



MAGPS News

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Karen Eberwein, PsyD
202-409-7774

Lisa Smith, MS

202-540-8244

Newsletter

Karen Eberwein, PsyD
info@eberwein.com

Contributing Editor

Lisa Smith, MS

Fall 2012

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MAGPS Fall 2012 Conference: The Effective Group Therapist

An Interview with Molyn Leszcz, MD, FRCP (C), DFAGPA

by Ann O'Malley, PhD

Ann: *Tell me how you got involved in group therapy. Was it a large component of your graduate training? If not, who or what influenced you toward working with groups?*

Molyn: When I was training at the University of Toronto, my then Chief of Psychiatry, Stan Greben, asked if I would be interested in pursuing group therapy more rigorously at the end of my training. He connected me with Irv Yalom and I spent a year with him at Stanford. I found that year to be life altering. Irv and I became good friends and colleagues and have done many things together over the last many years, not the least of which was co-authoring the 5th edition of *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. When I came back to Toronto after spending a year in Stanford, I took responsibility for developing programs in education, training, and scholarship in the area of group training at the University and that really has been my academic base for the last thirty years or so.*

Ann: *Can you provide a brief overview of what participants will learn about the importance of the therapeutic relationship?*

Molyn: Sure. What I'm hoping to do—through a combination of presentations, including theory, interaction and clinical illustration, and through the use of demonstration groups in which people volunteer to participate—is to try to address issues that have to do with how we improve our effectiveness as group therapists (with information that is also relevant to our work as individual therapists).

One of the things that I've been very interested in more recently is that, although the adage that "all therapies win prizes" may be true (going back to Luborsky's work in the 70's and then a few years ago), not all therapists are equally effective. What I hope to do in this workshop is to address factors that contribute to improving therapists' effectiveness in leading groups. Some of these relate to working in the here and now, activation of interaction, the attribution of meaning to experience as well as with how the therapist uses himself or herself as a therapeutic tool.

(Interview continued on Page 11)

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MAGPS Fall Conference

The Effective Group Therapist

Molyn Leszcz, MD

October 19, 20, & 21, 2012

Solomons, Maryland

Conference brochure and registration:

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



MAGPS News



Letter from the President, Farooq Mohyuddin, MD

As I write this letter to the MAGPS membership I am filled with a multitude of thoughts and emotions. It is customary for the President of any professional organization to address the membership and write a Presidential Message or proclamation. To me MAGPS is not just a professional organization but a family. It is the community that has given me a professional identity and a support network when I have needed it. Therefore, rather than proclamations, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for providing the community where I, and many others, have found a place to belong, grow, and foster development in others new to the field. Thank you all.

This year, we celebrate the 60th anniversary of MAGPS. Through the years we have continued to evolve into a vibrant organization with a diversity of experience, which is what I feel is the most outstanding aspect of being a part of this community. Our membership includes some of the most experienced and respected group leaders in the country, as well as energetic, mid level practitioners, and thoughtful, newly minted group therapists. While the interest and membership in many professional organizations promoting psychotherapy has dwindled, we have been able to attract new members and have many new faces in leadership positions on the MAGPS Board. This is an achievement we share as members of MAGPS and is an attestation to the welcoming atmosphere created by all of you. The MAGPS mission of promoting group psychotherapy education and creating a learning community can only be achieved by all of us working together. We also owe a great deal of thanks to the MAGPS leadership, including the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Conference Chairs, Conference Committees and volunteers, who through their hard work, have facilitated making our mission a success.

During my tenure as President MAGPS, MAGPS leadership and the Board have made it a priority to diversify our membership and have worked to increase participation from psychotherapists working in the public sector. We have also increased minority representation and collaboration with other local organizations. One major step towards this integration has been the collaboration between Saint Elizabeths Hospital/DMH and MAGPS. Additionally, we have nurtured a relationship, which has been mutually beneficial, and has furthered the collaboration between public agencies and private sector. For the first time we invited an institution as presenter; The Washington School of Psychiatry, who was very well received at our Spring 2012 conference. We should be proud of our forward momentum and I would ask all of you to make suggestions about ways to increase these collaborations. Also, we welcome your general suggestions, feedback and guidance.

You likely have also noted that it is time for the next Board election and we, under the leadership of Reginald Nettles and the nominating committee, are in the process of requesting nominations. Please participate actively in this process to continue to elect dynamic leadership to serve our wonderful organization. As we look to the next conference I would like to congratulate the Board and Fall Conference committee on inviting a giant in the field of group psychotherapy, Melyn Lesecz. He will be presenting on "The Effective Group Therapist" at our Fall 2012 conference in Solomons Island, MD. This promises to be an excellent conference and I look forward to seeing everyone there. Also, I would like to acknowledge and thank our new, Newsletter Editor, Karen Eberwein. She, along with the help of Lisa Smith and the MAGPS members who you will hear from in this volume, has worked tirelessly to bring out this issue to continue our traditions.

Lastly, while we look with hope to the future of MAGPS, we might also reflect back at the monumental losses that we have had in 2012—Mark Lawrence, Leon Lurie, Beryce MacLennan, Alan Miller, and Sy Rubinfeld. Sadly, we said goodbye to dear friends who gave so much to our organization and the field of Group Psychotherapy. They will be missed.





Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society Events

Electing our 2013-15 Board of Directors—send your ballot in!

Elected Positions

President Elect/Conference Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Membership Chair
Members at Large (4)

Ex Officio Positions

Webmaster
Cinema Series Chair
Student/New Professional Reps (2)
Newsletter Editor

- ☒ Aug 1, 2012:
- ☐ Nov 1, 2012:
- ☐ Nov 20, 2012:
- ☐ Dec 10, 2012:
- ☐ April 2013:

Call for nominations
Candidates established
Slate of candidates mailed
Deadline for returning your ballot
New Board takes Office

The current President, Farooq Mohyuddin, MD and the President-Elect, Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, MA, FAGA will automatically assume the positions of Immediate Past President and President, respectively. We need a majority of members to respond to fulfill our by-law requirements, so please be on the look out for your ballot and vote. For further information, please contact Reginald Nettles, PhD, CGP, the chair of the Nominations Committee,

r.nettlesphd@gmail.com or 410-290-7999.

2012-2013 MAGPS Calendar

Fall-Winter 2012

Saturday, September 29, 2012—5:45 pm

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

Lars and the Real Girl

Jonathan Stillerman, PhD

October 19, 20, & 21, 2012

Annual Fall Conference—Solomons Maryland

The Effective Group Therapist

Molyn Leszcz, MD

Saturday, December 1, 2012—5:45pm

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

The Celluloid Closet

Gordon Cohen, PsyD

Winter-Spring 2013

Saturday, Feb 1, 2013—5:45 pm

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

Bear Cub

Gordon Cohen, PsyD

March 2013 (Date TBD)—5:45 pm

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

Film: TBD

Stephanie Koenig, LICSW & Mark Feldman, PhD

April 20 & 21, 2013

Annual Spring Conference—St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, DC

Group Psychotherapy & Recovery from Addiction

Jeffery Roth, MD



For more information and to RSVP for Cinema Series events, visit the MAGPS website at <http://www.magps.org/cinema/cinema.html>.

MAGPS News

MAGPS Conference Returns to Solomons, Maryland

Nancy Hafkin, PhD, CGP, Fall 2012 Conference Chair



*"We hope that the
MAGPS Fall Conference
is in your October plans."*

MAGPS will hold its Fall Conference in Solomons on Friday evening, October 19 through Sunday morning, October 21. We are fortunate to welcome Molyn Leszcz, MD as our guest presenter.

Dr. Leszcz is the Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Mount Sinai Hospital, and Professor and Vice-Chair, Clinical, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto. He will be presenting on "The Effective Group Therapist." Dr. Leszcz has spent an illustrious career studying group therapy in all its variations, and is prepared to share with us his understanding of the factors impacting effectiveness in the group therapist. He will be discussing such topics as the therapeutic alliance, negative outcomes, the maladaptive transaction cycle, and working effectively in the here and now.

Dr. Leszcz's proficiency as an instructor has been acknowledged by multiple awards for excellence in teaching. In 2005, he co-authored, with Irvin Yalom, the 5th edition of *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*, and in 2009, was awarded the Alonso Award for Outstanding Contributions to Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy.

Assisting Dr. Leszcz this weekend are a talented cadre of small group leaders: Gloria Myers Beller, Trish Cleary, Karen Eberwein, Bradley Lake, Venus Masselam, Bob Schulte, Ted Siedlecki, Jonathan Stillerman, and Katherine Thorn. As is custom in MAGPS, a visiting small group leader, Josephine Tervalon, will join us from Texas. There will be small process groups on three occasions during the weekend.

The venue at the Holiday Inn Conference Center and Marina is conducive to learning and to recreation, as it exists in a relaxed setting overlooking beautiful Back Creek. The hotel is located off Route 4 just before the Thomas Johnson Bridge. Newly refurbished rooms are \$119 for a single and \$124 for double occupancy. A fitness center and two restaurants are on premises. The little town of Solomons is a pleasant walk from the hotel. Nearby activities include golfing, boating, fishing, and visiting historical sites of Southern Maryland, such as St. Mary's City, Calvert Cliffs State Park, and the Calvert Marine Museum.

We hope that the MAGPS Fall Conference is in your October plans. We look forward to an opportunity to learn and play in beautiful Southern Maryland.

Remembering the Fall Conference

John Thomas, MSW, CGP



"The invitation from Mid-Atlantic's Board to present was, for us on the faculty, both an honor and a special challenge..."

MAGPS's spring conference this past April at St. Elizabeths Hospital was a unique experience, for both attendees and presenters. The latter were faculty members of the [Washington School of Psychiatry's National Group Psychotherapy Institute](#). The invitation from Mid-Atlantic's Board to present was, for us on the faculty, both an honor and a special challenge. An honor because, as MAGPS members ourselves, we were being asked by respected colleagues to take up the task of creating a conference that would live up to Mid-Atlantic's high standards. The challenge was the flip side of the honor: What would we or could we offer that would maintain those standards?

