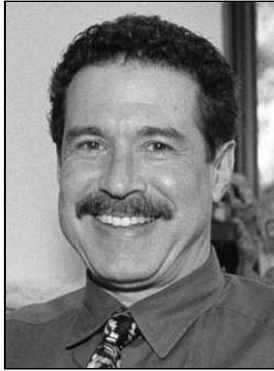


ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY THERAPISTS

January

OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

2005



AFTNC PRESIDENT'S FAREWELL COLUMN

By Robert-Jay Green

“Looking Back, Looking Forward”

When I volunteered to become AFTNC

president two years ago, the decision felt impulsive yet strangely predestined at the same time. I was inspired by the dedication of Bart Rubin and the previous council members who had kept AFTNC alive during the roughest patch in the association's long history. I figured that I could draw on my large personal network and use my program development skills to help with the important work that lay ahead. After 26-years of being a family therapist, teacher, and administrator of training programs in the Bay Area, I knew whom to call for help with rebuilding AFTNC, and almost all of them said “yes” to my invitations.

Looking back now, I can say wholeheartedly that serving a term as president of AFTNC has been among the most satisfying experiences of my entire career. I've been blessed to have the collaboration of an extraordinarily talented group of Council members, each working incredibly hard every step of the way. Whatever success we've had is the result of our joint efforts. I'd like to publicly thank all of the council members who served with me over the last two years. Their names and leadership areas appear in the masthead of this Newsletter. A special thanks goes to Carla Vogel -Stone for many years of organizing our annual conferences. Over the past year, Carla has been passing that baton to Lori Ono, who did a superb job of coordinating the very recent conference with Insoo Kim Berg.

The current council and I started out with some very clear and ambitious goals, and we developed some new ones along the way:

Increase membership, especially bringing back into AFTNC the senior members of the profession as well as recruiting a large number

AFTNC COUNCIL MEMBERS

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|
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of graduate students who would be the future of the field in the Bay Area.

Locate a “permanent” home for our annual conferences so that we could revive the retreat-like experience that was so emotionally nurturing and professionally stimulating in the earlier days of AFTNC.

Initiate and launch an intensive 1-2 year postgraduate family therapy training program under AFTNC auspices to prepare the next generation of local family therapy leaders, teachers, supervisors, and clinicians.

Enhance the value of AFTNC’s traditional 2-hour “monthly meetings” by providing CE units for as many of these events as possible.

Improve the content of the newsletter by including more substantive pieces along with announcements of meetings and association news.

Establish clear operational procedures for each AFTNC committee so that it is clear who is responsible to do what and by when, and so that new committee chairs would not have to reinvent the wheel.

Expand the content of the website by including descriptions of all AFTNC programs, copies of the newsletter, and by posting downloadable application forms for AFTNC membership, the Postgraduate Training Program, and the Annual Conference.

Establish a listserv to significantly improve communication and cross-referrals among the members of AFTNC.

Increase access to the AFTNC video library by establishing a mailing system for borrowing and returning tapes.

Although there is more work to be done in some of these areas (including the hard work of simply maintaining these gains), we’ve basically accomplished everything we set out to do in this

two-year period. AFTNC has become a much more organized and financially stable entity. The Postgraduate Training Program drew more students in this first year of operation than we expected, and the trainees and faculty are filled with the excitement of a new program and new ideas in the systems and narrative traditions. Almost all of the current council members will be continuing in their posts after Roger Lake becomes President on January 1, and I will stay on the council as past-president for one year. Bart Rubin will remain on the council as “member-at-large.” Whenever possible, incoming committee chairs will overlap with the current chairs for a year, to facilitate smooth leadership transitions.

The Council also has been engaged in an ongoing dialog about the longer-term future of AFTNC. It is becoming clearer that as AFTNC’s programs increase in complexity, the association will benefit by becoming a nonprofit “charitable” corporation. For example, we’ve discussed the idea of establishing a scholarship fund for trainees in our Postgraduate Training Program. However, for scholarship contributions to be tax deductible, AFTNC must have nonprofit status. We also may need nonprofit status in the future to do some payroll processes (for example, for the salaries of paid assistants) and for other tax and insurance purposes. The Council in its last meeting voted to keep reserves of \$10,000 in our bank account, which we believe is possible this year based on projected income and expenses. In other words, we are in decent shape financially now, and this is primarily due to the exceptionally large attendance at the Monica McGoldrick conference last year and the increases in dues paying members (double the number of members compared to two years ago). If you haven’t already paid your dues for 2005, please do so now as we are counting on your participation.

The Council is also attempting to expand membership to include a more racially and ethnically diverse mix of members. The

program committee and the Postgraduate Training Program are planning CE programs that address issues at the intersections of families, communities, and cultures (see announcements in this newsletter). As is true of most other professional associations in the mental health fields, AFTNC historically has been a predominantly white organization. This largely reflects who went to graduate school in the mental health professions in the past 40 years. Currently, however, a much larger proportion of graduate students (about 35% of students at CSPP where I teach) are from traditionally underrepresented groups. We want to ensure that all new AFTNC members feel a sense of comfort and belonging and that all members' interests are represented in our varied programs. Most of us on the Council have been very involved with social justice concerns in our therapeutic practices. We know from personal experience that everyone grows and learns more from a mix of diverse perspectives, and we want more of those experiences in our local association. Under Roger Lake's able leadership as AFTNC's President, multiculturalism will remain an abiding focus of the Council's membership recruitment efforts and a theme in the association's CE offerings.

Along these lines, the Council members are planning to do more outreach to couple and family therapists who work in agency settings. Equally important, the Council is reaching out to mental health professionals in the community who have not previously identified with the field of family therapy per se, but whose work embodies the kind of multicultural, contextual, systemic thinking that underpins best practices in both the field of family therapy and the field of community-oriented health and mental health services. If you have suggestions along these lines or would like to join in these member recruitment and CE program efforts, I know that Roger Lake will eagerly welcome your input and involvement.

I'm delighted to be able to end this column with some very good news! We have arranged for

Nancy Boyd-Franklin, PhD (Professor, Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology, Rutgers University) and A.J. Franklin, PhD (Professor, Clinical Psychology PhD Program, City University of New York) to be our next annual conference speakers together. The dates are set for October 15-16 at Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma (Saturday night stayover), and we are especially lucky to have an October (rather than November) date this year.

For those of you unfamiliar with their work, Nancy is the nation's leading author on the topic of African American families in therapy. She also has written significant books on delivery of family therapy services in nontraditional community settings (homes, schools, churches) and on the treatment of children and families dealing with HIV/AIDS. A.J. Franklin is a former president of Division 45 (Ethnic Minority Psychology) of the American Psychological Association and is one of the country's leading authors on the topic of African American men's couple and family relationships. Nancy and A.J.'s books include:

Boyd-Franklin, N., & Bry, B. (2001). *Reaching out in family therapy: Home-based, school, and community interventions*. New York: Guilford Press.

Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black families in therapy, Second Edition: Understanding the African American Experience*. New York: Guilford Press.

Boyd-Franklin, N., & Franklin, A.J. (2000). *Boys into men: Raising our African American teenage sons*. New York: Dutton Books.

Boyd-Franklin, N., et al. (Eds.) (1995). *Children, families, and HIV/AIDS: Psychosocial and therapeutic issues*. New York: Guilford Press.

Franklin, A.J. (2002). *From brotherhood to manhood: How black men rescue their*

relationships and dreams from the invisibility syndrome. New York: Wiley.

Having known Nancy and A.J. for many years, I can tell you that they are an inspiring duo, each one a gifted teacher, and dynamic together. In case you hadn't guessed, they also are married to each other. They are not only expert couple and family therapists, but they are at the center of multicultural thinking in the fields of family therapy and clinical psychology, and they have many ideas about innovative community service delivery systems. I expect this will be a pivotal conference for the future of AFTNC, and I hope all of you will mark October 15-16 in your calendars now and plan to attend.

Robert-Jay Green, PhD is Distinguished Professor in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program, California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant International University—San Francisco Campus. In his private practice in San Francisco, he specializes in couple therapy. EMAIL: rjgreen415@cs.com; TEL: 415-749-0100; Website: www.robertjaygreen.com



**NEW PRESIDENT /
OLD EDITOR'S
COLUMN**

By Roger Lake

“Looking Around”

I hope you've already read Robert Green's immediately preceding column. If you haven't, please go back and do so now, because it is

the context for what I have to say.

