

Mid Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society

MAGPS News

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Fall 2013 Volume 21, Issue 2

A Letter from the President, Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA

Whether you are an "old-timer" or a newcomer, I want to welcome you to the MAGPS community! I am honored to be your president for the next two years and am counting on the "power of the group" in many ways. First, I feel sustained, supported, and held by our terrific Board. Their knowledge and skills are useful to me at every turn. The Fall Conference committee is working hard preparing for "The Interplay between Envy, Competition, and Shame." The institutional memory held by so many people is especially helpful as I move into this new position. I thank each of you for that!



We are in this organization because we have some sense of the power of groups - to wound, to heal, to kill, to repair the world. May our journey together help us further our understanding and our skills to be more effective in the multiple groups to which we belong.

Meanwhile, I welcome feedback about how we are doing. Our organization should be a model of effective group life - which takes transparency, trust, honesty, kindness, courage, and effort. I look forward to our endeavor together.

Our Fall Conference is entitled "The Interplay between Envy, Competition, and Shame: Its Impact on Intimacy in Groups." It will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MD, a lovely hotel on the water. Steven Van Wagoner will be our guest presenter. I look forward to seeing you there.

-Maryetta

An Interview with Steven Van Wagoner, PhD, CGP, FAGPA by Jonathan C. Stillerman, PhD, CGP

In preparation for the Fall 2013 MAGPS Conference, I had the pleasure of interviewing our guest presenter, Steven Van Wagoner. As you will read, Dr. Van Wagoner is personally and professionally invested in the conference theme and very much committed to creating a learning environment where it is safe to strive and grow together.

Here's a taste of the weekend to come:

JCS: Competition. Envy. Shame. That's a daunting triumvirate. Perhaps you could begin by telling us a bit about how you became interested in this theme?

SVW: My academic interest in this topic began during my first few years at the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA). I was taken with how competitive our colleagues in the field can be. I attended a workshop on competition led by my friend and colleague Leyla Navaro, who edited the book *Envy, Competition, and Gender* with another friend and colleague Sharan Schwartzberg. At the time I was leading workshops and institutes on intimacy in groups. Leyla and I began to discuss the relationship between envy and competition, and its impact on the development of intimacy in relationships.

(Continued on Page 8)



"MAGPS is delighted to have Steven Van Wagoner, PhD, CGP, FAGPA, as our guest presenter at the upcoming Fall Conference ...This conference promises to be exciting and invigorating, and we hope you will join us."





MAGPS 2013 Fall Conference in Historic Cambridge, MD by Conference Committee Member, Jen Bissell, LICSW

MAGPS is delighted to have Steven Van Wagoner, PhD, CGP, FAGPA, as our guest presenter at the upcoming Fall Conference "The Interplay Between Envy, Competition, and Shame: Its Impact on Intimacy in Groups." The conference will take place from Friday evening, October 25th, to Sunday morning, October 27th, on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Cambridge, MD.

Steven Van Wagoner is a licensed psychologist and certified group psychotherapist who is in private practice in Washington, DC. He is on faculty at the National Group Psychotherapy Institute of the Washington School of Psychiatry and is an adjunct clinical faculty member at Georgetown University and the University of Maryland, a Fellow of the American Group Psychotherapy Association, and the editor of "The Group Circle," AGPA's newsletter. Dr. Van Wagoner has presented extensively on group psychotherapy locally and nationally, and has been leading groups for 30 years.

Drawing from his three decades of experience, Dr. Van Wagoner will highlight the interplay between envy, competition, and shame, elements that are found in all psychotherapy groups. Through demonstration groups and the large plenary, Dr. Van Wagoner will help us explore ways in which the group therapist, members, and the group as a whole work with envy and competition, and how the group process holds the possibility of transforming these concepts into creative/constructive energy. Participants will experience and discuss how the leader's containment of these powerful experiences enable members to identify and analyze various ways of constructing intimacy and competing for relatedness. We will also learn to identify and verbalize passionately held feelings of envy, rejection, and perceived loss of power as a way of neutralizing its destructive potential.

