I wish to talk of several things here. Some things that pester my mind about the old and the new media, as well as the contributions of psychology to a better world.

But let me say firstly that I often wish I was just beginning my life in psychology. The Internet and the “new media” are so exciting, and so promising, and have such a fit to the things we psychologists are interested in that I’d like to be around for longer than the stats allow! I envy the beginning Internet-age psychologist.

However, as with Dickens, it is the best of times and it is the worst of times. There are the wonderful aspects of the Internet and new media world, and then there is its dark side. It all seems to mirror much of human nature. And this is in part due to its ubiquity, its extent in our lives, and its populist qualities. Everyone now has a planetary platform for their life’s story, the “Global Me,” the good, the bad, and the boring. Millions are blogging. From personal peccadillos to every trip to the store, all gets recorded for posterity and the planet. But who is reading all this stuff? Is there any active shelf-life? Is increasingly everyone is writing, who is reading? Does it follow the famed Farley/Gresham dictum that “The bad ideas drive out the good”? Is there a growing over-load, a cacophony of words that offer such extreme variety of views, opinions and solutions that old-style off-line diagnoses will need extensive on-line updating, with new categories of digital disorders emerging way beyond what we have seen already? Walden Pond and its quiet, simple, contemplative space are gone. Where will we find time for quietude, and thoughtful reflection? The new media and the old media are raising the mundane to mountainous moment in our lives. A small tragedy here, a mic in the face of grief over there, a minor slip of the tongue by some famed person, a passing facial expression of a politician, a relentless dissection and debate of everyday events elevated to absurd interpretation by fakirs called pundits. Endless personal reactions to transitory events or others reactions to those reactions through an increasingly bloated blogoshere. What is solid? Who knows anything with certainty? What is an expert anymore in a wikiworld? Has the tower of babble been found? Yes, and it’s the media in many of its current manifestations! And we are the media psychologists.

So what are we going to do about it? Do we have proven research-based psychological techniques to arm children, young people and others to navigate and survive the media muskeg confronting them? Do we have a plan? Do we even have a clue? And what proof do we have that any plan or clue is important and will actually work and will bring about change? This question brings me to my final concern here.

Is psychological research making the world a better place? We’ve been around almost 130 years as a science. In APA we had enough members in our founding year to fill G. Stanley Hall’s vestibule. Today we count almost 160,000. Have we seen a palpable reduction in horror and human misery in that time, less violence, better interpersonal relationships, fewer prisons and prisoners, fewer wars and terror, happier people, that can be said to be due in any clear way to our discipline? I think the answer is decidedly mixed. There is progress in some areas, but no progress and even regress in some others. And yet we have become a research leviathan, an academic wonder, an enormous discipline that pours out studies like Niagara. Do these many thousands, yes thousands, of studies per year actually change the world, or do they just feed our voracious journals and our conferences (the leisure of the theory class) and our crowded classrooms? Are our universities the new monasteries, where researchers do research primarily for the consumption (and the hoped-for scholarly citation) of other researchers who then repeat this process endlessly even onto retirement. We have no “citizen citation index” reflecting impact on the public. Galileo is reputed to have said that much science should be applied science whose goal is to “lighten the toil of everyday

(continued on p. 4)
I am continually amazed by how rapidly the world is shrinking, and I believe that Division 46 has to take the lead in representing the interests of all APA members who appreciate this phenomenon and who are trying to understand what these profound changes that are occurring in media and communication mean for clients, members of the public, and society.

I’m writing this column while waiting for a flight at Ronald Reagan National airport. This day—and almost every other day of my life—provides multiple examples of the ubiquity of the media. I started the day watching Division 46 member Judy Kuriansky being interviewed on the CBS “Early Show.” She was very articulate and seemed to be enjoying herself. I had spoken to Judy the day before while she was waiting to be interviewed on yet another national program, this time discussing the recent telephone threats made against Hulk Hogan and his family. Judy is producing a video for Division 52 (International Psychology) describing the division for prospective student members, and I sent Judy an email note about the project on a shuttle bus trip from my Alexandria hotel (where I had been reviewing grants for the Health Resources and Services Administration) to the airport. While waiting for a delayed flight (something I seem to be doing a lot these days), I downloaded YouTube clips that I’ll use for an upcoming lecture for medical students at the American University of the Caribbean. I checked my email and looked up several Internet references to articles I had written and Internet references to the Missouri Institute of Mental Health, the research organization I direct; these references had been identified by my daily search of key terms on Google Searches. I used PsycNET and Scopus to see if other researchers had cited any of my work recently. I also used this time to search YouTube for a clip of our President, Frank Farley, being interviewed on ABC’s “Good Morning America” earlier in the week, and I exchanged several “instant messages” with my son regarding his upcoming trip to Saint Louis. I also took time to update the blog I use in graduate seminar I teach in Mental Health Policy; my students love the fact that they no longer have to purchase a textbook for the class, and I love the fact that I can provide topical policy information literally the day it becomes relevant (e.g., changes in Medicare or Medicaid policy). Finally, I used Google Books to pull up a quotation from William James’ book Varieties of Religious Experience that I needed to make a point in an upcoming lecture.

While in Virginia, I used Skype from the convenience of my hotel room to chat in real time with several friends around the world; this was done quickly and easily, and there was no charge for the service. I’ll be attending the International Congress of Psychology in Berlin in July, and I learned that I’ll be seeing many of the psychologists I met at the last international congress held in Beijing in 2004, and at the International Association of Applied Psychology conference in Athens two years ago. Attending international gatherings of psychologists has become a routine event for many of us.

I’ll be living in Seoul, Korea and teaching at Yonsei University with Fulbright program support from September of this year through June of 2009. During this time I’ll have almost daily contact with my Administrative Assistant (via Skype), and I’ll continue to edit PsycCRITIQUES: Contemporary Psychology—APA Review of Books; almost all of the work done on the journal is now done online using APA’s Journal Back Office (JBO) software. My professional life in Korea will not be all that different from my current life—I’ll simply be answering email in Seoul rather than in Saint Louis. I believe I can do a credible job as Division 46 President during the period when I’ll be out of the country, despite the dramatic constraints of geography, all because of the wonders of technology.

(continued on p. 19)
Past President's Column

Where Do We Go From Here?

Rochelle Balter
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Many of you may be aware that APA is presently experiencing a number of “Firsts.” The Council has mandated that the first Strategic Plan for APA be established. The APA membership has signed a petition which will lead to the first member generated referendum in the Organization’s history.

Division 46, as always ahead of the times, also established a Strategic Planning Committee in 2007. This Committee is examining a number of new areas such as the use of Internet, web, and other interactive technologies in education, practice, and general communications, (including You Tube, and Face Book) as well as the impact of new technologies on various cultures and the impact of multiculturalism on technology use. This is not the first time that Division 46 has led. We have been in forefront of many innovative fields such as telehealth, looking at the impact of violence in the media, distance learning, and of course, members appearing on television, doing podcasts, bringing psychology to the public, and being commentators on various aspects of psychology in current news.

All of this is great stuff, yet our membership numbers are small. We need to ask why the disconnect, if we are truly such a forward-looking, multi-disciplinary entity. Why aren’t we attracting all sorts of new members? Is it because we the supposed experts in communications are poor communicators?

This leads us to a controversial question…what do we need to do to sell the product…Division 46? Do we need a name change? Do we need an image makeover or a pubic relations campaign including outreach to other Divisions? If we are so good at selling psychology, why aren’t we also experts at selling to psychologists?

When the McKinley Group that APA hired to assist them with their plan, spoke to the Council of Representatives in February, they tried to establish a BHAG (big hairy audacious goal). Do we need a BHAG and if so what would it be? What are the Division’s goals? How can we get our members involved in these issues? Can we lead our discipline to a language in which they can actually share psychologically healthy principles with the legislators and the public? What other forward looking areas should we be involved with? We need your voices and input, if we are to be active and recognized in new areas of Psychology and Technology.

We are visionaries…we need some vision now as to how to survive and thrive.

