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Announcing the 19th Spring Meeting of the Anesthesia History Association - May 2-4, 2013, Hartford, Connecticut

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Announcing the 19th Spring Meeting of the Anesthesia History Association - May 2-4, 2013 Hartford, Connecticut

Anesthesia history enthusiasts are aware that although Crawford Williamson Long (1815-1878) had been using ether in his practice in rural Georgia since 1842, he did not publish his findings until 1848, by which time Horace Wells (1815-1848) and William Thomas Green Morton (1819-1868), primarily the latter, had stolen the show. It has been quipped, "Long did Long have to wait for recognition." New England boasts many sites and artifacts related to the history of our specialty – the Ether Dome at Massachusetts General Hospital, the Ether Monument at Boston Public Gardens, Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine for viewing a famous oil painting by Robert C. Hinckley (1853-1949) depicting the first public use of ether, Mount Auburn Cemetery where many principal contributors to the discovery of anesthesia are buried, the Morton homes that were beautifully rendered as watercolors by Dr. Leroy D. Vandam (1914-2004), and of course, the many sites in Hartford, Connecticut.

The meeting will start on May 2, 2013 with a tour of several of these sites. We will begin with Bushnell Park (established in 1868), where a beautiful monument and statue of Horace Wells were erected in 1875. The sculptor was American artist Thomas Howard Bartlett (1835-1922), whose other famous known work is "The Wounded Drummer Boy of Shiloh." Bushnell Park is named in honor of reverend Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) who was greatly influential in securing the establishment of this park, the first public park in the United States.

We next visit Cedar Hill Cemetery (established in 1868) to view Horace Wells' burial site, beautifully adorned by works filled with allegory and symbolism. The cemetery is also the final resting place of firearms maker Samuel Colt (1814-1862), who was an occasional itinerant demonstrator of the curious effects of nitrous oxide. Additional sites are a Tiffany stained glass window panel in Center Church (built in 1739) and a plaque denoting the location of Horace Wells' dental office. Lunch will be offered during a stop at the Connecticut Historical Society (founded in 1825), which houses many artifacts related to Horace Wells, including his personal diary, a death mask and other personal effects. The first of several guest lectures will be held during lunch – by William McDonnell, D.D.S., who is also our local guide. He is an office bearer in the Horace Wells Club (founded in 1894, on the 50th anniversary of Wells' partially successful demonstration of the anesthetic properties of nitrous oxide at Massachusetts General Hospital), an organization whose membership is limited to 40 practicing local dentists, and which strives to preserve and propagate interest in the history of anesthesia.

Two sites related to significant American literary figures will also be included in the tour – Mark Twain House and Harriet Beecher Stowe Center. During the evening, a welcome reception will be held for delegates and accompanying guests on a cruise on the Connecticut River aboard the *Lady Katharine*.

The scientific sessions will be held on Friday, May 3 and the morning of Saturday, May 4. On Friday evening, our guest speaker will be renowned author, medical historian and Yale



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surgeon, Sherwin Nuland. Among the many books he has written is the classic *The Origins of Anesthesia*. Another guest speaker will be the author of many popular historical novels, including *Ether Day*, Julie Fenster. Although this book is now out of print, Ms. Fenster has agreed to help us with autographed sales from her personal collection. Also offering autographed sales will be Boston University anesthesiologist Rafael A. Ortega, M.D., author of *Written in Granite: An Illustrated History of the Ether Monument*.

The program will end on Saturday, May 4, with a novel workshop/course offered for the first time by the Anesthesia History Association – "Techniques in Historical Research." Our aim is to help history enthusiasts who are not formally trained in historical research undertake their projects with a greater degree of academic rigor. It will also help attendees identify areas that could be explored, help them formulate their plans and offer suggestions on how to get their work published.

Residents and trainees are encouraged to participate in the C. Ronald Stephen, M.D. Anesthesia History Essay Contest. Essays on any topic related to the history of anesthesiology, pain medicine or critical care medicine can be submitted by September 20, 2012. A prize of \$1,000 is offered to the winning entry, and this individual is required to make a 20-30 minute oral presentation at the Hartford meeting. Additional information about the essay contest may be obtained at <http://aha.anesthesia.wisc.edu/Essay.php>.

This meeting should provide everyone, history enthusiast or otherwise, a great opportunity to visit Hartford and explore sites related to the history of our specialty. At the same time, it offers interested individuals an opportunity to present their work, meet renowned authors and learn how to conduct history related research. We are delighted to welcome and encourage one and all to attend. Join us to tour, to present your work and to learn; but most important, we want you to have FUN!

Addition information at <http://aha.anesthesia.wisc.edu> or by e-mail sdesai@partners.org