Greetings from your President!

During our Mid-Winter Board of Directors meeting, several issues surfaced that require prompt action. One of the most pressing is the need to select a new Journal Editor since Dr. Kivlighan’s term ends in December 2006. I have asked Past President Andy Horn to chair the Publications Committee and recommend a new editor. Dr. Kivlighan and his Associate Editors Drs. Glenn Littlepage and Craig D. Parks are to be commended for continuing the excellent quality of the Journal established by its first editor, Dr. Forsyth.

A second issue that permeated all aspects of the meeting agenda was increasing membership and providing services to members that are unique to group specialists. Some of the services under consideration include sponsoring programs during the APA Convention, beginning with the New Orleans Convention, that will offer attendees CEU’s. Other options for earning CEU’s under consideration include using the Division’s journal context for a source of credits as well as on-line programs. Joint or “summit” conferences with sister associations are also under consideration. The newsletter is now being used to respond to member questions in forming and leading groups. Members may also pose questions on the Division Member LISTSERV and receive responses from other professionals within the Division. Plans are underway to share instructional material through the LISTSERV. To get your name added to the Division 49 LISTSERV contact Dr. Steve Sobelman (steve@cantoncove.com). Currently, Dr. Moreland, posts position openings and other APA information on the Division LISTSERV as a continuing service to members. A student website is also being developed. Members are encouraged to contact me or another member of the Board of Directors of Division 49 with your suggestions for improving and adding services.

Another priority that I outlined in my last column in the Newsletter was making some adaptations to the Journal so that it has more appeal to the practitioner. The editor has agreed to include case study articles and publish “a theme” issue of the Journal from time to time. The first theme issue that I have proposed deals with groups in education, especially improving education through group dynamics and methods from organizational or system development, to small group interventions such as group counseling and psychotherapy and psychoeducation or skills training groups and cooperative learning groups, for example.

Inasmuch as Divisional operations are not clearly obvious in the By-Laws and policy has been passed on by recall or word of mouth, it seemed to me that the Division needed a Policy Manual that provide elected officers with specific guidelines for operational procedures. I have proposed to the Board of Directors that a task force be developed from among current and previous officers to draft a Policy Manual for future use. I shall appoint such a task force.

Still another priority of the Division is that of enhancing diversity. Dr. Eric Chen has provided a mission statement for the Board on this issue. In the interim, the APA Presidential Task Force on Enhancing Diversity has published a Final Report and I have asked Dr. Chen to develop a committee to study this report and offer a program to operationalize it for Division 49.

I encourage you to read our Secretary’s Report for more information on the Board’s actions. I am very grateful for the Board’s diligence and staying focused on task throughout the meeting and for their careful preparation of reports to the Board. Division members can be assured that they are being well represented by their elected representatives.

One of the priorities that I cited in my last column in the Newsletter was to complete the revision of the By-Laws during our Mid-Winter Board meeting and place the revisions before the membership in a Newsletter for a vote on change proposals. We were able to make the proposed revisions in the By-Laws during our meeting and they are being edited for circulation to the Board before being printed in a forthcoming Newsletter.
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**THE GROUP PSYCHOLOGIST**
is published by Division 49:  
Group Psychology & Group Psychotherapy of the American Psychological Association

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**Submission Deadlines:**
March 1, June 1, October 1

All material for publication should be submitted to the Editor as an email attachment (Microsoft Word or Word Perfect format).

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Division 49 Membership Application:…Back Cover
Catastrophic events highlight the fragility of life and can illuminate the sacredness of intense connection to everyday experience. I have recently returned from a brief visit to New Orleans and observed the insidious and deleterious impact of Hurricane Katrina on the lives of a few special people personal and dear to me. Six months post-hurricane, loss, fury, bewilderment and helplessness continue to corrode beneath a steadfast and courageous persona. All tragic disruption underlines the tenuousness thin line we walk, and ought to convince us of the imperative to seize the day. Yet, fully living in tune with the present is so much simpler to advocate than implement. We typically revert to past form, and regress to historical psychic structures and tried and true expenditures of our life force.

Intensive psychotherapy, living the examined life, a focus on awareness and accountability, all aim for a richer and more intense engagement of living. Irvin Yalom’s work (his novel, The Schopenhauer Cure, being explored in this newsletter issue with a reflective response by Yalom himself), heralds the interpersonal and the here and now, and tackles the existential issues we all know about but nonetheless may continue to flee. Yalom serves the discipline of psychotherapy quite well in his didactic and frequently wise emphasis on cherishing the luminosity of our life odysseys. We know as group psychotherapists that creating a group culture where exquisite awareness of the interpersonal and private abound is no easy task. For a variety of powerful reasons, our groups and sometimes their leaders escape into dulling intercourse or intellectualized communications. Yet, when the group hums in the present with magnification of the space between and within members as well as the leader, amazing events may occur, and powerful learning and change can take hold.

Ralph is a financially successful businessman in his early 40’s. He began psychotherapy because of debilitating episodes of anxiety, rage, and despair. As these manifestations of his misery have dissipated and receded, a profound personal emptiness has come to plague him. He retreats from this agonizing space by constructing a social life of entertaining associates, or ingratiating himself to others, or by engaging in a wide repertoire of compulsive organizing and sorting tasks in his home or office. He also devotes much time to being terrorized by a disabling hypochondria. He is without any deep friendships even as he knows and visits with a multitude of acquaintances across the country. He has never had a girlfriend or lover but craveingly imagines that it is only a matter of time before this gift will arrive. Fleeting attachments are his social menu, that and an envious clinging and static connection to his divorced parents and his younger two brothers. He is both exquisitely aware of and in denial about his aging and the finiteness of life.

Since he can remember, Ralph has told himself and anyone else who will listen that once certain milestones have been attained, he will get the girl/woman of his dreams and have a wonderful and stable life. These milestones have included: making the high school and college football team, graduating college and graduate school, having a certain number of sexual conquests, creating and starting a new business, earning six figures, losing weight, and helping worthy charities. The milestones are sometimes achieved, sometimes not, new ones take their place, and little changes within.

Ralph enters the group room in a manner that conveys palpable self-doubt. He is stooped, eyes quickly darting to survey the scene, and so eager to catch the gaze and friendly greeting of other group members. If he is unacknowledged, he sits down and hunches over, looking up beseechingly to each new arrival that evening. It is a sad and hungry scene.

Being in a psychotherapy group has been both enlivening and agonizing for Ralph. He is a master story and joke teller, and can easily amuse the group with melancholic and self-effacing tales from his past or present life. He lights up with a receptive audience and his internal house darkens when attention goes to another group member or to another side of the room. Staying in the present with his own experience is very painful for him. He quickly retreats to performance and show time. At times, my heart aches for his suffering, the group seldom picks up on his distress.

One evening, he began to speak of an office incident where his boss devalued him. He paused for a moment in search of a phrase to convey his feelings and a woman member of the group filled in his statement. He looked at her with enormous gratitude. I asked them each to speak from their experience. The woman associated to her proclivity to fill in her husband’s sentences, and when on to talk of her disdain for him. Ralph ignored all she communicated and declared Ralph, “and I don’t want that taken from me.” He then became quite uneasy and distressed. The group worked with this complex event with much compassion.

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**From Your Editor**

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The here and now focus with Ralph elicited his regressed and primitive longings in a live and immediate manner that also enabled him to experience how desperate and lonely he is in the world and how he deliberately keeps his universe that way. He stayed with this malaise for awhile, flitting back and forth between his defiant insistence on being infantilized and his powerful sense of loss and awareness of a hollow and ravenous self, truly unable to self soothe and enter a mutual and sustaining relationship. His proclivity to curse God for his travails was undercut for a poignant time in this group session by his seeing how he insists on not living his own life. This group event also allowed other group members to experience their own flights from accountable engagement and their holding on to archaic and self-defeating coping strategies resulting in compromised experiences. That group ended soberly and somberly. It is courageous and self-defeating coping strategies resulting in compromised experiences. That group ended soberly and somberly. It is courageous of a group and its members to persevere with such pain. It is also hopeful. And, as group leaders we also need persistent reminding that our time and expertise are quite bounded.

**President-Elect’s Column**

Lynn S. Rapin, PhD

I have recently returned from the orientation for new Division Presidents-Elect sponsored by APA, called the Division Leadership Conference (DLC). The Friday evening to Sunday morning conference had several goals including orientation to departments and services, introduction to members serving in major APA governance roles, and informal time for inter-division dialogue. I am still sorting through the stack of information (a bit overwhelmed by APA’s massive structure), and plan to take advantage of the formidable resources provided to the Divisions by APA headquarters.

Several issues pertinent to the ongoing health and growth of Division 49 are also key issues for many other divisions. Membership growth and retention, diversity of both membership and leadership, and collaboration with other divisions for the overall health of the profession were widely shared themes. Because membership in professional and volunteer associations is declining nationally, it is both logical and essential to collaborate with other organizations who share our goals. I believe we can do this while keeping a strong identity.

Membership recruitment and retention are major issues for us, and are central to George Gazda in his presidential year. While we have made strides in attracting graduate students to the division, we have done less well in retaining members. The Division has made significant progress in the last several years in providing more “value added” services. For example, the very attractive and informative web site with both public and members-only sections (www.apa49.org); the Group Psychologist newsletter you are now reading; our now revenue-generating journal, soon to be getting its third Editor; and the helpful members list-serve all enhance communication about issues and advancements in group psychology and group psychotherapy.

We must, however, reach those people who would benefit from membership who are not current readers of our publications, nor familiar with the website, nor on the list-serve. We must all work to let our colleagues and students know that the value of our Division membership has increased. I was struck by the number of conversations I had at the Division Leadership Conference with other Division presidents-elect who talked about group work. I want to assist the Division in communicating the advantages of group training for those who practice in other specialty areas of psychology. I share with George Gazda, our President and a founding member of the Division, and Steve Sobelman, Past President, the goal of jointly sponsoring a group summit with other Divisions of APA and with other associations specializing in group work. These projects are, of course, all done with volunteer time. Please join us in generating ideas to continue our healthy Division. We cannot do this work without you!

**Secretary’s Report**

Board Meeting
Washington, DC
Hotel George
January 14, 2006, 8:30 a.m.– 5 p.m.

Present: Steve Sobelman, PhD, Past President; George Gazda, PhD, President; Lynn Rapin, PhD, President-elect; John Dagley, PhD; Treasurer; Janice DeLucia-Waack, PhD, Secretary; Dennis Kivlighan, PhD; Journal Editor; Joseph Kobos, PhD, Council Representative; Allan Elfant, PhD, Member-at-Large; Newsletter Editor; Gloria Gottsegen, PhD, Member-at-Large, Fellows Chair; Jennifer Harp, PhD, Member-at-Large; Convention Program Chair; Sally Barlow, PhD, Liaison to CoS; Education and Training Chair; Member-at-Large; Josh Gross, PhD; Member-at-Large; ABPP Liaison.

Absent: Zipora Shechtman, PhD; Member-at-large; Josh Semiatin; Student Representative.

President’s Welcome, Introductions: Dr. George Gazda welcomed us. Everyone introduced themselves.

Minutes: Dr. Janice DeLucia-Waack. Minutes from August board meeting at APA were distributed and unanimously approved with minor changes.

President-Elect Comments: Dr. Lynn Rapin discussed her upcoming attendance at the APA Division Leadership Conference to assist
newly elected presidents in getting oriented to the APA structure and resources.

