

# Association of Family Therapists of Northern California

October

2003

## AFTNC PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Robert-Jay Green



It's a great pleasure for me to report all of the good news about AFTNC in this column and to see AFTNC becoming more vibrant with each passing month. We're about to have our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend Conference

(with Monica McGoldrick as the speaker) in a new retreat setting. We've added 52 new members since last January. We are arranging CE units for our 2-hour speaker events, which will be a major new benefit of AFTNC membership. Our new Postgraduate Training Program is gearing up for a September 2004 starting date.

Maybe I've spent too long in academia, but it's rare in my experience to see so many of my dreams for an organization completely realized. I give a lot of credit for this progress to the new

and continuing members of the AFTNC council, all of whom are putting a tremendous amount of heart and soul into this organization that we love. They're a great group of people personally and professionally. I hope you take the time in the next few months to learn more about what each of them is doing for AFTNC, and I also invite you to consider joining one of AFTNC's committees yourself. The sense of shared purpose and forward momentum is inspiring.

Here are some details of our progress and plans for the coming year:

### The Annual Weekend Conference (November 15 & 16, 2003)

As all of you probably know by now, our annual weekend conference this year is with **Monica McGoldrick, MSW, PhD (hon.), Director of the Multicultural Family Institute in New Brunswick, New Jersey.** This year's conference will be held at Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma — a retreat center that has become very popular with various psychotherapy, wellness, social action, and nonprofit groups in the Bay

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Area. Conference attendees will be able to earn 12 CE units if they wish. We also will have a special 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and the traditional charades on Saturday night at the conference, so be there or be square.

Monica will present her unique blend of multicultural and Bowenian ideas, show us videos of her work, and engage in the usual lively exchange of ideas that make our annual conferences so stimulating. Regardless of your own theoretical orientation to therapy, I believe you will find that Monica's multicultural ideas are applicable in all therapeutic contexts. Not only is she an expert on family traditions in a wide range of cultural groups (as represented in her best selling book, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*), but she has thought as deeply as anyone on the planet about the effects of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of prejudice on family life (as represented in her other best selling books, *Women in Families*, and *Revisioning Family Therapy: Race, Gender, & Culture in Clinical Practice*).

Equally important, Monica is a down-to-earth, direct, accessible kind of person. Although she will be in the presenter role, I think you will find that she relates very much as a peer—as eager to hear others' ideas as to express her own. Among her many accomplishments, she is known as being a great mentor to aspiring authors and a great supporter of others' innovative approaches to therapy. I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to get her feedback on your ideas.

### **Membership Renewal Time**

It's membership renewal time again. This year, you will be receiving your membership renewal information with your conference registration information. Both completed forms can be returned to the same address. If you send your membership dues in with your conference registration materials, you will be eligible for a substantial "members discount" off the conference fee. If you renew your membership and want to attend the conference, please be

sure to send *separate checks*—one check for your dues payment, and a second check for your conference fees.

### **New Member Recruitment**

I'm happy to report that membership in AFTNC has increased by 52 people since last January. I think this is a good example of two organizational principles: "If you build it, they will come"; and "If you have Ryan Kolakoski as membership chair, things go as they're supposed to." We are still in a membership recruitment phase, so if you know of interested persons (mental health professionals or graduate students), please refer them to our website's "Membership" page for a downloadable membership application ([www.aftnc.com](http://www.aftnc.com)). They can also contact Ryan directly (see his contact information in the masthead of this newsletter).

### **Postgraduate Training Program**

Our plans to start a Postgraduate Training Program are proceeding very well. The planning committee includes co-chairs Jane Ariel and Ellen Pulleyblank Coffey, and committee members Anne Bernstein, Bart Rubin, Jim Sparks, Sam Tabachnik, Veronique Thompson, Yoel Elizur, and Keith Armstrong. The Postgraduate Program will be similar in format to those offered at some nationally known family institutes and psychoanalytic institutes. It will start as a one-year program and will include ongoing case consultation in a group format as well as didactic trainings by faculty drawn from the AFTNC membership. Assuming initial success, the program may evolve into a two-year training program, with special emphases in the second year.

The starting faculty will consist of those who volunteered initially to be on the planning committee. However, faculty will rotate over the years. Thus, other AFTNC members who have prior teaching or supervisory experience will be eligible to become postgraduate training faculty in subsequent years. In addition,

trainees in the Postgraduate Training Program will be able to attend all AFTNC events during their training year(s). We hope this will enable them to choose a mentor from among the larger AFTNC membership and to get general career-building advice and referrals from other AFTNC members.

The target date for the first cohort of postgraduate trainees to begin is September, 2004. At the McGoldrick conference, members of the Postgraduate Training Program Committee will present more detailed information and solicit your feedback about this major new program.

### **Nonprofit Status**

After careful consideration based on Ellen Pulleyblank Coffey's research and feedback, the AFTNC Council decided not to pursue nonprofit status at this time. Various liability issues were discussed, but none seemed to justify our becoming a nonprofit corporation right now. We will revisit this decision in the future if various AFTNC programs (particularly the postgraduate program) grow substantially.