From the Editor

Lita Linzer Schwartz
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As your editor, as a psychologist focused on children, as a responsible member of the community, and, yes, as a grandmother, I want to share with you my concerns about the amount of time I see children sitting in front of a screen, a monitor. In some cases, they are actively interacting with a computer monitor, either playing games, or doing homework, or otherwise engaged. In other cases, they are curled up or sitting staring at a television monitor—for hours.

Obviously, not all of this focus on a monitor is bad. Being able to use a computer as a learning tool, or to do homework, or to play some games is virtually mandatory today. Sitting in front of the television screen for hours, watching what even kids will tell you are inane products (though they might use another word), may be labeled relaxation, but also seems to erode their thinking ability, their imagination, maybe even their potential level of intelligence.

The problem is that some computer games teach more about doing harm, or taking vengeance on others, than they do about being creative in a constructive way. Is this what we want children to learn? Some of the cartoons, to use the term loosely, on television do much the same thing. Parents or other adults in the home do not always supervise these activities and may be unaware of their orientation and what they "teach," or underestimate the messages being transmitted. Perhaps our Division can provide more adult education in this area.

Another alternative might be to encourage more reading, as books and magazines are another aspect of the media. Parents may be able to exercise a bit more control in this mode, perhaps even suggesting a wider range of subject matter that would arouse a youngster's curiosity, perhaps providing problems that would evoke creativity, and maybe stimulate new interests. Who knows? Our Division's efforts might even lead to an upsurge in discovery.

Join Division 46 Today!

You can find the online membership application form at our site (www.apa.org/divisions/div46/). There is a PDF download on the main page. Please fill out the form and mail it to Division 46, Administrative Office, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242.
From the Associate Editors

Not Just Sex and Violence

Kathryn Stamoulis
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Sex and violence are the two most common concerns many people have when it comes to potentially negative content in the media. While recently watching the romantic comedy 27 Dresses, I was given a huge reminder that those are not the only problems.

The movie 27 Dresses stars Katherine Heigl as Jane, a dowdy (read brunette) wedding-obsessed career woman who is secretly in love with her boss. She cherishes her 27 bridesmaid’s dresses and dreams of her big day. She is a pushover, watching her younger, more beautiful sister (read blonde) swoop in and quickly become engaged to her dream man.

Another man comes rushing in and challenges Jane to learn to stand up for herself. And they live happily ever after; the film culminating with Jane and her rescuer’s wedding. Everyone is delighted she is finally getting married and in the end, everyone is coupled up, even the sarcastic, witty best friend.

I was completely shocked by this film’s overt message that a woman’s worth resides in her marital status. Haven’t we moved far past that? Glaring messages that young people receive in the media depicting racial stereotypes, gender inequality and women who are nothing without a white wedding may not be as glamorous as sex and violence. But these messages are being crammed down the throats of media consumers, and they deserve some dissent.

The Other Side of the Internet—Immoral, Vile, and Appalling

Victoria Hennessy
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The Internet is a resource that no one can live without. The information exchange is beyond reproach of any other technological creation. On the flip side, how much consideration is given to the damage it can do and has done to so many innocent victims. A 2006 report by Gartner Research found that losses for phishing attacks in 2004 were $137 million and in 2006 it increased to $2.8 billion! They also found that the per victim loss increased almost five-fold from $257 in 2004 to $1,244 in 2006. Phishing….do you even know what it is? Probably most readers of this newsletter do not. In a nutshell, it is an email scam with the purpose of obtaining valuable personal information. PC Magazine explains that there are phishing kits that a novice can use to create their own mass mailings to obtain people’s information! Believe it. There is software out there to actually help people steal other people’s personal information.

Another evil part of the Internet is pimping and prostitution and the Internet is the messenger. Sites such as Craigslist which has an erotic services category are used by prostitutes to sell their “services.” In an article found in the Seattle Times dated November 16, 2006, the founder and Chairman of Craigslist, Craig Newmark, stated that he had heard that prostitution was significant on the site. Another article in the New York Times dated September 5, 2007, details a number of arrests and statistics surrounding the prostitution services being offered on Craigslist. The New York Times article reported that in one day 9,000 listings were added to the sites “erotic services” category in the New York region alone. These numbers are staggering.

Pornography is another vile industry which has flourished through Internet transactions. Twelve percent of all websites are pornographic websites. There are 4.2 million pornographic websites, 420 million pornographic web pages, and 68 million daily pornographic search engine requests (or 25% of total search engine requests) (Internet Filter Review, 2006). The Top Ten Adult Search Requests in 2006 were for: “sex,” “adult dating,” “adult DVD,” “porn,” “sex toys,” “teen sex,” “free sex,” “adult sex,” “group sex,” and “free porn” (Internet Filter Review, 2006). Every second, 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography and every 39 minutes a new pornographic video is being made in the United States (Internet Filter Review, 2006).

As with most unbelievable and mind boggling creations such as the Internet we must recognize the good, the bad and the ugly.

President’s Column

(continued from p. 1)

life.” Beyond the monastery walls there is horror, hate, violence, misery, often untouched by the machinations of the monks. Horror remains the number one problem confronting our species. The language of horror is of course incorporated into many of these laboratory/monastic studies, simulation studies, psych-101-students-as-subjects studies, self-report low-validity questionnaire studies as if these studies somehow capture true horror. External and ecological validity sacrificed at the monk’s altar of internal validity. Endless causal inferences from correlations. Is our slow progress at making the world a better place due to our scientific method? I think yes, in significant part. We need more creativity in developing research methods that are effective outside the confines of our order. And if we can achieve that, media psychology can play a much enhanced role of taking those valid results to where they can make the world a better place—to the media, the families, the schools, the nations and the many publics. Will we get there?
APA Council of Representatives News

Lenore E. Walker
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Although the Council of Representatives (COR) only meets twice a year, lots of business goes on all year long as this is the policy-making body for the APA. COR designates some of the important and time-certain business to the Board of Directors which is like an executive committee of COR. Therefore, COR elects eight members to three year terms on the APA Board of Directors (two each year for at-large terms plus a secretary and a treasurer) and together with APA-wide elected President, President-Elect, and Past President they serve as the Board of Directors along with the APA CEO, Norman Anderson. While the Board can take care of routine business that it has the power to conduct, there are many items that they send on to COR members for our comments and action between our two meetings. I try to send some on to the Division 46 listserv for your perusal and comments whenever I receive them so if you are not on our listserv, join and catch the news.

Perhaps one of the most important issues to come before COR and the Board this spring has been the expansion of COR with four more seats to have full participation of representatives of the minority psychological associations. The four represent Hispanic, Native American, Asian American and Black psychologists. Their representatives have been meeting with COR for the past three years as part of an experiment and their voice on Council floor has been quite helpful in giving all sides to a discussion. This is especially important as we do not have a fully representative group of different minority psychologists’ views elected to COR and so we better understand some of the pressing issues to our colleagues, students, and clients. It will take a by-law change to give these APA members representing the other associations full voting powers on COR so we hope you all will support the amendment when it arrives in your mail.

Another interesting issue raised this year was our response to the AMA’s attempt to pass a resolution in their Council stating that only medical doctors could use the term Doctor. As you might imagine, psychology as well as several other health care professionals who use the courtesy title to identify ourselves as part of the health care profession were concerned that the APA would even be arrogant enough to think that they owned the entire health care profession by themselves. President Alan Kazdin and CEO Norman Anderson immediately sent the AMA a letter informing them that psychologists have a much longer tradition of using the title Dr. than did physicians and that we would not stop using the title no matter what they said. Indeed, their resolutions are not binding on anyone but their members, just like ours. Interesting, NAPPP sent a letter to the AMA threatening a Federal Trade Commission investigation of restraint of trade should they pass the resolution. As of this time, it appears that the resolution is no longer on their table. Some claim that the AMA is desperately looking for ways to lead the health care reform that will be coming with a new Presidential Administration in our country. Surely they should know by now that their best hope is an integrated approach to health care working with other professionals.