APA Council: Dr. Joe Kobos. The Council will meet again in February. We have helped with Katrina economically and personnelwise.

Journal: Dr. Dennis Kivlighan. An official report was submitted. In 2005, 49 manuscripts have been submitted with the rejection rate of 67%. A call has been put out for case studies. A motion was made that the Board recommend to the Editor that special issues on relevant topics be encouraged and that the Publications Committee propose mechanisms to consider special issue topics and editors.

A motion was made that the Board recommend to the Editor to consider a special issue on Groups in Education. Editor Kivlighan was in support of the special issue concept. It was left to Dr. Gazda to pursue the issue by developing a committee to present a specific proposal to the Editor. Dr. Kivlighan’s editorship ends in August 2006. A call needs to be put out for applications for a new editor. A Publications Committee needs to be established and this Committee will be responsible for coordinating the search process and recommending an editor to the Board. In 2006, the stipend is $7500 for the editor. Dennis recommends supporting stipends for future Associate Editors. Further discussion will take place at the August meeting.

Newsletter: Dr. Allan Elfant. Dr. Elfant has completed 2 issues; he is at work on the 3rd issue, the Elections issue. Several inquiries have been made about advertising in the newsletter. Allan will work on guidelines for content and pricing in conjunction with the Publications Committee. Book reviews may now be included as part of the newsletter.

Website/Listserv: Dr. Steve Sobelman. The listserv is working well for the Board and the Members, n = 300. Everything has been updated. Members can update their profiles; board members should update theirs.

Treasurer: Dr. John Dagley. The treasurer’s report was distributed and unanimously accepted, a summary since 1998 as well as broken down by newsletter, conferences, etc. We have 445 dues paying members and a total of 634 members. We had a net loss of $2858. Next year with the additional journal revenue, we should begin to move from crisis based budgeting to values based budgeting. There was discussion that we need to reinstitute the Finance Committee to assist the Treasurer.

Awards: Dr. George Gazda. The Group Psychologists of the Year will be Gary Burlingame and Addie Fuhriman. Awards will also be given to the outgoing Associate Editors at APA.

Education and Training: Dr. Sally Barlow. An official report was submitted. Some discussion occurred about new ways to sponsor CE programs. Jennifer Harp and Josh Gross will co-chair a Task Force to study the options, and at least, solicit workshops to be given at the Annual APA convention.

Fellows: Dr. Gloria Gottsegen. An official report was submitted. Two recommendations have been put forward to APA for initial status and one who is already a fellow in APA.

Membership: Dr. Josh Gross/Dr. Lynn Rapin. An official report was submitted by outgoing chair, Dr. Rapin. An increase in student members was noted. We currently have 445 paying members, which is down by 36. The new Member-at-Large, Dr. Gross, as new Membership Chair, shared his focus on retention and product development. One strategy is to put an advertisement in the APAGS magazine. Josh will put together a proposal.

Nominations and Elections: Dr. Steve Sobelman. An official report was submitted. A slate of candidates, 2 for president and 7 for member-at-large, for the next election has been submitted by the Nominations Committee to APA. Nominations for APA committees were made: Allan Elfant for CODAPAR, Gloria Gottsegen for Committee on International Relations in Psychology, Lynn Rapin for Board of Professional Affairs (Slate 3: psychologists with expertise in developing and reviewing practice guidelines), and Sally Barlow for Commission for Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies for Professional Psychology.

Convention Program: Dr. Jennifer Harp. An official report was submitted. We have 20 hours substantive hours for 2006 with 7 additional non-substantive hours. We accepted 10 poster sessions and 16 programs. Jeanmarie Keim was the Co-Chair this year; Jennifer will continue as Chair for 2007. We would like to encourage participants to submit their presentations for CE credit.

Diplomate and Credentials: Dr. Allan Elfant/Dr. Josh Gross. Two exams have recently occurred, two exams are scheduled, and one work sample is in progress.

By-Laws Revisions: Dr. Jennifer Harp. The committee (Jennifer Harp, Gloria Gottsegen, Allan Elfant, Joe Kobos, George Gazda) examined the by-laws carefully and identified several areas/issues to be examined by the board. The board made revisions throughout the document. Jennifer will draft revisions based on our discussion to be circulated for final editing via email. Revisions will then be publicized in the newsletter and on the website; the membership will then vote on the amendments. The vote will be taken through a Newsletter ballot prior to APA so the Board can act.

Council of Specialists (CoS): Dr. Sally Barlow. Sally attends the bi-yearly meetings. CoS has a good website.

Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW): Dr. Lynn Rapin. The ASGW National Conference was successfully held in Mobile, Alabama just prior to the Division Board Meeting. ASGW and Division 49 are committed to collaborative efforts in the future. There are many Division 49 members who are also ASGW members. Both groups are exploring the possibility of a group summit.


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Secretary's Report

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Diversity: Dr. Eric Chen. An official report was submitted, which included a clear mission statement for the Committee. Dr. Gazda will send the APA Diversity Task Force Report to Dr. Chen to use as a guide for proposing a Diversity Implementation Plan for Division 49 to be presented at the APA meeting.

Committee Reorganization. Dr. George Gazda. There was a discussion of which committees should be standing and which ad hoc along with special interest groups. By law revisions will reflect these suggestions. Dr. Gazda will pursue re-activating current standing committees and ad hoc or Task Forces interested in continuing.

Mid-Winter Board Meeting 2007: Dr. Lynn Rapin. The plan is to meet here next January.

Committee on Women in Psychology. Dr. Sally Barlow was appointed as our representative to this committee.

Meeting Adjourned, 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice DeLucia-Waack, PhD
Division 49 Secretary

Treasurer's Report

John Dagley, PhD

Several trends seem to be apparent in a perusal of the organization’s financial picture. Some patterns are positive and encouraging, while others reflect challenges of varying significance. Most importantly, the revenue is beginning to grow from the infusion of the income from the association’s journal, Group Dynamics. This year’s revenue from the journal reduced the size of the annual loss to a relatively low level ($2,858). Next year with a full year of journal revenue, there is a very strong possibility of a net income, that is, if we continue to monitor expenses and manage our funds with fiscal responsibility and constraint. Expenses this year ($21,630) were roughly 13% less than the average of the last seven years. That was important primarily because our revenue from paid memberships continued to decline. This year the loss in membership income was approximately 8%, but we’re still approximately 25% over the membership dues income figures from the year before the recent raise in dues.

Perhaps the most challenging numbers are those that reflect a continuing decline in dues-paying members. We are down a little over 7% from last year, now totaling a membership of 634, with only 445 dues-paying. The proportion of members exempt from paying dues has stayed virtually the same over the last seven years, around 186.

Hopefully, now that we seem to be destined to move toward a stronger fiscal base, we can begin to establish value-driven budgets where we pursue initiatives on merit in relation to our basic principles with a bit less fear of going broke.

APA Council Report

Joseph C. Kobos, PhD, ABPP

Council met on a cool weekend in February (Feb. 17–19, 2006). This was the first meeting of Council in which all expenses for travel, hotel and meals were covered by APA. In the past costs were borne by the State or Division which was represented in collaboration with APA. The former procedure was seen as placing a burden on under represented minorities in the profession as well as states or Divisions which did not have an adequate budget to fund their representative. The new system places everyone on the same playing field.

There were two items which attracted most of the attention of Council. One, there was an update on the Presidential Taskforce on Psychological Ethics and National Security. The following material is abstracted from a press release issued by APA on 2/24/06.

Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, PhD, Chair of the APA Ethics Committee emphasized APA’s longstanding prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, which derives from the ethical mandate “do not harm” and from international human rights documents such as the 1987 U.N. Convention Against Torture. The PENS report further stated that psychologists are duty bound to be alert to acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and have an ethical responsibility to report these acts to appropriate authorities. Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter reported to the Council that a psychologist who served on the PENS Task Force put his professional career at risk by fulfilling this ethical obligation to report. (Editor’s note: Due to the sensitive nature of this psychologist’s work, his/her identity is not being released by APA although the psychologist has been identified by some media outlets.)

The PENS Task Force noted that as experts in human behavior, psychologists may contribute to effective interrogations and when doing so must always abide by the principle of do not harm. The report furthermore noted that psychologists are always bound by the APA Code of Ethics no matter their work title or work setting.

In the coming months, the Ethics Committee will begin work on a casebook/commentary through which APA will provide members more specific guidance on issues of and surrounding national security investigations. The Ethics Committee will consider which definition of torture best aligns with the spirit and intent of APA’s longstanding...
professionals to obtain licensure at the completion of the degree. The Ethics Committee hopes to complete the casebook/commentary by the end of this year (2006).

In response to the PENS report, the Divisions for Social Justice (a coalition of 10 APA divisions) addressed Council and voiced their support for the PENS report and its findings. The coalition also recommended further action that would allow APA "to play a more proactive role in this critical social justice issue":

The suggestions for further action include that APA:

1. Perhaps through an independent investigation, seek to determine the facts to that allegations of psychologists’ involvement in violations of human rights of detainees can be refuted or substantiated (Editor’s note: APA has notified and will continue to notify parties working in the national security arena and/or reporting on issues related to interrogation of the association’s intent to investigate and adjudicate any such allegations. APA has invited any knowledgeable party to share such information within the framework of the ethics process);

2. Use the casebook to identify specific psychological interrogation practices that are coercive, cruel, inhuman, or degrading. APA should draw on international convention to define torture, so called “torture lite” and cruel and degrading treatment;

3. Involve APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP) in distributing and publicizing relevant United Nations and other documents upon which the 1985 and 1986 APA policy statements against torture are based;

4. Utilize the consultative function of the APA Ethics Committee to offer consultation to psychologists, especially those working in the military, who face ethical issues related to interrogation and other practices;

5. Provide support for psychologists who observe the report or refuse orders to engage in practices that conflict with professional ethics and standards;

6. Use the ethical issues raised by the PENS report and subsequent discussions to inform the training and education of students as well as career psychologists; and

7. Form a task force or working group to review the 1985 and 1986 resolutions on torture for possible updating in light of more recent research.

The second major item which provoked debate, and in the eyes of a very vocal group, not enough discussion, was the passage of a new policy regarding the acquisition of supervised training. Basically, the policy allows the development of an educational sequence which permits a new doctoral psychologist to complete their coursework and required supervised experience within the completion of the doctoral degree. The policy permits a mechanism which allows new professionals to obtain licensure at the completion of the degree.

On one side were students, trainers and practitioners who argued that a required one year of post doctoral supervision was not educationally meaningful and had become onerous in the current practice climate with limited or no reimbursement for young professionals without licensure. On the other side were those who argued that educational standards were being eroded and that the proposed model was equating increased practicum training with the required post doctoral year of supervision. The general tone of Council was to support the proposal and accept the perceived risks that came with making the policy change. State laws would have to be changed to conform to the policy. Trainers in doctoral programs would have to take cognizance of the fact that individuals would need practicum and internship training that was adequate for licensure. Accompanying the passage of the new policy, Council also voted to set up a process to review the APA Model Licensing Law which has not been updated for many years. The full text of the new policy follows:

The American Psychological Association affirms the doctorate as the minimum educational requirement for entry into professional practice as a psychologist.

The American Psychological Association recommends that for admission to licensure applicants demonstrate that they have completed a sequential, organized, supervised professional experience equivalent to two years of full-time training that can be completed prior to or subsequent to the granting of the doctoral degree. For applicants prepared for practice in the health services domain of psychology, one of those two years of supervised professional experience shall be a pre-doctoral internship.