### **Continuing Education Speaker Series (formerly known as the Monthly Meetings)**

With the help of Alliant International University's Continuing Education Division, we are in the process of arranging CE units for MFTs, MSWs, and Psychologists at our 2-hour speaker events (usually held in members' homes). This would enable AFTNC members to get many of their CE requirements filled at a minimal cost (only \$10 paid to Alliant for two CE units at each speaker event). As in the past, members who did not want these CE units would still be able to attend the 2-hour speaker events for free.

In addition, we are trying to do more long-range planning of events so that we can coordinate announcements of meetings with the newsletter publication dates, arrange the CE units ahead of time, and give members more advance notice of

events. Please see announcements for the October and December CE Speaker Events later in this Newsletter. Also keep in mind that all information about the CE Speaker Series and copies of all Newsletters will always be posted on the Website ([www.aftnc.com](http://www.aftnc.com)). Here is a list of planned activities this coming year:

*October 19 — Gay/Lesbian Parents and their Children.* Presenters: Anne Bernstein, Jane Ariel, and Dan McPherson. Location: Jane Ariel's house, Oakland. See full description in this newsletter issue.

*December 7 — Post McGoldrick Meeting.* Presenters: Bart Rubin and Robert-Jay Green. Location: Gloria Fraser's house, San Rafael. See full description in this newsletter issue.

*February — Annual Student Meeting.* Organizers: Kuuipo Ordway & Taghi Amjadi. Location: TBA. No CE Units for this event.

*March — ADHD and Family Therapy.* Organizers: Bart Rubin & Casi Kushel. Presenters: TBA. Location: Casi's Kushel's house, Alamo.

*May Open Meeting — Narrative/Social Justice.* Organizer: Suzanne Pregerson. Presenters: TBA. Location: TBA (should accommodate 60 people).

### **Student Membership Representatives**

We have two outstanding new student representatives on the Council--Taghi Amjadi (from California Institute for Integral Studies, CIIS) and Kuuipo Ordway (from CSPP/Alliant International University). They will be in charge of planning the February speaker event, which is primarily for students and geared to student career interests and schedules. Kuuipo and Taghi will take the lead in recruiting new student members and faculty liaisons at local graduate schools and in building a more active student organization.

**AFTNC Listserve.** The new listserv seems to be working well, and the volume of messages has been very manageable so far. Please remember to put the word “Announcement” at the start of the subject line for any messages you send about your clinical services or workshops. Other rules for use of the website may evolve, and feel free to post on the listserv your own ideas about its use.

**Website:** With the help of our webmaster Quinn Stone, the AFTNC website (address: [www.aftnc.com](http://www.aftnc.com)) has become a valuable source of information for our members and the public. I would like to encourage all members to pay a visit to the website. In addition to our *Home* page explaining AFTNC’s purpose, we have a *Videotape Library* page (with borrowing instructions and a fully annotated list of our videotapes); a *Conference* page with details of the annual weekend conference; an *Events* page describing the speaker series; a *Newsletter* page on which all issues of the newsletter are posted in pdf format starting with the January 2003 edition; and a *Membership* page with a downloadable membership application in pdf format. You can now refer any colleagues who are interested in joining AFTNC to the membership page for an application, or you can download the membership application yourself and send it to them as an email attachment. Prospective members who do not have internet access can contact our membership chair Ryan Kolakoski by telephone.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of AFTNC for allowing me to serve as leader of the association. The cause is noble and so are the people, so it’s a real privilege!

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## EDITOR’S COLUMN

By Roger Lake

This is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of the AFTNC newsletter. Robert Jay Green’s President’s column highlights the amazing resurgence of what we believe to be the oldest Family Therapy Association in the



world. We have grown considerably this year, with lots of old members returning and lots of new professional and student members. You can see the names that have been added to our roster on the last page of this newsletter. Having been here myself for half the life of the association, I want to offer my appreciation to Bart Rubin and Robert Jay Green, for their considerable personal effort in making this happen. I know that they haven’t been alone in doing it, but I also believe it wouldn’t be happening without them.

In the April 2003 Newsletter, I wrote about seeing Family Therapy from a transgenerational perspective. I meant to convey both the developing nature of our field and the importance of the value framework of Family Therapy in shaping the practitioner. In June, I solicited the membership by email, expressing an interest in articles about AFTNC itself. What roles it has played in your life, what values you would like the Association to express, as well as what programs have been or would be interesting to you. I received several responses that you can read in this issue of the Newsletter. I include them for several reasons. They reveal the importance of the personal experience that I think we seek in AFTNC, they are interesting as history, and I think that this Newsletter should be a place for our own members to expound. With that thought in mind, let me thank those of you who have contributed and encourage everyone in this Association to take a chance at putting your own perspectives in writing where

they can be seen by professional colleagues. We are not about being a professional journal, and we aren't looking for science so much as perspectives that inform practice. I would like to see reviews of films, books, conferences, and training situations. Practical stuff, fanciful stuff, important for others to know about stuff. Take a risk and send me your work. I'm not a professional editor, but I'm happy to help you develop your ideas.