We will follow the traditional MAGPS conference structure, engaging in large plenaries with demonstration groups and small experiential process groups led by experienced group psychotherapists throughout the weekend. Among our small group leaders for this conference are Trish Cleary, Margo London, Rose McIntyre, Joan Medway, Farooq Moyuddin, Reginald Nettles, Kathi Sholz, Grace Riddell, and Lewis Weber. Our visiting small group leader is Sharan Schwartzberg, who will be joining us from Boston. Biographies of all small group leaders are available on the website at this link: http://www.magps.org/conferences/archive/2013%20fall/SGL_Fall2013.pdf.

Our conference hotel is the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa & Marina located at 100 Heron Blvd, at Route 50, Cambridge, MD 21613. Visit http://www.magbs.org/conferences/conferences.html and learn how you can reserve a room for \$135/night by requesting the MAGPS block room rate and registering before September 25th.



The resort (seen above) is beautifully situated on 400 acres on the banks of the Choptank River. There will be many opportunities to stir up envy when you tell your family and friends where you will be spending the weekend! The resort provides a multitude of activities to engage in during conference downtime. Be playful in the indoor pool, hike along the trails, walk along the tree-lined streets of historic downtown Cambridge, watch the sunset over the bay, or take the opportunity to indulge in relaxing treatments at the spa. This conference promises to be exciting and invigorating, and we hope you will join us. We're looking forward to seeing you this Fall!

Experiencing Southeast Asia in a Wheelchair

By Barbara Cristy LSCW-C, LICSW, BCD



Editor's Note: I asked Barbara Cristy to write an article on her recent travels to Southeast Asia to capture her unique perspective of the power of the group and society. Barbara has had multiple sclerosis since childhood and, throughout her life, has traveled all over the world. She has training in Intensive Short Term Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP) from the Washington School of Psychiatry. Barbara practices in Silver Spring and Washington, DC, and works with a variety of concerns affecting adults and couples. On September 28th she will be co presenting the film Anotnia's Line for our Cinema Series.

I took the plunge and upgraded to business class. After major surgery in October, it was either upgrade or cancel my November trip to Southeast Asia. I was planning to travel to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. No way was I going to give up one of the last items on my bucket list! So upgrade I did for the I9-hour flight from Washington to Hanoi.

There's no enough space here to describe my experience in Lao or Cambodia, so I'll focus on Vietnam, where I'd go back in a minute if I could."

Upon our arrival in Hanoi, we were greeted by our charming guide. One of the first things he said was, "I hope we can be friends so I don't have to use a false smile." That set the tone for our entire trip to Vietnam, and our guide and I are friends to this day.

As our driver first pulled up with the van, it was clear that it was not in the least handicapped accessible. We were all looking at each other quizzically trying to figure out how on earth we were going to get me in when, suddenly, a small Vietnamese man appeared saying, "Let me show you," and swept me

into his arms, gently depositing me into the van. He then told our guide that his wife was in a wheelchair and that she had started Hanoi Independent Living Center, the only independent living organization in the country. Of course, my itinerary changed there and then. The organization not only trains the disabled to function independently, they also train personal assistants how to work with those unable to care for themselves.



The city streets were chaotic with cars, motorcycles, scooters, and bicycles going every which way; barely a semblance of a right of way. No traffic lights. No honking. I sped across the street in my motorized chair. After all, one runs in order not to get hit! Not in Hanoi. I nearly gave our guide a heart attack! His response was clear, firm, and yet, poetic: "You have to go slowly, slowly, very slowly; you're a rock in the river and the water has to go around you." From then on he insisted that the motor be off while he controlled the wheelchair whenever we had to cross a street or travel along a street were there was no sidewalk.

Energy, excitement, and a life force were palpable all through our visit in Vietnam. Yet a walk through a beautiful park surrounding one of the many lakes found people picnicking, doing Tai Chi, lovers strolling arm in arm, having their pictures taken in preparation for their wedding. At one point we watched as a couple of people began to massage the back of the "strangers" in front of them. As others walked by, they joined the line. We watched the line grow and were touched by the care and affection so easily shared.