The American Psychological Association affirms that postdoctoral education and training remains an important part of the continuing professional development and credentialing process for professional psychologists. Postdoctoral education and training is a foundation for practice improvement, advanced competence, and inter-jurisdictional mobility.

In adopting the preceding policy statement, the Council supports further development of competency goals and assessment methods in the professional education and training of psychologists.

An unfortunate aspect of the Council discussion of the policy was the perception that the item was pushed forward with limited debate on the floor.

Two proposed Divisions were voted upon. Council approved the motion to accept a new Division on Trauma Psychology. Council rejected the proposal for a new Division, the Society of Human-Animal Studies. The proposal was before Council a second time. Ultimately, Council determined that the proposed division was not sufficiently different from other Divisions which addressed animal, developmental, and physiological issues. There was an open and candid discussion of a variety of issues related to the development of the proposed Division.

Financially, the Association continues to be on sound financial footing. We were $5 million in the black. A good part of this was

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the result of the successful launching of a new handbook helpful in applying the APA Style manual. APA employees all received a year end bonus as a result of the successful year. They have had to endure hardships in years past when the financial news was not so good. There will be a cost of living adjustment in dues. This follows from an earlier decision by Council to raise dues in small increments rather than big jumps. However, with the financial outlook continuing to be good, there is a very strong sentiment to revisit the dues structure.

Dr Norm Anderson, our very able CEO, received kudos in his evaluation. He has done a good job of managing a complex operation and doing so in a cost effective way. He presented a thorough review of the decision to meet in New Orleans this summer. The convention contract was renegotiated. There were visits to New Orleans to ensure that it was safe and healthy to meet there. While some expressed their own concerns, the Association is ready to revisit an old friend and hopefully add to the recovery process.

A Task Force was funded to review the educational model for Psychopharmacology Training.

Council voted to fund representatives from four national associations of minority psychologists to participate in the meetings of Council as observers and resource persons. This was passed unanimously and reflects the Association’s wish and responsibility to respond to the professional needs of all psychologists. This was funded for a three year period to be reviewed.

Help Us With Our Membership! Please encourage your colleagues to join Division 49. An application form is in every issue. Our new Membership Chair, Joshua Gross, PhD will be pleased to help. He can be reached at JGross@admin.fsu.edu.

Inquiries to the Consultation Corner are invited and most welcome. We are asking for any dilemmas pertinent to group interventions. Your name will only be used if you wish. E-mail Jennifer Harp, PhD, at JSH262@aol.com.

Letters to the Editor are strongly desired. If there are any newsletter pieces you wish to comment on or debate or add to, please do so. This is your newsletter, let’s make it lively for our group. And, contributing a 750-word to 1500-word piece would be most welcome. If you wish to run an idea by your editor I am reachable at abelfant@aol.com.
President-Elect

Don Forsyth, PhD

I am honored to add my name to the slate of candidates running for office for Division 49. I have enjoyed my past Division activities, which include membership on the board (1996–2001) as the editor of Group Dynamics. I served as the Chair of Publications (2001–2003) and am currently a member of the search committee for the journal editor (2006). I look forward to continuing to be a contributing member of the division.

My background is in social psychology. I did my undergraduate work at Florida State University. Barry Schlenker mentored me through my PhD at University of Florida, and I also studied with Marv Shaw (communication networks) and Bob Ziller (open and closed groups). While at Virginia Commonwealth University (1978–2005) I worked with Jack Corazzini in analyses of leadership in therapeutic groups and edited (with C. R. Snyder) the Handbook of Social and Clinical Psychology. I am currently at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, and hold the Colonel Leo K. and Gaylee Thorsness Chair in Ethical Leadership. My research examines such issues as how groups sustain their members and why groups perform to their full potential. My vita can be seen at http://oncampus.richmond.edu/academics/leadership/faculty/forsythcv06.pdf.

As president of Division 49 I would work to promote the shared goals of all members, including the enhancement of resources at their disposal in their studies of and work with groups; to disseminate information about groups and their uses to a wider office; and to build networks of alliances among group researchers and practitioners. Specific projects that I hope to pursue include developing a national network of recognized experts on specific types of groups and group process and the development of a database for the storage of outcome data pertaining to the effectiveness of group psychotherapy treatments.

Thomas W. Lowry, PhD, ABPP

Dr. Lowry received his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, has held teaching and administrative positions at the University of Texas and Texas State University, and is currently in private practice doing group, individual and marriage therapy.

His leadership positions have included: Founding Member and President, Capital Area Psychological Association; President, Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy; President, Southwestern Group Psychotherapy Association; President, Texas Psychological Association; APA Representative to Council from Texas; Founder and President, Austin Group Psychotherapy Society; and Founder and President, American Academy of Group Psychology. He is a Fellow with AGPA, a Diplomate with ABPP in Group Psychology, and was named Psychologist of the Year by The Capital Area Psychological Association. He currently serves as a member of the Board of the American Academy of Group Psychology (of ABPP).

Dr. Lowry has published and conducted workshops in the areas of Group Process and Psychotherapy, Sex Therapy, Organizational Development, and Boy Scout Leadership.

Dr. Lowry’s professional career in academia and clinical work has made him sensitive to the essential importance of science and practice in the field of group psychology. For many years he led the effort to integrate academicians into the life of the Texas Psychological Association, he has worked to maintain a strong licensing law for Texas psychology, and he has been an advocate for active involvement of graduate students in state and national professional organizations.

He is married to another psychologist, Dr. Alaire Lowry, and they have two grown sons.

Member-at-Large (2 to be Elected)

Michael A. Andronico, PhD, ABPP

From the beginning of my long career, I have been an advocate of group therapy and the value of group psychology. I have conducted workshops on this subject for over forty years. Organizationally, I have been president of several professional groups, including two Divisions of APA. I have written many articles, chapters, and have edited a book on the subject of groups. I am a Fellow of four Divisions of APA.

My service to the Division has been long and extensive. I was one of the Division’s co-founders, the first Treasurer, the fourth President and have served on the board. I have also served on the Group Psychology Diplomate Board. I wrote the chapter on the History of Division 49, which details the achievements the Division had accomplished to that point. Much more has been done since then and still more remains. All of the above was accomplished by the efforts of good people with good leadership.

Having been a group leader for over forty-five years, I still get a feeling of awe and wonder at how a group of individuals with

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**Member-at-Large**

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many diverse and intense problems can come together and work in harmony (and conflict) to achieve impressive results. I think that Division 49 is a good organizational analogy to the above. We have done well as a Division with a membership of diverse interests. We need to help those diverse interests to amplify their voices within the Division so that we can all work together and help individual as well as collective goals to be met.

What are some of these goals?: Continuing to recruit more psychologists for the Group Psychology Diplomate (ABEPP); retaining and expanding our membership base; reaching more graduate students; keeping and making the Newsletter and Journal “user friendly” to all of our membership; and, bringing more public and professional awareness to the value of groups as a potent force in our society.

As our society becomes more diverse, bringing diverse populations and interests together to make a better working society becomes more crucial. We, as Group Psychologists, can become a contributor in this effort. We need to help ourselves, our colleagues and others to, “Think Group!”

**Irene Deitch, PhD**

I appreciate the opportunity to serve our Division!

Dr. Irene Deitch, Fellow of Division 49, has a history of involvement with Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy, as activist in its formation and as Charter Member. She has proven record of successful service, experience, leadership.

Irene Deitch, Professor Emerita Psychology, City University New York, College of Staten Island, Licensed Psychologist. She introduced, “Group Dynamics” to her College Curriculum 35 years ago. Irene works with groups therapeutically, educationally, supervisory. Dr. Deitch holds Certification as Thanatologist.

Dr. Deitch has demonstrated leadership as Chairperson APA’s, Public Information Committee; Chairperson APA’s Membership Committee; Committee on International Relations in Psychology; President of Division of Media Psychology and Running Psychologists. She served on APA task forces and written extensively. Irene produces and hosts, “MAKING CONNECTIONS” cable TV program with psychological, social, health issues.

Goals for the Division: Fulfilling our mission for group research, training, practice and working collaboratively with directorates and divisions; increasing membership/attracting new members/retaining members through publicity, programs, participation; outreach diversity in membership; involvement in organizational processes; increasing hands-on training, workshop opportunities; increasing utilization of media; raise the divisional profile, promote mission, build inter-divisional coalitions, undertaking joint projects; establish liaisons APA Boards, Committees; increase number of Divisional Council representatives; the reality of our times requires a greater need for group training and application of our groups skills with the following groups: the military, their families; the underserved; the homeless; older adults; the dying and the bereaved.& the New Americans. We must address the needs of various groups to enhance their quality of life and end of life issues.

Dr. Irene Deitch is highly motivated, enthusiastic, energetic, and most importantly, works and plays well with others. She welcomes your support!!!

**Deborah A. Gerrity, PhD**

Deborah Gerrity is an Assistant Professor at the University at Buffalo and has been a member of the American Psychological Association and Division 49, Group Psychology and Psychotherapy, for two years. She has had a strong commitment to the field of group psychology since she was a graduate student in the areas of service, practice, and scholarship. She is a co-author of The Handbook of Group Counseling and Psychotherapy (with Janice DeLucia-Waack, Cynthia Kalodner, and Maria Riva). Much of her scholarship has been related to group research and practice; 6 articles have been published in refereed journals, 2 book chapters, and numerous presentations at the American Psychological Association, American Counseling Association, and Association for Specialists in Group Work national conferences.

Her current research interests focus on the process and outcomes of groups for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Much of her teaching and mentoring has also been focused on groups. She has taught the introductory group counseling course at the University at Buffalo for three years and in Singapore once. Two articles written with graduate students have received the Association for Specialists in Group Work Best Research Article Award (2002 and 2005).

Dr. Gerrity has previous experience as a board member, president-elect, president, and past president of a large chapter in the Washington, DC area of a national support group. During her tenure there, she planned a one-day conference for 250 participants, oversaw a bi-monthly newsletter, and organized monthly meetings for the organization.

She is honored to be nominated for a Member-at-Large position to the Division 49 Board and hopes that this will be the beginning of a long-term commitment to the organization.
Joshua M. Gross, PhD, ABPP

Thank you for electing me to the Division 49 Board of Directors in 2005. I was elected as Member-at-Large to fill the vacant position left when Lynn Rapin was elected as President Elect. I would like your vote once again this year so that I may be elected to my own three year term as member at large. I now serve as Chair of the Membership Committee which is important because we are loosing members and have a low level of retention among those joining us for the first time. An active and involved Membership Committee is essential to draw more group psychologists into our ranks. In addition to membership I am involved in liaison between ABPP and the Division with the goal of organizing group psychologists across the country. At this point in my career I am involved with governance and professional service in several professional organizations and believe that I can continue to make useful contributions to Division 49. I currently serve as Board Member for the American Board of Group Psychology where I serve as the examination coordinator for the ABPP Diploma in Group Psychology. I serve as Co-Chair of the SIG Task Force at AGPA as well as an occasional reviewer for the International Journal of Group Psychotherapy. I am treasurer of the Capital Chapter of the Florida Psychological Association. I am co-founder of the groupsinscc@lists.fsu.edu listserv dedicated to the work of developing and maintaining group interventions in the college counseling center setting. I actively present and write about various topics in group psychology. My work as psychologist and group coordinator at The University Counseling Center, Florida State University allows me the opportunity to maintain an active practice of group psychology and train pre-doctoral interns in our APA-approved internship. Please consider giving me your vote for Member at Large, APA Division 49.