While I'm pleased to present all the contributions in this newsletter, I particularly want to thank Alan Leveton, himself a founder of family therapy. Alan's piece reveals something of our beginnings while challenging us too look at our intersection with larger forces in health care and American life. Family therapy's unique contribution to psychotherapy is about the importance of hearing all voices. Forty years later, it is obvious that we can, in fact, become divided against ourselves and lose track of the importance of our connections to overriding values and the institutions (like AFTNC) that represent them. The multi-disciplinary shape of AFTNC and the multi-cultural commitment to diversity that we have shown over the years seem more important than ever.

These thoughts lead me to a personal acknowledgement. I joined AFTNC in the Fall of 1984. I was part of the Family Therapy training team at what was then PMC in San Francisco. I remember with great fondness bicycling back and forth between my office in the CD unit at Garden Sullivan Hospital and the Psychiatry Department on Sacramento St. Rodney Shapiro was the director of that team, and provided a rich experience both practically and conceptually. I stayed for two years, learning through the one-way mirror, and through weekly supervision of my videotaped work at Garden Sullivan. My supervisor was Sarah Stearns, the assistant director of that team. As many of you know, Sarah is a real treasure. She served as AFTNC president in the 80's and was responsible for some of our truly great

conferences with important national and international presenters. Her work on diversity and multi-cultural issues is known nationally, and her reputation as a therapist is impeccable. For me, she has always represented the heart of psychotherapeutic work with individuals and systems. Sarah has been both colleague and dear friend to many of us. I wish her a very fond farewell as she moves to the East to pursue new dreams. For those who might want to say a personal goodbye, you can email Sarah at [smstearns@juno.com](mailto:smstearns@juno.com).

## PAST TIMES

*by Alan Leveton*



So here it is: the fortieth anniversary of the Association of Family Therapists. A good time for reflection. I've been re-reading parts of a series of commentaries and notes I wrote for this Newsletter in the early 1990's and came across these passages (slightly modified):

"I'm trying to reconstruct the past, the beginnings of this organization, in fact. Getting the historical record straight isn't easy. Like family members, some remember the facts one way, others another. The harder I try to find out the true story, even though I was there, the more obscure the peripheral details seem. Why didn't someone write it down at the time? Or if they did, where are the records?"

Here is the first telling of the story. It's as I remember it with the help of phone calls to Marty Kirshenbaum and Joan Herrick who were also there at the beginning.

### The context

In the early 1960's family therapy was in its earliest pioneering phase. At the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, Don Jackson, Virginia Satir, Jay Haley, Paul Watzslavick and

John Weakland were originating the foundations of theory and practice. At Yale, Stephen Fleck, Theodore Lidz, and Alice Cornelieson were reconstructing the family dynamics of schizophrenics. Gregory Bateson was delineating the grand design of systems theory, Bowen was innovating in the East, and everyone was studying with Milton Erickson.

Several therapists in the Bay Area were recent graduates of the first Intensive Course offered by Jackson, Satir and Haley, and wanted a forum for further study, teaching and clinical sharing. I had come in from Yale.

There was a zeal and enthusiasm for the possibilities of using systems theory in many different clinical settings and working with the problems of the individual in the context of their family, work and society. The theory and practice had (and has) embedded in it a value system that is inclusive rather than exclusive. We all understood that; ‘When in doubt, bring everyone in.’

Family therapy was direct and active, we eagerly embraced the experiential and there was a value placed on self-disclosure. We were simultaneously beginners and experts, students and teachers. The idea of an informal group was inevitable.

### **The place**

Where did poor clinicians hang out (before hanging out was something we knew we were doing)? San Francisco’s North Beach.

It was the era of the Beatniks. Rexroth reading to Jazz in the Cellar, Ginsberg getting busted for ‘Howl’, Kerouac’s ‘On The Road’ and revolutions roiling the social fabric. I achieved slight notoriety by playing a Bob Dylan tape at a case conference at UCSF. Do I mythologize and romanticize? Oh, yes. If not now, when?

The Green Valley restaurant was a good quiet place with dark varnished tables the color of cloudy midnight. Upstairs was a private dining

room that was perfect for our founding meeting. Their premium, three-course dinner was \$2.50 and included a glass of house red that dissolved plaque.

### **The founders**

So there we were, in 1963 talking about starting a dynamic, inclusive association of people who worked with or were interested in families. That was the only test for membership. We would meet monthly at members’ homes to discuss clinical issues. We would have annual meetings. (Early meetings featured Fritz Perls, Stan Kellerman and Richard Korn.) Our goal was to stay local and as informal as possible.

And now, the mothers and fathers that fateful night: Joan Herrick, Shirley Luthman, Daniel Kahn, Ben Handelman, Marty Kirshenbaum, Marty Steiner, Samuel Slipp and me.”

### **The values**

“Systems follow out the pattern implicit in their beginnings. The Association is a good example. When we founded it we wanted to be inclusive, generous and clinically oriented. There were many discussions about going National all of which were countered by our desire to stay local and personal. Being inclusive meant that we were open to anyone who worked with families, period. Being generous meant that people shared their homes for meetings, gave administrative time, and offered teaching. The clinical orientation guaranteed that the focus would be on the work, not certification, or hierarchical political power. We had the luxury of being a small group. It appears that those values continue today.”

