

FEBRUARY, 1999 NEWSLETTER

See You in Portugal!

Program chairman Bill Piper has constructed the preliminary program for the international SPR meeting to be held in Braga, Portugal, June 16-20. You will be receiving the preliminary program and registration materials soon. Hold the dates, as the number of program submissions are way up from last year, and you can look forward to interacting with many of your friends. The Executive Committee, led by Marvin Goldfried, has just returned from reviewing the site and organizing the meeting. Host Paolo Machado has organized the meeting in the charming setting of the University of Minho, with lodging accommodations that are both excellent and relatively inexpensive.

As a primer for the excursion to Portugal, note the scientific achievements of Prince Henry of Portugal, known as the Navigator. In the old section of Oporto (near the convention site), there is a square with an impressive monument to Henry the Navigator. A major figure in 15th century Portugal, Prince Henry was a scientist who gathered empirical data from the Portuguese sailors who explored the western coast of Africa. By his insistence on the systematic gathering of data from sea-going men of Portugal, he helped chart the Atlantic and its coasts for further exploration. For more information, take a look at Daniel J. Boorstin's The Discoverers, chapters 21 and 22.

ELLIOTT ELECTED GENERAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Congratulations to Robert Elliott who has been elected General Vice-President of SPR. In his statement of candidacy, Robert enunciated the following priorities he envisions for SPR. In his own words:

1. Empirically-Supported Treatments. SPR needs to play a more active role in the debate over what kinds of scientific evidence count as empirical support for psychotherapy. SPR has an obligation to see that scientific, evidence-based considerations drive this debate rather than ideological and political ones.
2. Mental Health Services. SPR should encourage therapy research which has general relevance to training and treatment in real world settings.
3. Change Processes. SPR should continue to encourage the study of the key change processes by which clients transform themselves in therapy, at both micro-and-macro levels.
4. Pluralism. One of SPR's key strengths is our theoretical methodological, and cultural/national pluralism. It is important for us to make these differences creative ones. Although I am North American, I believe that it is very important to avoid scientific/cultural imperialism. With the continued growth of SPR chapters outside

North America, it has become more important than ever for us to make sure that the interests of SPR members outside of North America are represented equitably.

REPORT ON SPR MEMBERSHIP

by Mark Aveline

The Executive Committee has noted the plateau of membership just under 1,000 members for the last 10 years. The following is a summary of a membership review and report as requested by the Executive Committee. This task force included Mark Aveline, Hans Kordy, Sylvia Gril, David Orlinsky and student member Jamie Lami. The membership of the Society hovers just under 1,000 and is not growing in total. Numbers are declining in North America and holding steady in UK and South America. There is growth in Europe, which is likely to increase yet further after the international meeting in Braga in 1999. There has been a loss of prominent members, and a narrowing of the professional base, especially in North America. In the past there were many medical members, and now there are few. The SPR is good at providing a friendly atmosphere, a non-doctrinaire approach, a small international conference, and a forum for research to be presented and discussed. There is an opportunity for young researchers and practitioners to meet with established leaders in the field. There are features of SPR that are less desirable such as a tendency to clique-formation, and senior members who take more than their fair share of the presentation slots. There is a poor representation of cognitive-behavior therapy and family/couples therapy and to a lesser extent, group therapy.

Priorities vary among the Chapters and have to be recognized in planning local initiatives and the overall direction of the Society. The North American chapter is built around post-graduate departments of psychology with a ready supply of doctoral students and career researchers in senior staff positions. In other chapters, clinicians are the main members. We assume that the former want a vehicle for their research work and the latter an opportunity to get up to date with the latest research findings and enter into debate with researchers on research priorities and design. The one has methodological interest and expertise; the other clinical wisdom and the urgency driven by clinical need and purchaser pressure to practice effectively. It would be helpful to ascertain from the membership what their priorities are and their balance of expertise.

There is no single solution to the membership issue. We want a society of no more than 1500, as a larger society would mean a less manageable conference. The following are recommendations: 1) Conduct a membership survey; being sure that our activities meet members' aspirations; 2) increase the number of chapters, and emphasize the international nature of the Society; 3) make the international conference more attractive, e.g., reserve one-third of presentation time for general discussion, draw on expertise of audience, more short presentations, cut down on discussants, focus group and round table fish bowl discussions worked well; 4) devising local solutions for each chapter; 5) active marketing; 6) ensure that the cost of membership does not outstrip the return to the members; 7) consider running summer schools on research design and implementation.

REPORT FROM NIMH AVAILABLE ON INTERNET

"Bridging Science and Service," a report by the National Advisory Mental Health Council's Clinical Treatment and Services Research Workshop can be accessed on <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/bridge.htm> This report, requested by the Director of NIMH, will advise the Council on strategies for increasing the relevance, development and utilization of research-based treatment and service interventions for mental disorders. The workshop defined four overlapping types of research: efficacy research, effectiveness research, practice research, and service systems research. The report has important implications for the funding and distribution of research resources in the United States for the immediate years to come.

News from the South American Chapter

by Sylvia Gril

The South American Chapter of SPR held a very successful meeting in September, 1998. There were 130 participants, 24 presentations from the Chapter members and plenary sessions with other SPR members such as Wilma Bucci, Kenneth Howard, Rainer Krause, Erhard Mergenthaler, and Horst Kaechele. There was an interesting program, a lively business meeting and a beautiful party with live South American music.

Participants came from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and the United Kingdom. We also organized other activities at the University, the Ministry of Health and in the psychoanalytic association. It was really a great success, also a big effort but everyone was satisfied with the organization. We chose nice places, the museum of arts and another building in front of the river, also the party was a very warm event. A major topic in the business meeting was the organization of the international meeting in 2001 in Buenos Aires.

NORTH AMERICAN CHAPTER NEWS

by Adam Horvath

The North American Chapter Newsletter is available on the WEB.

JOURNAL NEWS

by Bill Stiles

The SPR Executive Council has voted to accept the offer of Oxford University Press to publish PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH, beginning with the 2000 Volume. A contract will be signed soon. New manuscripts submitted now will be considered for this first volume from the new publisher.

On January 1, 1999, Bill Stiles became North American Editor of PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH. Associate Editors for North America now include Robert J. Lueger from Marquette University and Brent Mallinckrodt from the University of Missouri, Columbia. Authors who live in North America should submit their best work to: William B. Stiles, Department of Psychology, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056, USA. Authors who live outside of North

America should continue to submit their best work to the European Editor: Bernhard Strauss, Institut für Medizinische Psychologie, Klinikum der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Stoysstrasse 3, D-07740 Jena, Germany.

Many thanks to Robert Elliott, who served as North American Editor for 1994-1998 and who will continue to handle some manuscripts that were first submitted during his tenure.

As proposed by the South American Regional Chapter, Sylvia Gril will serve as South American liaison for PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH. Authors who wish to do so may consult with Sylvia and receive feedback on drafts before they submit their manuscripts for review. This opportunity is optional and is meant to encourage more submissions from South America. Write or email: Sylvia Gril, Echevarriaza 3310/1001, Montevideo, Uruguay. Email: sgril@chasque.apc.org

SPR Web Sites

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

<http://www.iep.uminho.pt/SPR/default.html>

<http://psyctc.sghms.ac.uk/spruk/>

www.ub.edu.ar/society/default.html