In contrast to more typical presenters, we could not bring a particular therapeutic approach, or idea. What NGPI offers in our two year cycles of weekend conferences is a systematic introduction to contemporary group practice, framed around various theories as applied to the developmental arc of therapy groups and to the practice problems associated with that arc. You could say that, besides the content of a given weekend, we advance a certain attitude toward the work, characterized by curiosity and openness to new ideas. Also, the exploration takes place in what we refer to as a "[dialogic learning community](#)," in

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(Spring Conference continued from Page 4)

which Institute members, no less than faculty, engage in a mutually enriching encounter. This process, we knew, might not be so easy to present in a day and half.

As it happened, we had no need to be concerned. Via two demonstration groups, led in turn, and masterfully, by Mary Ann Dubner and Steve Van Wagoner, two quite different ways of working, each informed by a particular theoretical position, provided a framework for plenary and small group discussions about how theory shapes practice, as well as the similarities and differences between approaches. Those discussions were rich in content and in the discourse that developed between conference members, Mary Ann, Steve, and other NGPI faculty who were part of a final plenary panel.

All in all it turned out to be an exhilarating and very rewarding weekend for our faculty, especially because it gave us a chance to collaborate and dialogue with so many Mid-Atlantic colleagues and friends.

More important, judging from their feedback, conference attendees shared our feelings.

Editor's Note: MAGPS would like to thank St. Elizabeths Hospital for hosting the event. In all, 70 attendees participated in our conference, including graduate students from Johns Hopkins University, the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences, and residents from St. Elizabeths Hospital. Also, we would like to express our appreciation to the small group, co-leaders for helping to make the event a success. They were: Bea Liebenberg and Eleanor Hoskins; Lenore Pomerance and Matt Flemming; John Thomas and Bridgett Neamo; Michael Stiers and Rose McIntyre; Hank Fallon and Margo London; Reginald Nettles and Harriet Swankin; Ayana Watkins-Northern and Lorraine Wodiska.



Lenore Pomerance receives an award from the Board in recognition of her years of outstanding service, dedication and commitment to the Mid-Atlantic Group Therapy Society.

Thank you Lenore!



Photos courtesy of Paul Timin. Many more are available on our [Facebook](#) page and the Mid-Atlantic website www.magps.org.



Spring Conference Scholarship Attendee Reflections

Katrina Ana T. Haller

What I have learned in my clinical encounters, in a more structured clinical setting, is the need for sustenance and how to use systems to get enough sustenance. This requires a greater awareness—we are both: self and other. A quote from Winnicott comes to mind, “There’s no such thing as a baby.” Whether you apply theory in order to facilitate the creative process of change or the other way around, or in the more confined interplay of both in the (often asymmetric) circle of the group, the essence of the change process remains the quality of a genuine connection.

Having participated in this conference, I am honored to say that I have been a recipient of a scholarship which

has somewhat facilitated me, in varying degrees, to declutter the mindset of my own professional self while I consciously attempt to connect. I found the group unraveled psychotic parts of the self in their multiplicity within it. The group seemed to contain these parts with much force, yet with less shameful exposure of the individual self. Hence, in my experience the group provided me with comfort and grinds. The definition of any ongoing approach remains a matter of both theory and experience. I personally wonder, though, whether any group can provide enough sustenance considering the multitude of enactments. Like in the small group, can there be healing that lasts?



Rachel Miller

I have already been urging all of my classmates in my graduate program to attend MAGPS in the fall! My first clinically-focused conference, I found it to be an enlightening experience which I will take with me throughout my clinical training. From the large group sessions demonstrating various modes and theories of group psychotherapy, to the small group session, I am grateful to have observed and

partaken in process-oriented groups for the first time.

My small group co-leaders provided an excellent model for effective ways of facilitating group therapy. I was blown away to be in the same group with some true pioneers in psychology, and was humbled by their genuineness and warmth. Thank you for this experience, and I look forward to attending MAGPS in the future!

Jen Bissell

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have received a scholarship to attend this year's Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society's Spring Conference. This is the second conference that I have participated in MAGPS and each time I have left the weekend feeling as if I have personally and professionally gained something of great value that is difficult for me to immediately articulate or to name, but I know is there.

The combination of the faculty fishbowl, the demonstration groups, and the small group experience, created an emotionally powerful and fulfilling experience. Each component enhanced my skills, but in very different ways.

The fishbowl discussion was intellectually stimulating and provided wonderful validation for how each of us integrates theory into our practice differently and develops individual relationships with theory. The small process groups continue to be such a tremendously moving experience for me, one that truly affirms the power of in vivo learning. To participate in these small groups and see how the group connects, develops, addresses conflict, and transforms over just three sessions in two short days, is a powerfully moving experience that reaffirms my belief in the power of the group.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to attend and participate so fully.

"I have left the weekend feeling as if I have personally and professionally gained something of great value..."

Steven Spatz

I consider myself very fortunate that I was given the opportunity to attend the Spring 2012 MAGPS Conference held in Washington, DC this April. Receiving the Louisa Schwartz scholarship enabled me to have an enriching experience, as I was able to gain insight into the use of specific group counseling theories and learn from more seasoned clinicians. From the moment I arrived, I felt welcomed and was pleased with the variety of familiar and new faces I encountered throughout the weekend.