Have the original, idealistic values continued to shape the Association, its members and the general therapeutic community? Yes and no. What seemed revolutionary in applying the systems approach to understanding problems in mental health and functioning seems to have become part of the accepted scheme of therapy and to fade at the same time. Clinicians were

seeing more families and more couples while good training in family therapy has seemed to wane. At the founding meeting, there were three psychiatrists (Steiner, Slipp and me); now psychiatrists are psychopharmacologists and psychiatric residents get scandalously little training in psychodynamic individual or family therapies. In the 1960's community mental health was strong, San Mateo County was one county that won awards for providing continuity of care and gave powerful support to our kind of work. Then Ronald Reagan became governor and promised to support local community mental health, while dismantling the State Mental Hospital system. The hospitals were scaled down, but so were funds for local services, setting the pattern for creating our homeless, mentally ill population that has come to be serviced by the justice system rather than public health.

A further attack on our goals has been the intrusive effect of the HMOs on the way most clinicians practice. Beyond the aggravations of paper work, and phone calls are the twin evils of 'authorization' and 'record reporting'. Clinical decisions have become based on 'cost effectiveness' for the insurance companies regardless of the individual needs of families and individuals. Pharmacological treatment and brief therapy approaches have been rewarded and long-term psychodynamic methods have suffered. We have yet to discover the full dangers of having huge quantities of previously confidential personal information now filed in databases. Third party payers have become witnesses and judges in our offices: often adversarial. In the spirit of our origins, some clinicians refuse to take insurance reimbursement and instead negotiate fair fees based on a sliding scale so that therapy is available to all without any intermediaries or loss of privacy.

### **The rifts**

Two factors lessened the participation of the founding members in AFTNC after the first

several years. The founders began to develop their own teaching and therapy centers. Marty Kirschenbaum and Shirley Luthman started a clinic and school. Joan Herrick continued her association with the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. Ben Handleman, Eva (Hitchcock) Leveton and I began the Family Therapy Center (Dan Kahn and many others became Associates.) At the Family Therapy Center we were able to teach many courses in family therapy and provide consultation to agencies. We were smaller and less organizational than the Association.

Second, as time went on, there was a split in the theoretical orientations of the early members between brief therapy and long-term or depth therapy. At times this was conflict: the brief therapists scorning the long term therapists as encouraging dependency with their patients and the long-term therapists dismissing the brief therapists as superficial and manipulative. In the absence of a middle ground, separate groups went their own way.

### **The outlook**

I am concerned that the mental health, educational, and social needs of our society are once again being neglected in our crazed response to terrorism and our capitulation to corporate power. I worry that individual privacy and rights are being lost. The political right doesn't believe in interdependency, but only in unilateral power.

Family therapy was a small-scale revolution in clinical thinking that was fostered by small, enthusiastic groups like the AFTNC. I continue to hope that our humanism and respect for the individual and the family, our understanding that health and growth flourish in a supportive, loving, economically secure environment will have some influence through the next forty years.

## ON BEING A FAMILY THERAPIST

*Two of our more senior members responded to my June query for personal articles. I'm pleased to have their responses and challenge some of our student and younger members to write about their own path in becoming Family Therapists.* — Editor

### From Judy Hess:

*Judy Hess, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies where she teaches Family Dynamics, Couples Therapy and Group Dynamics. She is an adjunct faculty member at JFKU and the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Judy also has a private practice in Berkeley where she sees mainly couples and families.*



I grew up in a family with a dad who was a prominent psychoanalyst in New York City and an older sister who followed his footsteps to become a psychoanalyst on Long Island. With a background like that, it was pretty clear that I would follow suit in terms of career path. I proceeded to go to graduate school in clinical psychology back in the early 70s at the University of Rhode Island. While working on my dissertation, I was able to secure a part-time job in a youth guidance center, which would help pay the rent. The only problem was, I had never been particularly interested in working with children or teens. Lo and behold, I was assigned a supervisor who had been trained at the Ackerman Institute in N.Y. back in the 60s. Now, mind you, I had never so much as taken a course in family therapy at graduate school since there were no such courses. When Eliot Brown, my supervisor, saw my reluctance to working individually with the children, he smiled and said, "Well, why don't you see the whole family?" I started to grow pale when he added, "You can tape record the sessions and

then I'll go over them with you." That was some relief.

And so began what has been the focus of my personal and clinical odyssey: the family. Once I found myself sitting in a room with four, five or even six members of the family, something clicked. I found that this was indeed my natural state. I felt at home and seemed to make the family feel at home as well. I realized that I had found a new passion for myself: "work" that I loved as much as any so-called pleasurable activity. I couldn't wait to see the next family! A chemistry seemed to occur among us all that allowed for healing to take place in these often multi-problem families. I couldn't have been happier, and so were the families! And so, of course, was my supervisor, who realized he had found a convert to this very new and growing field!

I wound up doing my dissertation on adolescent girls and their families and spent that year going to the homes of about fifty families to administer tests to the parents and their adolescent daughter. Meanwhile, I would be sitting and watching TV with the younger children or playing with the family dog or cat. In these often cold winter nights in New England, I found myself very much at home in this family setting as I had felt with families in the therapy room, quite unlike the feelings I had grown up with in my own family. In fact, what was so neat about these situations was that not only were the families being healed. So was I!

