

# AUGUST 1999 NEWSLETTER

## President's Message by Bill Piper

Our June 1999 Annual Meeting in Braga, Portugal was a remarkable conference, both socially and scientifically. It was the largest in our Society's history. This was evident from the number of presentations (377), attendees (468), and countries represented (27). The large numbers created an extraordinary challenge to the Local Arrangements Committee, chaired by Paulo Machado, particularly because many registrations were made just prior to the onset of the conference. For example, 100 extra places for the Saturday evening banquet had to be negotiated during the conference due to unexpected demand. Despite such complications, the banquet, as well as the other social activities of the conference, were most enjoyable. A strong note of thanks is extended to the Local Arrangements Committee for all of their hard work.

Pre-conference concerns about having seven simultaneous sessions for most time slots and having two very large poster sessions were alleviated by the number and enthusiasm of the attendees. Sessions were well attended and the poster sessions were lively and informative. In addition, the interactive format of the two state-of-the-art panels on group therapy and family therapy resulted in stimulating exchanges between members of the panel and audience, a format that deserves further implementation at future meetings.

The size and nature of the conference seems to signify at least two things. First, there is growing interest in psychotherapy research. Second, there is the truly international character of our Society. The two are of course related. The decision of the Executive Committee of several years ago to hold annual meetings outside North America every other year has proven to be a wise one. The international character of SPR was further supported by the current Executive Committee's recent decision to appoint Paulo Machado as the next Executive Officer of SPR. His term will begin at next June's annual meeting in Chicago. Correspondingly, the Society's administrative office will be in Braga, Portugal.

Other areas that received attention at the Executive Committee's meetings held just before and after the conference concerned membership retention and growth, procedures for nominating candidates for election to the Executive Committee, and the need to revise our Society's By-Laws to reflect the contemporary nature of our Society, e.g., its international character. The Executive Committee also spent considerable time considering the sites and arrangements for future annual meetings. Currently, the 2000 meeting is scheduled for Chicago, the 2001 meeting for Buenos Aires, the 2002 meeting for Santa Barbara, and we are expecting to review proposals for the 2003 meeting from proponents of Weimar and Jerusalem. As you can see, we expect to continue the SPR tradition of holding our annual meetings in attractive venues.

The Braga meeting marked the end of term for several members of the Executive Committee. These included Bill Stiles as Past President; Mark Aveline as United Kingdom Vice-President; and Sylvia

Gril as South American Vice-President. I wish to thank them for their years of dedicated service. At the same time, we welcomed to the Executive Committee Elspeth Guthrie as the new United Kingdom Vice-President and Paulo Luis Sousa as the new South American Vice-President. I look forward to working with them. I would also like to thank Marv Goldfried, who delivered a thought-provoking Presidential Address at the conference, and others on the Executive Committee for making my own transition to office a smooth one. As current President, I hope to contribute to the momentum created by our recent annual meeting. I am open to your thoughts and suggestions about further ways to improve and strengthen our Society. Finally, I strongly encourage you to vote for one of the two candidates for the office of General Vice-President in the forthcoming election. Information about Wilma Bucci and Franz Caspar is included in this newsletter. Voting is one way that you can directly affect the future course of our Society.

## Candidates for General Vice-President

There are two candidates for the office of General Vice-President who were recommended by the nomination committee at the business lunch during the annual meeting in Braga, Portugal. The following are their campaign statements as submitted to the newsletter.

### Wilma Bucci

This is an exciting, unruly and creative field and becoming more so. Our meetings now range from outcome studies and reports of advanced statistical methodologies at one pole, to a hermeneutic, post-modern, constructivist stance at the other. I see several directions that emerge from the work of our members and that should be emphasized in bridging these differences and defining our institutional and scientific role:

Increase the collaboration among research sites around the world. There are many groups addressing similar issues, but with their own theoretical frameworks, their own terminology, their own measures and without awareness of related work ongoing in other research programs. There is a unique opportunity at SPR to develop interaction among such groups, to advance the field.

Increase interaction with the basic science context. When we talk about the process of psychotherapy, we need to recognize that we are talking about basic psychological processes — such as attachment, interpersonal interaction, changes in mental representations, symbolizing. In studying therapeutic change, we can use the basic research in such areas and also contribute to it.

Incorporate both process and outcome in our studies and develop prospective longitudinal designs. The emphasis on process bridges the gap between the more traditional research approaches and the new modes of qualitative research. In studying process, however, we also need to know whether we are dealing with effective treatments and to address the deeper issues of what effective" means — for different patient groups and in different treatment forms.

Advocate for funding. I like to think that we are entering the *century of psychotherapy*, moving away from the recent emphasis on biological factors and chemical treatments. Neurophysiologists are

beginning to recognize, to their amazement, that talking about emotional experience in the context of a relationship can cause the same neural circuitry to fire as chemical treatments, and can do this without side effects and with more lasting results. We need to convert this incipient scientific recognition to an appropriate valuation of our field by policy makers and funding agencies. SPR must be ready for an expanded role around the world in supporting the development of research and advocating for funding. It's appropriate that SPR will enter this century of psychotherapy in Chicago, where it all began.

There are many other directions that I see as important — including increased interaction between researchers and clinicians, development of innovative treatments for diverse and at risk populations, greater attention to the role of SPR in training students, and development of career opportunities that incorporate research — but unfortunately I can't go any further in the small space allotted to me to introduce myself to you. My own research interests focus on the psychotherapy process, how people change in treatment, how to measure change in inner experience, not only symptoms and behaviors. I see our research questions in the context of a basic theory of mental and emotional functioning, the *multiple code theory*, and have developed the concept of the *referential process* and the variable of *Referential Activity* to examine the therapeutic process and therapeutic change. You can read about my work in my book *Psychoanalysis and Cognitive Science: A multiple code theory*, published by Guilford Press in 1997, and in many other publications. I am a Professor at the Derner Institute, the clinical psychology program of Adelphi University, and Scientific Director of the Glass Research Institute, where my research group and I are working to measure what is observable, while recognizing the complexity of the clinical issues, and where we have established active collaborations with many colleagues in the U.S., Europe and South America.