I wish to begin by noting that I am the President of AFTNC by selection, not election. I don't have a problem with that, and apparently no one else does either, because nobody objected. I suspect that's how my successor will be chosen, so those of you who might be available for that should let me know, because one of my goals is

to ensure the continuity of leadership in the Association. I'm serving now because it's my turn. I'd been drafted before, but never signed until Robert agreed to take over first. I know that I'm not the disciplined and energetic program developer kind of guy that Robert is. I think our careers demonstrate that, and our friends know it. AFTNC would never be where we are now without Robert's work over the past several years to build our organization in exactly the way that he's described in his column that you should have read by now if you're paying attention. We all owe him accolades and gratitude for his work. Not, as he makes note, that he's done this alone. Robert has had a dedicated council, which has worked hard to create this turnaround. In that regard, we should take special note of Bart Rubin, past president, and now council member at large. In my own mind, I think of Bart as the guy who put his finger in the dyke and saved AFTNC during our most difficult time.

As I look around at this juncture, thinking about being president makes me mindful that I'm in AFTNC because I like family therapists. I have been drawn to community and family issues from the beginning of my work, and knew in graduate school that I was not going to become either a researcher, or an analyst—I just can't sit still long enough. I joined AFTNC twenty years ago at the suggestion of Rodney Shapiro, who led my training group at Presbyterian and had just been elected President of the Association. He came into a seminar one day and handed out information about that year's annual conference with Karl Whittaker, which took place at this funky little place called Greenwood Lodge in Soquel. I also went to AAMFT for the first time that year, because it was in San Francisco. With many workshops and simultaneous events, AAMFT was crowded and overwhelming. At AFTNC's meeting, on the other hand, I got to sit at the table with Whittaker during meals, and had the chance to watch him consult on a case that my own supervisor had brought to the meeting. What a difference for someone just licensed.

Over the years, I have learned a lot about family therapy by participating in this interesting local organization that never seems hierarchical or full of experts, even though they are all around. I credit the familiarity of the meetings, which generally take place in member's homes, and the playful sense of community that emerges in the annual conferences. Big professional organizations certainly have their place, but AFTNC has a very special role to play in nurturing the careers of those of us who sit with families.

In thinking about what I want to accomplish during my year as president, it is really the continuation of the building efforts Robert has addressed. Much is in place now, and many people have stepped up. I am particularly grateful to the faculty of the Postgraduate Training Program (PGTP), who report on their progress in this Newsletter. As Robert notes, I do think that we are committed to clinical work and research that reflects our increasingly diverse communities and that it is important that we continue to reach out to workers in the community agencies where so much happens on the cutting edge of cultural engagement. Carla Haimowitz' article in this Newsletter is a good example of that. Family Systems therapy can inform interventions and practices in many settings, and adopting training as our mission through establishing the PGTP is both good for us and good for the community. One particular way, in which everyone can support the PGTP, is by attending their workshops. I realize that they aren't free, like our other events, but they are a bargain, and they build our community.

The revitalization of AFTNC involves the continuing recruitment of new members and the willingness to expand our sense of who we are. Our by-laws, as I read them, reflect an older (and perhaps "whiter") organizational structure. In truth, the By-laws have been abandoned in our efforts to keep this Association going. A council that is, in many ways, a coalition of the willing, now guides AFTNC. While that is working, I'm afraid it might reflect AFTNC's

relative unimportance in the daily affairs of most of our membership. While I know that we are "just another professional organization" for some of our membership, I don't think that taps our potential. We may be the oldest family therapy association in the world, but we certainly aren't the only one. I think we have to develop the resources that are now present in our student membership. Many of you have joined over that last two years, dramatically increasing our membership.

To those that have just joined, how can we help? To those of you who have been around awhile, what can you contribute? In that regard I've become involved through AFTNC with pro-bono consultation to a post-Doc trainee. I'm not a teacher/supervisor in my work world, so I don't think of this consultation as work, but rather as a chance to hang out with an interesting person who is formulating her approach to clinical work. My point is that AFTNC creates this connection and serves the developmental needs of the family therapy community, through open recruitment and a commitment to helping each other in our work. We have to make it matter.

As Robert points out in his column, one task that we need to accomplish is the incorporation of AFTNC as a non-profit. We have approached this question many times in the past, but never really had reason to follow through. We're convinced that now is the time, and will be working on it this year. So here's a chance to contribute to our development. We do have administrative support from our amazingly talented student employee, Aparna Dixit, and we have Council members with prior experience in incorporating a 501 C 3. I'd like to have one non-Council member of the AFTNC community to coordinate this task. The requirements are simply your administrative competence and willingness to follow through. Please contact me directly if you want to get involved.

This is my last Newsletter as editor, and I must say that I've had an interesting experience over

the last two years. I'm glad to be turning it over to my colleague Mary Cronin, MFT. Mary will be the new Editor, and will have the support of Terry Patterson, Ed.D. Terry, who has many years of experience as teacher and practitioner, has agreed to serve as "contributing editor." I look forward to his help in developing the Newsletter as a vehicle for interesting perspectives from within our membership. I have had some success in that, and am extremely grateful to those in the Association who have contributed to the newsletter in that way. I believe that we should view the Newsletter as a forum for the many gifted writers, teachers, and practitioners in our community to express themselves to a friendly and knowledgeable audience. In saying this, I do want everyone to know that the Editor needs you all to step up to this task by responding to requests for articles and coverage. I've too often failed to have a member designated to review a meeting, and found myself scrambling to write something. To that end, I'd like everyone reading this to stop right now and ask yourself: "Would I like to write a meeting review for the Newsletter?" Those of you who answer yes should email or call Mary Cronin (marytime@peoplepc.com, 415-693-9495) and let her know right now that you'd like to be on her list, and are willing to attend a meeting and write it up for the Newsletter. Remember, the Newsletter needs you!

Looking around at 2005, I'm hopeful for great change in America, and a productive year in AFTNC. The PGTP will complete a successful first year while recruiting a dynamic new class. The fall conference will be fulfilling and stimulating, as we meet and welcome new presenters and new participants. And all of us will continue to enhance our collective understanding of how to be family therapists in a world of diversity, complexity, and challenge.



Roger Lake, MFT, maintains a private practice in San Francisco. In this picture from the fall conference, he is caught once again, trying to make two points at once.

THE POST-GRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAM HAS BEGUN!

*By Jane Ariel, Ph.D.
(Co-chair of the program with Ellen Pulleyblank Coffey)*



Jane Ariel, Ph.D., is on the faculty of the Wright Institute in Berkeley, CA, and has a private practice where she sees couples, families and does personal and small business mediations.

It is hard to believe. The first third of the first year of the AFTNC

Post-graduate Training Program in Couple and Family Therapy (known as PGTP) has been successfully completed. As the six members of the faculty look back over the year of preparation, it is satisfying to see that there is a very alive entity happening in Berkeley. As many of you know, we have nine students, and we are team teaching in three segments throughout the year, as well as co-sponsoring with AFTNC four workshops relevant to our training. The first one, "The Cultural Context in Family Therapy," given by Veronique Thompson in October, was a central link in communicating our belief that understanding the cultural context and its influence has to be at the

center of our family practice. Now we are looking forward to Yoel Elitzur's workshop on January 22nd on the "personhood of the therapist," another important aspect of what we are encouraging students to be thinking about during the training. We also have nine mentors from the AFTNC community (Mike Searle, Suzanne Pregerson, Marianne Ault-Riche, Ben Kanne, Margaret Rosoff, Davida Cohen, David Shaw, Roger Lake, and Casi Kushel) who are meeting with students on a monthly basis, talking about whatever seems relevant to them. Feedback meantime has been positive - one of the trainees said - "if I could have dreamed of what I wanted in training, here is what it is". It made us feel great.