Another issue that I want to share with you here is a resolution proposed by a group of APA members who would like to restrict any psychologist from working in any place where the U.S. Constitution or the Geneva Convention is not respected. This will come to members in the form of a petition to adopt this resolution without the support from COR or the Board. These psychologists appear to be similar to those who put forth a number of resolutions against psychologists participating in any form of torture during the past few years that COR has approved and are now APA policy. However, it does not appear that COR either has the authority to specify where psychologists can or cannot work or could enforce any such mandate even if it were to pass. So COR and the Board have rejected this resolution fearing that the very possibility that it were passed could permit some third party to use it against psychologists working in situations that we might not even think of now. Nonetheless, the psychologists who support this resolution have researched a way to by-pass COR and the Board, and go directly to the members to see if they agree with such restrictions. It appears too unclear if the intention of the petition’s makers is to amend the ethics code and if so, then they probably will need to involve the ethics committee and COR before that can be done. I have been posting the discussion on the listserv as it is an interesting issue that on the face of it seems sensible but when looking more closely at possible ramifications could be quite unintentionally burdensome on restricting where psychologists can work. In my opinion, it seems to be sufficient to monitor what psychologists do rather than where they do it, but I have an open mind and will wait to see how this issue gets resolved.

Finally, we are moving forward in the revising our APA Mission Statement and developing a strategic plan. We are promised another presentation at the August COR meeting. So, if you plan to be at APA Convention in August, please stop in and sit in the gallery for awhile and watch our deliberations. We meet all day on the Wednesday before convention begins in the Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton Boston and again from 9 to 12 on Sunday in the same place.
Dr. David Shapiro is a Professor of psychology at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He teaches in the forensic psychology concentration, teaching courses in professional ethics, projective testing, forensic assessment, and criminal law. He also supervises forensic students in their clinical/forensic practica. He also maintains a private forensic consulting practice specializing in issues of ethics, professional liability and malpractice. He has published extensively in the area of forensic psychology, ethics, and professional practice. He is the author of four textbooks in the area of forensic psychology and two books in the area of professional liability and malpractice.

Death and the Privilege

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It is not uncommon for a therapist to encounter a situation when a patient has died and the therapist would like to write a journal article about some particularly compelling part of the issues raised in treatment. We can recall the controversy that arose when, following the death of Nicole Simpson, her therapist spoke to the media reasoning that since the patient was dead, confidentiality was no longer an issue. A similar case had to do with the poetess, Ann Sexton, who had been in therapy with the late Martin Orne, MD, PhD. Following Ann Sexton’s death, Dr. Orne made available to her biographer, a woman named Diane Wood Middlebrook, 300 therapy tapes. Ann Sexton had never given Dr. Orne any explicit written consent to release the tapes, but, according to Orne, had told him that he could use the tapes in any way he saw fit if they would be of benefit to other people. Orne did have the permission of Sexton’s daughter and literary executor to let the biographer hear the tapes. Of some note is that Ann Sexton had left detailed instructions in her will regarding the disposition of her papers, but nothing in those instructions about the tapes Dr. Orne had made. Orne was condemned in the media for betraying his patient and his profession. Despite the family’s belief that confidentiality did not survive the patient’s death, some legal analyses suggested otherwise. A compelling and cogent argument regarding the steps to be taken in such a situation is proposed by Behnke in a recent volume entitled Essentials of Florida Mental Health Law. This includes obtaining a written authorization from the patient for release of materials, an analysis of what the patient would have wanted if he or she had not given written consent and a consideration of whether there were other less intrusive means of obtaining the same information. Under any circumstances, be sure to obtain legal consultation in such a matter because the matters are complex and the legal precedents frequently contradictory.

Reference

Dr. Salvador Santiago-Negrón was born in Cayey, Puerto Rico. He obtained his PhD at the University of Wisconsin—Madison and a Master’s Degree in Public Health from Harvard University. He is also a diplomate of the American Board of Administrative Psychology.

He has been the Dean of Students at the School of Medicine of the Universidad Central del Caribe in Puerto Rico. In 1985, he was appointed president of the Carlos Albizu University, where he served for 21 years until he retired in 2006. In this position, he brought to the institution his vitality in administration and development of academic programs at its two campuses, San Juan and Miami, securing the American Psychological Association’s (APA) accreditation of the doctoral programs in Clinical Psychology. This was the first APA-accredited Hispanic institution.

Dr. Santiago was recognized by the Puerto Rican Psychological Association as Psychologist of the Year in 1999. In 2000, he received the Cultural Diversity Award from the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology for his role in promoting cultural diversity in higher education. In 2006, he was recognized with The Karl F. Heiser APA Presidential Award for Mental Health Advocacy.

He participates in various radio programs providing orientation and referrals to the general public. At present, he is directing the media campaign for the Commission for the Prevention of Violence in Puerto Rico (appointed by the Governor of PR), located at the Cayey campus of the University of Puerto Rico. He frequently contributes editorials to the local print media in Puerto Rico, particularly addressing topics related to drug policy and violence prevention.

At present, he works as a private consultant and psychotherapist at the Red Metropolitana de Psicología, a private corporation in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
Dr. Edward Donnerstein is Professor of Communication and Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Arizona. Prior to his appointment at Arizona in 2002, he was the Rupe Chair in the Social Effects of Mass Communication, and Dean of Social Sciences at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A social psychologist, he received his PhD in psychology in 1972. His major research interests are in mass-media violence, as well as mass media policy. He has published over 220 scientific articles in these general areas and serves on the editorial boards of a number of academic journals in both psychology and communication. He was a member of the American Psychological Associations Commission on Violence and Youth, and the APA Task Force on Television and Society, and served on a Surgeon Generals panel on youth violence. He is Past-President of the International Society for Research on Aggression. In addition, he was primary research site director for the National Cable Television Associations 3.5 million-dollar project on TV violence. He has testified at numerous governmental hearings both in the United States and abroad regarding the effects and policy implications surrounding mass media violence and pornography, including testimony before the United States Senate on TV violence.

The media have changed. Newer technologies—in particular, the Internet—have created a new dimension for researchers and practitioners to consider when they examine the impact, ethics, regulation, and dissemination of a vast array of media content. Unlike traditional media such as TV, radio, and film, the Internet gives children, adolescents and adults access to just about any form of content they can find. For the first time, these individuals have the ability to view almost any type of media content. The “gate keepers” of the past are no longer confined to a relatively small group, but are part of a true global media and managed by almost anyone from “bloggers” to “youtubers.” Even today’s Presidential election is immersed within cyberspace.

For decades parents and others have consistently been concerned about the potentially “harmful” influences of new mass media that were developed and were easily accessed by children. The major difference today compared to those concerns in the past, is the knowledge gap between parents and their children. The Internet, and all its varying facets, is a technology in which children and adolescents are often more sophisticated and knowledgeable about then their parents. Too often we hear of computer-phobic adults who posses little knowledge of this expanding technology. Such resistance to the technology, and limited knowledge base, will make solutions to potential problems even more difficult.

Unlike traditional media such as TV and music, the Internet gives children and adolescents access to just about any form of sexual and violent content they can find. For the first time these individuals will be able (with some work) to have the ability to view almost any form of potentially harmful media depictions.

Division 46 is at a pivotal and important place in the American Psychological Association to be the organizer, facilitator, and representative of this exciting and continuing change in our media environment. How we present psychologists and our profession have and will undergo transformation. The impact of the media on children and adults is already changing and presenting new challenges. The organization and issues surrounding access to information, information privacy, intellectual property, intellectual freedom, and censorship will be at the forefront both nationally and internationally. For those of us in Division 46 this is both a challenge and opportunity. It will not be Media Psychology as usual—nor should it be.

Lita Linzer Schwartz
(Also see Editor’s column this issue)

Dr. Lita Linzer Schwartz is Distinguished Professor Emerita at the Pennsylvania State University, where she taught at what is now Abington College (formerly the Ogontz Campus) from the 1960s through 1995. She earned her PhD at Bryn Mawr College in 1964. A developmental, clinical, and forensic psychologist, she served as educational psychologist, and also taught courses in special education, American education, abnormal psychology, psychology of women, cults and conversion, ethnic studies, and psychology and the law. Author/co-author/or editor of 20 books, including Psychology and the Media: A Second Look (APA, 1999), she has also contributed many chapters to books published here and abroad, as well as an abundance of articles to professional journals. Her more recent books have focused on divorce (with Florence Kaslow), international adoption (also with Florence Kaslow), When Adoptions Go Wrong (2006), and Child Homicide: Parents Who Kill (2007). Her interests and publications also include gifted and talented youth, and women artists and photographers. She is herself an enthusiastic photographer.