The ease with which care and affection was shared for one another was also evident in



the way people treated me. They were very interested in my chair. I believe they felt honored that a wheelchair-bound person would want to visit their country. People frequently gave me a flower or gently touched my shoulder as they passed by with a lovely smile. Many wanted to take a picture with me with my camera. The picture was not for them; it was for connection, attachment, and appreciation. Many times a group of people spontaneously surrounded me to carry me, in my wheelchair, up a flight of steps so I could go where it would otherwise have been impossible. Another spontaneous group would carry me down.



I have been to many countries where we have not bombed or deposited Agent Orange, but where I have, nevertheless, experienced anti American feeling. What was so extraordinary in Vietnam was its absence. I saw the same warm, accepting attitude displayed towards other nationalities, such as the French and the Japanese. The Vietnamese do not seem to hold onto past injustices. As a culture, while they worship their ancestors, they live in the present with excitement and enthusiasm for both the here-and-now and for the future they are building.



Rose McIntyre is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Group Psychotherapist. In addition to her practice in Vienna, VA, she is an artist and poet, who loves the beach and the outdoors.

Do You See Me?

By Rose McIntyre MSW, LCSW, CGP

Do you see me?....I am here.

Am I the child from your past, the neighbor down the street, the person from the news?

Do you see me?....I am here.

Am I a memory from before, or an experience in the now, am I the one who brings about trust, or do I elicit fear?

Do you see me?....I am here.

Can you get beyond "what you think you know,"
To "be curious" about "what you see" and acknowledge "who I am,"
can you "ask" and together "let's be."

Do you see me?....I am here.

Are there scars within your dreams, hopes amongst your anxieties, and desires in the midst of your confusion?

Do you see me?....I am here.

Can you look beyond my skin, or my money and the status of my job, and can you leave my sex life and gender to me?

Do you see me?....I am here. What are you afraid of?



MAGPS Awards & Scholarships

Student Scholarships
Volunteer Scholarships
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Barry Bukatman Memorial AGPA Scholarship

For more information about receiving a scholarship or to make a donation: see the MAGPS directory, contact Farooq Mohyuddin 703-625-8444, or visit http://www.magps.org/join/scholarship.html.

MAPGS News is published twice a year.

MAGPS News seeks to promote the objectives of the Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society, while also serving as a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and expressions among MAGPS members.

Do you have something creative to share?

MAGPS News is now accepting announcements, articles, poetry, and artwork..

Submissions:

Karen Eberwein, PsyD (202) 409-7774

newsletter@magps.org

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Group Psychotherapy and Recovery from Addiction, our Spring '13 Conference by Conference Committee Member Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, LICSW, CGP, FAGPA

Jeffrey D. Roth, MD, FAGPA, FASAM, from Chicago, was our presenter for our spring conference entitled *Group Psychotherapy and Recovery from Addiction*. Our guest small group leader was Eleanor F. Counselman, EdD, CGP, LFAGPA from Boston.

Although the focus was on addictions and group therapy, it was quickly apparent that everyone present could benefit from watching leffrey work. His style is group-centered and psychoanalytic with great attention to transference and counter-transference. Over the weekend he did a total of six half-hour demonstration groups that flowed together through the phases of "forming, norming, and storming." My initial skepticism about such short demo groups led to an appreciation of how effective his interpretations were in moving members to choice-points of greater openness and exploration. His careful way of seeking authorization from members and from both the demo group and the larger conference group was a wise reminder of the need for this in our own work. His view of addictions was far broader than the generally accepted notions of addictions, to include work, "the internet," and anything that moves us away from living authentically.

I asked Jeffrey for his comments about our experience together. First, he felt St. Elizabeths provided an "amazing container" for our work. "It was very

grounding to have this [conference] in a real place rather than an ivory tower." He added that it was "symbolically important" given that the history of the hospital was to care for people who did not have the means for care otherwise. He was struck by the sense of community and inclusiveness for people to come and connect with others from both the private practice world and from agencies. He noted our efforts to embrace diversity, something that is a struggle for all group therapy societies. Finally, he appreciated the warm sense of being welcomed here. He greatly appreciated the integrity of the small group leaders and their willingness to be vulnerable and to offer him the respect of challenging him and learning from him.