If I had to focus on only two important aspects of the program, it would be on the ideas of collaboration and transparency. The different levels of collaboration have been both stimulating and sometimes difficult. As the six of us tried to hammer out ways in which we could present a cohesive curriculum without compromising our own identities or theoretical positions, we expanded our own thinking, and ran into places that felt like rocks trying to change their shapes. Eventually we formulated a set of over-arching principles, which have become the "work in progress" which joins us well enough to organize the curriculum in a way, which is cohesive for the students. Then, as the training actually began, a second aspect of the collaborative process came into focus. Bart Rubin and I began to teach together in the first trimester of the course. It is a little like being married without having gone through any engagement process (do excuse the heterosexist image, given that gays and lesbians again cannot legally marry here). We emailed, met over dinner, struggled, laughed, found places of joint vision, and sometimes, when we could not agree, just agreed to disagree. Now the students say, "oh - there they are, seeing things differently again. We really are learning what multiple perspectives mean" And Bart and I are proud as the trimester ends. It worked. We are curious how our next pairs, Ellen Pulleylank

Coffey and Jim Sparks for the second trimester, and Anne Bernstein and Sam Tabachnik for the third, will work out their team teaching.

Given that collaboration is one of our over-arching principles, we are trying as a faculty and in our teaching pairs to model collaborative processes that we can apply to our work with families. We honor the strengths and resiliencies of families. We create collaborative contracts with them in trying to envision a future that grows out of their strengths and is free of debilitating constraints. Part of this collaboration has to do with our transparency as therapists, which is another one of the over-arching principles we try to embrace. It is difficult to be transparent. I personally find it easier to "know" as a therapist than "not to know" or to acknowledge that what I know comes from my subjective experience rather than from "a truth" I believe will help. I also sometimes find it easier to solve problems than open them up for deliberation, particularly when there is a crisis and much pain is involved. I have been taught to keep boundaries so I am used to being less visible as a human being in terms of the details of my life. But real transparency means opening to the unknown and stepping away from the privilege and authority embedded in our position as therapists. Not simple. But given that we are often working with families who are marginalized in our society, how very important the realness of ourselves is for genuine contact.

This question of transparency has entered in as we teach as well. How much do we show what we don't know? How much do we utilize the strengths and resources of our students, which are quite extraordinary? How much authority do we feel we need to assume in order to maintain the respect of our students and for them to feel that they are coming to us for reasons they can elaborate to themselves? Aren't these questions valid as well for us to ask ourselves as therapists in relationship to families? Maybe the most important thing for me in this process is that I feel enlivened by being part of a

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community, which is engaged in trying to formulate thoughtful questions as well as deliberating about the complexities and different levels of possible answers. I am hoping that this spirit is meaningful to our students, and that they too feel part of a family therapy community, which can talk together about ideas, vulnerabilities, excitement, as well as continue to be curious about the very nature of the healing process as it occurs across cultures.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The section on the upcoming pages is a calendar of upcoming AFTNC events. We often meet in member's homes, and it can be a substantial bummer to get lost in the Berkeley hills on a Sunday evening when you've driven all the way from Palo Alto. Knowing this from experience, we have taken great pains to provide detailed directions with telephone contacts for all of our events. We encourage everyone to **take these directions with you to the event.**

AFTNC REGISTRATION FORM Name:

Address: _____ City

_____ ZIP _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-mail address:

Professional Affiliation: _____ Seeking CEU credits? _____

yes ___ no

Event Date Cost Amt. enclosed

The Person and Voice of the Family Therapist Saturday 1/22/05 \$55 members \$85 nonmembers. \$ _____

Introduction to Social Therapy Saturday 2/5/05 no fee or pre-registration needed

Annual Lunch Forum for Graduate Students & Recent Graduates: Saturday 2/26/05 no fee or pre-Career Options in Couple & Family Therapy registration needed

Playful Approaches to Serious Problems: Saturday 3/12/05 \$55 members

Young Children in Family Therapy \$85 nonmembers. \$ _____

AFTNC's Annual Open Meeting Sunday 4/17/05 no fee or pre-registration needed

Interventions with High Conflict Couples: Strategies for Healing Saturday 5/14/05 \$55 members

Wounded Relationships and Promoting Client & Therapist Well-Being \$85 nonmembers. \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please complete the form above and mail this form with your check (payable to AFTNC (PGTP)) to:

Redacted for privacy reasons.

AFTNC PRESENTS:
THE PERSON AND VOICE OF THE FAMILY THERAPIST
Yoel Elizur, Ph.D.

Date: Saturday, January 22, 2005 Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Location: First Unitarian Church (Starr King Room) 685 14th Street, Oakland, CA 94612.

PRESENTER: Yoel Elizur, PhD is professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. He is the co-author (with Salvador Minuchin) of *Institutionalizing Madness*. He recently completed a new book, *Holding Their Own*, a study of people with serious mental disorders and how they survive.

DESCRIPTION: This workshop focuses on the personal style of the therapist and the development of the therapeutic relationship. We will examine our strengths and vulnerabilities, learn to recognize habitual positions, and expand our repertoire, especially across differences.

CE UNITS: Attendees at this event will be eligible for 5 CE units for licensed psychologists, MFTs, and MSWs. To sign up for these units at the door, there is a \$ 25 per person fee (must be paid by check or credit card, not cash, made out to "AIU") for doing the CE paperwork. 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.

COST: The cost is \$55 for AFTNC members, \$85 for nonmembers. To register, cut out and return the registration form below. NOTE: You will not receive confirmation of registration in advance of the workshop. Simply show up at the door if you have sent in your check and form.

DIRECTIONS

From Berkeley, Richmond and points north, or San Francisco, Marin and Points west: Take the 580 freeway to the 980 freeway towards downtown Oakland. Take the 18th/14th Street off-ramp. Turn left on 14th and cross over the freeway. The church is on your right.

From Contra Costa County and points east: Take the 24 freeway westbound, which becomes the 980 freeway near downtown Oakland. Take the 18th/14th Street off-ramp. Turn left on 14th and cross over the freeway. The church is on your right.

From Hayward & the South: Take the 880 freeway north to the 980 freeway. Exit at 11th/14th St. Merge right and go three blocks to 14th Street. Make a right on 14th Street. The church is on the corner.

Public Transit: The church is approximately 4 blocks west of the 12th Street BART station. Numerous bus lines, including the 13, 14 and the 62, pass near the church.

PARKING: Safe and secure parking is available at the City Center garage located on Martin Luther King Jr. Way and 12th Street. From the church, go one block to MLK Way and make a right. The entrance to the garage is one block down on the left, just before 12th Street.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: If lost while driving call Jane Ariel at 510-306-0083. For other event information, call Aparna Dixit-Brunet at 510-521-5567.

AFTNC PRESENTS:
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL THERAPY
Ellen Peskin, LMFT and Helen Abel, LCSW

Date: Saturday, February 5, 2005 Time: 2-4 pm

PRESENTERS: Ellen Peskin, LMFT is the Clinical Director of the West Coast Center for Social Therapy, where she leads social therapy groups and clinical workshops. She is the director of the West Coast Center's "Building a New Psychology" series, a forum for clinicians, educators and other helping professionals working to change psychology from a diagnostic, evaluative, and (often) stigmatizing social science into a positive and creative force for the emotional, social, and cultural development of all people and their communities. Ellen has utilized many different approaches in her 25 years of private practice. Helen Abel, LCSW is the Director of the West Coast Center for Social Therapy. She is one of the founders of the social therapeutic approach and has been a practicing social therapist for many years. She is a lead trainer in the performance approach to development and has co-lead many workshops on topics such as the "Joy of Creating Imperfect Relationships," and "Stress: Who Needs It?" She is a social worker who has brought social therapy's approach to many mental health and professional organizations.

DESCRIPTION: Developed in the early 1970's by therapist and philosopher, Fred Newman, and influenced by the extraordinary discoveries of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky and philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, social therapy has "family resemblances" to narrative, social constructionist and systems therapies. Social Therapy focuses on the whole person in the context of his or her environment and helps us experience the essential human activity of creating with others. People get better by creating environments (such as the social therapy group) where we can bring our emotional pain (loneliness, anger, humiliation, and depression) and create something new with it---new conversations, new meanings, new emotions, and new lives. To the extent that we are focused on ourselves---on fixing what hurts us---we can't effectively use all of our creative, emotional, and social resources.