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Div. 46 Leaders!!

We wish to congratulate David Shapiro, our new President-Elect; Salvador Santiago, our new Treasurer-Elect, and Edward Donnerstein and Lita Schwartz, our new Members-at-Large-elect of our Board of Directors! They will all take office on January 1, 2009. We would also like to thank those who were not elected for their willingness to stand for Division office. We are most grateful for the great commitment all the candidates were willing to make to ensure outstanding leadership for the Division.

Frank Farley, President
Danny Wedding, Chair, Nominations Committee
2008 Div. 46 APA Convention Program

A Miniconvention at the Convention

APA Convention, Boston August 14–17
“Humanizing an Inhumane World”

Conveners: Frank Farley & V. Krishna Kumar, Program Co-chairs

Divisions 46 and 32 (Humanistic Psychology) have partnered to create a Miniconvention at the upcoming APA Convention in Boston on the topic “Humanizing an Inhumane World.” Several of the invited and submitted sessions in each Division Program are on this theme or related to it in some way, although each division also has many sessions not related to the theme (see all Division 46 sessions below).

When you get to Boston, flyers detailing the Miniconvention will be distributed at the Registration Area in the Convention Center. Please look for these.

There is a stellar list of speakers scheduled, including Aaron Beck, James Bray, Sharon Brehm, Dorothy Cantor, Noam Chomsky, Patrick DeLeon, Raymond Fowler, Daniel Goleman, Elaine Hatfield, Lawrence Kutner, David Shapiro, Robert Sternberg, Richard Suinn, Lenore Walker, Danny Wedding, and many more. On Sunday August 17 at 10 AM there will be a “wrap-up” session for the Miniconvention. Hope to see you there!

Thursday, August 14

9:00 AM–9:50 AM
Business Meeting
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Meeting Room 157A

11:00 AM–11:50 AM
Discussion: Humanizing an Inhumane World—Grand Theft Childhood: Videogame and Media Violence
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Meeting Room 155
Chair: Bray; Participants: Kutner, Olson

1:00 PM–1:50 PM
Paper Session: Media Psychology
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Meeting Room 161
Chair: Kumar
Participants: Klisanin: Megapixels, Gigabytes, and Dharma: Exploring the Design of Conscious Media; Byrne: Boomerang Effect: Competitive Processing and Construct Activation; Malesky & Peters: Are Faculty Members Welcome in Their Students’ Online Social Networks?; Isleib: New Nancy Drew: A Psychologist Turns Detective

2:00 PM–3:50 PM
Symposium: Smart Ways to Publish and Promote Nonfiction, Trade Books
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Meeting Room 155
Participants: Barrett: Psychology Trade Book: From Proposal to Publicity; Kutner: More Than Words: Writing a Profitable Book; Sapadin: Self-Publishing and POD: A Viable Option; Wallin: Marketing Your Book Online Ethically and Effectively

2:00 PM–3:50 PM
The APA Comedy Jam—Laughter: The Most Positive Psychology
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Meeting Room 160B
Chair: Farley; Participants: Ellis, Fowler, Kuriansky, Walker, Wedding

Friday, August 15

8:00 AM–9:50 AM
Discussion: APA Presidents Discuss Psychology and the American Presidential Election
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Rooms 151A and B
Chair: Farley; Participants: Bray, Cantor, DeLeon, Suinn

10:00 AM–10:50 AM
Poster Session: Media and Internet Psychology
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Exhibit Halls A and B1
Participants: Agee: Going Mainstream: Getting Your Theory-Based Idea Into the Public Eye; An, Choi, & Choi: Relationship Among Social, Physical, and Psychological Home Environment Variables and Internet Game Addiction Disposition in Korean Adolescents; Andrews & Brojack: Gender Stereotyping in Television’s Depiction of the First Female President of the United States; Bertocci, Silk, Forbes, Carpentier, Klein, & Dahl: Media Use in Children and Adolescents With and Without Psychopathology; Bowman, Levine, Waite, & Gendron: Instant Messaging Impacts
Summer 2008

Academic Reading Time, but Not Test Performance; Dale, Pidano, Klein, DiLoreto, Waszkiewicz, Olson, & Bozak:
Commercial Content: Do You Know What Our Children Are Watching? Fogel & Shlivko: Spam E-Mail and Romance:
Consumer Responses to These Solicitations; Heretick & Scarlett: Content Analysis of Social Aggression in Prime-Time
Television Commercials; Hogg, Saba, Penn, & Hodges: African American Media Usage: Analysis of Personality
and Cultural Differences; Meiners: Beyond Abnormal:
Feature Films as a Teaching Tool; Nguyen & Campbell:
Exploring Online Self-Disclosure: Synchronicity, Reciprocity,
Personality; Robison & Ogles: Effects of Fictional Portrayals
of Psychotherapy on Expectations of Treatment; Rockwell
& Giles: Humanizing Fame: Glimpses Inside the Celebrity Experience; Walsh: Magazine Reading and Young Women’s
Sexual Assertiveness, Knowledge, and Intentions

12:00 PM–1:50 PM
Discussion: Humanizing an Inhumane World—A
Conversation With Noam Chomsky and Frank Farley and
Audience
Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel, Grand Ballroom B
Chair: Farley; Participant: Chomsky

2:00 PM–2:50 PM
Workshop: Getting Your Book Published—Turning Your
Ideas Into Print
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room
204A
Chair: Kuriansky

2:00 PM–3:50 PM
Discussion: Sex, Love, and Psychology—A Townhall
Meeting
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room 210A
Chair: Farley; Participants: Brehm, Hatfield, Rapson, Miller

4:00 PM–4:50 PM
Discussion: Humanizing an Inhumane World—Criminal
Justice, Courts, Media: Dialogue With Lenore Walker and
David Shapiro
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room 213
Chair: Balter; Participants: Walker, Shapiro

5:00 PM–5:50 PM
Student Meeting: The New Media, the Internet and More:
A Division 46 Organizational Meeting for all Interested
Students.
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Meeting Room 101
Co-Chairs: Kathryn Stamoulis & Julia Walsh

6:00 PM–6:50 PM
Social Hour
Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel; Paine Room

Saturday, August 16

9:00 AM–9:50 AM
Symposium: Packaging Boy Power in Media—From Superman to Superbad
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room
150
Chair: Lamb
Participants: Lamb: Superhero Movies, Masculinity, and
Male Vulnerability; Brown: Guy Love: Messages About Masculinity and Friendship in Buddy Movies; Tappan & Dang:
Video Game Heroism: Master Models for Masculinity

10:00 AM–10:50 AM
Presidential Address
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room
206B
Chair: Beck;
Participant: Farley: Adventures of Doctor Thrill: Making Life Exciting and Better

12:00 PM–12:50 PM
Symposium: Varieties of Media-Aided Adjunctive
Therapeutic Procedures
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room
203
Chair: Fischoff
Participants: Fischoff: Psychotherapy, the Internet, Creative
Anonymity, Role Playing, and Identity Management; Balter:
Bibliotherapy: The Role of the Print Media in Promoting Mental Health; Logue: Cinematherapy: Technique, Tool, and Catalyst for Personal Growth and Change

1:00 PM–1:50 PM
Conversation Hour: Psychology Goes to the Movies—A
Conversation With Danny Wedding and Frank Farley
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room 203
Chair: Farley; Participant: Wedding

3:00 PM–3:50 PM
Discussion: Psychologist as Filmmaker
Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel; Berkeley Room
Chair: Swerdlik
Participant: Cohen: Writing, Producing, and Directing a Feature Film

Sunday, August 17

9:00 AM–9:50 AM
Symposium: Childhood in the Age of Electronic Media
and Online Communications
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; Meeting Room 160C
Chair: Carll
Participants: Levin: Sex, Violence, Media: Implications for Children’s Development, Self-Image, and Relationships; Linn:
Commercialization of Childhood: Issues for Psychologists;

(continued on p. 10)
My thanks to Division President Frank Farley, PhD, for this opportunity to speak to division members. Dr. Farley asked me to talk about the challenges my office and APA face in working with the news media. These challenges are in many ways similar to the challenges division members face in your dealings with the media. We strive to provide reporters and producers with accurate information quickly and in language that is based in the science of psychology but that they understand and can accurately summarize for their audience.

