As this is being written in mid-January, it is pleasing to note that our Division has made substantial progress during 2005 under the strong and capable leadership of President Peter Sheras. Documentation for this was reported by Peter in his President’s Column published in the Winter 2005 The Amplifier in which he noted, in detail, the many accomplishments of our Division and the specific contributions of individual members. We also received a very high rating from APA in 2005 for our compliance with Division guidelines, record keeping, and budget obligations.

Perhaps the most arduous task that was undertaken last year involved the work of our entire Board on completing the revision of our Bylaws, the first major revision since 1993. We are, indeed, very grateful to Secretary Pauline Wallin who coordinated these revisions, which were sent to our members for final approval in the Winter 2005 issue of The Amplifier. I would also like to thank Rochelle Balter for her contributions to the Bylaws revision and her dedicated service as Chair of the Membership Committee, and James Bray for the excellent and highly stimulating program that he organized and coordinated for the 2005 APA Convention. The elections of Rochelle as President-elect and of James as our Division Treasurer clearly reflect the recognition by our members of their many distinguished contributions.

Given the limited financial resources of our Division, the Board scheduled its two 2005 meetings immediately before the Mid-Winter APA Council in Washington, and during the APA Convention. It is interesting and impressive that nearly half of our Board members are currently serving on the APA Council as representatives of other divisions or state associations, which greatly reduced the travel expenses for our February 2005 meeting. Lenore Walker continues to do a great job in representing Division 46 on the APA Council.

Given the many responsibilities of our Board members, it is especially pleasing to report that our 2005 Board meetings were well-attended, and that all Board members continue to give a very high priority to carrying out their Division responsibilities. Our Division Board is again scheduled to meet immediately prior to the February 2006 Council meeting in Washington, and will also meet during the APA Convention in New Orleans. Input from our members regarding programs and activities that are of special interest will be greatly appreciated. Members are also cordially invited to join us at future Board meetings.

Turning now to 2006, I am very pleased to report that Mary Gregerson, as Chair of our Program Committee has done an outstanding job in organizing our program for the APA Convention that will be held in New Orleans this August. I would like to call special attention to the invited addresses that will be presented by Professor Jamie Pennebaker on “Computerized Text Analysis: Understanding the Media, the Culture” and by Secretary Daniel Glickman, CEO and President of the Motion Picture Association of America. Division 46 will also sponsor symposia on: “Research and Media Psychology”; “Media, Myth, and Mental Illness”; and “Creativity and Psychology.” Mary has also done a great job in obtaining co-sponsorship and co-listing for these and other Division 46 program activities from APAGS and a number of Divisions.

During the past year, our Division has also worked closely with Division 52 (International Psychology) on 2006 program-related activities, especially the Lynn Stuart Weiss Lecture on Psychology as a Means of Achieving Peace Through World Law sponsored by APF. We have worked intensively with Norman Abeles, President of Division 52, on selecting the speaker for the 2006 Weiss Lecture, which will be given by the Honorable Captain Mike Mukula, Minister of State for Health in Uganda. Mary Gregerson was primarily responsible for working with Professor Abeles in nominating Captain Mukula and for obtaining his acceptance to present the Weiss Lecture, for which our Division will be a co-sponsor and co-lister. The Weiss Lecture is scheduled to be held on Saturday, August 12 at 2 p.m. Since this will be a very special event, I sincerely hope that our members will give a very high priority to attending.

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**President-Elect Paragraphs**

**Rochelle Balter, PhD, JD**

I am truly honored to be the Division 46 President-Elect. There is an ancient adage (credited to any number of cultures) that says “May you live in interesting times.”

It is obvious in Psychology that this is presently true. It is especially pertinent for our Division. Media Psychology was formed as a type of guild for those who did Psychology on Radio and Television in the late 1980s since there was nowhere else for them to go and share their experiences and challenges. However, the type of celebrity represented by this group led to a separateness based on specialization. Division 46 has been viewed as the home for attractive, charismatic media people who are not like the average psychologist and who will not welcome the average guy, a totally untrue perception, and one that results in low membership numbers.

It is time for us to do what we do best…to educate and market the diversity of content inherent in our division. It is time to showcase our members’ cutting edge accomplishments in fields such as telehealth, robotics, man machine interface, internet services and present, as well as future, communications technologies. It is time to demonstrate that we have a lot to offer not only in terms of new developments, but also in delivering the messages we need to deliver to keep Psychology vibrant and essential in schools and universities, and to present research findings that are relevant and in a form that is both attractive and usable by the Public.