CE UNITS: Attendees at this event will be eligible for 2 CE units for licensed psychologists, MFTs, and MSWs. To sign up for these units at the door, there is a \$10 per person fee (must be paid by check or credit card, not cash, made out to "AIU") for doing the CE paperwork. 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. There is no additional charge for attending this event.

LOCATION: West Coast Center for Social Therapy, 870 Market St., # 559 San Francisco, 94102

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

The West Coast Center for Social Therapy is located in the Historic James Flood Building at 870 Market St. between Powell and Stockton and across from the San Francisco Shopping Center.

From the South: Take 101 North to the Seventh Street Exit. Turn Right on Bryant Street, then left on Fifth Street to market Street. The Historical James Flood Building is on the north side of the street between Fourth and Fifth Streets on Market Street.

From the East: Take Highway 80 (Bay Bridge) to the Fifth Street/Downtown Exit to Market St.

From the North: Take the Golden Gate Bridge to the Lombard Street Exit. Turn Right on Van Ness Avenue, Left on Eddy to Market Street.

RECOMMENDED PARKING:

The Fifth and Mission / Yerba Buena Garage at the corner of Fifth and Mission Streets

The Ellis-O'Farrell Garage off Ellis Street between Powell and Stockton

The Union Square Garage located off Geary Street between Powell and Stockton

Public Transport: The James Flood Building is easily accessible by both the BART and MUNI Metro, exit at Powell Street Station. MUNI bus lines 5, 6, 7, 9, 21, 31, and 66 will bring you to San Francisco Center at the corner of Market and Fifth Streets. The Amtrak offers bus pick up and drop off from the station directly to the San Francisco Center. Look for the Amtrak sign on Market Street in front of American Eagle Outfitters

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Call Aparna Dixit-Brunet at 510-521-5567.

AFTNC
(ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY THERAPISTS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)
PRESENTS:

ANNUAL LUNCH FORUM FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES:

**CAREER OPTIONS IN COUPLE & FAMILY THERAPY
(FOR PRIVATE PRACTICE, AGENCY, AND ACADEMIC SETTINGS)**

Join us for a lively panel of recent graduates and leading bay area family therapists to
discuss career focus and opportunities

Saturday, February 26, 2005, 12:00 noon-3:00 p.m. (no admission charge, refreshments provided),
food and mingling from 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m., panel discussion from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP), Alliant International University,
1 Beach Street, San Francisco

DIRECTIONS: The school is directly across the street from Pier 39, so it may be easiest to take the Embarcadero or Van Ness to Bay Street.

ABOUT AFTNC: Founded over 40 years ago (in 1963), AFTNC is the oldest organization of couple and family systems oriented therapists in the world. The aim of AFTNC is to advance the theory and practice of systems-oriented individual, couple and family therapy while fostering collegial relationships among its practitioners. Our multi-disciplinary, multicultural membership includes PhDs, PsyDs, MFTs, LCSWs, MDs, and graduate students in the helping professions. Please visit our website at www.aftnc.com and join us for this free panel discussion.

BENEFITS OF AFTNC STUDENT MEMBERSHIP (\$10 student membership fee):

- ❖ Networking with some of the leading family therapists in the Bay Area and the United States
- ❖ Priority registration for our 2-day annual retreat conference in the fall of 2005 on diverse families.
- ❖ Attendance at our Continuing Education series for members (This year's series includes programs on The Person and Voice of the Family Therapist; Playful Approaches to Serious Problems: Young Children in Family Therapy; Interventions with High-Conflict Couples: Strategies for Healing Wounded Relationships and Promoting Client and Therapist Well-Being; and others.
- ❖ Access to our videotape lending library of outstanding tapes in the field of couple and family therapy
- ❖ Subscription to the AFTNC Newsletter with lively articles focusing on local family therapy issues.
- ❖ Participation in the AFTNC listserv

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: contact AFTNC Student Co-Chairs: Mariah Feld (Email: mariahfeld@hotmail.com) or Keith Sutton (Email: wkeithsutton@comcast.net).

AFTNC PRESENTS:
**PLAYFUL APPROACHES TO SERIOUS PROBLEMS:
YOUNG CHILDREN IN FAMILY THERAPY**
Davida Cohen, MFT, and Jennifer Freeman, MFT.

Date: Saturday, March 12, 2005 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location: First Unitarian Church of Oakland (The Starr King Room), 685 14th Street, Oakland, CA 94612

PRESENTER: Jennifer Freeman is a consultant, speaker, and parent living in Berkeley. She wrote with Epston & Lobovits "Playful Approaches to Serious Problems: Narrative Therapy with Children and Their Families". She is also a supervisor at the Family Institute of Pinole. She is a faculty member at the College of Holistic Counseling in Sydney, Australia. She is also a mother.

DESCRIPTION: Kids are the experts on play and have unique problems-solving abilities. Blending narrative and innovative approaches, the workshop addresses: respecting children, evoking caring and healing intentions of most parents/ caregivers, responding to the internal and surrounding conditions that families encounter.

CE UNITS: Attendees at this event will be eligible for 5 CE units for licensed psychologists, MFTs, and MSWs. To sign up for these units at the door, there is a \$ 25 per person fee (must be paid by check or credit card, not cash, made out to "AIU") for doing the CE paperwork. 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.

COST: The cost is \$55 for AFTNC members, \$85 for nonmembers. To register, cut out and return the registration form below. NOTE: You will not receive confirmation of registration in advance of the workshop. Simply show up at the door if you have sent in your check and form.

DIRECTIONS:

From Berkeley, Richmond and points north, or San Francisco, Marin and Points west: Take the 580 freeway to the 980 freeway towards downtown Oakland. Take the 18th/14th Street off-ramp. Turn left on 14th and cross over the freeway. The church is on your right.

From Contra Costa County and points east: Take the 24 freeway westbound, which becomes the 980 freeway near downtown Oakland. Take the 18th/14th Street off-ramp. Turn left on 14th and cross over the freeway. The church is on your right.

From Hayward & the South: Take the 880 freeway north to the 980 freeway. Exit at 11th/14th St. Merge right and go three blocks to 14th Street. Make a right on 14th Street. The church is on the corner.

Public Transit: The church is approximately 4 blocks west of the 12th Street BART station. Numerous bus lines, including the 13, 14 and the 62, pass near the church.

PARKING: Safe and secure parking is available at the City Center garage located on Martin Luther King Jr. Way and 12th Street. From the church, go one block to MLK Way and make a right. The entrance to the garage is one block down on the left, just before 12th Street.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: If lost while driving, call Jane Ariel at 510-306-0083. For other event information, call Aparna Dixit-Brunet at 510-521-5567.

AFTNC PRESENTS:
AFTNC'S ANNUAL OPEN MEETING
Alan Leveton, MD & Eva Leveton, MFT

Come one, come all, and bring your friends as we celebrate our origins

“HOW THE WEST WAS WON”
AN EVENING’S ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDICINE SHOW
FILM!! DRAMA!! LAUGHTER!! TEARS!!

DATE: Sunday April 17, 2005 TIME: Show starts at 7.30 p.m.
LOCATION: Western Sky Studio, 2525 8th St., Berkeley, CA 94710

PRESENTERS: Alan Leveton, M.D., is one of the founders of the field of family therapy in the Bay Area and of AFTNC (in 1963). He also was one of the founders and directors of the San Francisco Family Therapy Institute on Sacramento Street. He maintains a private practice in San Francisco.

Eva Leveton, MS, MFT is a psychotherapist in private practice and a retired professor of Drama therapy at the California Institute of Integral Studies. She was a charter member of AFTNC. She is the author of three books, *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama and Adolescent Crisis: Approaches in Family Therapy*, as well as articles and poems. Her most recent book is a memoir entitled, *Eva's Berlin: The Memory of a Wartime Childhood*, which recalls her experience as a half-Jewish girl growing up in War-torn Berlin.

DESCRIPTION: Celebrating the beginnings of the AFTNC. Meet the giants...Don Jackson, Virginia Satir, Fritz Perls, James Framo, Karl Whitaker, Milton Erikson, Jay Haley.... through video projections, eye witnesses and dramatic re-creations. Laugh at the “worst time skits”. ...Meeting your client in the sauna at the Claremont, the double booking moment in the waiting room, the “tell-me-again-doctor-the-wonderful- interpretation-you-gave-me-a-year-ago” amnesia moment. One time only opportunity to celebrate origins, ancestors and our general euphoric optimism as the West as Won.....