Being in Mike Stiers and Rose McIntyre's small group was a valuable experience for my own growth; it was interesting to see how each member brought unique characteristics and life experiences to the group. I also

really appreciated the support of my mentor for the conference, Rob Williams, as he helped me learn the nuances of the MAGPS conferences and discussed his own group experiences with me. Watching the group demonstrations by Steve Van Wagner and his modern analytic approach and Mary Ann Dubner and her relational approach was informative and I appreciated seeing use of specific techniques in action. Additionally, I must thank my supervisor, Katherine Thorn, and my group professor from graduate school, Dr. Robert Bernstein, for their wisdom and insight during the course of the two day conference. Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity to attend the Spring 2012 MAGPS conference and I look forward to attending again in the future!

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MAGPS News

Sentiments from a Middle East Travel Seminar

Maryetta Andrews Sachs



Following our Spring conference, I had a remarkable group experience. For 3 weeks in May, I, along with two Bible professors, six other laypersons from different fields, and twenty-three Protestant Seminarians (who represented five southern seminaries) traveled through the Middle East visiting key Biblical spots. I felt honored to be chosen as a layperson and will be digesting my experience for a long time. Once again, I confirmed within myself, "Sometimes you can trust the group you are in—or are running."

In 1979, Dr. Max Miller, an Emory University Biblical Archeologist, and H.G. Pittillo, a builder and Atlanta philanthropist, designed and initiated the first Middle East Travel Seminar (METS). Miller and Pittillo wanted future community leaders to have a bigger vision of the world than they would get sitting in their southern seminaries. Pittillo believed "You put your money on the leaders," so laypersons, who are leaders in their fields, were eventually added to both balance the group and bring greater perspective. Over the years criteria for selection has been tweaked for both students and laypersons.

The orientation we received was thorough, clear, and included, "We love you, but we will leave you. If the bus is leaving at 8am, it is not leaving at 8:05." When issues arose within the community, someone would ask for a community meeting before dinner. I noted with appreciation that our group did its work without me having to break much of a sweat. Our two "fearless leaders" assumed we would take responsibility for anything extra that we needed as a group and simply passed responsibility back to us if asked. I also noted how unobtrusive they were about taking us to the different Biblical/archeological sites. They lectured about each spot, but completely respected our capacity to take in each experience at our own pace and in our own way. My favorite experience was climbing onto a camel at 1:30 a.m. to be led up Mt. Sinai in Egypt by Bedouins. The last third of the way was on foot with flashlights. I was moved by the millions of stars, the sounds of Arabic and camels, the cold desert night air, and then sunrise over the Bible lands. I thought of the analogies between archeological digs and psychotherapy—Clearly excavation work, whether in the field or in therapy, must be handled very carefully by people trained in the particulars of their field.

Extensive conversations on the bus and over meals stretched our world views and religious beliefs. Our leaders frequently reminded us, "The questions are easy; the answers are not." The transgenerational transmission of trauma as reflected in the Palestinian/Israeli problem lay before us. Racism was evident throughout our stay in Petra, Jordan. Members were greatly interested in the elections in Egypt and the politics of Greece, but avoided any discussion of our politics at home. This seemed to mirror the current polarization in this country. It also struck me that yet after 30 years of taking groups to this part of the world, we were asked in a worship service, "What are we blind to today?" This question reverberated for me throughout the three weeks.

I would propose that each of us consider "What are we blind to?" in our daily lives and in our work with patients. Do we move to easy answers to bind our existential anxiety? Can we trust the group process we are involved in? Do we speak truth to power? Do we ask the tough questions necessary for a healthy group or society even when the answers are exceedingly difficult? We should always stay open to new information that may fundamentally change our worldview...Mr. Pittillo would smile.

Newsletter Contributions Welcome

The newsletter welcomes contributions and feedback from members. Please keep us posted on your professional activities and thoughts. Also, consider writing an article of educational, informational, or instructional quality related to the field of Group Psychotherapy. Submissions should be approximately 500-1000 words in length. For more information, please contact Karen Eberwein at

202-409-7774

or

info@keberwein.com



MAGPS Awards & Scholarships

Student Scholarships

Volunteer Scholarships

Louisa Schwartz Memorial Scholarship

Conference 1st Time Attendee Scholarships

Barry Bukatman Memorial AGPA Scholarship

For more information about receiving a scholarship or to make a donation, see the MAGPS directory, contact [Reginald Nettles](mailto:Reginald.Nettles@magps.org) at 410-290-7999, or visit <http://www.magps.org/join/scholarship.html>.

(Scholarship Reflections Continued from Page 7)

Liz Marsh

The Spring 2012 conference was quite a gift! The intimacy of a small conference allowed me an opportunity to interact with many talented clinicians in my field and to feel included in a way that I haven't before at bigger events. I left feeling that I had several mentors to connect with in the future.

Besides the intimacy of the conference and my small

group experience, which was maybe my best yet, I have to say that my personal highlight was the discussion group on the value of theory. It was a treat to be able to listen to more experienced therapists talking about how they work. This is something that I wish I had more opportunities to witness. It fostered a great discussion and I left considering my own use of theory. Thank you again.



Anonymous

As a training psychiatry resident, I was able to benefit significantly from the MAGPS Spring Conference. I currently lead a weekly psychoeducational therapy group with another resident where the aim is to educate individuals in care about important issues related to mental health education. This has been my first and only exposure to group psychotherapy and the conference provided new insights into different aspects of the group process.