APA’s Media Referral Service (MRS) is a critical tool in matching reporters with the right psychological expert in a timely fashion. Many division members belong to the MRS. Thank you for doing so; members’ availability and responsiveness to reporters’ inquiries is what makes APA the “go to” organization for reporters looking for experts in mental health and behavioral science issues. We have over 2,000 APA members in the MRS and are always looking for more. If you are not already part of the service, I invite you to join. Please send an e-mail to public.affairs@apa.org to express your interest.

As the number of media outlets has exploded over the last decade—we are now working with bloggers and people wanting to post something on YouTube, Facebook, and/or MySpace, in addition to traditional print and electronic media—the number of requests we get from media has also grown. Typically, we receive about 50 media calls a week and refer about 150 members for interviews.

Breaking news can greatly increase that number. For example, in April 2007 after the Virginia Tech shootings, we responded to close to 200 media calls in two days, which resulted in over 1,000 news stories quoting APA members.

I also am very appreciative of being able to reach out to division leaders for their thoughts and advice when complex issues are raised by breaking news. I’ve done that twice recently: when the Britney Spears/Dr. Phil incident hit the airways and again when a New York psychologist was murdered by a patient. In both instances, the consultation was extremely helpful in crafting APA’s response.

Another project I’m sure is of interest to division members is the redesign of the APA website. We are working on a top-to-bottom re-engineering of the site. Our goal is to make the site more user-friendly for both members and the public and to build the APA brand online. For members, the “MyAPA” feature will be greatly improved to allow for a single sign-on to reach all pages and services available on the site. You will also be able to manage at a glance and at your convenience all of the features of your membership, including journal subscriptions, CE courses, convention registration, APA elections, etc.

We are also very cognizant of the power of the Web as a public education tool. Simply put, there’s no better investment of APA’s public education budgets than in an outstanding website. We have created new information architecture for the site that will allow us to highlight APA’s many information products, from scholarly works to those created for the public, and feature those topics in which we know, based on our current site traffic, the public is most interested.

A sneak preview of the new site will be available at the Boston convention. Please stop by the exhibit hall at the convention center (Booth #1032) and let us know what you think.
Florence W. Kaslow, PhD, ABPP, former President of Division 46, will receive the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in the Practice of Psychology from APA at this year’s convention. The Award recognizes her contributions to the field in the areas of couples and family, media, international and forensic psychology, and family business consultation. She had previously received APA’s Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Advancement of International Psychology.

Board certified in clinical, family, and forensic psychology, Dr. Kaslow began her career at Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia, earned her PhD from Bryn Mawr College, and has moved forward since then in multiple directions and with prolific results. Her early writings were concerned with training personnel in the helping professions, and with religious cults which were flourishing in the 1970s. From there she moved into family therapy, again practicing and writing about issues in that area, especially divorce and its effects on family members. Her interest in family therapy led her to found the International Family Therapy Association, which she served as its first president, and to develop Div. 43 (Family) of APA and establish the Journal of Family Psychology. She served as well as editor of the Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy.

Dr. Kaslow has traveled the world exploring families of holocaust survivors and perpetrators, family therapy in other countries and cultures, what contributes to successful marriages (and unsuccessful ones). Work in the area of divorce led to her knowledge of the importance of legal issues involved, ultimately leading to her establishment of the American Board of Forensic Psychology, which she served as first president. Relative to families, she has also written about military families, and about adoption, and is co-editor of Welcome Home: An International and Nontraditional Adoption Reader.

She has written or edited (solo or with a co-author or co-editor) more than 20 books, 150+ articles, and innumerable chapters. In her private practice, Dr. Kaslow has also moved into the area of family business consultation. She has served the profession in the media as well, sharing her knowledge with the public so that they are better informed about what helps or hurts families.

Dr. Lawrence Kutner, Harvard University, is the 2008 recipient of the Division 46 “Award for Lifetime Contribution to Media Psychology.”

Dr. Edward Donnerstein, University of Arizona, is the 2008 recipient of the Division 46 “Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions to Media Psychology.”

Barbara Meltz, of the Boston Globe, is the 2008 recipient of the Division 46 “News Media Recognition Award for Print Excellence.”

Dawn Fratangelo, of NBC News, is the 2008 recipient of the Division 46 “News Media Recognition Award for Broadcast Excellence.”

Dr. Aaron T. Beck, Dr. Daniel Goleman, and Dr. Robert Sternberg are each recipients of the Division 46 “Presidential Citation for Distinguished Contributions to the Public Understanding of Psychology.”

Dr. Danny Wedding, Division 46 President-elect, is recipient of the Society for General Psychology/APA Division One “Ernest R. Hilgard Award for Distinguished Contributions to General Psychology.

Call for Fellow Nominations

Please submit nominations for Initial and Current Fellows to Alan Entin at adentin@earthlink.net or 804-359-0109.
You may want to see an interesting April 2008 article by Phyllis Hanlon on the website of the New England Psychologist titled “Does Media Coverage Distort the Link Between Violence and Mental Illness?” The website is nePsy.com.

**Invitation to Early Career Psychologists at the Boston Convention**

Town Hall Meeting: Membership and the Early Career Psychologists”

Your Chance for an Open Exchange with APA Leaders

Saturday, August 16, 5:00–5:30

Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Meeting room 254A

Leaders: Sandra Tars, PhD, Chair of the APA Membership Committee; Shamin Ladhani, PsyD, Chair of the APA Committee on Early Career Psychologists

Invited Guests: Norman Anderson, PhD, APA Chief Executive Officer; Alan Kazdin, PhD, APA President; James Bray, PhD, APA President-Elect; Rhea Farberman, APR, APA Executive Director for Public and Member Communications

**Division 46 Book Series**

Division 46 Book Series, Psychology and the Media, is expanding “…Volume 3…and They Lived Happily Ever After…” by Mary Gregerson, PhD, (Ed.) is now being readied for publication with Springer Science and Business Media Books Series Editor. Florence Kaslow, PhD, is pleased to announce this book will be published in late 2009 and that it looks extremely interesting. Florrie also reminds members and others interested in Media Psychology that they can still purchase Vol. 1—Perspectives on Psychology and the Media—S. Kirshner & D.A. Kirshner (Eds.) and Vol. 2—Psychology and the Media: A Second Look—L.L. Schwartz (Ed) from Washington DC: APA Books.

**The Future of Children’s Latest Publication**

The Future of Children has released its latest publication, Children and Electronic Media (Vol. 18, No. 1). The volume focuses on how common forms of electronic media influences the wellbeing of children and adolescents. Accompanying the journal is an executive summary and a policy brief. The volume concludes that rather focusing on the type of technology children use, parents and policymakers should focus on what is being offered to children on the various media platforms. The fifteen leading scholars who contribute to the volume consider how exposure to different media forms are linked with school achievement, cognition, engagement in extracurricular activities, social interaction, aggression, fear and anxiety, risky behaviors, and lifestyle choices. Media technology can be a positive force in the lives of children and youth. Editors Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Elisabeth Hirschhorn Donahue argue in the Introduction that while government’s ability to regulate content is weak, educators and families can promote child wellbeing by ensuring that children engage in media in a positive way. The Future of Children is a co-production of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University and the Brookings Institution.

**Member News**

**Dr. Edward Abramson** has recently been interviewed for articles in Redbook, Quick & Simple, and Prevention. He has also been traveling around the country (Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Missouri, etc.) presenting a continuing education workshop on “Obesity & Compulsive Eating.” His CD, “Overcoming Emotional Eating” will be distributed by StopStress.com.

**Dr. Alma H. Bond** has a 13th book in press, titled Margaret Mahler: A Biography of the Psychoanalyst, McFarland Publishers. In 2007 she published two books, Old Age is a Terminal Illness and Camille Claudel, a Novel.