Jennifer Harp, PhD

It is with enthusiasm and a record of commitment to the Division that I run for re-election as Member-at-Large. I have been privileged to serve Division 49 for the past 3 years and am sincerely committed to continuing in this leadership role for the Division.

I currently serve as Program Chair for the 2006 Convention Program. Prior to this, I worked on the Program Committee as Co-chair for the 2004 and 2005 Convention Programs. In these roles, I have contributed to the Convention and Program planning and have been impressed by the professional talent and expertise that is represented in the Division’s membership. I also look forward to our ever-growing potential.

In addition, I have served as Chair of the Bylaws Revision Committee, an ad hoc committee that has worked to update and streamline the existing bylaws over the past year. The process is ongoing, and I have been honored to work with senior members of the Division who have shared their wisdom, vision, and history throughout the process.

My deep interest in clinical matters and group psychotherapy has been satisfied by another role--my role as a contributor and coordinator of the Consultation Corner column in the Division’s newsletter, The Group Psychologist.

Through it all, my commitment to diversity and sensitivity to our membership remains steadfast. I am an advocate for new members and those seeking a professional home in Division 49. My vision for the Division is one that respects our past, gathers energy for our future, and works together to bring strength, leadership, and vitality to the fields of group psychology and group psychotherapy.

I hope to continue to represent you on the Board.

I ask for your vote in the 2006 election.

Jeanmarie Keim, PhD

Jeanmarie Keim is a licensed psychologist in Arizona where she earned her doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Arizona State University. Her Bachelor’s of Science degree is in Business Administration with a major in Management. She is a faculty member at the South campus of The University of Arizona. As director of five academic programs, Keim has the organizational and administrative skills needed to serve as Member-at-Large.

Keim’s breadth of experience includes: teaching for thirteen years in higher education, including APA counseling psychology, CACREP counselor education, family studies, and human services programs; teaching numerous group courses such as group psychotherapy, group procedures and group theories in management; being nominated for an excellence in teaching award; serving for seven years as a Faculty Senator and chairing a Finance Committee of a faculty senate; consulting on numerous grants focused on underserved populations; serving as program evaluator for a Title V grants Hispanic-Serving Institutions, gaining valuable knowledge of interventions and support services involved with retention of students; assisting in the writing of a sports ethics curriculum for youth; consulting on grants aimed at adolescent suicide prevention and job-readiness training for underserved populations; serving on editorial boards and as a reviewer for five journals; serving on the Division 49 program committee and membership committee; reviewing program proposals for other APA divisions since 1996; chairing the Community Counseling Interest Network in ACES between 1997-2000; facilitating many insight-oriented groups, with special interest in group therapy around trauma, abuse, and diversity issues; providing weekly pro bono services to those who do not have insurance or funds for psychotherapy; and serving as a member of a HIV/AIDS consortium.

Keim is committed to Division 49 and would be honored to serve as Member-at-Large.
**Member-at-Large**

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**Dr. Richard Moreland**

I am a charter member of Division 49. Since the division began, I have served as a member and as Chair of the Research Committee, as a member of the Executive Board, and as President of the division. I was also responsible for creating and running the division’s email original listserv and webpage.

I joined the division because it was described as a new place in APA for anyone and everyone who was interested in small groups. That broad category would include social, organizational, counseling, developmental, school, and military psychologists, as well as clinical psychologists. Clinical psychologists have always controlled Division 49, of course, and that is not a problem, so long as other group psychologists are kept in mind, both as potential members and as actual members whose needs deserve to be met. In recent years, however, it seems to me that Division 49 has slowly drifted away from these goals. The division has thus become more narrow. I propose to broaden it again.

As for my academic background, I am a college professor who does both social and organizational research on groups, mostly in the laboratory. Although I study many things, much of my research focuses on temporal changes in groups. These changes include group formation and dissolution, group development, and group socialization. A more detailed summary of my work can be found at www.pitt.edu/~cslewis/. As for my professional activities, I am a Fellow of Divisions 8, 9, and 49 in APA, and of APS. I have served as Associate Editor for the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, and Management Science. I have also served as a Consulting Editor for many journals, including Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, Organizational Science, and Small Groups Research.

**Membership Report**

*Joshua M. Gross, PhD, ABPP*

This is my first report as membership chair since elected to the vacancy left when Lynn Rapin was elected as President-Elect. I am only now learning the ropes and want to make a brief statement about our membership pattern in the period from 1992 when we started through 2005 which is our last complete year of record. In 1992 we had 877 members which represented about 1% of the total division memberships in APA. Our highest year of membership was 1994 when we had 2,021 members for about 1.6% of the APA total. We have had a steady decrease in membership each year since 1994 with a concomitant decreasing percentage of the APA division membership total. In 2005 we had a meager 598 members for a total of 0.79% of the total division memberships in APA.

What does this mean to us today? Clearly a new division, as we had in 1992, brings in the psychologists who want to participate in the new area of specialization. It would appear that this draw endured for about three years and we have been on steady decline since then. Today we need to consider this data both in terms of APA overall as well as our specialty domain of group psychology and group psychotherapy. Over the next months it is my goal to begin to explore some of these numbers and take steps to increase our ranks. Membership is more than welcome letters and pushing reluctant members to pay their past dues. Our Division has much to offer both in terms of our clinical and scientific work, but also as a front line intervention for many of the problems that Americans face in terms of healthcare, life stressors, international conflict, and economic hardship.

I am interested in your opinions about our Division and what you think we can do better. Please email me at jgross@admin.fsu.edu if you would like to share your ideas and opinions with me. Thanks in advance for your time and support of Division 49.

**Call for Division 49 Fellow Nominations**

The Fellows Committee invites you to apply for initial Fellow status if you:

1. have held a doctoral degree in psychology for at least five years,
2. have been a member of the Division for at least one year,
3. have made an outstanding and documented contribution to the science, teaching and/or research of group psychology and/or the practice of group psychotherapy,
4. are endorsed by three APA Fellows, including two Fellows within the Division if possible.

Current Fellows, who are already Fellows in other divisions, and who seek Fellow status in Division 49 should submit a statement outlining their involvement in group psychology and/or group psychotherapy.

Please send for your application forms early since the process is a lengthy one. The deadline for final submission of materials for 2006–2007 is December 1, 2006.

Requests for application forms should be sent to:

Gloria B. Gottsegen, PhD  
Chair, Fellows Committee, Division 49  
22701 Meridiana Drive  
Boca Raton, FL 33433  
561/393-1266 Fax: 561/393-2823  
E-mail: GGottsegen@aol.com
The Schopenhauer Cure by Irvin Yalom, MD

In the 2005 Convention Issue of this newsletter, I invited commentaries on Irwin Yalom’s recently published novel. The novel centers around a group psychotherapist and his group. The commentaries by Drs. Bernard Frankel and Sally Barlow are printed below, and Dr. Yalom’s response follows. The commentaries of two graduate students from Fordham University, Lauren Luttinger and Daren Bedrostan, conclude this newsletter discourse and analysis on The Schopenhauer Cure. When these commentaries are considered together, the reader is engaged with many of the complex and critical issues that exist regarding group therapy leadership and the functioning of a therapy group. I invite readers to offer their own comments with letters to the editor. —Editor, TGP

Reflections on The Schopenhauer Cure

Bernard Frankel, PhD, ABPP

Dr. Irvin Yalom, author of The Schopenhauer Cure, is a renowned and master group therapist, as well as a teacher and prolific writer of both professional and popular books. He is the originator of several basic texts on interpersonal group psychotherapy in which he incorporates interpersonal technique with existential concepts. The Schopenhauer Cure is Dr. Yalom’s third novel.

I have called my remarks “reflections” as I cannot in good faith review a novel as if it were a treatise on group therapy, nor can I pretend to be an art critic. What is within my purview is my experience as a reader who also has the capacity to understand people from the lens of a group therapist and my own history as someone who has practiced and written about topics concerning group psychotherapy for many years.

In The Schopenhauer Cure, Julius, a group therapist who is dying of melanoma, contacts Philip who was in group psychotherapy for three years duration with Julius twenty-three years ago. The therapy was a complete and utter failure in both Julius and Philip’s eyes. Philip’s presenting problem was rampant sexual addiction.

In reading the book what was at first, intriguing to me, was my continual confusion in mixing up the names of Julius and Philip, countless times. Julius was depicted as quite humane, while Philip was all mind control. Through the lens of projective identification, each seemed to represent a denied part of the other.

Julius and Philip make a Faustian pact of trading supervisory credits for a needed license to practice “philosophical counseling,” for six months of group therapy. This bargain is struck for the mutual desire of both parties. Since such a bargain and all of its ramifications, would never stand in an ongoing group, I prefer to see this bargain as a metaphor representing the ongoing conflict between thinking and feeling.

Philip asserts that he has cured his sexual addiction by “the Schopenhauer cure”. What he means by this is the study of the writings of the philosopher Schopenhauer that counsel life without any object ties as a prescription for living.

This prescription is a prostitute of existential thought. It is without being, freedom to choose, authenticity, and responsibility. However, Julius facing death, may see Philip as having successfully escaped physical death by creating for himself an emotional death. Their attraction is a common fear of nothingness.

The other pseudo-existential adventure in the book involves Pam, who like Philip, has an obsession. Like Philip, she also leaves therapy, but temporarily. She seeks the “Buddha” in India and by doing so, rids herself of her obsession. In this way she is like Philip, she uses the “Buddha” as a replication of Schopenhauer. However, unlike Philip, Pam does not solve her problems with rage and contempt. It seems as if the teachings and discipline of Schopenhauer and Buddhism are presented as cures for addictions, particularly the factor of renunciation of worldly pleasures including attachments. If one lives death in life, then there is no death. Everyone in this book seems to be grappling with death and the fear of loss of the self.

I stopped writing for two days as I was struggling with how to make my responses indicate a wholeness. The chapters in this novel begin with an aphorism that is not part of the text. In addition, chapters containing only references or information pertinent to Schopenhauer follow chapters pertaining to the living characters in the book.

Finally I solved my dilemma. Since the major theme of the novel is living and dying it’s many manifestations that are both concrete and metaphorical, why not perceive the entire book with its’ seeming disparate parts as a “Group as a Whole.” Thus, each chapter could be seen as a representation of either intra psychic and or interpersonal communication in the life of the group if the “group” is considered the “book as a whole.” For example, Julius’s knowledge of his impending death and his calling Philip Slade could be seen as a way for Julius to contact his grandiosity as the unchallenged and beloved group leader. If he can, at last cure Philip, then he is triumphant.

Death is the equalizer for us all, and knows no distinction for the mightiest and the smallest. The group which Julius “loves” can be seen as the arena for finding ultimate meaning.

The aphorism’s which begin each chapter and are full of universal wisdom that can be equated with the transitional space that occurs between group sessions. The pearls of wisdom and solace are the potential integration that each group member may take out of each session and can represent the “group” which is a place to find meanings for living and dying. Schopenhauer, whom Philip introduces to Julius as his cure for sexual addiction, appears in over ten chapters devoted solely to his own words.