In general, I was aware of the fact that group therapy is intended to help people improve their ability to cope with difficulties and problems in their lives. However by listening to experts in the field at the conference, I now realize that group therapy also focuses on interpersonal interactions within the group setting. Particularly by observing members in the two large group sessions on both days, I was able to see how group psychotherapy helps to address emotional difficulties and encourage the personal development of the participants in the group.

The smaller group sessions were particularly enlightening because I experienced what it is like being a part of the group process—which was initially very intimidating. The psychotherapy group I participated in differs from the group that I normally lead, in that group process is emphasized more in the former compared to a psychoeducational group which simulates a class setting. I found that it was initially difficult to decide in what way I wanted to introduce myself to the group members (i.e. state where I was from vs. my profession vs. my interests) and to participate in an activity without any clear direction. For example,

subject matter for discussion was not determined by the leader but instead rose spontaneously from the group, which was also new for me. It was at this juncture that I realized exactly how task-oriented and self-conscious I am. My group members were able to help me by discussing personal issues that they were facing alongside the feelings they were experiencing in the room. I was able to identify with them and in turn they gave helpful feedback, encouragement, support, and criticism to my words/contributions.

In addition, I realized how important the leaders' roles were as I found myself paying attention to both their verbal and non-verbal communication. At times, I would react both positively and negatively to their position depending on how the group process was developing. It took us a while to get into a rhythm (i.e., connect with each other) and although I understood that there were key points that the leaders wanted us to appreciate based on our discussion, I found that the timing of their interventions was not always helpful and/or appropriate. It was at this point that I was able to question my interpretation of resistance to the material being discussed (i.e., psychotropic medication) from my weekly group members as being possible resistance to the group process and/or the leaders. Overall, I found the conference stimulating and enlightening and based on my experience, I now have better understanding of psychotherapy principles, the stages of group work and process, and the role of the leader in different types of group therapy, which should enhance my skills in group psychotherapy.



"The smaller group sessions were particularly enlightening because I experienced what it is like being a part of the group process..."



MAGPS News

What Rules Y/Our World?

Bob Schulte



Bob Schulte and John Dluhy
celebrating after their workshop
experience at IAGP.



Rosemary Segulla and Mary Dluhy
at the Hotel Santa Teresa,
Cartagena, Columbia.

The XVIII Congress of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes (IAGP) was held in Cartagena, Columbia on July 16-21, 2012. The theme "Between Worlds and Cultures: Social Transformation" recognized the dynamic interplay of many cultures in the social transformations of the 21st century. Cartagena de Indias, one of the oldest cities in the Western Hemisphere, is also known as the "Heroic City and the Pearl of the Caribbean." The city is a symbol of diversity and multi-cultural influence.

The [Red Well Theater Group](#) was pleased to present a dramatic reading of *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton. An audience discussion followed. The cast included John Dluhy, Mary Dluhy, Rosemary Segalla, and Rob Williams. I directed the reading.

Our introduction to the workshop quoted from an article in the current issue of *GROUP*, titled "Philosophy of Life: J. L. Moreno's Revolutionary Philosophical Underpinnings of Psychodrama and Group Therapy" by Peter Howie:

"Moreno believed that spontaneity and creativity are the propelling forces in human progress...that love and mutual sharing are powerful, indispensable working principles in group life. It is imperative to have faith in our fellow man's intentions, a faith that transcends mere obedience arising from physical and legalistic coercion...and that a super-

dynamic community based upon these two principles can be brought to realization through mutual encounter and engagement."

Moreno's ideals are put to the test in *God of Carnage*, a dark comedy about two families struggling to balance self-interest with concern-for-the-other. The play dramatizes a meeting between two couples that have come together to address an act of violence that has occurred between their eleven-year-old sons. From a geopolitical perspective, the play might also be viewed as a parable about nations responding to an act of "armed" aggression with a diplomatic overture in hopes of a peaceful resolution.

Our workshop was presented just hours after the Aurora, Colorado shootings had occurred back in America. Scores were also killed and wounded on the streets of Damascus, Syria that day. These shocking headlines gave painful immediacy to the intersubjective question, "What rules y/our world?"

The audience was appreciative of the actors' passionate portrayals of the characters and the discussion was engaging and insightful. The dramatic tension between retaliatory aggression and empathy as alternative pathways to conflict resolution emerged quickly as a central theme. The difficulty of being understood and recognized when the atmosphere is one of mistrust and fear was thoughtfully explored as relevant to both our clinical work and broader efforts of reconciliation and community building around the world.

Mary Dluhy's poetic reflections best captured the essence of our journey together:

The heat and beauty of Cartagena...

Heat in our performance

Heat in the global issues

Heat on the beach and on the pavement

Beauty in the vibrant colors

Beauty in the people

Beauty in the music

And beauty and heat in the walled old city

Loved being in, and with, the heat and beauty of our group.