It is not that we wish to lose our roots, or cover them. We will always have our core of media people who are central to Division 46; however, it is past time and we must reach out to the other Divisions to let everyone know how they can become involved with us, and become members of our very exciting and ever changing Division.

Please help us to accomplish these goals. We need you all to be Ambassadors for Media Psychology.

**From the Computer of the Editor**

**Mary Banks Gregerson, PhD**

Movies and advocacy, the respective themes of the 2006 Spring and Summer issues of *The Amplifier* are media “second cousins.” These media-friendly enterprises share a common blood line of appeal to mass audiences while usually having different raison d’êtres. Movies typically entertain. Advocacy typically persuades and influences. Both movies and advocacy have import for media psychology.

Thus, the Spring and Summer issues intertwine intimately. This Editor’s column for the 2006 Spring issue will compare and contrast these two themes. Then the Editor’s column for the 2006 Summer issue will discuss how these two themes will be realized in the 2006 Convention Program in New Orleans, LA.

Both movies and advocacy concern, bottom line, money. Money for movies is the industry blood. Those movies making the most money, the “blockbusters,” spawn sequels, prequels, satires, remakes, and revisions. Usually entertainment and not “message” characterizes blockbusters like “Titanic” or “King Kong.” In advocacy, money is the lobbying blood of government. Well-placed contributions attempt to influence and persuade policymakers and policy. Message characterizes the entire reason for advocacy, although sometimes entertainment has been used to

(continued on p. 5)
Advocacy to Reduce the Mysticism due to Media that Misleads

Jameson C. Lontz, MA

One of my superordinate goals as a psychologist is to advocate reducing the mysticism that surrounds the profession of psychology. Many examples in mass media, particularly the silver screen, which portray psychology professionals in an erroneous light, contend with this goal. Although psychologists teach, give talks, and seek other modes of outreach, the mysticism persists. Perhaps psychologists should be offering popcorn and soda!

A child once answered an inquiry about the value of Thomas Edison in our modern world by replying that without Mr. Edison, “...we would still be watching television by candlelight” (Gerbner, 2000, p. 75). Such malaprops beleaguer the popular understanding of technical psychology, and oftentimes television and movies are the culprits. These media often provide the models which guide laypersons’ understanding of the role of psychology. Whether a steamy love affair between a client and his therapist as in “Prince of Tides” (Streisand, 1991), or a satirical representation of what mental health services entail as in “Anger Management” (Seqal, 2003), media that misleads may impact consumers in damaging ways.

It is in the nature of movie making to manipulate the audience (Turner, 2005). Non-fiction also manipulates the audience. A recent news story, which was subtly manipulated to have the victim of a crime appear less virtuous, predicted defensive attribution (i.e., blaming the victim) by consumers (Lontz, 2005). As another example, White males are over represented by 150% of their true population proportion; older persons by only 20% of their proportion; and only 1.3% of characters in television are impoverished (Gerbner, 2000, p. 76). Given that approximately 98% of homes in the United States have a television (Bushman & Anderson, 2001), these distorting effects are far-reaching. Whatever the type of media, I ambivalently recognize its tremendous power to persuade.

I hope to challenge readers to become involved as advocates at their respective levels. In particular, involvement by new members of Division 46 will increase the diversity of our readership. You will learn more about my recent research, “A Study of Defensive Attribution: Measuring the Effects of Media Bias,” at APA in New Orleans. See you there!

References
**Member News**

**Edward Abramson, PhD**
Dr. Abramson, author of *Emotional Eating: What You Need to Know Before Starting Another Diet* (Jossey-Bass, 1998) has recently written *Body Intelligence: Lose Weight, Keep It Off, and Feel Great About Your Body Without Dieting!* (McGraw-Hill, 2005). The book was excerpted in *Fitness* and will be published in France. His online article, “On the futility of dieting,” was the 6th most widely read article on Medscape last November. Dr. Abramson has done a media tour of Canada, has been quoted in *Oprah, Us Weekly, Cosmopolitan,* and has had an op-ed piece published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His workshop, “The Psychology of Weight Regulation: Eating, Exercise and Body Image” has been presented at several conferences and will be presented at the California Psychological Association convention in March.