Julius loves his group even with Philip in it. The group loves him,
ultimately including Philip. There are a staggering number of secrets that are revealed in short order, including alcoholism, sexual affairs including one in the group, and various shames including some of Julius's peccadillos after his wife died. While I ascribe these dramas partly to the author’s need to enliven the book, I deeply appreciated the use of the interpersonal method in the here and now to engage the group in significant work. I particularly liked the distinction between “vertical and horizontal disclosure.” The therapist was consistent and coherent in his methodology and he gave a good demonstration of offering the group his feelings. Julius was quite present.

I also perceived Schopenhauer and his writings as a representation of the anti-group in each member. Morris Nitsun has written a book about the anti-group as part of any group. Each chapter in The Schopenhauer Cure about the group, pertains to some piece of progress made. When each of these chapters is followed by quotes from Schopenhauer and the grim reality of isolation and rejection of attachments, these passages seem to be a refutation of the humanistic values of the interpersonal, interactional, here and now, model of group psychotherapy portrayed in the book.

Schopenhauer can be seen as a resistance to the model by his emphasis on intellectualization and despair. The positive effects of the Schopenhauer passages are their influence on controlling the pace of anxiety in the narrative and their caution about not being swept away by false hope. In this way the Schopenhauer quotes serve as an antidote to false idols.

The drama in each group session is necessary in order to hold the interest of the reader, although it may not be terribly realistic. Any portrayal of the nuts and bolts of group therapy, where so little change occurs from one session to the next, and the process grinds along repetitively, does not make for interesting reading. I really enjoyed the group members, their characterizations, their struggles to change; and their commitment to the group and to Julius, their leader. The way their stories were translated into present interactional patterns and became emotional knowledge that the whole group could use, was insightful and skillfully done.

The heart of the story, in the last analysis, despite all the side roads of various dramatic actions and incidents, is a dying therapist and his announced last year of working with his beloved group. He dies before the last group session, and his spirit is regenerated and immortalized by a new group that is created led by Philip and Tony, former patients. As a co-therapy pair Philip and Tony symbolize the splitting of thinking and feeling just as Julius and Philip once did. Perhaps the creation on this new group is a fitting postscript to the splitting of thinking and feeling just as Julius and Philip once did.

There is also the impending death of the group and its’ shared history and meanings. These feelings and a process of goodbye were also avoided in the narrative and by the creation of the new ‘substitute’ group.

The therapist gives birth to the group, but then there is a group that exists independent of the therapist. The group develops its own identity. This is why therapists who work with groups, experience each group as having an individual stamp. The Schopenhauer cure and the interpersonal cure are one entity for full humanness, they stand for the integration of separateness and relationship. Our existential responsibility is to reach for this wholeness and yet accept the human limitations of our reach since when all is said and done, we are only mortal.

**Commentary on Irvin Yalom’s The Schopenhauer Cure**

*Sally H. Barlow, PhD, ABPP*

Sex and death. Sound like a Woody Allen movie? Actually, these are the important topics dealt with in the novel, The Schopenhauer Cure by Irvin Yalom, which weaves together the life and philosophy of Schopenhauer, the last year of the fictional psychiatrist, Julius Hertzfeld who is dying of a malignant melanoma, and the members of his favorite therapy group.

Julius is contemplating how he might spend what his doctors suggest will likely be the last year of his life. His two grown children give what support they can, and he has only the memory of his wife, whose abrupt death 10 years earlier in a car crash haunts him still. One good year left. What should he do? Take a cruise, write a book? After much thought, he realizes what gives him his deepest meaning is his work, so he decides to continue with his individual and group patients as long as he is able.

Before coming to this decision, however, he had restless examined old files and stumbled upon Phillip, the brilliant, sexually compelled young man whose treatment 25 years earlier failed. Julius calls him to “follow-up.” And therein begin the intriguing plot twists and turns of the book. Phillip joins Dr. Hertzfeld’s therapy group in a compelling pari passu. Dr. Hertzfeld may be able to rectify his earlier treatment mistakes in exchange for a future promise of providing supervision for Phillip, who has become a philosophical counselor and needs supervision hours for state licensure. Phillip, a counselor? Phillip, the patient who possessed no apparent human feelings? (And now you get to know, “why the title of the book?”) Phillip finally
reveals to a very curious Julius that it was the reading of the famous German pessimist philosopher, Schopenhauer that cured him. The reader is both treated to and taunted by Schopenhauer so that we may judge for ourselves if Phillip’s cure makes sense. Had one of my former “negative outcome” patients revealed to me, say, that a reading of Kierkegaard had cured her rather than my well-intentioned hard work, I believe I wouldn’t have been quite so generous. But Julius’ predicament (the inevitability of death coming earlier than expected) allows him a newfound generosity of spirit and of self. Along with conducting research on and teaching about groups, I have kept track of group literature that finds its way into other genres. Paul Solotaroff’s book, Group: Six People in Search of a Life (1999) comes to mind. So impressed was he with the positive impact that his therapy group had on him, he asked to sit in the corner of the next group led by a master clinician so he could write about it. Interestingly, the group members agreed! Based on real people, real events, this book has a poignancy to it more like real life (e.g., disappointments, leader mistakes), yet it is actually less satisfying than The Schopenhauer Cure. These two translations of group treatment from the academic to the popular are both fascinating. But this latest addition to Yalom’s oeuvre is superior because, quite simply, the therapist is more heroic—not the heroism of Parsifal, Wagner’s hero who was pure and untouchable, rather more like Amfortas, the mortally wounded king, whose humanness reaches out and invites the audience to understand suffering and redemption. Julius’ equally impending death makes him more human, more able to make mistakes, modeling the very behavior that allows Phillip to begin a very different journey indeed than the one he first took while reading Schopenhauer. (But you must read the book to know the ending!) I first read Yalom in graduate school when designing my first group study and turned to Encounter Groups: First Facts (1973), the first book to begin to tease apart the complex interactions between specific and non-specific effects of group leaders in T- groups. In my first group therapy class, I read his now legendary group text and its many editions, the latest of which I have used while teaching clinical psychology graduate students and psychiatric residents. Because of this, I was delighted to once again encounter astute “Yalomisms” sprinkled throughout this latest book.

“As for my goal in the therapy group, I can be real clear about that: it is to help each member understand as much as possible about how he or she relates to each person in the group, including the therapist. I maintain a here-and-now focus” (p. 66). “Phillip, try a thought experiment. Philosophers do this every day. . . . Humor me for a moment and try to imagine that you were going to have feelings about others’ responses today. What might they be?” (p. 192). [My personal favorite—] “Group therapy isn’t life. It’s a rehearsal for life!” “The danger of an out-of-group relationship is that it jeopardizes the therapy work. How does it do that? Because people in a tight relationship will often value that relationship more than the therapy work” (p. 300). “Therapy begins when blame ends and responsibility emerges,” (p. 312).

Further, the nuances of therapist-group member interaction are amply and aptly illustrated in passages throughout the book (See for instance p. 243). These are just a sampling of the wisdom of a master clinician speaking through his main character, Dr. Hertzfeld. Like his protagonist, Yalom just seems to get better with age.
public and one that would offer an accurate picture of the group therapy process—replete with its power, beauty and ingenuity. The mass media presentation of group therapy has been atrociously inaccurate and invariably mocking or derisive. (Think for example of the long running Bob Newhart show.) Resistance to entering a group from intrapersonal sources is high enough without these pernicious TV and film portrayals.

Sally Barlow mentions Paul Solotaroff’s popular book, Group: Six people in search of a life. I had the shortcomings of that book in mind when I began my novel. The author was an experienced writer who had the good idea and rare opportunity of journaling (with the leader’s and members’ permission) a year in a therapy group. However he had the misfortune of reporting on a group that represent poor group therapy practice. Interaction was limited by a format in which members were assigned to interview other members in each meeting. Cohesion was poor, members missed meetings for weeks, sometimes months at a time, many of them dealing unsatisfactorily with substance abuse issues. The leader was charismatic, exhibitionistic and unfortunately abused substances himself to the extent that he had to be hospitalized before the end of the group. This book increased my motivation to write a book truer to my field and more reflective of the work we do.

All experienced leaders who lead long term groups know that once the group has matured it has enormous healing powers. Sometimes several members undergo considerable growth simultaneously. The mature group has a healing aura affecting all members and leaders as well. It was this remarkable phenomenon, far too little known to the public, that I set about to portray in The Schopenhauer Cure.

I combined group therapy with my other chief interest—existential issues germane to therapy in a number of ways. I created a leader, Julius, who was afflicted with a malignant tumor and faced a greatly foreshortened future. His physicians had informed him that at best he had one good year remaining. Hence he was faced with a major decision: how to live that final year? Ultimately he chose to live it as authentically as possible by continuing to do the therapy which had always provided him with great satisfaction and a deep sense of meaning in life. He became less cautious in the group and took great risks in the group which for the most part catalyzed the therapy work. Moreover he brought death into the therapy discourse which resulted in deeper, more effective therapy for some members.

Another theme of the novel is Arthur Schopenhauer—a much neglected philosopher who had much to say about existential issues that have value to our field. Hence another goal of my novel was to offer clinicians an introduction to his life and work and also to examine the question of the extent to which characterological issues influence the content of philosophical investigations. Schopenhauer’s personal characteristics are of great interest: he was a chronically depressed, pessimistic, thoroughly misanthropic and disagreeable individual. To what degree did his character issues influence his dark, pessimistic philosophical system?

I attempted to explore these questions about Schopenhauer in two ways. First I wrote brief alternating psycho-biographical chapters on Schopenhauer which, when possible, intersected with events transpiring in the adjacent group therapy chapters. Secondly I created a character, Philip, who was a Schopenhauer clone. He was not only a Schopenhauerian philosopher but also had all of Schopenhauer’s misanthropic personality factors. He was a man highly unlikely to have entered (and remained in) a therapy group. In fact a therapy group experience would have been Schopenhauer’s personal vision of hell. But my group therapist exercised unusual leverage to coerce Philip to join the group. At that point the group leader was faced with an enormous challenge. But a thrilling one. If group therapy could help Arthur Schopenhauer, it could help anyone!

Another question I’ve asked myself is why I have waited till now to write fiction about group therapy. I’ve been committed to group therapy for many decades and yet my teaching fiction has almost entirely centered on individual therapy. The answer is simply that it is too hard a task. An experienced novelist who is a superior craftsman (think, for example, of Iris Murdoch, Philip Roth, Ian McEwan) could etch several indelible characters in the first few pages of a novel without breaking a sweat but for me the challenge of quickly bringing to life so many differentiated characters was daunting. An analogous problem arises in the supervision seminars on group therapy: new students need most of the supervisory hour to present the whole cast of characters. Consequently when I taught classes I usually had one therapist (or set of co-therapists) present their group for several sessions and then move on to another set of co-therapists and another group.

Since I’ve read nothing in these reviews and others published elsewhere to indicate that the characters were blurred and undifferentiated from one another, I assume I’ve succeeded in this task. I’ve had considerable e-mail about this book: many readers (most of whom are therapists I assume) complain about how the Schopenhauer psycho-biographical chapters interfere with the flow of the therapy group drama whereas many others (often lay readers) complain about the long group chapters interfering with the stimulating Schopenhauer essays. Half empty? Or half full?