**Dr. Stuart Fischoff** is doing a regular blog for Psychology Today online. The blog is entitled “The Media Zone.” He covers subjects pertaining to the interface between the media and psychology. Recent blogs have included discussions of Grand Theft Auto IV and other violent media products, suicide reduction through reaching out online, and how media impacts all aspects of our social and psychological lives, including politics and war coverage and analysis. Interview comments have appeared in the L.A. Times, Orlando Sentinel, Huffington Post, and ABCNews.com.

**Dr. Mary Gregerson**, APA Div 46 Member-at-Large, has joined the psychology undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of St. Mary. She has a chapter “A Quiet Soul Listens to Her: Women, Spirituality, and Psychology” in the book WomanSoul (2008, Praeger).

**Jerri Lynn Hogg** is a PhD student at Fielding Graduate University. She is presenting a paper “Impact of Culture, Personality, and Digital Media on the Virtual Classroom” in Berlin at the XXIX International Congress of Psychology in July. She is also teaching a Media Psychology course online that she created.

Div. 46 Fellows **Dr. Carole A. Rayburn** and **Dr. Lillian Comas-Diaz** co-edited and contributed to WomanSoul: The Inner Life of Women’s Spirituality (2008, Praeger), dealing with the history of women’s spiritual life, the healing power of spiritual expression,
women’s individual journeys, and the application of women’s spirituality to mental health practice. Div. 46 Fellow Marcella Bakur Weiner and member Dr. Aphrodite Clamar were also contributors to this work.

Dr. Kimberly Young’s book, Breaking Free of the Web: Catholics and Internet Addiction was published by St. Anthony’s Messenger Press and focuses on faith-based recovery for helping clergy and pastoral counselors treat Internet addiction. She was quoted in the May issue of U.S. News & World Report in the article, “Addiction to Video Games a Growing Concern” and appeared in Second Skin, a documentary on the impact of virtual life in games such as World of Warcraft and Second Life that debuted at the Calgary, Boston, South by Southwest, Fantasia, and Hot Docs Film Festivals.

Creative Writing 101: Writing and Publishing Psychological Novels and Short Stories

Elaine Hatfield & Richard L. Rapson
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There are really two reasons why we write psychological novels. Firstly, it is lots of fun. You can be a dilettante—spending a year learning about the Amazon, Washington, DC politics, or a San Francisco circus circa 1890—never to revisit the topic again. Secondly, you can heed the call of George Miller, who in his APA presidential address, exhorted psychologists to “give psychology away,” by sharing its findings with the public. Recently, however, Janet Shibley Hyde (former President, APA’s Division 35) complained that psychologists are losing the media war. Today, young people garner more “facts” about feminism, love, and sex from TV, movies, short stories, novels, Dr. Phil, and the Web, than in the classroom or from textbooks crammed with scholarly facts. There is no reason scholars, psychologists, and researchers can’t get into the act and use their imaginations to enrich the cultural conversation.

Elaine has always been a creative writer. When she was 12, she was appointed poet laureate of the Detroit Police Gazette—the Truborg. She claims it has all been downhill from there. Nevertheless, when we started a serious creative writing career more than a decade ago, we were surprised to discover that creative writing and academic writing weren’t all that different.

Creative Writing 101

People always claim that “writers are born not made.” That you “can’t teach creative writing.” That is ridiculous. What do critics think all those MFA programs, writers groups, and conferences are about? If you are interested in writing (and publishing) we would suggest you start with short stories. That way, you can master the techniques of character creation, plotting, building suspense, and wrapping up a story in a series of slow steps. Some people argue that (for ethical reasons) you should avoid writing about people or situations you know, but they do offer an unmatchable starting point. Further, it is fairly easy to disguise the origins of our characters.

There are a slew of books that will tell you how to craft a really good short story or novel. You might try authors like Annie Lamott (1996),

(continued on p. 14)
CreativE Writing 101
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David Lodge (1994), Dwight W. Swain (2008), or dozens of others.

Plotting
The Bell Curve. According to the conventional wisdom, a story ought to revolve around a conflict. A story should set things up so tension rises to an almost unbearable peak. After a dramatic climax, comes a soothing denouement, where all things are wrapped up. “Hmm,” say the feminist literary critics: “Sounds suspiciously like a male sexual response.” Ursula Le Guin disparages the preceding “bell-curve view” as the “gladiatorial view of fiction.”

This is not the only way to satisfy a reader or to craft a good story, however. Variability is possible. Diane Lefer points out that alternative metaphors are appealing—jazz musicians may think in terms of a musical improvisation, Native American storytellers may think in turns of a wheel. Ann Hempel proposes a mosaic. Sports fans may find the instant replay a congenial device. Still, while there is no single formula for good plotting, you might want to start with the traditional bell curve structure until you are comfortable enough to craft your own experiments.

Difficulties of Publishing
The first step in finding a publisher is to find an agent. Probably you will have to contact many, many agents before you can find one interested in taking you on. In the old days (if you were a major talent), agents could be counted on to court you, soothe you, painstakingly edit your scribbling, and put up with drunken nights on the town. No more. Today, writers consider themselves lucky if they can find an agent—even a sports agent—to represent them.

Nonetheless agents are essential, since most modern day publishers won’t even consider an “over the transom” manuscript. They will simply send your treasured manuscript back, unread, and postage due. Thus, for a first step in finding an agent, you might consult: Jeff Herman (2008). Once you have succeeded in garnering an agent, the next step is to find a publisher.

Herman Melville wrote one of the great American classics: Moby Dick. At the time, reviewers questioned his sanity as well as his skill. By the end of his life it had earned a total of $157. In a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1851 he complained: “The malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me . . . I shall be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood . . . What I feel most moved to write, that is banned—it will not pry. Yet, altogether, write the other way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches.” Melville notwithstanding, we’ve found it relatively easy to get short stories published in literary magazines. You just have to send them out again and again—until “bingo!”—someone wants them. Novels, on the other hand, are a different matter. It is almost impossible to find a publisher. Nonetheless, you will surely want to give it a try. To find a potential publisher, you (and/or your agent) might try Lauren Mosko (2008). If you can’t find a decent publisher, you may want try one of the publishing-on-demand companies—like Aventine Press, iUniverse, or Xlibris. They generally do beautiful work—and have the advantage that they allow you to say what you want to say, without shaping your message to commercial interests.

Once you’ve done the best you can, and send your work out into the world, it will help if you develop a thick skin. Rejections can be harsh, but they are often funny. In attempting to publish, we received reactions that, had we taken them too seriously, we would have led us to toss our manuscripts in the trash. Some favorites:

• Thanks, but this is way too good for us. We publish pointedly tasteless stuff.

• Thank you so very much for your submission “Holy Guacamole.” Your piece is well crafted, but cannot be used in the Blackstone Circular. Some of my subscribers are rich, while others are working class. They would be offended. Can you send me a positive point of view, either about them or about your own class of people?

The point? Our suspicion is that, in psychology as in life, the prerequisites for “success” are not talent but enthusiasm, endurance, and resilience. That—and a large dose of self-mocking humor. The rewards of a successful career must be intrinsic: the pleasure of saying what you’ve got to say and doing what you’re aching to do. If one casts one’s fate to the adulation of colleagues or the crowds, then—good luck.

For information on Hatfield and Rapson’s scholarly work, short stories, and published novels see http://www.elainehatfield.com and http://www.elainehatfield.com/novels.htm

References

Join the Div. 46 Listserv!

Looking for a forum to join with others interested in a dialogue about Media Psychology issues?
To subscribe to the Division’s Listserv, go the following URL: http://lists.apa.org/cgi-bin/wa.exe? HOME Scroll down to DIV46-MEDIAPSYCH, click on it, and follow the instructions for joining the listserv. (Please note: You must be either an APA member or a Div.46 member to be eligible to join.)
Beyond Video Game Violence: New Avenues for Research

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We now have substantial evidence that playing violent video games leads to aggressive behavior in children and adolescents (Anderson, 2004; Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Anderson, Gentile & Buckley, 2007; Bushman & Anderson, 2002; Dill & Dill, 1998; Funk, Baldacci, Pasold & Baumgartner, 2004; Gentile, Lynch, Linder & Walsh, 2004; Kirsh, 2003; and Sherry, 2001). This listing does not encompass the large number of research studies in the area of video game violence, but certainly their data are representative of the findings on a whole. Video games are big business. Grand Theft Auto IV, a leader in the video game field sold 3.6 million copies in just one day after its release. About 70 million copies of other Grand Theft Auto editions have sold worldwide since its debut in 1997 (Marsh, 2008). The video game industry is an $18 billion dollar business in the United States, and sales of violent games play a substantial role in the profits.