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From San Francisco: Take I-80 East towards Bay Bridge/Oakland. Take the Ashby Avenue exit. Continue on Ashby (CA-13.) Turn left on 7th Street and right on Dwight Way. Turn right on 8th Street and arrive at 2525 8th

From Oakland and points South: Take 880-N towards Walnut Creek (I-980)(CA-24). I-880 N becomes I-980 East. Take the I-580 West exit towards San Francisco. Take the Ashby Avenue Exit. Continue on CA-13. Turn left on 7th Street, right on Dwight Street, right on 8th Street and arrive at 2525 8th

From points North: Take I-80 West to University Ave. exit. Turn RIGHT on 6th St. Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto DWIGHT CRES. Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto DWIGHT WAY. Turn RIGHT onto 8th Street and arrive at 2525 8th St.

INTENTION: To have an evening of fellowship across the generations of Bay Area family therapy. As we rebuild AFTNC, we invite all of our members to join in the celebration and bring your colleagues to experience where we come from, and why they should join in.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Aparna Dixit-Brunet at 510-521-5567.

AFTNC PRESENTS:

**INTERVENTIONS WITH HIGH CONFLICT COUPLES: STRATEGIES FOR
HEALING WOUNDED RELATIONSHIPS AND PROMOTING CLIENT AND
THERAPIST WELL-BEING**

Yvette Flores, Ph.D.

Date: Saturday, May 14, 2005 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location: First Unitarian Church of Oakland (The Starr King Room) 685 14th Street, Oakland, CA 94612

PRESENTER: Yvette Flores Ph.D is a researcher and clinician with extensive experience addressing violence in families. She presents therapeutic ideas informed by a cultural and gendered perspective. She is a professor in the Chicana Studies department at U.C. Davis.

DESCRIPTION: This workshop explores intimate relationships, and how violence is understood cross-culturally. It offers research-based interventions that promote healing and increase well-being of clients and therapists.

CE UNITS: Attendees at this event will be eligible for 5 CE units for licensed psychologists, MFTs, and MSWs. To sign up for these units at the door, there is a \$25 per person fee (must be paid by check or credit card, not cash, made out to "AIU") for doing the CE paperwork. 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.

COST: The cost is \$55 for AFTNC members, \$85 for nonmembers. To register, cut out and return the registration form below. NOTE: You will not receive confirmation of registration in advance of the workshop. Simply show up at the door if you have sent in your check and form.

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REVIEWS OF AFTNC EVENTS

Roger Lake

A regular feature of the Newsletter, meeting reviews are one way to participate in AFTNC. This section covers the events since the last newsletter. I want to thank Maggie Passanisi for her thoughtful comments on the September meeting in which Ann Jauregui spoke about her book on Epiphanies.

Having fallen down on my efforts at recruiting others, we are left with only my comments on the rest of the fall event calendar, which comprised Veronique Thompson's workshop for the PGTP, the Annual conference with Insoo Kim Berg, and the December meeting in which we reviewed that conference. I apologize for that, and hope some of you are encouraged to call Mary Cronin now and volunteer your services to review future events.

ANN JAUREGUI'S SEPTEMBER AFTNC PRESENTATION "AN EPIPHANY: WHERE DOES IT COME FROM AND WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?"

Reviewed by Margaret Passanisi

Margaret Passanisi, LCSW has had a private practice in San Francisco for 20 years. Family systems theory, feminist thinking, 12-step program involvement, narrative thought, EMDR, and the study of trauma and the brain inform her psychotherapy work. She loves learning and working with her primarily adult clients. In addition, she has begun a consolation ministry, a program for those who are grieving, in her church.

It was definitely an end of the summer event in the East Bay hills of El Cerrito. The air had a tinge of fall coolness, the leaves were beginning to turn colors and drop from their summer homes, yet people were still wearing sandals without socks. Richard Bush had opened his home, with family dog and all, to host this meeting of approximately 25 people. The presenter this evening was one of our own, Ann Jauregui, whose book; Epiphanies: A Psychotherapist's Tales of Spontaneous

Emotional Healing was published in January 2003 and has received excellent reviews.

I came to the event for a couple of reasons. I am particularly interested in the spiritual aspect of the healing work we do as psychotherapists, but just as compelling was the fact that Ann and I had shared time together in the writing group where this project was nurtured. I clearly remembered Silver Bay, but I didn't know how the story had developed from there. Right in the middle of Richard's living room I found myself volunteering to review Ann's presentation and thereby securing the fact that I would learn the rest of the story and renew my connection with Ann.

The presentation unfolded around the reading from her book about the epiphany she experienced in Silver Bay, Michigan, when she was a young girl. While summering there she would row out to a raft in the bay where she would read and lie in the sun. Occasionally she would have an experience where she expanded out of her body becoming one with her surroundings, observing herself and questioning her part in the experience. The words that came to her were, "I want to know"; to her they indicated, "How creation delights in the recognition of itself."

Ann uses Webster's definition of epiphany as a sudden insight into the reality or essential meaning of something ... the revelation is usually brought on by some simple, homely, or commonplace experience. Something big is occasioned by something little, something easily missed. In addition, it unfolds from there, sometimes as a flash, sometimes in exquisite slow motion, out of conventional time and space and language. "Look at this," you whisper as you see something you've never seen before. "And look at this," you whisper seeing yourself seeing it.

She kept this experience secret, but not intentionally; she didn't even tell herself. It was a phenomena unstoried in her own experience.

This has clinical implications for psychotherapy, she posits. Psychotherapists are repositories for stories. Her question, are we available to our clients for stories of the transcendent? Can we move beyond the secular boundaries of psychotherapy that are about “getting fixed?”

Assuming the position of an inquirer and storyteller, Ann began to relate stories of transcendent experiences of people outside her practice. There was one about a woman who attended a book reading and shared experiencing a “benign” universe looking through a dandelion. Another was about a mailman who was experiencing a number of difficult problems at that time in his life and dreamt that he was ok and would resolve his problems. With this story Ann added his mother’s response to the dream; she told him to “cherish” that dream. The significance here was the importance of the response of normalcy and inclusion to our stories of transcendence.

Ann continued to distinguish an epiphany. Meditation was discussed as was clairvoyance, extrasensory perception and insight. There was good participation. People accepted Ann’s quiet but powerful invitation to grapple with subject matter that could be viewed as New Age. More importantly, however, the message seemed to be to relish the questions, and to focus on the scientific context in which we work as psychotherapists.

I left Richard’s home that evening with the experience of a ‘fuzzy’ head. Formulating questions was difficult.

The following Friday I saw the movie, “What the Bleep Do We Know” and there was a resonance with what Ann had been saying. A group of scientists and researchers are asking the question of how we human beings know things. Do we know the universe from the inside, our mind, and our biochemistry? What is the “there” that is out there? How does one explain 4,000 people meditating and the crime rate dropping by 25% in Washington, D.C. over

a period of 6 months? Science and the transcendent discussed in the same movie. There was even a reference to the kind of joy Ann had spoken of in encountering the questions. Talk about synchronicity!

It wasn’t until I read Ann’s book that I began to understand the connections between psychotherapy, transcendence and science she made in her presentation. Science is in a contextual relationship to our practice of psychotherapy; we interpret the world (for ourselves and our clients) through the lens of science. What a revelation! I had stopped thinking about science since I squeaked by physics my senior year in college, yet I have been aware of both my own and my clients’ spiritual connection.

The history of science featured prominently in Ann’s book: Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein. How were their theories limited by the scientific context at that time? Descartes and Freud, where do they fit in? Which theory of science are we operating from when we diagnose and attempt to fix? Quantum physics was the subject of a long discussion. It seemed that herein lay an explanation for the epiphany Ann experienced and the spontaneous emotional healings she continues to learn about through her clients and others.

Reading Ann’s book has deepened my work. It has shown up in my listening. I ponder the question what more is there to be heard and attempt to be open to the healing. In conclusion here is a quote from her book that I found especially engaging: “Physicists have to keep doing quantum experiments. Just to do battle with old mind habits, just to let the Universe show them again how mysterious it really is.”