**Kimberly S. Young, PhD**
Dr. Young, Director of the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery, has given talks and interviews, provided a course, and conducted research. *Presentations and Interviews*: She appeared in the December issue of *The New York Times* for the article “Hooked on the Web: Help is on the Way,” which explored the growing number of clinics across the country offering treatment for Internet addicts. She also appeared in the Associated Press for a feature story about China opening its first clinic to treat Internet addiction in Beijing. In addition, Dr. Young appeared in the January issue of *Current Biography*, a reference publication that is found in libraries throughout the U.S. and Canada. She had a three-hour distance education course, “Internet Addiction: Symptoms, Risk Factors, and Treatment” published through Dr. Ofer Zur. The home-study course is approved for 3 hours of CEUs by APA, the National Association of Social Work Boards, and the National Board of Certified Counselors. She had the article “An Empirical Examination of the Client Attitudes towards Online Counseling” published in the *CyberPsychology & Behavior*. The article examined 48 online clients and their attitudes towards the delivery of mental health services over the Internet. As a professor in the School of Business at St. Bonaventure University, she also had the article “The Seven Habits of Servant Leaders” published in *The CEO Refresher*, an online journal dedicated to leadership theory and practice. The article describes seven guiding principles or “habits” that enable executives to build sensitivity, integrity, and community within their organizations to improve employee loyalty and motivation.

**Dorothy G. Singer, EdD**
Dr. Singer recently co-edited *Handbook of Children, Culture, and Violence* (Sage, 2006). This book discusses how the effects of violence on children and what to do about it have been in the center of public and political life in recent years. This is evident in debates over censoring pornography on the Internet, placing V-chips in every television, and how best to avert the next Columbine before it happens. The debates about these important policy decisions, however, often occur in a vacuum of interdisciplinary dialogue based on hard empirical evidence. This book moves the policy discussion and dialogue forward by bringing together scholars whose work is unified by a common concern for the impact of violence on children’s lives. This volume consolidates the current research and provides solid, empirical evidence from which to make informed policy decisions. It is hoped that this volume will both stimulate further research and provide a new lens through which to evaluate the nature and predicted impact of the choices facing policymakers.

**Helen Friedman, PhD**
Dr. Friedman authored an article titled “Synergy in Motion,” a review of the book *Hypnocounseling: An Eclectic Bridge Between Milton Erickson and Carl Rogers*, in *PsycCRITIQUES—Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books* (2005, December 28), 50 (No. 52), Article 17. This was a labor of love. The author of *Hypnocounseling* (Hugh Gunnison) is a former college professor of hers. Synergy in motion, indeed, for the student to critique the professor’s book! Helen was featured (“Interview with Helen R. Friedman, PhD”) in a chapter on managing the day-to-day operations of a successful practice in *L. Kase* (2005), *The Successful Therapist: Your Guide to Building the Career You’ve Always Wanted* (pp. 119–123), Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. She was presented the 2005 SASH (Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health) Merit Award “for outstanding commitment to the organization” by Patrick Carnes, PhD in San Francisco, CA. Dr. Friedman serves on the Advisory Board and does frequent media interviews for SASH. This past year she was interviewed in *The New York Times, New York Daily News, Cosmopolitan, Self,* and the “Bill Good Show” (CKNW in Vancouver), among others.

**Mary Banks Gregerson, PhD**
Dr. Gregerson was appointed to the Virginia Board of Health Professions as the representative for the Virginia Board of Psychology. In 2006 she will continue as newsletter editor for the Virginia Board of Psychology as well as sit upon the Continuing Education Committees for both Boards. She was also appointed to the Nominating Committee for the Virginia Board of Health Professions. Recently Dr. Gregerson was appointed APA Division 46 Media Psychology Liaison to the APA Office of Women Task Force on the Sexualization of Women. Her entries on “Allergies: General,” “Allergies to Foods,” “Allergies to Drugs” have been published in the 2006 volume *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology, Health and Medicine* (2nd Edition) edited by S. Ayers, A. Baum, C. McManus, S. Newman, K. Wallston, J. Weinman, & R. West and published by Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press. Dr. Gregerson also provided a selection on “Environmental Stress” for the 2006 edition of *Health Psychology* (Vol. 4), edited by A. J. Christensen, R. Martin, & J. M. Smyth.
President's Column

The Division will also sponsor a workshop at the 2006 Convention concerned with media training in collaboration with Rhea Farberman, APR, Executive Director of Public and Member Communications, and two workshops on ethical considerations in media psychology. In addition, there will be several panel discussions and an informal conversation hour, co-sponsored with Divisions 34 and 52, that will give our members an opportunity to personally meet and talk with Captain Mike Mukula. The full schedule for our APA Convention Program is to be published in the next issue of The Amplifier.

During the coming year, I will personally endeavor to stimulate and enhance the programs of our Division, and will give special emphasis to the recruitment of new members who can help us to facilitate the interaction of psychology with media representatives. We must keep in mind that the major goals of our Division are to enrich the teaching, training and practice of media psychology, and to assist psychologists in working with the media more effectively in informing the public about the science and profession of psychology. We must also continue to support research on the effects of the media on the public and, especially, on the effectiveness of the media in transmitting significant psychological information. All members of our Division are invited to join with your Board in helping us to achieve these goals.