**The Schopenhauer Cure**

The novel The Schopenhauer Cure by Irvin D. Yalom is a skillful integration of psychology and philosophy presented through the story of Julius Hertzfeld, master therapist, and his last year alive. The reader first meets Dr. Hertzfeld at his annual physical examination where he is faced with the reality of his mortality. After an initial reaction of despair, Julius examines the successes and failures of his professional life. During this reflective evaluation, he comes across the records of a former patient from his individual therapy practice, Philip Slate. Philip, a severe sex addict, was, perhaps, Julius’ greatest failure as a therapist. This reminiscence prompts Julius to make an uncharacteristic follow-up call to Philip who informs him that therapy was, indeed, worthless. Instead of admitting to defeat, Julius, faced with his mortality, commits himself to be fully engaged in his work for the next year. A special level of energy is reserved for his weekly therapy group—which Philip has been invited to join.
Yalom allows the reader to be the ninth member of the group, connecting so closely to the members that tears will be shed at the passing of the group’s leader. Yalom’s “feel-good” ending celebrates the joy available in life through successful interpersonal relationships. He simultaneously ties all loose ends, leaving the reader certain that as a result of successful participation in a therapy group, everything and everyone will be alright.

Julius is a “cutting-edge” therapist who not only takes on challenging clients but utilizes a variety of therapeutic techniques while treating them. Faced with his own mortality, he takes intuitive risks with his clients in an effort to live out the rest of his life in a meaningful way.

Additionally, The Schopenhauer Cure provides the reader with insight into the therapist’s mind, the group therapy process, and how different personality characteristics play into each therapeutic interaction. Through Julius’ train of analytical thinking and self-talk, the reader can be satisfied that therapists do, in fact, analyze everything. This stereotypic public view of psychology is peppered with the inclusion of diagnostic terms such as “flagrant borderline”, “impaired schizophrenic” and “bipolar patient”. Banter between Philip (now a counselor-in-training) and Julius takes place as it would between two individuals who are skilled in the same secret language, as they both extract meaning from content and delivery. The reader can not help but be curious about the biographical similarities between Julius and the real-life master therapist, Yalom.

Even in the novel, Yalom gives the reader a glimpse into the thoughts and actions of Julius. One can not help but draw parallels between the character and the man. Once the reader is sufficiently curious about the inspiration for Julius, contemplation regarding the inspiration for the Philip character begins. Does such a man exist? Would he really enter the field of counseling? And more importantly, is he really capable of change? At the start of the novel, Philip is the type of man who makes the consumer shudder at the thought of his callous arrogance in a therapy setting. A group counselor must have experience with a wide range of human emotions in order to accurately reflect them back on their clients. For the better part of the novel, Philip is a callous sexual predator with a very limited range of emotions. Every individual who has ever been in a helping profession has heard a phrase likened to “you can’t get through to everyone”. Regardless of enthusiasm, anyone with practical experience in a related field knows this to be true. Yet, at the close of the novel, Philip, the self-proclaimed loner who has taken every meal on his own these past 12 years, becomes another success story of group therapy. The reader is witness to his development from a detached member who simply provides philosophical comments whenever asked to respond to an integrated member who allows his protective boundaries of isolation to crumble into a cathartic expression of emotion and tears during the last group session of Julius’ life. The reader is satisfied assuming that the novel’s surviving seven characters are benefiting from their increased insight and satisfaction in their interpersonal relationships—and—could it have worked out any better—miracle of miracles—Julius lived to see it.

Existential factors were evident throughout this novel on many levels. Awareness of death was an obvious component of the novel as Julius came to grips with his impending mortality and his group members prepared themselves for the day that their leader would no longer be among them. Related to awareness of death was life purpose. Part of facing his mortality included his evaluation of how to greet death in a dignified way. Throughout this reflection, Julius recounts his therapy group of cancer patients and how so many of them only learned to live after learning that they were going to die. Julius acknowledges that it is human nature to seek the future and not live in the moment. He reflects that it is his death sentence which led him to re-evaluate his life. Upon evaluation, he recognized that it was his work that brought meaning to his life. Is this a universal view of counselors and psychologists? Or an attempt by Yalom to express his gratitude for the meaning his clients brought to his life?

Although this novel includes realistic characters and plausible events, there are a few aspects which reek of unreality. I have already mentioned that that reader enters the mature, fully functioning therapy group. In fact, the members were functioning so well that they solved all their problems! Everyone benefited from the group—even Philip—and coincidentally, just in the nick of time! Philip’s cathartic break-through happened during what was to be Julius’ last group session before passing away. How convenient!

Additionally, the novel provided a few soap-opera twists. Pam, an original group member, was a victim of Philip’s predatory past. When she returns from her trip to India, she is enraged to see her old professor (and first lover) in her group. And towards the end of the novel as Philip recounts the details of his sexual experience with Pam, he somehow is able to remember specific details of their brief “relationship” and is able to recognize that, perhaps, part of the reason he withdrew from her so quickly is the fact that he actually cared about her in a way. This is a bit suspicious—out of his thousands of sexual encounters, the one potentially significant one wound up in his therapy group. One question the reader is left wondering at the close of The Schopenhauer Cure is in regard to the mechanism of change for Philip. This question has plagued research psychologists studying the therapeutic process and mechanisms applicable in different therapy settings. Was it due to Philip’s choice to engage in the group therapy process, the interpersonal contacts he developed, or the convenient inclusion of Pam in his therapy group which lead to his success?

However, regardless of the few unrealistic twists this novel took, it was a well-written story about the human experience. The characters engaged in significant relationships with others, sought meaning in their lives, maximized their potential, and faced their mortality. Yalom is clearly an expert in group therapy. Additionally, if one is able to overlook the unrealistic components of his novel, one might call him a magnificent storyteller as well.

The Schopenhauer Cure

Critiqued by Darren Bedrosian

The Schopenhauer Cure [TSC] (Yalom, 2005) depicts the dynamics of group interaction and illustrates how it affects the development of all of its members. Yalom did an excellent job illustrating how the group psychological setting is an effective vehicle of change for
people who want to work on their own personal development. He combined his psychological knowledge with his skillful writing to produce a work with the capacity to have left me with many questions and comments regarding it.

My first observation regarded Yalom’s writing style and how much of a departure it was from his premiere work, “The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy.” Having personally found this voluminous tome to be lacking in appeal, I did note his effective use of colorful vignettes. His writing skill in these vignettes was a hint as to what I could expect from TSC. In fact, it appears to me he used his skill in writing vignettes to make TSC as effective as it was in depicting a group counseling setting. As opposed to the heavy and verbose language he uses in “The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy”, I feel his use of more common language in TSC was one of the reasons he was able to so effectively reach out to the reader and pull them in to the novel.

Many questions arose as I read through TSC. Having first been exposed to Yalom through his existential work, I noted the overall existential tone of The Schopenhauer Cure and I wondered if there were any possible connection to the Yalom’s personal feelings on life and death. As Yalom is now in his seventy’s, I could not help but wonder if Yalom was confronting the same existential fears that had become a reality for Julius Hertzfield. Just as journaling is regarded as an excellent way to work through one’s own feelings, perhaps the writing of TSC was Yalom’s way of confronting his own?

At times I felt I was seeing some of Yalom in the character of Julius Hertzfield. I remember reading Yalom’s acceptance speech for the 2000 Oscar Pfister prize (for important contributions to religion and psychiatry.) He had made an anecdote about whether the prize committee had made a mistake in awarding him, an atheist, the prize. In Julius I saw a disdain towards religion, and I felt this was a reflection of Yalom’s own beliefs. To explain this conclusion of mine, I quote Yalom’s acceptance speech (http://www.yalom.com/pfister.html):

“I’ve never been burdened with early planted faith and I’ve taken the position that faith, like so many other early irrational beliefs and fears, is a burden.”

Yalom regards faith and religious belief as burden, while billions of people throughout the world would elaborate on the comfort and release their religious faith would bring them. In my own writing, I often see my own personal beliefs and feelings bleeding through, even if ever-so-slightly. This would lead me to pose the question (or challenge) to Dr. Yalom, as to whether he could write a novel in which the leading character was a devoutly pious individual.

In addition to this, I wondered how much of Dr. Yalom’s own personal style of counseling (group or individual) was used to inform the character of Julius Hertzfield? Overall, I felt Julius was an exceptionally effective group counselor who made good use of the groups’ strong sense of cohesion, which was a definite force for the group. The strong cohesion was evident in the groups willing to disclose and offer feedback on one another. The group members played different roles and they worked to keep each other on track. The cohesiveness was vital to the group members’ willingness to be honest. One of Julius’ most effective skills was taking the energy that existed at any moment and feeding it back through the group as a whole. Even when the topic was focused on two individuals, he pulled in other group members by eliciting their feedback. It makes me wonder if Yalom was the model for this or if the “model” of Julius was a composite of counseling skills known to be effective in a group setting?

In my opinion, however, Julius wasn’t always acting in the groups’ best interests. In fact, I would wonder if Yalom agreed with Dr. Hertzfield’s disclosure to Pam regarding his sexual behavior after his wife’s death. I had this debate with a fellow graduate student who disagreed with me. I felt this was an improper disclosure on the part of Julius, and that he disclosed it to alleviate himself, as opposed to helping his client to process her feelings. In fact, at that point Pam was experiencing an elevated level of anxiety and had openly questioned her ability to remain in the group, now that Philip had arrived. I felt Julius’ disclosing that he behaved similarly to Pam’s aggressor (Philip) was a dangerous risk that could have resulted in Pam leaving the group.

While on the topic of ethical behavior, I couldn’t help but wonder about the ethical implications of Julius going through his client files and ultimately contacting Philip. After Julius’ own self-described failure to assist Philip, he then decided to call him up to “see how he was doing”. This seems to me, a young graduate student, to be a rather questionable act. First off, it seems Julius has accumulated quite a little collection of files on the people he has seen. This may not be a bad thing; except for the times he decides to go back to use them to satisfy a personal need of his. Naturally, this makes me wonder if this is something Yalom has done himself? Not to sound completely cold-hearted, I do understand that being in the throes of an existential crisis may not bring out the best in people. After all, psychologists are people (last I checked).

And of course, how could I possibly forget to address Philip Slate. Who was the character of Philip Slate based on? This is the question that burned inside of me throughout my reading of The Schopenhauer Cure. Philip Slate was the perfect example of an individual in need of interpersonal skills. Yalom was able to consistently present Philip’s character as emotionally dead, both through his words and behavior. I felt this was a difficult task for any author who works in a field where he is expected to be in touch with his emotions. How Yalom was able to negotiate this to present a realistic character is yet another question?

TSC also showed me that becoming a Psychologist is not the end-all-be-all of our existence. Even an accomplished one such as Julius Hertzfield was left wondering about his life when death was at his door. For someone at my station in life, it seems as if it is all about obtaining the doctorate and becoming a psychologist; as if having the title and the document in hand will somehow make life “perfect”. I am often operating from that very premise. My suspicion is that Yalom used TSC to reach out to his reader; to perhaps convey such an existential message. Ultimately, when our lives are at their end, what will there be to comfort us? I feel this was Julius’ internal struggle. I am left wondering how much of that struggle is shared with Yalom.
Toward an Understanding of Multicultural and Attachment Influences in Group Counseling

Eric C. Chen
Fordham University

In 1995, upon graduating from Arizona State University with a PhD in Counseling Psychology, I began teaching group counseling courses at Fordham University. The primary goal of the group counseling course is to prepare masters and doctoral students in counseling and clinical psychology programs to function competently as group practitioners. To this end, students are expected to familiarize themselves with a basic knowledge of group dynamics, process, and development. Moreover, they participate in an experiential training group rotating the roles of co-leader, process observer, and member. As a result of my teaching experience at Fordham, multicultural group counseling has emerged as one of my main professional interests.