Ann Jauregui’s book can be purchased at either of the following websites:
SharingEpiphanies.com or AnnJauregui.com

**THE CULTURAL CONTEXT AND
FAMILY THERAPY
PRESENTED BY
VERONIQUE THOMPSON**

Reviewed by Roger Lake

On a rainy October Saturday, the first open workshop of the new PostGraduate Training Program brought about 20 of us to the First Unitarian Church in Oakland to learn more about becoming culturally aware allies in our work and practice.

After her mother, Marcia Thomas-Cooke, opened the workshop in a ritual space reflecting African tradition, Veronique Thompson led the discussions and provided us with a framework and exercises to engage us in understanding the importance of keeping culture at the center of our awareness. She distinguished “culturally informed practice” from “cultural competence” by helping us to look at the language and power differences between these two framings. The “cultural competence” frame implies a set of skills acquired by an expert professional, which may be practiced in a way that is not accountable for the relational experience of the family in the room. The “culturally informed practice” frame considers the power differential in the clinical situation and is more accountable and process oriented

Veronique used ideas coming from Social Justice and Narrative Therapy perspectives to help us understand what it means to work as a “multicultural ally” in family therapy. As an exercise, she used the narrative technique of having a conversation with racism as a way of engaging us in our own perspectives. She also used case material to illustrate and challenge us.

As the opening workshop in our new training program, Veronique’s presentation gave me the opportunity to meet the trainees, an impressive group, and to reflect on the nature of my own practice in this area, always valuable. I would encourage all of us in AFTNC to attend some of these Workshops put on by PGTP. They have

been added to our traditional AFTNC meeting series as a way to integrate the trainees into our organization (in which they are automatically members) and to provide greater depth in the presentations (they are planned as 5 hour events with ceu’s.) Because they are workshops, they need to be financially supported by the attendees, but I’d say the cost is worth it, and the material that’s covered here is hard to find anywhere else.

**THE 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND
FOLLOW-UP MEETING IN DECEMBER**

Reviewed by Roger Lake

We returned this year to the Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma County, a location that may become the home of our annual conference. We met again in mid November, a time when the weather can be a significant factor. Although evenings and mornings were chilly, the bunkhouse like accommodations at the Ranch were quite cozy and the dining hall affords an affable gathering place with really good food that is served buffet style. The meeting room we had this year was different from last year’s. Although adequate to the presentation, it had the distinct disadvantage of being located close enough to a pasture that produced hordes of those lazy buzzing flies (the kind that just drive you crazy) as they swirled into the room through the doors we kept open for ventilation. It was distracting, but we’ll be ready for them next year, when we return for the 2005 meeting featuring A. J. Franklin and Nancy Boyd-Franklin. That meeting will take place in mid-October, which should mean warmer weather, more opportunity for outdoor fun, and faster flies.

The conference was well enough attended that we did slightly better than break even, though there were some anxious moments as we approached the event, never being sure we had enough registrants. Carla Vogel-Stone and Lori Ono did a superb job of bringing the conference together and making it a success. As we move toward next fall’s meeting, I’m confident that

we are developing a relationship with Westerbeke that will help us return to the sense of having a familiar place for this important annual gathering.

A big part of the conference for me is the chance to play with others. As an old timer, I want to get the newer members to join in and share some of the fun. Where else can you see our distinguished President looking like this as he illustrates an illusive concept in a game of charades:



The theme of the conference was Solution Focused Therapy with Couples and Families, and the presenter was one of the developer's of that approach: Insoo Kim Berg. Personally, I enjoyed meeting Insoo very much. As part of the Council, I joined her for dinner in San Francisco the evening before the Conference began. She was seated across from me, and we had a very pleasant conversation that included as many at our long table as could hear. She continued throughout the weekend to be quite available to personal conversations and questions about her work. She sat down to lunch with student members on Saturday, and throughout the weekend, she was open to anyone interested to chat. She is clearly a seasoned, well-traveled, presenter, comfortable with any group of trainees. I remember her saying that she had just come from Europe, and describing a schedule that made me think that she really is doing what she loves, or she would be a zombie by now.

As to what she does, well, that's what she was here to teach. I'm not a solution-focused therapist. I think we spent one day on that perspective in my own training group. In my memory, that perspective was presented by somebody from MRI who I didn't know (and can't remember), and who seemed to feel like we weren't the friendliest audience (about half of this group were psychiatry residents who were pretty sketchy about family therapy in general, and the group's overall orientation was pretty clearly psychodynamic.) I'm probably confabulating this, but I remember being supervised through the mirror by this MRI guy in an interview with a couple that I'd just started to see. I found it all hopelessly confusing and never really went back to it. So I was actually pretty interested in seeing what Insoo had to say.

As a presenter, I found her coherent, creative, and masterful in her conduct of the workshop. She utilized lots of exercises and role-plays to amplify the material she was presenting through video cases. She had basic handouts that articulate the approach, which is pretty straight-forward, and she was always responsive to questions. She got an overall 1 from me for the weekend.



What I personally found most interesting about the presentation was Insoo's ability to keep the cognitive framework of the session organized around the exploration of individual perspectives on differences that make differences. The technique employs scaling questions which map subjective evaluations of potential solutions, and the infamous "miracle question" which explores unpredictable markers of systemic change. It's not hard to see how this technique can organize change in clinical situations, and what a valuable contribution it is to the field of social welfare. I would agree that it is (as Insoo pointed out) a powerful tool in the

first encounter with clients, and as a resource for the therapeutic group task of exploring potential solutions. But it's not my thing.

It is Insoo's, however, and I felt like I gained some understanding as I watched her deal with the workshop. She did a clinical role-play on Sunday morning where pretty much anyone in the room was invited to respond to the developing situation, rather than the standard one person per role. Of course, this gave license to all of us to try to be that dysfunctional family member who nails the therapist with a potentially explosive agenda. To my mind, she simply swept those issues aside with an orchestra conductor's grace and a capacity to hold the emotional potential in the room. She was always very much at the center of our attention, and able to stay with her own agenda. Given all the times I've simply been confused by that kind of chaos, I must say I was impressed.

Our tradition in AFTNC has been to follow the fall conference with a meeting that reviews the work of that presenter, a post hoc analysis by the locals, as it were. We did that this year on the first Sunday in December, when a small group of us met at Robert Green's Sacramento Street home for a presentation that was to have included Bart Rubin, who is quite familiar with a solution-focused approach. Bart had a conflict that left the job to Robert, who had a good deal to say about the limitations of solution-focused therapy as an approach to working with families and couples. His central concern, as I understood it, was that in this very active approach, the therapist may not listen well enough to the clients, nor utilize sound clinical judgment in assessing areas that the clients may be avoiding or ignoring. While that perspective might be ironic, from the solution focused view, (which gives immense weight to positive framings, respectful interactions, and rather meticulous formations of the client's problem in the client's own language), most of us in that meeting tended to agree with it. As usual, Robert also offered literature that was helpful,

including an excellent paper by Michael Hoyt on Solution Focused Couple Therapy (Chapter 12 in Gurman & Jacobson (Eds.) Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy (3rd Ed. 2002) New York: Guilford Press.)

I found myself frustrated by the poor turnout at this post-Conference meeting, but I do understand that December is a busy time, and doesn't really lend itself to a meeting like this. I'm hopeful that shifting the conference to October next year will allow a follow-up meeting in November where we can really focus on the Conference presentation, and that our December meeting can once again be more of a Holiday Season social gathering for the membership.

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Roger Lake

This section of the Newsletter comprises member contributions. It is the part of the newsletter that I like the most, and is the one I hope Terry Patterson will help to develop. This edition begins with a description of "Social Therapy" which will be the topic of our February CE event. It also includes Carla Haimowicz interesting commentary on "Multi-Cultural Group Work" and Ellen Pulleyblank-Coffey's contribution on the post election shock that most of us felt.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL THERAPY

By Ellen Peskin, MFT



Helen Abel, LCSW, is the Director of the West Coast Center for Social Therapy. She is one of the founders of the social therapy approach and has been a practicing social therapist for many years, seeing individual, couples, and families and leading groups. Helen coordinates outreach and is a lead trainer of social therapy. She has brought the approach to many mental health agencies and professional organizations. Phone 415-986-3500 ext #2. Email: habel@westcoastcenter.com.