(Leszcz Interview Continued from Page 1)

Molyn: This relates to transparency and, once we understand something, how we communicate it in a way that maximizes the learning that can occur for our patients, maximizes their emotional engagement, and reduces unnecessary inflammation. I find that sometimes therapists use themselves less fully than they should because they are afraid of boundary issues, or because they are afraid to turn the therapy into something that it's not supposed to be, or because it will stimulate regression, or unnecessary dependence. My experience is that when therapists use themselves effectively it expedites the therapy, it makes the therapy more alive, more genuine, more meaningful, and there's little downside. In fact, I think sometimes the downside of not finding a way to address what's happening constructively in the moment is that therapy goes on and on because things are not being spoken about in a way that's useful to our patients. So that's what I hope to address.



Ann: *What do you consider to be some of the essential skills that a group therapist must have compared to an individual therapist?*

Molyn: Well, I think that it's even more complicated as a group leader because doing what might be necessary or useful for one person in a group at a particular moment in time may trigger a whole different subjective response from another member. The tricky thing is how to be an advocate for everyone at the same time, while speaking to group forces that are influencing what you're seeing at the moment. If anything, and residents tell me this all the time, learning how to do groups well improves effectiveness at doing individual treatment. This is because they gain a certain kind of confidence and a kind of therapeutic courage.

Ann: *In the conference description, you mention that you'll talk some about therapeutic metacommunication. Can you give us an idea of what you are referring to?*

Molyn: Therapeutic metacommunication is how we as therapists engage our patients in the processing of what is occurring between them and others or between them and us in the moment. It's a way to enliven the here and now. It's contingent on finding palatable ways to say unpalatable things. It's built upon the principles of genuineness and immediacy, and always focuses on how we may help remove a potential obstacle to the patient's growth and development. The behavior or the communication that is problematic for the patient comes from some place that has been hard earned by the patient and it's not a matter of us judging it, but it is a matter of us commenting on it, so that the patient can be liberated from repeating it. Therapeutic metacommunication is staying alive to what's happening in the here and now, giving feedback that is timely, and involves a certain amount of risk on the part of the therapist, but healthy, constructive risk.

Let me give you an example: In one of my groups there's a gentleman who is quite narcissistic and is successful in many ways except in his intimate relationships. This man will often rail about how unresponsive his wife is when he's disappointed and says she doesn't provide him with adequate support. So how do we work with that? We try to find ways in the group to look at here and now manifestations of what it's like to engage him or what it's like to offer him support. So, in a particular session I'd made an announcement at the beginning of the group that I wanted to remember to tell everyone about some changes to our schedule and that I had some important logistical information. When I came back to that later in the group after everyone had settled in, the man was kind of mocking and said, "That's important information? What are you going to tell us next week, that we should be wearing different colored shirts?" I felt annoyed and irritated and shut down. Afterward I was able to digest that a little bit internally, as he was talking again about his wife and monopolizing a bit of the session. I said to him, "I want to share something with you—I felt a bit shut down and withdrawn from you and it made me think that if I can feel that with you here, that I don't want to engage with you, that you've made me feel ineffective, I'm wondering if that isn't something that's happening between you and your wife when you feel disappointed." And that led to a really productive discussion and exploration.

So that's an example of what I mean by therapeutic metacommunication. I'm talking about something that's happening between him and me in the moment, I'm not talking about it in a way that reflects it being raw or unprocessed. I'm trying to separate out my own countertransference, and trying to word it in a way that makes it workable and useful for the patient within the context of the therapeutic alliance. How does this align with the goals of treatment? How does this align with the tasks of treatment as we understand them? And can I do this in a way that strengthens the relationship rather than damages it? A damaging way of saying it is, "Well geez, no wonder your wife doesn't give you any support, you..."

(Continued on page 14)