Charles D. Spielberger, PhD, ABPP, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus Director, Center for Research in Behavioral Medicine and Health Psychology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620-7200; E-mail: spielber@cas.usf.edu

Past President's Reflections

itself seemed obsessed with covering all aspects of this story, not just in the immediate, but for a long time afterward.

I began to think about the line between news coverage and sensationalism, between providing information and purposely eliciting extreme emotions. Food analogies came back to me. Some media products, like some foods nurture us, cause us to think, feel and be inspired to thought or action. Other media offerings just seem to slow us down, hop us up, or just cause us to feel comatose.

Shows, movies, and magazines articles are like foods in a way. Some are nutritionally balanced and unprocessed producing healthy effects while others are fatty or sugary or too salty triggering negative health consequences. I guess there are fatty or high-carb programs, laced with behaviors and images designed to upset people or elicit very strong emotions (think of some reality TV as an example), and there are more well balanced programs with the “protein” of useful information, problem solving skills or real human interest (some programs on HGTV or the History Channel to name a few).

If not all media, like all food, is good for us, and if it is offered indiscriminately (think about 400 cable channels) to us, like foods in the supermarket, how do we go about selecting what is most healthy and, more importantly, how do we educate others to do the same? Could we teach our children to choose healthy programs to watch like they choose healthy foods to eat? Of course we could! But how are we doing in the former category? Obesity is epidemic among children in most developed countries. How are we doing at reasonably controlling access to television, violent movies, video games and the internet for our children? I guess you can see the problem.

So what is the solution, then? Or at least, what is a reasonably informed strategy? Maybe we need to look one final time at our food analogy. Losing weight is not helped by crash diets or fad diets or over exercise to compensate for our over-indulgences. Changing life style appears to be more effective.

Fasting, used to purge us and then to start us on a healthy regimen can be useful as part of an ongoing plan for health. Media is not bad for you if you select your offerings well, read the labels, and proceed with moderation. Yum.

From the Computer of the Editor...

amplify the message in the best instances, say, with benefit concerts for worthy causes and in the worst instances with sleazy lavish entertaining like that of the disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

Media psychology interfaces with movies and with advocacy in interesting ways, some similar and some quite distinctive. The similarities include consultation to leading figures in the field both in design and reception of the product, commentary about ethics and effects, and influence of the actual content as well as the mode of communication. Distinctions start with the observation that movies sometimes feature story lines with psychologists and psychology as protagonist and villain in addition to the typically hapless, helpless, and needy user of psychology while government features policies typically aimed at the protection of the “hapless, helpless, and needy” recipients of psychological services, leaving the actual policing of professionals to the professional societies and to the state jurisdictions. At the state level, media psychologists typically are not represented per se in regulatory boards because media psychology is not licensed yet. Roles for media psychologists to enhance delivery of government services have recently been identified, say, with the application of psychology principles to counter terrorism and the trauma of disaster when leaders communicate to the populace.

In many ways, media psychologists are just beginning to blaze trails with both movies and advocacy. Movies and other entertainment venues could employ the knowledge and skills found in performance psychology. Advocacy could glean important clout when systematically designing and applying media psychology communiqués.

Future roles available to media psychologists may not even be available to our imagination today. For now, we have our pieds-à-terre in both movies and advocacy. Now, Div 46 members pave that dusty trail to these temporary abodes so that our protégés may follow our footsteps and build firm foundations. Follow this newsletter trail into the upcoming Summer issue, where movies and advocacy will appear again.
Media Psychology and Film: A Love Story

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psychology’s voice in the media. I joined an informal association where we shared experiences and helped each other prepare for our close ups. The association later shape-shifted into a division of the American Psychological Association, and provided me with a sexy, new identity—media psychologist!

“Media Psychologist.” I loved it. I was excited by it. The time was ripe, nay, exegetic, to channel my twin loves of film and research into a most altruistic and elevated goal—promotion to Full Professor! But, as Yoda might intone: Easy, it was not. Faculty colleagues were a bit snobbish about this new field. “Why is this guy always on television and always being quoted in newspapers?” “Doc Hollywood” was the sobriquet they hung on me. To channel Yoda one last time, a compliment it was not.

Fortunately for me, my college dean appreciated the finer forms of TV celebrity, film, and, of course, academic productivity. He also loved seeing me quoted in the media on his watch. In the end, the Dean was my shepherd, I did not want.

For the next 15 years I played the mad scientist role in reality and devoted myself to research, forging a media psychology curriculum and founding a media psychology lab. The laboratory served as a base camp to conduct nation-wide studies.