My interest in the interplay between diversity and group counseling has continued to grow. Several observations have contributed to this growth. In a multicultural or diverse group setting, for instance, racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, and misconceptions between group members can actually facilitate active processing and efficacious interpersonal learning. Members in the diverse counseling group bring their own social and cultural values, beliefs, and expectations into each interpersonal encounter. Accordingly, the diverse group affords the members a unique opportunity to identify and reflect upon interpersonal perceptions, relationships, and conflicts that arise from sociocultural differences. In a related vein, the diverse group provides a setting in which the members are able to enhance their capacity to stay engaged in an intercultural dialogue that promotes interpersonal growth through dual concerns for self and others, while exploring the intricacies of common and diverse human experiences.

Building Connection through Diversity (Chen, Thombs, & Costa, 2003)

In light of my experience and observations studying multicultural competencies in group counseling, I was excited to be invited to contribute a book chapter on the topic. Two doctoral students at Fordham and I sought this opportunity to synthesize several bodies of literature examining the dual aspects of diversity as a relationship and diversity as a process in group counseling. In this chapter, we argue that diversity is best understood in a way that reflects the permeable boundaries of culture in the complexity of group life. As such, we conceptualize diversity in the context of group counseling as communicated through our interactions with others. We also presented a dialogical or interactional perspective to increase the group counselor’s ability to conceptualize the psychosocial influences of diversity on communication in the group counseling process and to assist the group counselor to develop an expanded repertoire of interventions.

In addition to my interest in multicultural group interactions, another line of research emerged. As a result of my observation of experiential group sessions, I began to inquire about how personality characteristics and in-session interactional behavior of group members contribute to the development of group cohesion, and influence the recognition and resolution of conflicts in the group counseling process. I became particularly interested in how these factors contribute to the development of group cohesion and influence the recognition and resolution of conflicts in the group counseling process. Within the counseling psychology literature, process and outcome studies represent an important line of scientific inquiry. I have focused on the interpersonal theory (Kiesler, 1983) as an aid to empirically understanding the complex processes and various outcomes of group counseling. Specifically, a colleague and I conducted two research projects (Chen & Mallinckrodt, 2002; Mallinckrodt & Chen, 2004).

Attachment and Interpersonal Problems (Chen & Mallinckrodt, 2002)

Research in individual counseling has examined the link between adult attachment styles and self-reported patterns of problems in specific regions of the interpersonal circumplex (for more information on this theory of interpersonal relations, see Kiesler, 1983). Relative to group counseling, Kivlighan and Angelone (1992) found that group members who complained of being overly dominant were more trusting perceptions of other group members, and to the actual experience of others as supportive and relatively trustworthy.

Stemming from the work done on attachment and interpersonal theory in individual and group counseling, our study (Chen & Mallinckrodt, 2002) sought to further understand the role of attachment style and personality in a group counseling context. In this study, we applied Bowlby’s (1973) attachment theory to the study of the counseling group as a social microcosm. We investigated group members’ perceptions of each other on dimensions of the interpersonal circumplex as a function of their adult attachment styles. Data were collected at four points in time from 76 participants over 18 months. The participants were graduate students who fulfilled a class requirement for interpersonal group participation. They completed measures of interpersonal problems and adult attachment at pretest. At the midpoint and at termination they completed measures of interpersonal problems and group attraction and provided interpersonal circumplex ratings of each fellow group member.
As predicted, selected attachment insecurities were significantly correlated with interpersonal problems and group attraction. Also in line with our predictions, attachment anxiety and avoidance, were associated with discrepancies in self-other perceptions. Whereas members with attachment avoidance tended to overestimate hostile and hostile–submissive problems, members with attachment anxiety were likely to overestimate interpersonal problems in the “friendly” half of the circumplex.

**Attachment and Transference (Mallinckrodt & Chen, 2004)**

Our work with attachment experience and its manifestation in the group counseling context gave rise to a burgeoning interest in the study of attachment experiences in relation to transference (Mallinckrodt & Chen, 2004). Although transference is most commonly thought of as an aspect of a client’s relationship with a counselor in individual counseling, Yalom (2005) argues that transference is a central aspect of clients’ experience of one another in group counseling as well. Specifically, transference is closely related to Sullivan’s (1953) concept of parataxic distortion when one’s perceptions of others are distorted by one’s own needs and past experience, Yalom maintains that other group members and the therapists are potential targets for a given client’s parataxic distortion.

The unique context of group counseling, with its simultaneous multiple interactions at numerous levels, presents unique research opportunities and challenges for researchers seeking quantitative methods that adequately capture these complex interactions. A promising technique for studying complex interpersonal perceptions in small groups is the social relations model (SRM) (Kenny, 1988). This technique involves collecting “round-robin” data, ratings of each group member by every other member on one or more dimensions. SRM assesses three different levels of influence on each member’s perception of another member: the individual level (including the perceiver and target effects), the dyadic level (the relationship effect), and the group level. As such, SRM are uniquely well suited to discover transference influences in group counseling contexts.

The Mallinckrodt and Chen (2004) study assessed the usefulness of a method of assessing transference based on the mutual perceptions of interpersonal growth group members, and explored connections between these perceptions and members’ adult attachment style and memories of emotional bonds with parents. This study was based on several premises: First, in group counseling the aggregate perspectives of other group members can provide a relatively objective standard that researchers can use to evaluate transference in a given member. This standard combines the advantages of a rating team with the advantages of tapping perspectives of actual participants in ongoing counseling. Our second premise was that attachment theory provides a useful conceptual basis for gaining a better understanding about how transference is manifested in counseling groups. Third, Kiesler’s (1996) circumplex model of impact messages furnishes one of the best theoretical frameworks for assessing interpersonal perceptions that might be distorted by transference.

Data were collected from the same group of participants in the Chen and Mallinckrodt (2002) study. Seventy-six graduate students in 12 training groups reported at pretest memories of emotional bonds with parents, and adult attachment avoidance and anxiety. At the midpoint and at termination they provided interpersonal circumplex impact ratings of each fellow group member.

SRM analyses were conducted with the round-robin data to partition variance in the data into perceiver and target variance. Thus, aggregate ratings of fellow group members provided a relatively unbiased standard against which potentially biased perceptions of a given member could be assessed. These biases, in the form of SRM perceiver variance, were interpreted as indicators of transference, and were significantly associated with negative memories of parents and attachment avoidance. Target variance showed consensus in group members’ ratings of dominance or affiliation in a given member, and was significantly associated with negative memories of parents and attachment anxiety. The findings from this study suggest that members of a counseling group can provide a relatively unbiased standard that researchers and group counselors can use to evaluate transference or parataxic distortion.

**Current Directions**

Building from these two studies, my current research projects in group counseling involve the use of a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research design to examine group impasse and helpfulness from the perspective of counseling group members.

**References**


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The ABPP in Group Psychology: A Personal Narrative

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I have been hearing from readers that there is interest in knowing some reasons why psychologists choose to sit for the ABPP examination and what it is that they might get from it. Some reasons candidates have given for wanting to engage in this process include: license mobility, placement on the salary scale, advancement in the work place, increased professional standing, additional bona fides, and personal growth. However, often the major motivation is a personal one.

Given this, I hope to use this forum to tell some of the stories of “why people sat for the ABPP.” Over the next few editions of The Group Psychologist I hope to tell some of these stories and in this edition I will start with my own.

I met Evelyn Crumpton, PhD, ABPP (Clinical) on my first day in graduate school when she was my instructor for the one year course in psychometric assessment. I guess that Dr. Crumpton must have thought I had promise because everything that I said or wrote was thoroughly vetted and the majority of my feedback was corrective. By the end of the year she began to talk about the idea of doing my second year internship at the VA hospital, where she was assistant chief and internship training director. Fortune was that I went to Brentwood hospital and spent a year under the supervision of David Benjamin Wine, PhD, ABPP (Counseling) who was perhaps the single most important influence on my professional life after Dr. Crumpton.

I returned to Brentwood Hospital for my APA-approved pre-doctoral internship and had more great training and supervision but the influence of Drs. Crumpton and Wine are still with me today. It was very clear to me from that early mentorship that someday I would need to sit for the ABPP diploma.

As my career took its course I ended up in private practice and with the onslaught of managed care I was faced with falling dollars per hour and the need for increased units of service to make my practice profitable. Time was tight and I had little or no spare energy for professional service or embellishments. The majority of my professional energy was focused on my practice and I was unable to fathom the idea of taking on something more than my participation in AGPA. I had for some time been considering the Clinical Diploma but never seemed to have the motivation as my practice was increasingly focused on group and family psychology.

It was not until I read an article in the AGPA Group Circle in 1998 that described the initiation of the new American Board and American Academy of Group Psychology as part of the new ABPP Specialty Diploma in Group Psychology that my motivation to take action came to life. I began to hear Drs. Crumpton and Wine talking at me from deep within and it was clear that I needed to learn more about this. The article suggested that interested psychologists could write to Joe Kobos, PhD, ABPP (Clinical and Group) who served as the examination coordinator for more information. That correspondence started an eight year process that resulted in my successfully completing the examination in group psychology in 1999, my increasing involvement with both the American Academy and Board of Group Psychology, and my now serving as examination coordinator. For me, the ABPP is about mentorship, personal growth, professional legacy, and service.

Upon hearing that I was interested Joe, lead me down a path of Socratic learning. The initial step was the determination of “Eligibility for Board Certification” which is both the first and administrative component to the application process. Upon acceptance of my candidacy I was screened for “Specialty Specific Eligibility” by the credentials coordinator of the American Board of Group Psychology. With that completed I moved on to completing the “Professional Statement” which is a document describing the candidate’s professional practice in response to ten questions put forth by the Board. When this was accepted I took steps to provide a “Work Sample” which in my case was a videotape of a private practice, long term, psychotherapy group. Given my nature, I collected tapes of that group over a period of three months, and when I selected a tape and completed my write up, I was invited to sit for the oral examination.

My examination occurred at AGPA in 1999 and lasted close to four hours. My committee was inquisitive and interested in my work. They were well prepared and conversant in my professional statement and video work sample materials. In the course of the exam I had to think on my feet and remain focused. We had the opportunity to discuss my “Professional Statement” and “Work Sample” in great depth. The committee also brought in material that was new to me to facilitate a thorough understanding of how I collected information and worked with a wide variety of professional circumstances.

In the end I felt good about myself and my committee, and to this day I believe it was one of the best professional experiences I have had. Clearly, I experienced some real professional growth in the course of the experience. I also feel as if I made a place for myself that was closer to those before me who had taught me the importance of excellence in professional practice. Drs. Crumpton, Wine, and Kobos made a real difference in my life and I hope that this has allowed me to do a better job with those whom I treat, train, and work.

The ABPP publishes a magazine entitled The Specialist. It turned out that the edition in which my Diploma in Group Psychology was announced also contained the obituary for Dr. David Benjamin Wine. Clearly, for me, this was entirely a personal matter from start to finish. Please feel free to correspond with me at jgross@admin.fsu.edu if I can be any help to you in your consideration of the ABPP Specialty Diploma in Group Psychology.
As group psychotherapists, we expect to be challenged by the ingenuity and resistances of our groups. We journey with our groups through good times and bad. However, even our readiness to enter into difficult times with our group members can be tested when extreme circumstances present themselves. And, such events are inevitable in a well-functioning group that explores beneath the surface of life’s realities. Containment of such explorations can be daunting for the group leader, especially as primitive responses are unleashed.