Ellen Peskin, MFT, is the Clinical Director at the West Coast Center for Social Therapy where she sees individuals, couples and families and leads social therapy groups and Life Performance Trainings. She is also the director of the center's Building a New Psychology Series, a forum for helping professionals working to change psychology from a diagnostic, evaluative and (often) stigmatizing social science into a creative force for the emotional, social, and cultural development of all people and their communities. Ellen has offices in S.F. & the East Bay. Phone: 415-922-4525 Email: epeskin@westcoastcenter.com.



The February meeting of the AFTNC will be devoted to Social Therapy, a non-diagnostic, cultural performatory approach that utilizes the understanding that everything we do in life is a performance.

In social therapy, performance has come to be regarded as a common human activity that allows human beings to act and be self-reflective of our actions at the same time.

Social Therapy works to build groups as dynamic environments in which people develop emotionally through their participation in the activity of building the group, whether the group is the therapist and client, a couple, family or therapy group. Cure comes in the form of growth through social activity, through ensemble performance, not through insight or transference.

As Fred Newman, the founder of social therapy, Stanford trained philosopher, activist and playwright, says, “We understand performance very broadly. From our point of view, performance might have nothing to do with being on stage ... With the proper kind of support, people discover that they can, that we can, do things through performance that we never thought we could do. In a sense, we’re

trying to broaden each person’s notion of what you’re allowed to do.”

The Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, showed that we learn collectively through our inter-relationships with others at varying levels of skill, knowledge, expertise and ability. Based on a particular interpretation and expansion of Vygotsky’s work on zones of proximal development (zpd), social therapy looks at relationships as construction sites. Lois Holzman, Ph.D., early childhood developmentalist and Fred Newman’s chief collaborator, describes this activity as people constructing “zones”—the emotional space between who they are and who they are becoming. An important feature of zpd is that in constructing them we do things we don’t yet know how to do; we go beyond ourselves.

Most of us haven’t done that since we were very young, so we have to relearn how to do it. Having lost their sense that they can be active creators of new performances and new plays in their lives, adults often repeat deadening performances in deadly plays. Similar to early childhood, the re-education in social therapy is active, ensemble and performatory, rather than didactic.

Social Therapy helps people learn how to create environments where they can go beyond what they know how to do or are good at—where they can risk being foolish and play together in the way that young children play. This ongoing and ever-changing activity is developmental for all—even those who are the most “individually developed”.

Join Ellen Peskin, MFT and Helen Abel, LCSW in a seriously playful evening of performing as an ensemble, and in creating the stage to move from our role as “knowers” to performers. Bring your clinical experiences of feeling stuck with clients and get help with creating new therapist performances.

MultiCultural Group Work

Carla Haimowitz



Carla Haimowitz is a psychologist who works both in private practice in Oakland as well as for Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay. In addition to her Platicas groups she also runs groups for women and a divorce support group for men and women.

This is a brief description of psychotherapy groups with three immigrant populations. These groups take place in and out of the offices of Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay, where we meet some psychotherapy needs of persons speaking English, Farsi, Cambodian, Spanish, Bosnian, Russian, Hebrew, and Greek.

I was eager to meet with and hear from Rachel Erwin, who is close to accumulating internship hours towards her Ph.D. licensure. Rachel has been leading groups of Cambodian women for several years. The groups are partially paid for by a grant for culturally sensitive psychological services for cultural groups who would otherwise not have access to treatment. In some cases, Medical is billed. The population of each group varies from about ten to about fifteen, and group attendance is inconsistent.

The group members are ages 45 and older, referred to the group by a trusted case manager with Cambodian Community Development. The women had no idea what therapy was or why they were being referred. They came because they were told to come. These are women who lost most of their families under Pol Pot, the leader of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the 60's and '70's. (For a quick study of that experience, rent *The Killing Fields*, but prepare for nightmares for some time afterward). The women have severe posttraumatic stress disorder. The translator herself suffered trauma in Cambodia. They

have headaches that last for days. They cannot absorb information because much of their cognitive energies are used keeping horrific memories at bay.

They were told to come because each was isolated in her own despair. All of them live in poverty, unable to learn English, and, being poor, live in a desperate community full of law breaking, gunshots, lousy schools, little access to health care, all daily reminders of their lives under Pol Pot.

Rachel emphasizes how long it took and how many interventions were tried to help these women build trust. Some women do not speak for months. Some daughters or grandmothers show up out of curiosity, or unspoken need, only to disappear and reappear at Rachel's makeshift office in a room at a school year or more later. At first she approached with traditional interventions for posttraumatic stress disorder, such as telling the story of what happened, but this was too much for them to bear. The closest they come to this is relating current nightmares and current traumas to past experiences. She tried Yoga, sitting in chairs, sitting on the carpet, relaxation, breathing, self-massage. A spontaneous intervention by her colleague Mona Afary became a group tradition--best described as pressing one's cheek against another's in a ritualized but deeply felt greeting. Currently they have a homeopath volunteering, are using embroidery circles, Karaoke, going to museums, talking about sexuality, and use the group to revisit their Buddhist beliefs and practices.

Women in this group may live with their five children in one room, sharing their apartment with two other families. But they say to Rachel, "This is the only place people know me". They use the group to help them remember they are more than victims, and that they can dare to reach out to others.

I also had the treasure of meeting with Mona Alfary, Ph.D., who works with Cambodian men

and women. Like the people that Rachel works with, her clients have horrific nightmares and memories from torture they experienced and witnessed in Cambodia--people tortured, buried half-alive, babies killed before their parents, parents killed before their children.

I wondered how she decided to do these groups. She had been working with Cambodian refugees through an interpreter who is a well-trusted part of the Cambodian community. As Dr. Alfary sat with individual refugees she heard them describe many of the same experiences and realized that her clients had not shared them with others. Using an interpreter is always awkward, and she felt she could help these persons reach a deeper healing through participating in a group. She described these brave, wise, uneducated women as having lived in the shadows since their transport to the U.S. twenty years ago. They have lived on the periphery, existing underground, physically surviving but like ghosts in the underworld.

I began to understand her experience as like that of Persephone, traveling from Hades to the world of the living. Indeed, Mona, an immigrant herself from Iran, has an exquisitely attunement to the dark side, while keeping both feet on the ground. The interpreter she describes as fluid, agile, invisible. Translation is a precious talent, can make or break a therapy session. Her co-leader she describes as graceful, present only enough to be helpful, and trusted in her own right because of her own successful work with these women's teenage children.

The group she described consists of eight women, and has been working together for one year. MediCal is billed for these services, and Mona pays her co-leader and the interpreter out of the fees collected. The women drink tea and eat bagels (after all, this takes place at Jewish Family and Children's Services!) When asked to describe a particular incident, Mona described one day when a woman began by describing her nightmare. All in the group just

listened. When she was done, another woman shared her nightmare. The group quietly expressed themselves, their nightmares, one by one around the room, while others listened respectfully. When the group was over, everyone felt a sense of calm.

in another incident described by Dr. Alfary, a group member had a psychotic break. She was in a manic episode and was not taking her medication. She came and reported impossible, bizarre events. The group, understanding she was in trouble, patiently let her talk, listening respectfully. Because of that bond, her sense of being held by the group, she agreed to take her medications and did so. As I listened to Mona I felt her extraordinary aura of kindness. I too, felt held by Dr. Alfary.

I also had the pleasure of interviewing Jody Bove, MFT, who works in the Walnut Creek office of Jewish Family and Children's Services. Jody works with women who escaped the horrors of Serbian "ethnic cleansing" (rent the video Sarajevo to get some idea). These women witnessed their loved ones being raped, tortured, and disappeared. This group meets from one to three times each month. The participants speak Bosnian, are in their 40's and 50's, and the translator is the daughter of one of the women in the group. Some women prefer the confidentiality of individual therapy, and some chose both. MediCal pays.