MAGPS News

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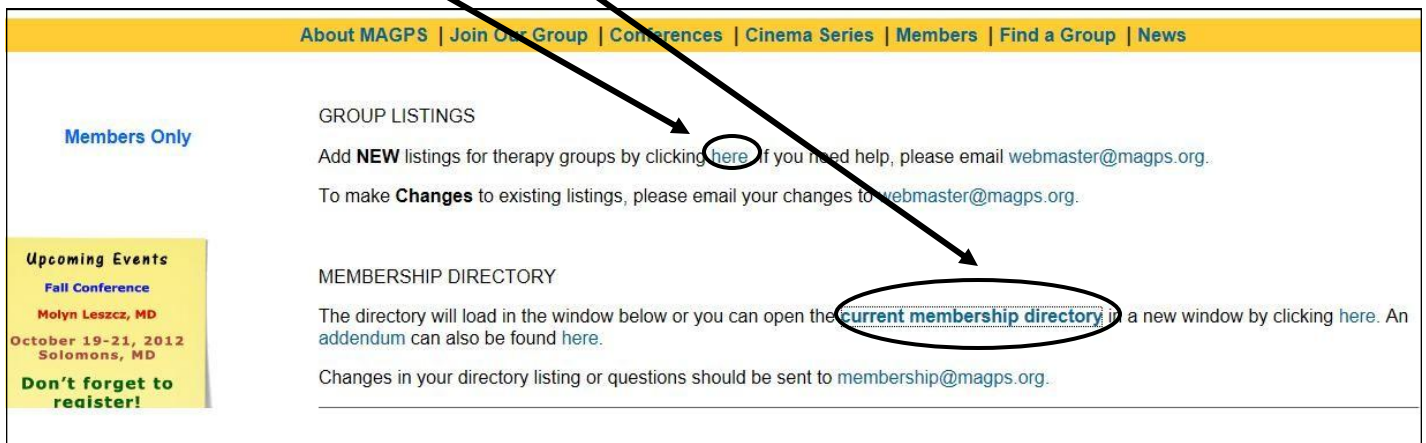
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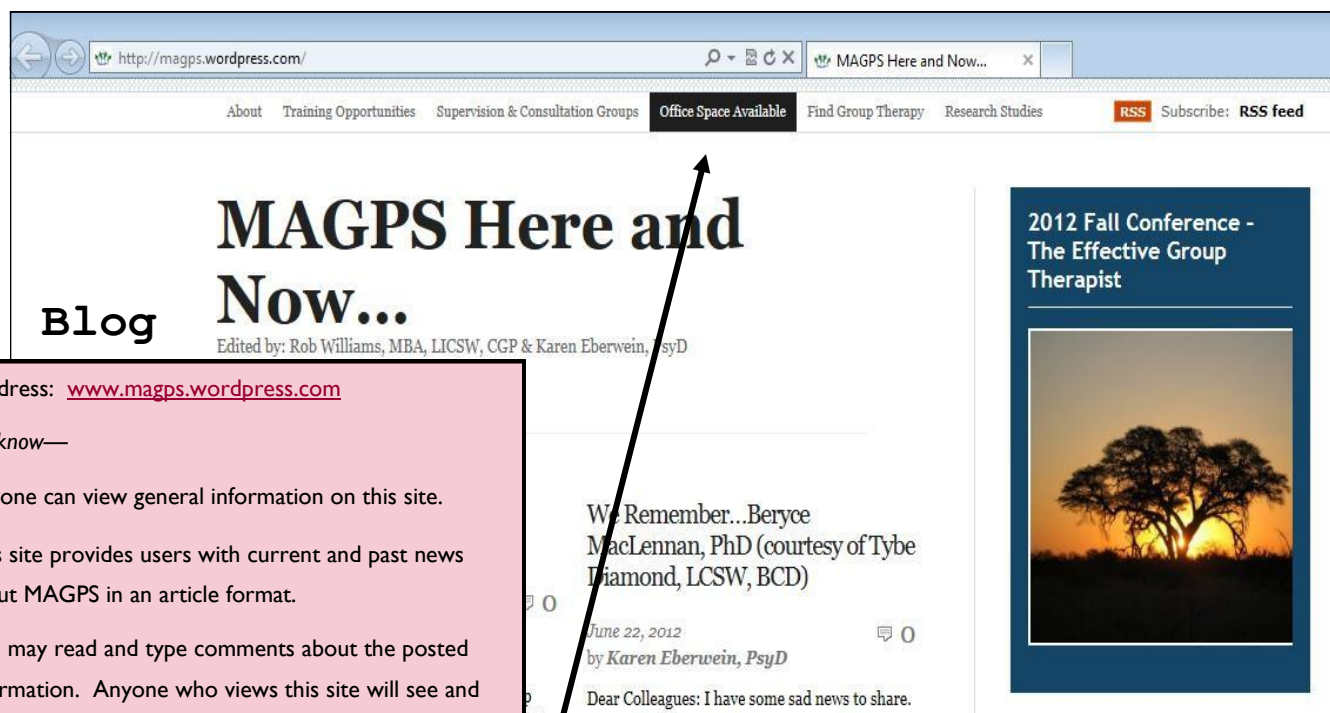
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- If you are an MAGPS member, you may access a .pdf copy of our annual directory or post a listing for your group(s) by clicking the “Members” tab.
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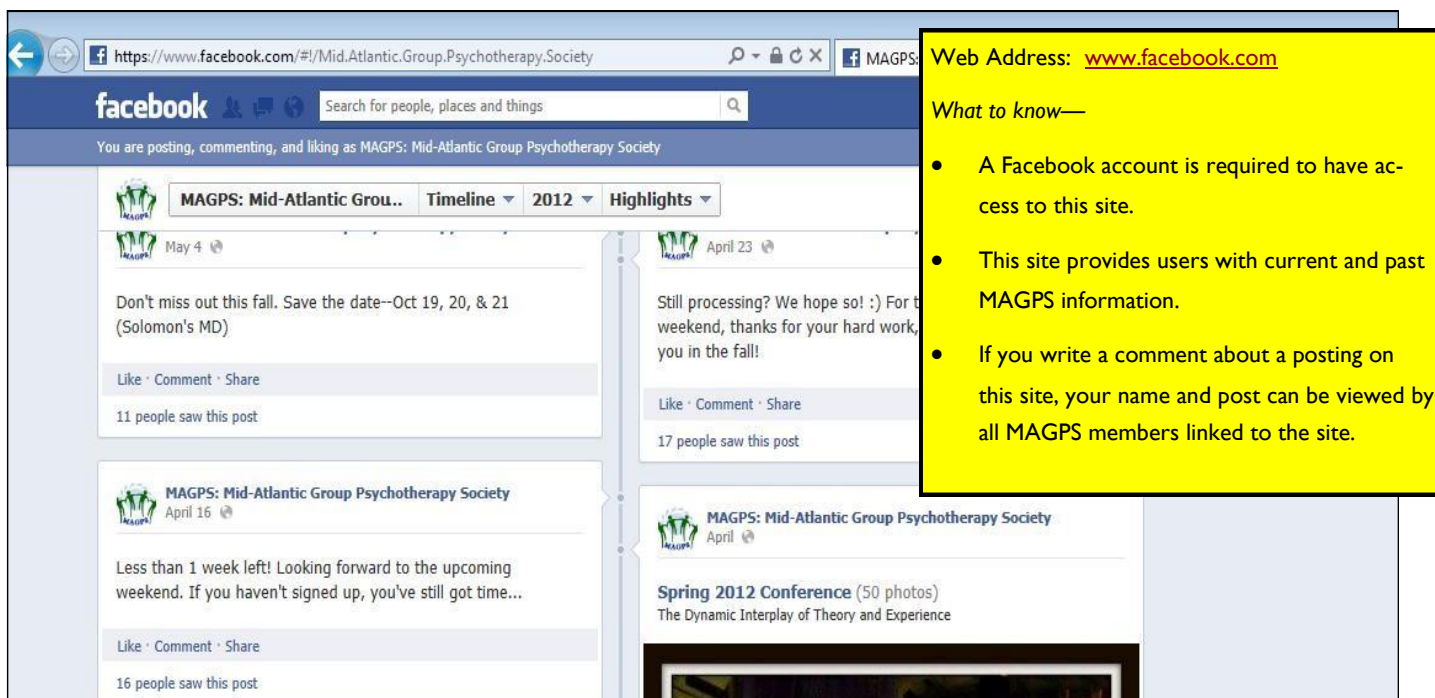