In this issue’s consultation question, one such life event challenges the group leader to effectively contain primitive responses that arise from a seemingly positive group experience. That same life event is later coupled with group difficulty and despair. Dr. Dale Godby and Dr. Kathleen Ritter respond with wisdom and experience to our shaken group leader.

EDITORIAL QUESTIONPOSED:
Dear Consultation Corner,

I am currently in need of consultation regarding a difficult situation that I am encountering with the group I lead in my private practice. The group is made up of 8 members, four women and four men, and has been a relatively stable group for the past two years.

Several months ago, a woman in the group tentatively announced her long-awaited pregnancy to the group. The issue of pregnancy was particularly painful for her, as she had suffered several miscarriages in recent years. Group members initially celebrated the news but, over the next several weeks, accessed deeper, more painful feelings associated with the woman’s pregnancy and its meaning for the group. At first, the woman immersed herself in the group’s holding and care, but was later taken aback by the more primitive disclosures of hurt, anger, envy and covetousness that some members expressed in their reactions to her pregnancy. Conflict ensued as members formed various alliances around the issue and I encouraged deeper reflection on the meaning of the unfolding drama for various individuals and for the group.

After weeks of this meaningful and charged group work, the woman missed a session and, upon her return the following week, was withdrawn and stone-faced, refusing to disclose openly to the group. When members of the group began to engage her, she revealed that she had lost the pregnancy and then, as she became more verbal, proclaimed her belief that the group’s “ugly feelings” towards her, coupled with the increasingly conflictual group environment, had possibly led to the demise of her pregnancy. The woman began to rage and cry and members watched in horror as she escalated, rebuffing any attempts to re-engage her, and left the room. She has not returned to group, nor has she returned my phone calls. Members liken the woman’s abrupt departure to a sudden death, or suicide, and the group remains in a state of grief with members expressing feelings of confusion, guilt, hopelessness and anger. I share some of these feelings. Also, the theme of “a lost baby” is emerging in group fantasies and dreams. Given the depths of and murkiness of all that has been stirred, I would appreciate your thoughts on how to best proceed.

Signed,
Searching

RESPONSE #1:
Dear Searching,

First of all, welcome to the club. You have just experienced a unilateral premature termination. Anyone practicing group therapy for any length of time has them. They hurt! It isn’t clear to me how long you have been running groups, but if you are relatively new at it, you’ll have many more of this type of termination before you retire. Don’t let it stop you from doing group. Maybe some day you will contribute to an understanding that will help us to decrease these types of terminations, but I don’t think we will eliminate them any sooner than the oncologist eliminates cancer. They come with the territory.

Could your group have contained this patient? My first concern is a biological one. Was she in some form of postpartum psychosis in which she became paranoid? If this was the case, a medicine consultation could get her to a place where she could usefully return to group.

Psychologically, what could have been done? You could think about whether or not she was scapegoated. Did she carry anything for the group in the sense of projective identification? If so would an active use of subgrouping along the lines that Yvonne Agazarian suggests have helped to contain the scapegoating process. Was there anyone in her subgroup? Could you as her therapist have been more active in creating a subgroup for her in which other members may have felt hurt or angry by ways the group had acted toward them? This could have given her strength to work with the hurt, envy, and covetousness that were directed toward her. Was she scapegoated in her family and was she recreating this in the group?

Exploring postpartum issues and an active use of subgrouping may have prevented her departure, but it is important to remember some dropouts cannot be prevented and they in fact are an occasion for some very stimulating work for the other members. You can now explore subgrouping around bully, victim, bystander, and healer. We have all played these roles at sometime in our life. Where do the group members see themselves in relationship to these roles with the newly departed member? What balance of these roles have they...
achieved outside of group? Are they happy with the role they usually play, with how it played out in relationship to the newly departed member? Do they want to change it in any way?

Helplessness will also be useful to explore in each of the members and in the therapist. Often in their families they have felt helpless. A father left them; a sister refuses to communicate. How and when to work for change and when to let go is useful for each member to explore.

It is important to keep track of the envy, anger, and conflict expressed by the group prior to the woman’s departure. Did it contribute to her losing the baby? Did it indeed force her to leave the group? My concern would be that these painful feelings would become repressed in the group and have the potential for becoming more destructive than when they are expressed more openly. I would wonder with them as to whether they felt safe to express negative feelings now that they are so closely associated with an important member leaving. It is likely that for some of the group members this is a repetition of what happened in their families of origin.

Finally, I would review the past few terminations with the group. Hopefully, the group has a history of some good terminations that can be compared to the woman who left prematurely and group members can discuss what they would consider a good termination for each of them. I wouldn’t be in a hurry to add a new member, but when you feel the time is right to add someone I would be aware of all the feelings that are likely to go with her taking on the place of someone who left the group in a tragic way. The integration of the next new member can be an important healing experience, especially for members who have a tragic loss in their backgrounds. And don’t be shy about asking for more consultation or even forming a group in which you present your group failures to one another. It is what we can’t do for our patients that is the hardest part, and having others to share this load can often make the difference between continuing on with your groups and giving up.

Dale Godby, PhD, ABPP
Dallas Group Analytic Practice, Dallas, TX

RESPONSE #2:
Dear Searching,

Without having watched your group develop to this point, I can only speculate on its past and present dynamics. I am struck, however, by the intensity of reactions that the pregnancy stimulated. You didn’t mention how many of the remaining seven members felt “hurt, anger, envy and covetousness”, but obviously not all members felt this way since you made reference to “various alliances” forming around the issue. I have rarely seen a pregnancy generate reactions as extreme as you described, so I am assuming that additional process were operating in one or more members. Possibly some in your group are survivors of trauma or childhood wounding and/or might possess some Axis II characterological features. You did not provide individual descriptions of the nature of coalitions between and among the members so I am only guessing about this.

The loss of the pregnancy and the departure of the member occurred against a backdrop of considerable emotionality. It seems as if the exodus reactivated (old) feelings in some members, possibly of betrayal, abandonment, or death; or even of abortion, miscarriage, divorce, or other losses. The passing of the baby stimulated deep material in some, while others may be reacting as much or more to the sudden leaving of one of their own.

Before you attempt to guide your members through this morass of reactivity, I suggest that you avail yourself of some professional consultation since you mentioned sharing some feelings of “confusion, guilt, hopelessness, and anger.” If I were facilitating your group, I would need to explore what these reactions are activating in me. As therapists, we all experience countertransference with clients, and understanding my own emotions helps me not to contaminate members’ material with my own unresolved issues. You need to remain objective and keep the broadest perspective possible as you help members navigate through their own emotions and unresolved losses, hopes, and dreams. They have before them yet another family that has disappointed them and the grieving for many appears profound.

As Irvin Yalom (2005) reminds us, you have considerable “grist of the mill” before you. The events of the recent past carry deep psychic representations for many members and you have the responsibility to assist members in understanding these and freeing themselves from the power of their pasts. Coalitions and alliances will have to be realigned in order for the cohesiveness of the group to be restored. Without this interconnectedness, the climate in your group will not be facilitative of the conditions essential for the emotional exploration that needs to transpire. Members must learn to trust each other again, to feel acceptance from other members, and to experience the support necessary to ask for and receive feedback. In many ways, this will be like “starting over” with your group, but far more difficult since much “scar tissue” has developed, both previously and as a result of this new trauma to the group.

You will have to work diligently to move your group through this transition. Therapeutic norms need to be restored and reshaped and this will require continual and tight structuring on your part. Careful norming is essential for the (re)creation of a cohesive and supportive climate, and also is necessary to avoid the emotional contagion (and projection and blame) that I suspect are occurring. This group may “get away from you” if you are not vigilant and it seems important to selectively choose when you are going to deepen the interaction and when to cut off, bridge, reframe, or move away from the emotionality.

Given the sequence and nature of interventions, as well as caution noted above, I would need to use every psychodynamically and enactment-oriented approach at my disposal to reach the depth of the psychic representations. Many unresolved family of origin dynamics have been activated and it will be necessary to bring these “to life” so that they do not continue to operate beneath the surface and cause additional fragmentation, both in the internal worlds of members, but also in the group itself. Because your entity is so chaotic at this point, I would suggest that your sequence of interventions first begin with the group itself, possibly with process commentaries of your own immediate experience, and later to interventions directed at

(Continued on p. 24)
Consultation Corner: Response #2

(existing from page 23)

existing coalitions or alliances, and then toward individual members themselves.

Best wishes with a difficult task.

Kathleen Ritter, PhD
California State University
Bakersfield, CA

Reference

Member News

Wendi Cross, PhD

Andy Horne, PhD
Dr. Horne, Past President of Division 49, has a new book and video/CD published by APA. The book, Bullying Prevention: Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence is co-authored with Pamela Opines. The video/CD is entitled Bullying Prevention.

Joseph C. Kobos, PhD, ABPP
Dr. Kobos, Division 49’s Council Representative, received the Texas Psychological Association’s 2005 Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award in November 2005.

Listserv

Are you participating in Division 49’s e-mail listserv? If not, then you’ve missed out on many interesting and potentially valuable messages about job opportunities (academic and non-academic), calls for papers in special journal issues, conference announcements, and so on. The listserv has also allowed members to consult with one another on issues of mutual concern, such as evaluations of various therapy techniques. Several hundred Division members are already on the listserv—if you want to join them, contact Steve Sobelman at steve@cantoncove.com.

Call For Member News and New Member Introductions

All current Division 49 Members are encouraged to submit any professional news for our newsletter. This may include: professional organizational activities, elections to office, appointments, presentations, or publications. New members of Division 49 are asked to write an introductory description of themselves and their professional affiliation or position. Send your news or introduction along with a photo to abelfant@aol.com.

From the TGP Editor:

Our Journal Editor, Dennis Kivlighan, is adding a Group Case Studies Section to our Journal, Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice. These case studies can be clinical or non-clinical (organizational, sports, naturally occurring groups). I would especially encourage group psychotherapists to contribute to this section as our Journal would be enhanced by more clinical articles. E-mail Dennis at dennisk@umd.edu, or feel free to contact me at abelfant@aol.com for any ideas or suggestions you might have.
Self-Nomination Form
Standing Committees, 2005

If you are interested in serving on a standing committee of Division 49, Group Psychology, please complete this form.

Name __________________________________________________________________________________________________

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Division Status
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Area of Preference
If you have a preference concerning service areas, please indicate your top three by writing the number 1, 2, or 3, respectively, by the names of first, second, and third most preferred assignments. Note, however, that you need not provide those ranks if you are uncertain about your preference.

_____ Action Oriented Approaches _____ Alcohol/Substance Abuse _____ Awards
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Special Interests and/or Qualifications
If you have any special interests or qualifications (e.g., previous service on Div. 49 or APA Boards/Committees that the President should consider in making decisions about committee assignments), please note them here.
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Please mail, email, or fax the completed form (or a copy of it) to:

Steven A. Sobelman, PhD
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Loyola College of Maryland
4501 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210
Phone: (410) 617-2461
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☐Member: A member of APA and have an interest in the science and practice of group psychology and/or group psychotherapy.

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