Coming out to California in 1977, I was soon to join up with AFTNC, and continue counseling families at Xanthos Family Counseling Agency in Alameda. I remember some of the early AFTNC retreats down at Soquel with Carl Whitaker and Helm Steirlin. I still quote from the conversations that took place with some of those great icons of family therapy. And in addition, the swimming pool was a lot of fun!

I soon found a really good mentor to continue my training, none other than past AFTNC



president, Alan Leveton. In this weekly five-hour course that I took with him at the Family Therapy Center on Sacramento Street in 1979, there were only six of us and we worked on client families as well as our own families of origin. At the time, I was going through a particularly difficult time with my own family. I once brought in a very guilt-inducing letter from my psychoanalyst father to share with the class. I can never forget Alan's almost blasé attitude upon hearing it. He said something like, "Oh, I've seen so many of these letters before." and was clearly unperturbed. When I conveyed how anxious I was at the idea of seeing my parents coming out to visit me in California, Alan said, "Well, why don't you bring them in? I'll see them with you." WOW! Could this really happen?

Well, I broached this subject with my parents by saying the only way I would be willing to see them was if they agreed to come to family therapy with me. My father, who was very identified with the role of doctor, was not happy with the prospect of being someone else's "patient". But my mom, who had thirty years of unresolved issues to work out with my dad, talked him into it. And so it was. They came out here and we did a six-hour marathon session with Alan, something none of us would ever forget.

In 1984, I was offered a position at the California Institute of Integral Studies teaching Family Dynamics and Therapy. It was my dream of a lifetime and still adds incredible satisfaction to my life. While the nature of the class involved doing psychodramas where students would act out the parts of the family members, the last five years have brought more and more actual families into the classroom for sessions. At times it will be just a parent or a sibling of the student; at other times the student will bring in his or her whole family for the demonstration session. As one student recently remarked in her paper, "When people brought their family members into class, they changed in a moment. They started looking as part of a

whole. Everything in them changed. I believe that the reason for that change is the huge potential lying in the family system. A potential for deep intimacy and creativity."

So when the question comes up, "Are you in this field 'because of' your family"? I cannot deny that growing up in my family has been a significant factor in my career choice. The inherent yearning I have always had to be part of a healing family; my familiarity with deeply embedded dysfunctional; my skills at being an agent of change; and the inborn passion for this work that I was endowed with in this lifetime, have all led to a path that has brought incredible fulfillment to my life.

### **From Terry Patterson:**

Personal or professional: only the therapist knows. Roger has invited us to answer some critical questions that I believe are vital for all therapists to ask themselves. I've actually thought of these issues a lot over my thirty years as a family therapist, so I'd like to take a stab at them. First, a thumbnail sketch of my own path in the field.

*Terry Patterson, EdD, ABPP*



*After receiving my MSW, I trained at the Family Therapy Institute of Marin, then later at the Family Therapy Center of San Francisco. I became Director of family Therapy training at Letterman Hospital, got an MFCC, then an LCSW. I then received my doctorate in Counseling Psychology at the University of San Francisco, got*

*licensed as a psychologist, became board certified in Family Psychology (ABPP), and president of the Family Psychology Division and a Fellow of APA. I am a now a Professor at USF and specialize in couple therapy in my practice. On to the questions.*

**How has being in the profession shaped your experience of family?** Since entering the profession, I have continuously felt that family relationships are primary to good mental health,

with “family” broadly and systemically defined. As with anything solid, there must be a foundation with nuclear family, then with one’s self-defined family of choice, whether it is an intimate partner or a set of other primary relationships. Someone said that one can never really divorce a spouse (emotionally), and it is even truer to say that we can never really leave our families of origin; we must come to terms with them, one way or another.

**Has your clinical experience really shown up in how you've handled your own path? I**

have no doubt that knowing about family structure and process has helped me observe and understand my own role and that of my family members, and through self-monitoring, I can say that I have become an expert at knowing what to avoid, and where not to go in all sorts of personal and organizational relationships.

**Do you think of yourself as a therapist in your own family? Never!**

Has your clinical experience really shown up in how you've handled your own path? We are tempted to try to be our family’s resident therapist, especially early on, but it never works. They may expect us to, and everyone who knows of our profession either thinks we can give them advice, or expects that we should have an uncanny ability to establish perfect families of our own. Again, attempts at either are folly, as we are not in a professional relationship in the former instance, and we are too personally involved in the latter. Besides, why deprive them of an objective, comprehensive professional who can be helpful to everyone (including ourselves)? Also, great resentment often builds up over the family member, colleague, or friend who becomes the inside “expert.”

**Are you in the field "because of" your family?** I think this is a misconception held by many people, similar to those who say that we (therapists) are the craziest ones of all. As mentioned, I believe we learn a lot that we can use in very informed ways, and that we work

things out as we learn, conduct therapy, and engage in our own process. Although I know that some therapists are “driven” to the field based on their own experiences, and that many develop specialties that arise out of their mastery of specific personal problems, I believe that most therapists are drawn to the field out of a desire to serve others in an intimate, professional context. I strongly believe that objectivity and detachment, along with passionate commitment make the best therapists.