Among our interesting findings, were that people’s “favorite films” come from the Drama genre more than any other, and that Horror films never crack the top 25 list of favorites for any demographic group. Apparently it’s one thing to like horror films, quite another to cherish them.

Another study revealed that Blacks are not especially fond of one of White America’s cinematic icons, Gone With The Wind. I blush to admit I was blindsided by their negative reaction—talk about cultural myopia!

One of our highly quoted studies suggested that the most popular movie quotes are those that are sarcastic or aggressive (“Do you feel lucky, punk?”), or are put-downs (“You can’t handle the truth!”). It also revealed that favorite movie quotes from the mouths of actors outnumber those from the mouths of actresses. Provocatively, findings from another study showed that as males age their tastes in film begin to look more like women’s, but women’s tastes in film change very little over the age cycle. Hmmmm.

In an explicit diversity study we discovered that all racial groups are offended by how their particular group is portrayed in films, but each differed dramatically in terms of what specifically offends. Asians dislike sub-racial nullification, e.g., casting Koreans in Chinese roles, and they’ve had enough of the martial arts cliché. Blacks and Latinos take offense at so many films showing them as sex addicts, thugs or losers. And Whites resent endless portrayals of them as minority oppressors. Amusingly, they cited White Men Can’t Jump as the most offending film (the truth seems to hurt).

Race and Gender Biases in Film Casting was a study that looked at if and how women and minority actors would benefit, if women and minorities were in control of the casting process. Unfortunately, women fared less well than racial minorities in the casting game: At the hands of both sexes, women were cast in only 25% of the roles even though gender was intentionally not specified in role descriptions.

Outside of the lab and classroom I did interviews with film legends Clint Eastwood and Oliver Stone for Psychology Today. For other magazines I wrote about film villains, victims and about stereotyped portrayals of therapists and the mentally ill. Another mini-career is writing essay/reviews of films and film-related books. Most recently I’ve done reviews for the APA journal PsychCRITIQUES. I’ve even dipped my intellectual toe into a new media psychology tributary, the nascent field of cinema therapy. A piece where I recounted a demonstration of Cinematherapy that I did for the BBC appeared in the Amplifier.

Our culture speaks Hollywood: Ex movie actor Ronald Reagan promoted a Star Wars Strategic Defense Initiative. At a press conference a frustrated journalist asked President Bush if he thinks Americans can’t handle the truth. And how many of us have said, “Make him an offer he can’t refuse?” The world easily falls spellbound under the artistic blandishments of filmmakers, their fictions, their facts, their propaganda. Yet, when people need personal truths or political clear-headedness media psychology can provide an antidote, a road map back to reality.

I M 4 U

The Dawning of Desire Skewed Through a Media Lens: The Loss of Adolescence

Mary Banks Gregerson, PhD

“Coming of age” means many different things for children in the media-rich American culture. In their private world, children’s pubescent bodies, with “minds of their own,” blossom into adult characteristics like body hair and experiences like onset of sex drive. In their public world, media like movies and television—with “minds of their own”—thrust more and more “teeny” adult images onto children already a bit challenged with body transition. Both public and private worlds exert control without asking permission from the child. Yet the child is expected increasingly to make decisions affecting their bodies, their lives, their friends, their loves, their souls. Few intervening, transformative societal images or models ease the transition from child to adult.

Our society is on the verge of losing adolescence. How can our children learn to navigate the shoals of changing bodies, changing times, and abruptly changed social roles when cultural images literally tele-port them from diapers to dating? What responsibility do media leaders have to guide rather than exploit our children? To answer these questions, guide adult action, and illuminate future decision making, first we need to know where we are now. The picture is not pretty.

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Almost a decade ago Saturday Night Live’s Molly Shannon played in the 1999 movie “Superstar” Mary Katherine Gallagher, a video store clerk and schoolgirl whose only wish in life is for a kiss, “not just any kiss, mind you—a big-time, hold-your-breath-‘til-you’re-gonna-faint, Hollywood-style kiss.” This movie is a perfect example of youth believing celluloid reality—life imitates art.

A decade earlier in a scene from 1987’s “Dirty Dancing,” 17-year-old “Baby,” a doctor’s youngest daughter, leaves the staid nighttime family entertainment furnished by a Catskills resort and wanders into territory forbidden for guests—the staff quarters area. Baby is drawn by a raucous dance cacophony and bright lights, like the proverbial moth to a flame. She awkwardly and shyly watches the “hot” dancing of other couples, and the “hottest couple” is not even a couple. Baby fast forwarded her transition time from child to adult by being dumped directly into a seething, undulating sticky situation. This media image of adolescence provides hazy relational boundaries, identity confusion, and age compression, as Baby bursts into sexual awareness, relational complexity, and identity searching. Message—girls require supervision. A woman does not.