St. Elizabeths is a beautiful facility and was available to us at no cost, and I want to thank Farooq Mohyuddin for arranging this. Due to illness, the Conference Chair, Eleanor Hoskins was unable to attend, but her thorough work in leading the conference committee in planning every detail was evident throughout the weekend, and I want to thank her, as well as the committee.

At this conference, Reggie Nettles finished an eight year stint with us as Board Member, President-Elect, President, and Past President. Tom Large also finished a tour on our Board as a Member at Large. We thank you!



"It was very grounding to have this [conference] in a real place rather than an ivory tower..." —Jeffrey Roth



Photos on the following pages courtesy of Paul Timin. Thank you, Paul!







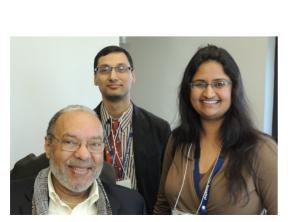


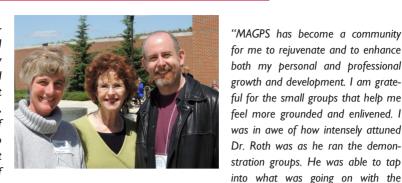
Spring Conference Reflections and High

"It is always an eye-opening experience to be on the other side, and I think that clients, in general, are very brave for joining group therapy and sticking with it... During the last session, I took a risk to self-disclose, and I received a great amount of support and feedback from my group members. Not only did I learn a lot about myself, I became more aware of my interactions with others. Three sessions of group work were powerful; I can't imagine how more effective it would be with more." —MM



"This weekend also brought to consciousness an old lesson about the pervasiveness of addiction in our client populations, as well as in our own group, whether it be our own recovery, or that of someone we love. I think this weekend was a call to action to make sure we're screening for addiction and co-dependency issues in our groups, AND that we're bringing them into our small groups and other encounters. I will happily carry this message to others." -LM







"Receiving a student scholarship to the MAGPS Spring Conference was a wonderful opportunity. The chance to hear Dr. Roth speak and demonstrate his techniques was valuable; and so were the small group sessions... Most of all, I am grateful that I was able to experience all of this with my fellow students." -WT

group members in the moment and

make targeted interventions that,

more often than not, seemed to be

right on." — IB

"MAGPS has become a community



"Thank you again, for the opportunity to attend the MAGPS Spring Conference at St. Elizabeths with a volunteer scholarship. I enjoyed seeing many of my colleagues again. Being a greeter was the ideal job to allow me to interact with people. I enjoyed being in a small group, and particularly enjoyed the presentations and demo groups by Dr. Jeffrey Roth, especially since I work in the area of addictions." —LB





Stimulating conversations at the new attendees and mentors reception. . .







Hellos, good-byes, and transitions...



Outgoing, Current, and New Board Members during the Community Meeting

From Left to Right: Tzetelina Dimitrova, Student/New Professional Representative • Reginald Nettles, outgoing Nominations & Scholarships Chair • Lenore Pomerance, Cinemas Series Coordinator • Chelsea Moore, Student/New Professional Representative • Venus Masselam, Member at Large • Nancy Haskins, President Elect/Spring '14 Conference Chair • Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, President • Ron Kimball, Membership Chair • Farooq Mohyuddin, Past President/current Nominations & Scholarships Chair • Lew Weber, Member at Large • Tom Large, outgoing Member at Large • John Rhead, Treasurer • Rose McIntyre, Secretary • Karen Eberwein, Newsletter Editor • Lisa Smith, Mentorship. Board Members missing from photo: Jen Bissell, Mentorship • Eleanor Hoskins, Spring '13 Conference Chair/Member at Large • Rob Williams, Webmaster).

Thanks, sentiments, parting words, and honors...









From Left to Right: Farooq Mohyuddin reflects on his past two years as President of MAGPS • Reginald Nettles admires his Jefferson's Cup and speaks about his eight years as a Board member • Thomas Large shares some words with us as he departs from a Member at Large position on the Board • Venus Masselam, Member at Large, smiles for the camera after receiving an award from the Board in recognition of her years of outstanding service, commitment, and dedication to MAGPS. Thank you all for your contributions to our group!