While the data concerning the potentially harmful effects of violent video game playing are impressive, very little research has been carried out on the following topics: imagination, identification and stereotypes, values and morality, attention and concentration, abstract thinking and reflective thought, and social/emotional issues. All of these areas would yield some interesting findings and we would gain new perspectives on how video games affect these behaviors.

Imagination

We know from television research that children who are heavily involved in viewing TV programs are less imaginative than children who are light TV viewers (Singer & Singer, 2005). Would heavy video game players be prone to think of plots in terms of simple stories without any complexity or embellishment? Would they tell stories that merely replicate the games they have played or could they go beyond these? Are heavy video game players able to make distinctions between fantasy and reality? Do they understand that the games they play are exaggerated in content and that aggression in society is complicated and dependent on many contingent circumstances?

Identification and Stereotypes

Do children identify with the characters they see in violent video games? A study conducted by a team led by Sandra Calvert (1999) demonstrates that systematic research on how preadolescent children engage in multi-user domain play is possible. It would be interesting to see if a study similar to this can be applied to violent video game playing to determine with whom the children identify and why. Calvert’s investigation involved 84 children between ages 10 and 13 who were fifth and sixth graders. The findings are particularly striking in demonstrating gender differences. Boys showed more mythological or pure fantasy tendencies, choosing names like Lord of the Rings. Girls made up names such as Brittany or Shania which reflected their interest in pop music stars. Boys largely chose to represent themselves in mildly rebellious stances wearing “leather jackets” or with punk identities. Girls seemed more likely to choose as a model of assertiveness soccer costumes. In keeping with findings from studies of sex differences in play, girls used more verbal expression and boys were more playful and engaged in more action.

In general, the literature indicates that media representations of femininity are restrictive, unrealistic, focused on physical beauty of a type that is virtually unattainable as well as questionable in terms of its characteristics, and filled with internal contradictions (Dill & Thill, 2006). What are the attitudes towards women and minorities specifically as a result of heavy video game playing?

Values and Morality

Given the fact that violent video games are played frequently by children and adolescents, one may be concerned about how heavy game players develop an internal code of morality. Certainly games like Mortal Combat and Grand Theft Auto present graphic violence and acts that reflect the most heinous behaviors. Can a young child understand that what he sees is merely a game and that in the real world there are consequences for negative behaviors. Nearly 90 percent of parents surveyed believe that popular media especially television, video games, and popular music encourage materialism, coarse language, early sexual encounters, and aggressive behavior in children (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2003; Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates & and American Viewpoint, 2003). How do youth process the stories presented in violent games concerning morality and decency?

Attention and Concentration

Events take place rapidly in violent videogames forcing children to focus on the events and make quick movements in order to gain points. How does this carry over in terms of schoolwork and attention in general? Does the rapid pace of violent video games enhance a child’s attention and concentration or will the rapid cuts with changes of scene affect a child’s ability for prolonged immersion in reading or in comprehension of a text. We have data that demonstrate that heavy television viewers have difficulty in attention and score significantly lower on standardized reading tests than do light TV viewers (Singer & Singer, 1981). Will this apply to heavy violent videogame players?

Abstract Thinking and Reflective Thought

In the typical violent video game there is very little opportunity for reflection on the acts as they are presented. Events move rapidly and the player must pay strict attention to the movements in order to reach a higher level of play. Does this affect one’s ability for

(continued on p. 16)
Beyond Video Game Violence
(continued from p. 15)

reflection in general? We need to study this topic more since we do know that the games are more concrete in presentation and yet the demand for performance in many tasks in school include the ability to think abstractly.

Social and Emotional
An important meta-analysis by Anderson and Bushman (2001) demonstrated that the more one played violent video games, there was less indication of helping behaviors. One wonders if other social behaviors are affected such as cooperation and turn-taking. Are we turning out a generation of heavy violent video game players who are self-indulgent young people and less empathetic than the non-players of these games. The challenge for new research is here and now let us hope some respond.

References


New Adventures in Spreading the Word

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These days, now that I’m not tied down to classroom teaching, I have an even greater motivation to disseminate the findings of media psychology to the public at large. Having written a parenting book based on my research on the media and children’s fears (“Mommy, I’m Scared”), and a children’s book to help young kids get over their worries (Teddy’s TV Troubles), I am well aware of the benefits that can come from reaching out to the public.

When “Mommy I’m Scared” went out of print last year and I was trying to decide what my next step would be, I got an invitation to a Writing for Change conference in San Francisco. This conference bills itself as serving nonfiction writers who (with all their due modesty) “want to change the world” for the better. There, I mingled with writers from across the country who were writing on all sorts of nonfiction issues. APA’s Phil Zimbardo was among the keynoters.

Along with talking to agents, publicists, book coaches, and others who help writers get their message out, I also met a number of people who spread their messages through public speaking. Having done a bit of this myself as the result of being invited by groups ranging from schools to churches to hospitals and professional associations, I was intrigued to find ways of achieving higher visibility as a speaker. One of the recommendations I received at the conference was to join my local affiliate of the National Speaker Association. My local group was offering a program for people in my situation, who want to find a wider forum for their speaking. Through their program, I have concluded that the overriding theme I would like to promote is that people should take the role of the media in their lives more seriously in terms of the effects on their emotions, their quality of life, their mental and physical health, and their productivity. I decided that rather than talk mainly to parents and other caregivers, I’d talk to adults in general and get them to contemplate the role of the media in their own lives.

Another effect of being out of the college classroom is that I have the time to read much more widely in psychology and to have discussions with researchers in other areas. I have become fascinated with the findings in neuroscience that help us understand media effects better. For example, Le Doux’s two-system conceptualization of fear memories helps explain why so many of my research participants who saw Jaws as a child, feel anxious in lakes and pools as well as the ocean years later. The latest research on mirror neurons also brings the study of media effects into much more prominent focus. So I have created presentations like This is Your Mind on Media: Staying Sane in a Crazy Culture, which make media effects
more prominent and more plausible. Rightly or wrongly, people take psychology more seriously when we include the brain in our explanations.

I’m also studying communication strategies for effective presentations. After reading Made to Stick by psychologist Chip Heath, I realized that the way professors are trained to communicate is not the way to make our messages memorable. So I have adopted many of their recommended strategies, including putting information in story form, creating surprise, and encouraging active audience participation. I’ve also benefited from reading Writing to Change the World by Mary Pipher (author of Reviving Ophelia), who advocates that we include in our speeches such techniques as creating suspense, quoting your grandchild or next-door-neighbor, and ending your talk with an inspirational quote.

Speaking publicly rather than writing books also has the advantage of allowing you to receive immediate feedback from the people you’re targeting, which permits you to continually revise and refine your message. As psychologists, we still must be careful that the content of our message meets the findings of research—but as speakers, we don’t have to wait nearly as long to learn how real people respond.

1. See, for example, Long-term memories of frightening media often include lingering trauma symptoms. Presented at the Association for Psychological Science Convention, New York, May 26, 2006. Available on my web site: www.joannecantor.com

A Week in My Life as a Video Producer

Roger Klein
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It’s 8:30 on a cold October morning in 2006, and I’m standing on a street corner near the Psychology Department at the University of Minnesota. I’ve never been on this campus before and I’m marveling at its beauty. It’s the first morning of a week-long video shoot, and I’m waiting for my cameraman, Chris Peterson, to arrive. I’ve spoken with Chris once on the phone but have yet to meet him. Chris is a freelancer with 1-800 TVCREWS (yes—that’s both their name and their phone number), a national company, that I’ve employed over the past 5 years. During that time I’ve gone around the country to the nations’ top psychology departments, producing 55 videos.

The video series, called Research in Action Videos, is a project I created in 2003, for Wadsworth, a major publisher of psychology textbooks. The goal is to provide students and psychology instructors with videos, 5–10 minutes in length, that take them inside the research labs of psychologists and neuroscientists.

