical trials studying the use of vigabatrin in treating refractory infantile spasms.

It would have been easy, I imagine, for Roy and Don to, essentially, “pocket the money” and move on to enjoy lives of relative luxury and ease (relative to being practicing pediatric neurologists, anyway). That they didn’t move in that direction, but chose instead to invest substantial personal commitment and effort toward directing the royalties earned to support a wide

range of research and educational efforts by young and upcoming pediatric neurologists (not just epileptologists) is more than remarkable. It is epochal: something worth remembering and recounting as part of the history of child neurology, the Child Neurology Society, and the Child Neurology Foundation.

True as all of the above may be, including the pleasure I have had of cashing Roy's checks, the greater pleasure by far is simply that of having known Roy for the past quarter-century, of having enjoyed his easy banter (that part is easy), and explored in earnest his many creative projects and proposals (that takes a bit more effort, but it's worth it).



Until tomorrow (the letter "F"),
Roger

Roger Larson, CAE
Executive Director

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.

[Click to Register](#)

2021 CNS 50th Annual Meeting

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