Today, I am extremely proud to identify myself primarily as a family psychologist, going beyond therapy to viewing and intervening with human issues from a relational, systems perspective. I have described, in a nutshell, how I’ve gotten here, and I hope many of you will do so too. I think this is an extremely important project AFTNC has undertaken, and for a nationwide precedent, please refer to Dr. Florence Kaslow’s *Voices in Family Psychology*.

Reference: Kaslow, F.W. (Ed.) (1990, 1994). *Voices in Family Psychology*, Vols. 1 & II. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

## TRUTH TELLING, INTEGRITY, AND NATION-BUILDING

by Mary Cronin

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One of the myths our country was founded upon is the story of George Washington, the first president, and the cherry tree.

Most of us heard the story when we began elementary school - that when George Washington was a boy he chopped down his father's prized cherry tree. When confronted by his father, George said, the story goes, "Father, I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my little hatchet."

We'll never know if this really happened - but what did happen is that our first president is revered as a truth-teller, a man of integrity. Truth telling, integrity, were valuable qualities on which a great nation could be built.

Webster defines truth as a: quality or state of being true; sincerity, genuineness, honesty, quality of being in accordance with experience, facts, or reality; conformity with fact; reality, actual existence. And, integrity is defined as a: quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition, wholeness, entirety. The quality or state of being unimpaired; perfect condition, soundness.

Apparently, in George Washington's time, as in our own time, truth telling and integrity were exceptional, outstanding. Truth telling takes courage - courage to face the consequences of stating the truth. I wonder how George's father provided the environment where George could find the courage to speak the truth. The father could handle the truth - his son's integrity was

safe with him. Families can learn from this father. Families can make themselves safe places for truth telling and the development of integrity. In families it can be safe to tell the truth about feelings and concerns for our country, our future. In these post-September 11th times, families can hear truth-telling words from differing points of view, not allowing fear to dictate the conversation.

In our time, we hear so much that is not true - information with a "spin" on it, and serious lies. Sometimes it seems that truth and integrity are in danger of being lost to us. Comparing the George Washington story with the stories of modern presidents, one feels discouraged and at a distance from the qualities on which we believe our country is built.

Yet, truth telling and integrity are at the heart of the therapist's profession. Someone has said that therapy is the experience of speaking the truth in the presence of another. Everyday we are in the process of helping clients find the courage to be truth-tellers with us, and in this process claim their own integrity. We help families handle the truth and the integrity of their members. When we help families learn the skills of George Washington's father - the results can help build families unafraid of truth telling because of the high value they place on their integrity.

Today, we live in a nation that is as divided as this nation was in George Washington's time. In Washington's time, the nation was finally able to unite under the leadership of an admired truth-teller, who was perceived as a man of integrity. Truth telling and integrity can help us find unity now.

As a therapist, I think about families divided, where truth telling and integrity are threatened because someone's "cherry tree" or other symbol has been lost. I think about how to help families withstand the fear that can paralyze, lead to inertia, and the abandonment of truth telling and integrity and even the ability to

recognize truth telling and integrity.

Truth telling and integrity are powerful energies — powerful enough to found and sustain nations — but these energies have adversaries in attractive disguises. There are lots of short-term perks for failures in truth-telling and integrity - and families sometimes take the perks instead of providing the environment for each other where truth-telling and the integrity of each member count for more than short-term perks. Therapy is about listening to the stories of our clients until the stories become experiences of truth telling that build integrity. The process is not so simple as in the myth of George Washington and the cherry tree, but the results can be the same — we can help build a nation.

### **MAY MEETING REVIEW**

*by Roger Lake*

The annual open meeting of AFTNC was held on Sunday, May 18, 2003 at the Arlington Park Clubhouse in El Cerrito. While it continued our tradition of technological challenge (things never work quite the way we expect them to) it provided us an opportunity to reflect on the problem of War.

The panel was moderated by Keith Armstrong, MSW, Director, PTSD and Families Project, Department of Psychiatry, Veterans Administration Medical Center, San Francisco.

Panel members were:

**Diane Ehrensaft, PhD, and Toni Heinman, PhD**, Northern California Psychoanalytic Institute, who described results of their research on children's reactions to the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

**Casi Kushel, MFT**, Private Practice, Walnut Creek, who reported on her recent work with children and health care providers in Afghanistan.

**Ellen Pulleyblank Coffey, PhD**, Private Practice, Berkeley and Adjunct Faculty

Member, Wright Institute, reported on her recent work with families and mental health care workers in Kosovo.

The discussant was **Yoel Elizur, PhD**, Professor of Psychology, Hebrew University-Jerusalem; Visiting Faculty Member (2002-2004), California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant International University.

While I wish that I could provide our readers with a meaningful analysis of what was actually presented, I'm afraid that, months later, my scrawled notes are pathetically inadequate to the task. Consequently, I am imploring those of you reading this to email me at [RogerLake@aol.com](mailto:RogerLake@aol.com) about your willingness to review future AFTNC events. The next of which will be October 18, 2003.

What I do remember was the context of discussing war during the pre-quagmire phase of the Iraq invasion. The clash of the therapeutic culture, its values and assumptions, with the culture of pre-emptive strikes was very much on our minds. (Mary Cronin's article in this Newsletter gets at that issue.)