More and more Bosnian refugees are arriving in Contra Costa County and as Jody worked with them individually she noticed their isolation, their need to express their grief, tell their experiences to those who were also there and could understand, as well as share their struggle with adaptation to the "weirdness" of U.S. norms. The goals of treatment are to reduce symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder and to prevent deterioration of mental health. Many have physical problems, from severe diabetes to shrapnel remaining from exploding grenades.

The ability to seek and take part in pleasurable activities helps reduce depression. So while the group initially met in the Walnut Creek office, Jody takes them on picnics (sometimes the picnic takes place on the floor of a member's living room), fruit picking in Brentwood, and they were welcomed in private gardens in Oakland to pick bouquets and compare herbs growing here in the States with herbs they grew in Bosnia. They play games aimed at helping them learn English as they prepare for citizenship. Boundaries and confidentiality seem to be less of a priority than empathy and support. This group has been meeting for over a year. Jody loves learning about Bosnian customs and is open to answering your questions. You may reach her at 925-927-2000 ext 562.

My urge to connect mothers and daughters in the Spanish Speaking immigrant community, as well as years of leading groups for sexually molested girls, resulted in my arranging mother-daughter Platicas, or "chats" using Planned Parenthood facilities (so as to familiarize them with Planned Parenthood's existence, location, and services).

The groups, two-hour gatherings, welcome mothers, daughters, aunts, neighbors, cousins, -- any females over age ten or eleven. Some girls brought their friends. Some women came without daughters. When boys show up (for lack of child care) they are given activities "in case they get bored" so they can wander in and out. Young women bring their babies. Babies, food, literature, and condoms--all are passed around the tables.

After icebreakers, we either address a certain topic as a whole group--sexually transmitted diseases, for example, or group members write down their questions anonymously and each question is answered by professional trainers, in Spanish for the mothers and English for the daughters. Because I know many of these mothers cannot write in either Spanish or

English, I stuff the box with questions I've heard them ask, or think they might want to ask.

It is often useful to have the mothers meet in one room separate from the youth, so the youth can ask questions they dare not with older generations present. Mothers want to know how to protect their daughters without losing the mother-daughter bond. Many mothers themselves have never had sex education, more are unfamiliar with sexually transmitted diseases or birth control methods, so with the official purpose of helping mothers educate their daughters, we are educating two generations at once.

One incident stands out in my mind: In one group we did some assertiveness role-plays, practicing what we would do if assaulted. One fourteen-year-old in the group used what she learned the following day: A near-lethal fight broke out in her apartment complex between an angry young man and an older, very drunk, oblivious man. Although many watched, she was the one, the only one, who called the police, saving the man's life.

Although every attempt is made to have the Platicas meetings close to where they live, on weekend days when most are free from work, attendance is unpredictable. The youth are usually more enthusiastic, but depend on their parents for transportation. Ideally, bilingual Platicas would be available weekly. Like in groups in general, one rarely knows the positive and negative reverberations from group activities.

**Politics and Family Therapy –
A Rant and a Reflection**
Ellen Pulleyblank Coffey Ph.D.

I was at the polls on election morning at 7A.M. Even in Berkeley, there was confusion. At first, the touch screen machines did not work and the woman signing us in was



elderly and had a hearing problem, so it took her a long time to find each person's name and the line kept growing, restlessly. I felt my anxiety and the anxiety of everyone on line. If we were having trouble here what was going to happen in Ohio, in Florida?

My first family therapy session of the day was at 8A.M. I expressed my anxiety about what was going to happen in the election. Though the family responded politely, it was clear that their agenda for our meeting did not include my election anxieties, or theirs. We had a productive session about life in their family as if we were not affected by what was happening in the world around us.

Most of the time family therapy takes place out of the context of the political world in which we live. In my mind, this is because most of the families I see are white upper middle class and privileged. They have many choices in their lives and their good fortune protects them, or so they think, from political events. Alternatively, more fairly they respond to political events outside the context of family therapy, as if one situation has nothing to do with the other.

How different this is when I work in Kosova, or as I recently did, on the Sioux reservation with a Lakota woman in Oglala South Dakota. In these conversations, political realities are at the center of what we speak of to each other. Family members in these situations include their political realities in all important conversations

that they have about their families. They often experience themselves as in the clutches of, and at the mercy of, political uncertainty or oppression. This leaves those who are the most oppressed most aware of the consequences of our political life. How do I as a political person and a family therapist reconcile these painful realities?

On election eve, I invited friends to join us at home, so that we could watch the election results together. No matter what the outcome it seemed important to be in community with others, as if what was happening politically was not just a public or private event, but also an event that affected us in relationship to one another. After the miserable outcome, we left each other dispirited and overwhelmed though still thankful that we had been together.

The next morning our adult children and their partners called us. Sarah and Todd were driving across the U.S. and had slept election night in Texas. Sarah said, "Mom we must get even more active." Her husband Todd said, "After I get over never wanting to vote again, I know I have to get back into it all." Caitlin called and in a nonstop diatribe told me how the democrats had to take back the conversation about the culture wars and family values. She was already thinking about starting to work for Hilary Clinton. Maureen emailed from NYC. She just had to share her outrage with us. Another friend called with a quote from the Dalai Lama. He said that when political injustice occurs we have to think about it from the perspective of the history of injustice. So many people reaching out to one another. In this way, our loving relationships soothe our feelings of disempowerment. We encourage in one another a hope for something better, and the courage to continue to take action in the face of injustice. At the center of political action is family and friends. This is what family values are all about. We have to take back the conversation about what really matters to most people.

So how does this all come back into family therapy. As a therapist, I cannot forget that even though when sitting with families it may seem as if we are unattached to the world outside, in fact, everything that we are discussing is connected to what is happening around us. Whenever I can, whenever it makes sense, I can offer that perspective and see if our ability to connect beyond ourselves can lead us toward alternative ways of living our lives.

Our AFTNC Postgraduate Training Program is based on a set of assumptions that places context and culture at the very center of our work as family therapists. This perspective teaches us how to keep politics, economics, and social justice at the forefront of our understanding of problems and how to address them. This kind of practice encourages us not to look away from painful realities, but instead to use our strengths to build relationships, families, and communities that care for one other and the world around us.

VIDEO LIBRARY UPDATE

Mary Coombs, Video Librarian & Council Member

Recent Acquisitions:

We have acquired three of Sue Johnson's Emotionally Focused Training Tapes; to be referred to as Tape #1, #2, and #3. A member of AFTNC is currently reviewing the three tapes so that we will have a brief description of each, to share with you. For those of you who attended the AFTNC annual conference in November and saw Insoo Kim Berg, we now have the following tapes of hers: Getting Her Children Home; Solution-Focused Therapy for Addictions (helping a client with a weight problem); and Interviewing for Solutions (2002). Any member who might like to borrow these tapes and do a brief descriptive write up, please contact me.

Borrowing Protocol:

The current procedure for borrowing tapes as an AFTNC member is to e-mail me (coombs@

berkeley.edu) with four choices. If you can pick up the tapes in person (East Bay-Kensington) you may borrow two tapes for up to two weeks. We can arrange a day for pick up, via e-mail, M-Fri. If you need tapes mailed to you, please send me a self addressed pre-paid video safe (bubble wrap) envelope, and I will mail you one at a time. All tapes are due within two weeks, after which there is a \$5 per week charge for each overdue tape.

If you have a recommendation of a Family Therapy tape they would like to see be a part of our video library please e-mail information.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Ryan Kolakoski, Membership Chair

Once again I am please to announce that membership has remained strong. We currently have 169 paid members for 2005 (114 Professional, 55 Student), which is up from 148 members last year at this time. We have more than doubled membership since 2003, and thanks to you have reestablished AFTNC as a thriving organization. There are still about 50 members from last year who have not yet renewed their membership. I encourage people to renew their AFTNC membership ASAP, as the 2005 Directory will be printed by mid-January.

If you have any questions pertaining to membership, please feel free to contact me at ryankola@yahoo.com or (925) 688-2118. We look forward to your continued support in upholding AFTNC's legacy as the "oldest family therapy organization in the country."

— LAST ISSUE NOTICE —

Ryan Kolakowski

If you haven't sent in your 2005 AFTNC membership dues, this is the last issue of the newsletter you'll be receiving. For membership or renewal information, contact Ryan Kolakoski, Membership Chair (925) 688-2118 ryankola@yahoo.com

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