And, what of boys?

In the 1983 movie “Risky Business” a young Tom Cruise’s breakout role was as 19-year-old Joel Goodson. When his parents leave for a week, his troublemaking friends call an escort service for Joel. Let’s bypass Tom’s famous “air” rock-and-roll dance in his tighty white briefs and shirt even though this scene was what first attracted his now pregnant fiancé Katy Holmes. When in bed alone post-callgirl, Joel’s own ambivalence toward his “bad boy” behavior tortures him. The young man, without developing a relationship, experiences sex “way over his head.”

Another example of a young man’s sexual initiation outside a normal one-on-one relationship comes from the 2000 movie “Almost Famous.” Rather than be in high school classes, young William Miller has convinced Rolling Stone magazine to hire him to write about a rock group. William bonds with the band’s groupies the Band-Aids, who relieve their boredom in middle America by deflowering young William. In a role reversal, young William and not the young women later feels used and confused. Not even Rolling Stone magazine had prepared William for the disorientation and distress he feels after his group deflowering.

Young girls, also, are not immune to skirting the bounds of propriety in media portrayals of their sexuality. The 1999 straight-to-video “Passport to Paris,” even had the American ‘tween sweethearts Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen escape their grandfather’s supervision in Paris and find “trouble” with two French boys. On a secluded bridge, the Paris boys invite Ashley and Mary Kate to a dance the next evening and start to kiss them when the Paris police “bust” them.

In “Passport to Paris” but not in both “Risky Business” and “Almost Famous,” the law and outside authorities regulated or attempted to regulate sex by strict enforcement. The common, even if subtle, shared message is of teens sexual expression being “trouble” and not amenable to self-regulation. Especially, girls.

In these arrested sexual expressions, no emotional turmoil results toward self although unpleasantness is aimed at adults. Even when William Miller and Joel Goodson each consummated their sexual initiations outside of an intimate relationship, confusion and conflict with their paramours resulted. And, their parents weren’t there to protect them, and they eluded other authorities. For media images of adolescents, families transition from a protective cover to a stranglehold to be broken.

This selected movie analysis anticipates the report coming from the American Psychological Association Task Force on the Early Sexualization of Girls, to which Division 46 has been invited. President Charles Spielberger has named me and Lenore Walker as Division 46 representatives. Both this analysis and the APA Task Force find consensus to challenge parents, educators, news staff, entertainers, and other interested adults. Who is responsible—the teens, their peers, their parents, their teachers, the media? Legally, until teens reach majority, however a particular state defines it, parents and adults are responsible. Yet Shari Graydon, who wrote a book about beauty stereotypes and marketing, succinctly observes, “Parents do have a responsibility, no question about it. But kids spend more time with media than they do with their parents.”

Yet responsibility shifting can occur, as one teen’s mother put it, “I am glad I don’t have to do [talking about sex] because she gets that at school (CBC Marketplace, 2005). In 2001 Donnerstein and Smith showed that parents who view television with their teens and openly communicate may inoculate teen and ‘tweens (those 8 to 14) from the potentially adverse effects of the media bombardment of sexuality. So, perhaps the first step will be for adults to convince teens of potential pitfalls and to teach discernment when viewing media images of sexuality.

And, closely following that step is teens commanding respect so that adults stop exercising the ostrich solution. Ignoring the dawning of desire does not make it go away. Believing that truth will start the navigation of these shoals with minimal anguish and angst. So, the “dawning of desire” might be also the heightening of motivation for adults to attend, recognize, and facilitate the social, sexual, and personal challenges adolescents face.

Psychology can help, especially media psychology.

Reference

Mary Banks Gregerson, PhD, Alexandria, VA, is the 2004–2006 The Amplifier editor and 2006 Program Chair for APA Division 46 Media Psychology.
Call for Nominations for 2006 Member Recognition Awards

The Awards Committee invites you to nominate yourself or any worthy colleague for one of the Member Recognition Awards.

Distinguished Lifetime Contribution to Media Psychology
This award is given for a sustained body of work in developing, refining, and/or implementing applications, procedures, and methods that have had a major impact on the public and the profession of media psychology.

Distinguished Scientific Contributions to Media Psychology
This award recognizes outstanding empirical and/or theoretical contributions to the field of media psychology. Nominees must be at least 10 years post doctorate. This award alternates annually with the applied contribution award.