"Once a person can own their envious feelings, they can then explore and communicate the potential admiration and prizing that is the underside of envy. In this transformation lies the greatest potential for mutual understanding, creativity, and intimacy."

(Interview Continued from Page 1)

SVW: Over time, we developed this into a workshop, and then co-led a related institute for five years. On a personal level, I have always been intrigued by envy, I was one of four, the one who always managed to slip under the parental radar. I was envied for being the only one to attend college, let alone graduate school. At the time I never considered that to be what envied meant or that had I possessed something that others in my family wanted (parental prizing, opportunity). So I would downplay what I thought might elicit envy, "dim my lights" as a colleague of mine says. This way of hiding, of not being exposed, opens the door for shame. Shame can also show up when one becomes aware of one's own envy or competitive yearnings. Some people learn to enjoy being competitive. As a child I sublimated it into sports or academics, but there was always a message in the family to avoid boasting or being too proud. It took years to develop a healthy sense of pride, to neither hide it, nor boast about it.

JCS: Can you give us an example of how competition, envy, and shame may manifest in a therapy group?

SVW: Sure. In one of my groups, a member decided to confront the person who sexually molested him as a teen. He came to group afterwards with a sense of pride that he had been able to navigate this confrontation so effectively. Another member of the group with a similar history asked why on earth he would expose himself to such an experience, and the first member immediately felt deflated and ashamed of his poor judgment. Fortunately, other members saw it differently and were able to praise the person for his courage.

JCS: So when you're witnessing this kind of emotionally charged interaction in group, is there a theoretical framework you find particularly influential in guiding how you think about the situation and choose to intervene?

SVW: I heavily rely upon both relational and modern analytic group theories. The language of relational theory really speaks to me as it pertains to the mutual influences that take place between the group therapist and the members in the group, and how we co-construct experience. The modern analytic approach developed by Hyman Spotnitz and Louis Ormont is a wonderful theory of technique that can steady us at times when the group is engaged in a powerful enactment that defies explanation, seems chaotic, and makes us question our competence. Techniques and tools like bridging, emotional insulation, progressive emotional communication, and affect education can help the group members continue to explore what is taking place between them as a way of learning about how they interact in the world.

JCS: Many people, on first glance, might think that acknowledging competitive and envious feelings would threaten intimacy in relationships. You seem to see it differently. Can you tell us why?

SVW: Of course it depends, but I see the opportunity for intimacy. When envy and competition are acted out in the group, they often have a negative impact. But if members can face their envious feelings and translate their behaviors into words, they begin to have more choices about how to relate. Once a person can own their envious feelings, they can then explore and communicate the potential admiration and prizing that is the underside of envy. In this transformation lies the greatest potential for mutual understanding, creativity, and intimacy. The catch, of course, is that many of us feel shame at having our competitive behaviors and envious feelings observed and exposed, which can make it difficult for members to study those parts of themselves.

JCS: I was struck in the conference description by your use of the phrase "competing for relatedness." It's not what I typically imagine people competing for. Can you tell us what you mean?

SVW: Yes. In a group, talking time is divided. Sometimes this can lead to members feeling deprived and competing for space and attention, either from the leader or other members. Or members will witness a really intimate interaction take place between two people and want some of that connection for themselves. How they go about trying to get it reveals a lot about that individual. Some might try to share in the interaction. Others might try to change the subject or interrupt in a jarring manner because they feel left out. No matter how clumsy, these are all attempts to compete for relatedness.

(Continued on Page 9)

(Interview continued from Page 8)

JCS: Given that competitiveness is often seen as a typically masculine quality, do you see competition for relatedness in your groups manifesting differently depending on the member's gender?

SVW: It sometimes does, but as gender roles have blurred over the past few decades, I've noticed both men and women rethinking competition, moving away from a "win-lose" paradigm to a "grow with" paradigm. I've certainly noticed that shift in myself. When I was a much younger professional, I felt the urge to be brilliant and offer up some insightful comment (that hasn't completely gone away), and I felt threatened if my ideas were challenged. Now I become excited when challenged, interested in how others see things, and curious as to whether I can learn something new. I plan to bring this attitude to the conference, and so long as I can manage my shame, it should make our experience together that much more engaging.