What stood out for me was the recognition of the trauma of state sponsored violence and its capricious, as well as intentional, sundering of the continuities of everyday life. Our privileged position in America, our assumption that it can't happen here, and our consequent unfamiliarity with therapeutic interventions at the individual and systemic levels is the cutting edge of our profession. I'm proud of the AFTNC members who have chosen to engage this complex set of issues. While I don't believe that Family Therapy will save the world, I do believe that we have much to contribute to the discussion of non-violence.

## **AFTNC PRESENTS: THERAPY WITH LESBIAN/GAY PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN**

In this presentation, a panel of experts on lesbian/gay families will describe current theory, research, and clinical interventions with families headed by lesbian or gay male parents. It is estimated that about 75% of young lesbians and 20% of young gay men intend to have children in the context of lesbian/gay couple relationships in the future. In addition, many lesbian and gay adults became parents in the context of former heterosexual marriages, and many of their children grow up in lesbian/gay stepfamilies. This presentation will emphasize the special issues facing these families and suggest guidelines for treatment.

**CE UNITS:** This event has been approved for 2 CE units (for psychologists, MFTs, and MSWs). If you want to sign up for these units, there will be a \$10 fee at the door payable by check (no cash or credit cards) to Alliant International University for doing the paperwork, and there will be the usual sign-in/sign-out time requirements. Especially if you are interested in CE units, please arrive 5-10 minutes early.

### **MODERATOR/DISCUSSANT:**

**Anne Bernstein, PhD.** Private Practice, Berkeley. Faculty Member, Wright Institute, Berkeley. Treasurer, American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA). Author of "Straight therapists working with lesbians and gays in family therapy." (2000). *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 26, 443-454.

### **PRESENTERS:**

**Jane Ariel, PhD.** Private Practice, Oakland. Adjunct Faculty Member, Wright Institute, Berkeley.

**Dan McPherson, PhD.** Associate Professor, Department of Counseling; Associate Dean, School of Education, University of San Francisco.

Jane and Dan are co-authors of the article "Therapy with lesbian and gay parents and their children." (2000). *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 26, 421-432.

**Date:** Sunday, October 19, 2003, 7:00-9:00 pm, Gloria Fraser's House, San Rafael, Marin County

**Location:** 3164 Sheffield Ave, Oakland, CA 94602, telephone 415-456-6652

### **Driving directions (from MapQuest):**

From the Bay Bridge:

- Take I-580 East/Downtown Oakland (CA 24) exit toward **Hayward/Stockton**. Go 4.3 miles.
- Continue on **MacArthur Blvd**. Go 0.4 miles
- Bear left on **E. 33<sup>rd</sup> St**. Go 0.1 mile.
- Turn left on **14<sup>th</sup> Ave**. Go 0.1 mile.
- Turn right on **MacArthur Blvd**. Go 0.3 miles.
- Turn right on **Sheffield Ave**. Go 0.2 miles.
- Arrive at **3164 Sheffield Ave**.

*Please contact Robert Green (email: [mail@robertjaygreen.com](mailto:mail@robertjaygreen.com), work tel. 415-749-0100, cell 415-640-6780) if you have questions about the meeting*

**AFTNC PRESENTS: BOWENIAN & MULTICULTURAL APPROACHES TO FAMILY THERAPY:  
DISCUSSING THE WORK OF MONICA MCGOLDRICK**

In this presentation, Bart Rubin and Robert-Jay Green will summarize the major theoretical contributions of Monica McGoldrick and show a videotape of her conducting a family therapy session with an interracial stepfamily. The presentation and videotape will be used as a springboard for discussing how AFTNC members can use Bowenian and Multicultural ideas in their individual, couple, and family therapy work, even if they themselves do not identify primarily as Bowenian therapists.

**CE UNITS:** For this event, we are in the process of applying for approval of 2 CE units (for psychologists, MFTs, and MSWs) under the auspices of Alliant International University. To sign up for these units at the door, there will be a \$10 per person fee (must be paid by check, not cash) to Alliant International University for doing the CE paperwork. Also, there will be the usual CE sign-in/sign-out time requirements so please arrive 5-10 minutes early if you are interested in CEUs.

**PRESENTERS:**

**Bart Rubin, PhD** is Founder and Director of the Family Institute of Pinole, and an adjunct faculty member at California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University. He is the immediate past president of AFTNC, and is a co-leader of the annual Men's Institute of the American Family Therapy Academy (AFTA).