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(Leszcz Interview Continued from Page 11)

Molyn: "...make it impossible for anyone to get close to you!" That's one way of saying it. A way that I think is more productive is to say, "You know that in your disappointment you make people feel badly and you push them away at a time when what you really need is their interest and support. I think it's creates a vicious circle for you and for them. And I think we just had an example of that in the session earlier today with your comment about my announcement."

Ann: *Tell us about your past experience presenting to MAGPS at Solomon's.*

Molyn: It was a great experience. I enjoyed myself a lot. That was my first time with the Mid-Atlantic. But I've had a long relationship with colleagues from the Washington School. I know there's a lot of overlap. I found it a very congenial group when I was there. If I remember correctly, John Dluhy, John Thomas, and Bob Schulte put together the play ART. It was a terrific. The use of that play led to fantastic discussion among the participants. And it was a nice setting. What I also remember was Bob told me this is a group that doesn't like PowerPoint, so I had my whole presentation on one piece of paper. And you can only do that with a really engaged group who asks questions, and the questions become your guide to the next thing you want to talk about.

Ann: *What do you hope we take away from this conference weekend?*

Molyn: What I hope people will take away is that they will think about how they work in a way that maximizes the use of themselves as therapeutic agents. I hope they will be guided both from the literature and from having learned in a way that is emotionally engaging and stimulating. I hope that I will similarly learn from the experience of the people in the audience, and from the demonstration groups, and that we'll all come away from it better for having been together.

Ann: *Thank you for your time, Molyn. We really look forward to having you here.*

**Editor's Note: Portions of Molyn's response to Ann's first question, on Page 1, were taken from a recent interview by Hank Fallon on behalf of AGPA.*

Is Self an Illusion?

IAPSP 35th Annual International Conference

on the Psychology of the Self
Washington, DC

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We Remember...



It's with saddened hearts that we said goodbye to some of our longstanding founders, members, influences, friends, and educators over this past year. We appreciate their outstanding dedication, creativity, and commitment to the field of group psychotherapy.



Mark Lawrence



Leon M. Lurie,
Past President MAGPS 1963



Beryce MacLennan,
Past President MAGPS,
1965 and 1987



Alan Miller
(No photo available)



Sy Rubinfeld

If you are viewing this newsletter online, you may click on each name for more detailed information about his or her life and contributions. To view this page online,
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Lawrence, Lurie, & Rubinfeld photos derived from The Washington Post.

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Annual MAGPS Fall 2012 Conference

The Effective Group Therapist

Molyn Leszcz, MD

October 19, 20, & 21, 2012

Solomons, Maryland

MAGPS Elections

November 1, 2012: Board Nominations Due

December 10, 2012: Ballots Due

April 2013: New Board takes office

MAGPS Cinema Series

All films will be hosted at 6014 28th Street North, Arlington, VA
Light dinner served at 5:45pm • Movie from 6:30-9:30 • [RSVP at MAGPS.org](http://RSVPatMAGPS.org)

Lars and the Real Girl

Saturday, September 29, 2012—Jonathan Stillerman, PhD

The Celluloid Closet

Saturday, December 1, 2012—Gordon Cohen, PsyD

Bear Cub

Saturday, February 1, 2013—Gordon Cohen, PsyD

Film: TBD

March 2013—Stephanie Koenig, LICSW & Mark Feldman, PhD

April 19 & 20, 2013: MAGPS Spring 2013 Conference

Group Psychotherapy & Recovery from Addictions—Jeffery Roth, MD

St Elizabeths Hospital Center, Washington, DC