Student Dissertation/Research Award
This award is made for outstanding research related to any form of media including: Internet, radio, TV, or print research/applications; multimedia telecommunications; virtual reality; distance learning; telehealth services; and product development. The award includes a $200 stipend and one year of free membership in Division 46. Applicants must be graduating from a doctoral program and have completed the dissertation between January 2004 and April 2006.

The Division’s Awards Committee will receive and evaluate all submissions through blind review. The submission deadline is April 1, 2006.

For each of these awards, a letter of nomination must be submitted highlighting the nominee’s research, publications, teaching, training, leadership, and/or other relevant information, along with the nominee’s vita. Please submit this information to the Chair of the Awards Committee, Peter Sheras, PhD, Curry Programs in Clinical and Social Psychology, University of Virginia, 405 Emmet St., P.O. Box 400270, Charlottesville, VA 22904, (434) 924-0795 (office), (434) 924-1433 (fax); pls@virginia.edu.

Report of the Editorial Policies and Guidelines Committee

Helen Friedman, PhD, Chair

In addition to the chair, committee members include Mary Gregerson, newsletter editor; Richard Bedrosian, listserv and website administrator; and Daniel Kegan, attorney.

The committee addressed a newsletter format issue. The feature “Member News” would change to list items by member—as opposed to under categories such as books, presentations, etc. The rationale is that the column’s primary purpose is to see who’s doing what. This would be more emphasized with listings by member, rather than by category. When an individual member has several news items, it would be more cohesive to have them all together, rather than divided up. Watch for this change in The Amplifier!

The committee is available to address any editorial issues that may arise.

Helen Friedman, PhD, can be reached at hfriedman5@earthlink.net

Federal Advocacy Update

Elizabeth Carll, PhD

As the Federal Advocacy Coordinator for the Media Division, I have frequently asked for your assistance on issues important to the practice of psychology. Having worked closely with the APA Practice Organization for several years, it has been apparent that much often goes on “behind the scenes” that you may not hear about. As I have previously posted considerable information concerning parity, I would like to take this opportunity to update you about the efforts undertaken to secure new testing codes, as well as the extensive advocacy efforts following Hurricane Katrina. I look forward to providing similar updates in the future.

Testing Codes

Psychologists providing testing services now have a more accurate way to bill as seven new Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) codes became effective on January 1. Implementation of the codes reflects a change in thinking by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which by awarding work values to the codes finally acknowledged that psychologists are engaged in professional work when providing psychological and neuropsychological testing services.

These changes are the result of continued advocacy by APA over the past several years. Due to concerns about the level of professional work

Join the Membership Committee!

Are you creative? Do you enjoy reaching out to touch someone? Do you like networking with both old and new friends? If so, we want you. The membership committee needs creative “people” persons. The time commitment will be minimal, but the pleasures will be great. Get involved. Our Division needs you. Contact me at 215-204-6024 or frank.farley@temple.edu.

Frank Farley, Membership Chair
involved in furnishing testing services, CMS previously only reimbursed psychologists for the estimated practice expenses, essentially overhead, and a small amount for malpractice insurance. The psychologist’s time and effort in providing the service went unrecognized.

Previous attempts in 2002 and 2003 to obtain professional work values for the testing codes failed to gain approval from the American Medical Association’s reimbursement committee. APA continued its efforts by engaging staff from the AMA’s coding and reimbursement committees in a strategy to revise the testing codes. APA developed a proposal that more closely identified the psychologist’s involvement in the testing service, thus making the codes more suitable for the assignment of professional work values.

APA gained the approval of the coding committee to revise the codes in 2004 and then used survey data from psychologists across the country to persuade the reimbursement committee to recommend professional work values for the codes in 2005. Later that year, CMS adopted the reimbursement committee’s recommendations and assigned professional work values for the revised codes.

The professional work values assigned to the new codes will significantly improve the amount paid by Medicare for these services. The previous psychological and neuropsychological testing codes (96100, 96115 and 96117) were all reimbursed at an average hourly rate of $74. Under the 2006 Medicare fee schedule, average payments for outpatient testing services under the new codes will increase from 26% to 69%. For a complete list of the revised codes and their new values go to: http://www.apapractice.org/apo/payments.html#

**Hurricane Relief Efforts**

In the weeks and months following Hurricane Katrina, Congress focused its attention on a wide range of proposals to provide relief to hurricane evacuees, including relief for evacuees’ health care needs.

In late December 2005, the Senate approved a measure to provide a 100% federal match of existing Medicaid plans for those states with evacuees. Significantly, this measure will allow states the option of expanding their Medicaid mental health services while receiving the 100% federal match for up to nine months. This program will enhance opportunities for psychologists in the affected states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, as well as in other states where evacuees currently reside that do not normally cover outpatient psychologist services in their Medicaid programs.