JCS: I noticed on the MAGPS website that shame is prominent in the conference title, but it doesn't appear in the narrative description of the conference. Do you think that says anything about the challenge of maintaining a focus on shame in our work?

SVW: You caught me. I think you're onto something. Working with shame is difficult, especially when we suddenly find ourselves having a partial identification with another person's shame. This is the contagious aspect of shame. Jerry Gans taught me that the therapist's shame is always nearby, and we have to tolerate and examine our own shame if we are to help our group members do the same.

JCS: You just mentioned your own shame. It seems that none of us are immune to feelings of competition, envy, and shame. How do you manage and use those experiences in yourself when running a group?

SVW: It's a great question. Whenever I am having a strong pull to act a certain way, or am having an intense feeling, I explore in my mind what I'm feeling, why, toward whom, and ask myself what are they feeling, why, and what could I say that would progress our relationship. These are techniques I learned from my friend and colleague Elliot Zeisel. I also ask myself, am I the only one feeling this way? Who else might be having a similar feeling? Sometimes if a feeling seems induced to me, what Spotnitz calls "objective countertransference," I might ask the group "Why am I feeling envious right now?" If another in the group feels similarly, this could invite him or her to express it. And if you want to know more, you're just going to have to come to the weekend.

JCS: In the spirit of the conference theme, I found myself wanting to ask you how you'll know by the end of the conference if you've WON...but in all seriousness, what do you hope members will take from attending this weekend?

SVW: That envious and competitive feelings are normal in human relations, and nothing to be ashamed of. I hope that attendees will bring their competitiveness to the weekend, and that we will all adopt a curious attitude toward whatever transpires. I don't intend to win anything, but certainly invite others to. I do hope that whatever feelings emerge, I can create an atmosphere that welcomes their verbal expression and exploration. And if folks return to their groups with a greater awareness of these dynamics in their work and a better sense of how to work with them, even better.

MAGPS Cinemas Series: Antonia's Line

Saturday, September 28, 2013

Barbara Cristy & Margo Silberstein

6014 28th Street, North Arlington, VA

Light dinner served at 5:45pm • Movie at 6:30

RSVP at MAGPS.org



http://magps.wordpress.com/2013/08/24/next-cinema-series-september-28-2013/



Calendar of Events

Fall-Winter 2013

Saturday, September 28, 2013, 5:45 pm

MAGPS Cinema Series—6014 28th Street North, Arlington, VA

Film: Antonia's Line

Barbara Cristy & Margo Silberstein

October 25-27, 2013

Annual Fall Conference—Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay

The Interplay Between Envy, Competition, and Shame: Its Impact on Intimacy in Groups

Steven Van Wagoner, PhD, CGP, FAGPA

December 2013 (Date & Film TBD), 5:45 pm

MAGPS Cinema Series—6014 28th Street North, Arlington, VA

Winter-Spring 2014

March 3-8, 2014

AGPA Annual Meeting, Boston, MA

Group: Creating Connection in Turbulent Times

May 2014 (Date TBD)

MAGPS Spring Conference, St Elizabeths, Washington, DC

Catherine Nugent, LCPC, TEP

Catherine Nugent is a psychotherapist and psychodramatist who serves on the Board of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, a Trainer, Educator, Practitioner (TEP) of Psychodrama, Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy, and a Fellow of The American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama (ASGPP).

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- Feedback from members.
- Keep us posted on your professional activities.
- Share your thoughts on Group Psychotherapy.

Submissions should be approximately 500-1000 words in length. For more information, please contact Karen Eberwein at

202-409-7774 or newsletter@magps.org





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MAGPS Fall Conference:

The Interplay Between Envy, Competition, and Shame: Its Impact on Intimacy in Groups



Steven Van Wagoner, PhD, CGP, FAGPA Friday, Saturday, & Sunday

October 25-27, 2013

Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay
100 Heron Boulevard
Cambridge, MD 21613

Conference brochure and registration:

http://www.magps.org/conferences/conferences.html