**Robert-Jay Green, PhD** is Professor & Associate Director, Clinical Psychology PhD Program, California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant International University. He has a practice in San Francisco, specializing in multicultural couple therapy and individual therapy for relationship problems. He is author of 60+ publications about couple/family therapy, gay/lesbian issues, and men in therapy, including two books, *Family Therapy: Major Contributions* (co-edited with James L. Framo, 1981), and *Lesbians and Gays in Couples and Families: A Handbook for Therapists* (co-edited with Joan Laird). Website: [www.robertjaygreen.com](http://www.robertjaygreen.com)

**Date:** Sunday, December 7, 1:00-3:00 pm, Gloria Fraser's House, San Rafael, Marin County

**Location:** Gloria & Jerry Fraser's home, 307 Highland Ave., San Rafael, CA, telephone 415-456-6652

**Driving directions:**

- From East Bay: Richmond San Rafael Bridge to 101 North.
- From San Francisco: 101 North
- From North of Central San Rafael: 101 South

Then:

1. Exit Central San Rafael. From the South, take the first right on 2nd Street. From the North, take the last left, just before you re enter the freeway onto 2nd Street.
2. Second Street changes its name and becomes 3rd and then Pt San Pedro Rd. Follow it for about a mile. Watch for the Porto Bello sign on your right.
3. Get in your left lane and make the next LEFT on SUMMIT. You cannot see a street sign coming in this direction, so note the Marin Beach and Tennis Club on the right hand corner.
4. At the top of the hill, at the yield sign where the road T's, turn RIGHT on HIGHLAND. Go one block.
5. At the intersection of Highland and Margarita, where the road Y's, our driveway is straight ahead-- big cement pillars with #'s 301 and 307. The code to enter is #7000. Be sure to enter the # sign before 7000.
6. We are the first house on the right. Parking is limited in our driveway, but abundant outside the first gate. To avoid being blocked, park outside the first gate.

**Please contact Robert Green (email: [mail@robertjaygreen.com](mailto:mail@robertjaygreen.com), work tel. 415-749-0100, cell 415-640-6780) if you have questions about the meeting**

## VIDEO LIBRARY NEWS

by Mary Coombs

Our video collection is growing. We have added the following videos to our list.

- 1) Dr. Sue Johnson. "Creating a Healing Relationship. Training tape #2". Ottawa Couple and Family Institute. 134 minutes.
- 2) Dr. Sue Johnson. "Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy — Shaping Change Events. Training Tape #3" made in 1982. Ottawa Couples Therapy Institute.
- 3) InSoo Kim Berg. "I love my kids — getting her children home." A good tape for those working with clients involved with Child Protective Services.
- 4) InSoo Kim Berg. "Talking Solutions with Mandated Clients". A good example of InSoo Kim Berg's work with an involuntary client using a strengths-based and solution-focused approach.
- 5) Thomas W. Pheian, Ph.D. "Magic 1-2-3". A lecture, very humorous, about child management skills for families made in 1990 to an audience of parents. Good example of a behavioral approach, using commonly experienced situations.

For those teaching family therapy, the following three tapes are a part of our collection, and are described in fuller detail on the web site video library page:

- (6) Monica McGoldrick. "The Legacy of Unresolved Loss" (88 minutes)
- (7) Evan Imber-Black, "Family Secrets" (45 minutes)
- (8) Peggy Papp and the Depression Project from the Acherman Institute, "Gender-Differences in Depression" (45 minutes).

All three are well-edited, shorter than the usual AAMFT tapes.

The first 5 tapes are not yet listed on our web site video list, but will be soon, and are available to borrow now.

If any members have recommendations for other excellent videotapes you would like to see be a part of our collection, please let me know.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

**Support Group for Women in Transition, including divorce:**

Tuesdays in Rockridge, Oakland. Carla Haimowitz 510-655-7828

**Men's Group for relational issues:**

Tuesday Evenings in San Francisco. Roger Lake 415-567-7786

#### Newsletter Advertising policy:

Our current policy is that each AFTNC member is entitled to one free 3-line ad for each calendar year to announce workshops, training programs, or groups. Subsequent ads will be billed at the rate of \$10 per line. Other kinds of ads placed by members (e.g., to advertise a private practice) and all ads placed by nonmembers will be charged at \$10 per line. Because the Newsletter is published infrequently, members of AFTNC may find it more useful to advertise via the AFTNC LISTSERV.

## RAPID RESURGENCE OF AFTNC

Check out all the folks who have joined (or returned) since April 1, 2003:

### Professional Members:

Jane Ariel  
Chuck Alexander  
Jessica Batha  
Susan Bresee  
Stephanie Brodsky  
Stephen Chou  
Mary Cronin  
Lucy Ferguson  
Catherine Freemire  
Lucy Garcia  
Ram Gokul  
Carla Haimowitz  
Stuart Lord  
Pauline Lytle  
Debra Milinsky

Meg Newcomer  
Audrey Nulman  
Lori Ono  
Terence Patterson  
Robert Park  
Carla Quint  
Margaret Rossoff  
Nancy Sallee  
Mike Searle  
Ken Seider  
Jim Sparks  
Roberta Stern  
Erika Waechter  
Randall Wyatt  
Linda Garcia-Shelton

### Student Members:

Taghi Amjadi  
Gracie Artemis  
Mary Azevedo  
James Brack  
Amy Brom  
Marjorie Chaset  
E-Ling Cheah  
Jackie Choppelas  
Veronica Garcia  
Aretha Fisher  
Tracy French  
Christina Gonculves  
Janet Hazen  
Nancy Johnston  
Richard Kellog

Regina Segura-  
Khagram  
Louise Olivia Kindell  
Erin Lacy  
Jennifer Lee  
Pamela Mchombo  
Autumn Merrill  
Caron Nogen  
Ted Obbard  
Shoshana Raiber-  
Kornfeld  
Barbara Sprout  
Bernadette Torrez  
Losa Wong

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