This critical provision was included in the Budget Reconciliation legislation that passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate in December in the final hours of the Congressional session. Due to amendments made in the Senate, however, the Budget Reconciliation legislation must come before the House for one more vote before final passage; as of this writing a vote is predicted for early February 2006. The Practice Organization is pleased that, in the interim, state-by-state Medicaid waivers are allowing funds to be spent on mental health services not previously covered by the hurricane affected states.

Among the dozens of earlier proposals considered by Congress, one sponsored by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Ranking Member Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) initially appeared quite promising. Known as the Emergency Health Care Relief Act (S. 1716), the bill also sought to create a Disaster Relief Medicaid program to provide evacuees below the poverty line 100% federal payment of their health care for up to ten months.

Importantly, and at our urging, S.1716 would have required coverage for a wide range of mental health services as part of the proposed relief, including screening, assessment and diagnostic services, psychotherapy, rehabilitation and other therapies, medications prescribed by “health professionals,” inpatient care and other mental health services, as well as alcohol and substance abuse treatment resulting from circumstances related to Katrina, and family counseling for Katrina survivors and for first responders. The Practice Organization particularly appreciated the sponsors’ express recognition of mental health services as an important part of Disaster Relief Medicaid. This bill stalled in the Senate due to budgetary concerns, however.

The debate in Congress over the need to offer some form of health care relief to the Hurricane victims presented the Practice Organization with a unique opportunity to inform members of Congress about the significant mental health repercussions of major natural disasters and the extensive volunteer relief services that psychologists have been providing “on the ground” to hurricane victims through the Disaster Response Network. The Practice Organization also developed, and distributed widely, an informational fact sheet concerning the substantial mental health needs of disaster survivors, highlighting the fact that when natural disasters cause extensive community-wide destruction and disruption—as with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita—25% to 30% of the survivors are likely to develop anxiety disorders, including post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and other clinically significant problems. The fact sheet is available at: http://www.apapractice.org/apo/pracorg/legislative/HurricaneImpact.html#

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently confirmed these statistics, and is now projecting that up to 500,000 people may be in need of professional assistance as a result of the hurricanes. The SAMHSA news release is available at: http://www.samhsa.gov/news/newsreleases/051207_hurricane.htm

This information has been very favorably received by Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), who suffered the personal loss of his home, and other key Members of Congress, and continues to be requested by other offices on Capitol Hill.

Much goes on behind the scenes regarding advocacy in order to accomplish long-term goals. Future updates will help keep membership informed as to the complex negotiations and work that builds the foundation for future success.

Elizabeth Carll, PhD, can be reached at ecarll@optonline.net.

Editor’s Note: Advocacy such as that noted in this article is the theme for the Summer Amplifier—look for it!
Insert APAIT ad here
Publication and Submission Guidelines

The Amplifier is the official newsletter of APA Division 46, Media Psychology, and is published three times this year (Spring, Summer, Fall/Winter). Unsolicited contributions from members are welcomed and encouraged. Articles must be relevant to media psychology and should not have been published elsewhere. All submissions should be sent to the Editor, Mary Banks Gregerson, PhD, by e-mail at ottowne@aol.com. Submissions must be received by February 1 for Spring issue, May 1 for the Summer issue, and October 1 for the Fall/Winter double issue. Authors should ensure that their manuscripts comply with all APA publication and ethical guidelines.

APSA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls

Drs. Lenore Walker and Mary Gregerson are Division 46 liaisons to the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. Others liaisons are Jessica Henderson Daniel (Board of Directors) and Janet Shibley Hyde (CWP). TF members include Drs. Eileen L. Zurbriggen (Chair), Rebecca L. Collins, Sharon Lamb, Tomi-Ann Roberts, Deborah L. Tolman, and L. Monique Ward, and Public Member Jeanne Blake (BlakeWorks). For information, contact Leslie Cameron (lcameron@apa.org, 202-336-6054).

Invite a Friend to Join Division 46

Know someone who should belong to the Division of Media Psychology? Ask them to send this form to: Division 46 Administrative Office, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242 to get more information. Or they can call 202-216-7602 or e-mail kcooke@apa.org for an application.

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Proposed Division Name Change

The Division 46 Executive Board voted for a Division name change at its Mid-Winter Meeting.

The proposed new name would be SOCIETY FOR MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY, COMMUNICATIONS, AND INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES. This name was chosen because the Board believes it best reflects the continuing interests of our members. Please send your comments/vote on this name to RBalt@aol.com, the Division President-Elect, as soon as possible.

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