## **Franz Caspar**

Ever since I attended my first SPR meeting in 1985, it has been the society in which I feel most at home. Gradually I moved from being a friendly newcomer to a well integrated member. Today, I consider SPR members of various orientations as good friends. Although much of the work has become familiar, SPR meetings are still a stimulating highlight in the course of the year. I have not missed an annual meeting since my first one, and I'm proud of SPR's ongoing openness to those who come to a conference for the first time - and to non-North Americans. The 1993 SPR Junior Award has been a precious encouragement for my work.

The openness and blend of activities and orientations in SPR corresponds to my own work: I grew up in Switzerland, studied in Hamburg, worked in Bern for 20 years, and moved to Freiburg this year. My familiarity with different systems comes from studying, teaching and practicing as a student, postdoc, researcher and lecturer in Switzerland, Germany, USA, Canada, and Austria. I had training and partial training in client centered therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, as well as dynamic and Gestalt approaches. Ongoing practical work with in-and outpatients is a pivotal basis for my research and teaching.

A central emphasis in my academic work has been on individual case conceptualizations, and on the therapists. The extent to which successful therapy depends on their good judgment is not reflected in the sparse empirically based insight we have into therapists. Therapists are the ones who relate

etiological and treatment knowledge to the individual patient. We still know much too little about how they do it and how we can train them to do an even better job. We have made progress, but a lot remains to be done. The empirically validated treatment approach needs to be developed further with all the expertise represented in the SPR. Ultimately, however, an approach can never be better than the therapists using it for a specific patient. My main interest is in custom tailoring a therapeutic procedure, determined in part by the patient's main disorder, but in addition by many other factors such as interpersonal needs and limitations.

I have always tried not to shy away from conceptually and methodologically tricky questions, but to use and develop adequate concepts and research methods. In research, I try to combine advantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches. My attitude of openness to various approaches of psychotherapy, as well as my dedication to research is also reflected in the chairmanship of the research committee of the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration.

The position I hold currently is Professor in Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy at the University of Freiburg in southern Germany, close to Switzerland, the country in which I'm a citizen. The department of which I am chair, includes developmental and cultural psychology. Apart from regular teaching and research, we run a postgraduate training program in psychotherapy and an outpatient clinic. My advisory committee activities include journals (Psychotherapy Research, Psychotherapeut) and several psychotherapy training programs.

The ample experience in boards and committees, and my dedication to psychotherapy research are, I feel, a good basis which I would love to use serving the SPR as a general vice-president and ultimately as a president.

## **First SPR Mid-Atlantic USA Chapter Meeting**

Clara Hill and her colleagues (Nick Ladany, Barbara Thompson, Libby Williams, and Jason Zack) have announced the first SPR Mid-Atlantic Chapter meeting to be held at the University of Maryland, Friday, November 5th. Those who wish to participate should send a one-paragraph Abstract to Clara E. Hill, Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742. For more information, contact Clara Hill at [Hill@psyc.umd.edu](mailto:Hill@psyc.umd.edu). The conference has been organized with an eye to keeping costs low and the registration fee will be \$25 for members, and \$15 for students.

## **SPR Awards 1999**

Per Hoglend, Early Career Contribution Award

## **Call for Nominees for Senior and Early Career Awards**

Every year, SPR makes Senior Career and Early Career Achievement awards. We encourage everyone

to think of making nominations for both awards. All too often, we assume that someone else is doing this task, and the committee ends up with no nominations. This year's selection committee is composed of the most recent past presidents (Paul Crits-Christoph, Bill Stiles, and Marvin Goldfried).

**Early Career Award.** This is an early career award, normally granted no more than 9 years after the person has completed his or her research training. The award should reflect the awardee's productivity as well as promise in making scientific contributions to psychotherapy research. To make a nomination, please send: (a) a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae; (b) a personal statement from the nominee that summarizes his/her program of research; (c) copies of four representative publications (the nominee should be the first author on some of these publications); (d) at least three letters of recommendation (one from the nominator) attesting to the quality, significance, and promise of the nominee's work. The three recommenders should represent more than one institution. All of the materials, except for the publication, should be in English. If the publications are not in English, please include an abstract of each in English.

**Senior Award.** This is a distinguished career award that reflects a lifetime of scientific work and constitutes a major and significant contribution to psychotherapy research. The primary criterion for this award is the scientific merit of the nominee's contribution. To make a nomination, please send: (a) a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae; (b) copies of six of the most important papers or book, (c) at least three letters of recommendation (one from the nominator) attesting to the quality, significance, and impact of the nominee's research. The three recommenders should represent more than one institution. All of the materials, except for the publication, should be in English. If the publications are not in English, please include an abstract of each in English.

Please send all nominations to Paul Crits-Christoph at 3600 Market Street, 7th Floor, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2648.

The deadline for the submission of nominations is **DECEMBER 1**.

## SPR Web Sites

North America <http://www.educ.sfu.ca/society/>

Europe (Continental) <http://www.iep.uminho.pt/SPR/default.html/>

Europe (UK) <http://psyc.tc.sghms.ac.uk/spruk/>

South America <http://www.ub.edu.ar/spr/default.html>

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