Today will be just like the beginning of any other week-long shoot—a week that will be filled with anxiety and uncertainty, but hopefully, also, with interesting and productive results. I will work with at least one camera crew (sometimes they change midweek), and researchers I’ve never met (and may have “spoken” with only by email). I trust that the researchers will have arranged to bring along students, children, or animals, who will, in turn, behave appropriately for a long enough time period, so that we can illustrate various psychological concepts.

I’m finding that my new audiences are much more responsive to the changes in both the content and style of my messages: People are approaching me weeks after my talks to tell me they’re still thinking and talking about what I said.

We begin with psychologist Angus MacDonald, a new PhD, who studies suspicion and trust, using behavioral methods and brain scans. Our goal is to illustrate a video game called the Minnesota Trust Game, show students playing the game, have them go into the scanner (a different location on campus), interview Angus, show some previous scan results and wrap everything up in time to meet our next researcher, Ann Masten, at 1 PM. We barely make it—and there’s no time for a lunch break.

Masten is one of the top researchers in resilience, but when agreeing to the interview Ann cautioned me that she had no way to illustrate the topic (read—no video beyond the interview). I was concerned because we were going to interview her for two different videos—her research on resilience in homeless people, and resilience in “late-bloomers.” In addition, two other Minnesota researchers had agreed to interviews, but they also had no supporting video (Nicki

(continued on p. 18)
Crack, on relational aggression, and Tom Bouchard, on twins). While it’s unusual to set up video shoots for which there is no supporting video, Wadsworth believed these researchers were so well known that we should go ahead anyway, and worry about supporting video later. However, it is supporting video, not interviews, that make or break an individual story. In addition, all video for my stories has to be “fresh” and shot by my camera crews. The one exception is for current news—like Hurricane Katrina. Wadsworth has an agreement with ABC News and will pay for small amounts of news video (but ABC charges by the “second”—and it isn’t cheap).

Ann Masten was friendly, and immediately offered us homemade pumpkin-raisin muffins. YES—lunch! After the interview she said that she had an idea about additional video. By 6PM that evening she called to tell me that she could arrange video for both the homeless and the late-bloomer stories. I was to contact physician Mike Maddaus—a noted thoracic surgeon at the University of Minnesota. Maddaus agreed to an interview at the hospital at 7AM Thursday. Maddaus had been arrested 27 times as a teenager, and was involved with drugs, and a near-fatal car crash. Mike became our “late-bloomer.” In addition, Masten arranged for a 4PM interview later in the week, with a homeless woman and her children. They were living at a local shelter where Masten was conducting research. We could tape it all. Bingo!

On Tuesday I prayed for warmer temperatures and sun (it turned out to be 65), because we were to work outdoors with Mark Snyder, a leading researcher in volunteerism. Mark had arranged for us to visit a Habitat for Humanity worksite and a Meals-on-Wheels distribution center. Donning hard hats at the former location, Chris and I were on top of a 3-story building, which was being built, in part, by volunteers from Wells Fargo bank. Cool video.

On Wednesday we interviewed Nicki Crick, but none of us had any idea as to where to get video of relationally aggressive children. On Thursday we had a similar issue about lack of video for the twins segment with Tom Bouchard. We spent the rest of each day shooting video on the college campus, interviewing students who had experiences with relational aggression, and searching the local community for video related to each story (e.g., churches, schools, poor neighborhoods. etc).

Friday was baby day. We worked with noted infant researcher Albert Yonas, who brought in a 26 week-old child. Al demonstrated a fascinating hi-tech way to measure the development of size constancy in infants, as well as some of his classic work in depth perception. The infant was well behaved, but the shoot took almost 6 hours. We also had what was only our second lunch of the week. Then we headed to the homeless shelter.

By 7 PM on Friday I was done, but not before re-interviewing Ann Masten, so she could comment directly on the specifics of the late-bloomer physician and the homeless woman. Ann thoughtfully dry-cleaned her Monday outfit so we could insert soundbites at any point—without worrying about a different “look.”

Early Saturday I headed to the Minneapolis airport, exhausted but exhilarated.

Update: Five months later, while shooting video at a public school near Rutgers University, we encountered two girls engaged in real-time relational aggression. We had permission to tape them as part of another project. We used this video in the Crick story.

In July of 2007 Ann Masten emailed to let me know that the homeless woman and her children would throw out the first pitch at a Minnesota Twins game. I was able to reach the ‘Twins’ PR department, and they graciously taped and sent us this video, at no cost, for use in the segment.

In August 2007, at Tom Bouchard’s recommendation, my Pittsburgh editor and I shot video at Twinsburg, Ohio, during their annual twins festival. Mission accomplished!

Over the five years that I have produced these videos not a single camera crew, researcher, child, or non-human organism has failed to show up—or failed to come through. They are the ones who have made these “weeks” fun, educational and worthwhile.

Roger Klein, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh. He teaches courses in Media Psychology and Human Learning. For the past 8 years he has produced a radio segment (formerly The Psychology Minute, now called The Healthcare Quality Minute), which airs twice per week on the all-news station, KQV 1410-AM. He is a two-time recipient of the Pennsylvania Psychological Association’s Annual Media Award.
Psych Central Recognized by TIME as One of Top 50 Best Websites in 2008

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Psych Central (PsychCentral.com) was recognized on TIME.com in June as one of the best websites in 2008 for its top mental health content and social media tools. TIME.com cites Psych Central's simple quizzes, "Ask the Therapist" area, and prescription rating sections as reasons for inclusion on its list of "2008 picks for the best the Web has to offer."

I began Psych Central in 1995 in order to provide professionally-reviewed mental health and psychology resources to consumers. Its roots, though, began in pre-Web 1991 when I first started indexing online mental health and psychology resources. Such resources included informational files on depression and other mental health concerns, as well as the dozens of self-help support groups on Usenet and private email lists. Psych Central was originally begun as a place to permanently house these indexes.

After its launch, however, I realized there really weren't many places one could find reliable and professionally-reviewed articles about symptoms and treatments for mental disorders. For instance, in 1995 not even the National Institute of Mental Health had a website. So Psych Central began publishing diagnostic criteria and treatment options for disorders, and worked hard to keep such information free from bias. Computers and programming have always been a hobby of mine, so it seemed like a natural fit to use them to help propagate mental health information through the Internet.

Psych Central soon became one of the first mental health websites that helped to break down the stigma and barriers associated with mental disorders. We were constantly looking to innovate, so for example we published the first online interactive screening quizzes on topics such as ADHD, depression, and bipolar disorder. We began one of the first psychology blogs in 1999, World of Psychology, where I and other regular contributors help put current news and research into some better perspective. In 2001, we started our own self-help support groups and have since added many social networking features, such as photo sharing, rating and reviewing medications and treatments, and blogs for our users. Last year, to supplement our popular "Ask the Therapists" feature, we added the Psych Central Answers Q&A service.

As one of the leading independent mental health networks online, Psych Central now reaches over 650,000 people every month, has nearly 60,000 members in its 140+ self-help support groups, and over 120,000 subscribers to its weekly newsletter. I now run Psych Central full-time with a staff of a dozen editors and other professionals who help us publish dozens of new articles every week, including mental health and psychology news every weekday. Over 41 million people have visited the website since its inception and the thousands of emails received over the years has reminded us of how many lives we touch each and every day with our information, resources, and support groups.

Psych Central is a reliable resource to refer clients and consumers to in order for them to learn more about a specific mental health concern, or to keep up-to-date on the latest news and research in the field of psychology and mental health. We work hard to keep Psych Central updated and ensuring that science doesn't get "dumbed down" in order to make psychology more interesting.

I'd also like to extend an open invitation to all Division 46 members that if you'd like to publish an article or blog on the site, please contact me at my email address with ideas.

Psych Central's TIME.com review may be found at: http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1809858_1809957_1811557,00.html

President-Elect's Column

(continued from p. 2)

While I was reviewing grant applications, I monitored my email on a Blackberry, and used breaks to respond to any messages that were critical. I was able to connect with my office with two “clicks” on my cell phone, and my assistant was able to link my call with anyone in the country—or the world.

The ubiquity of telecommunications has a dark side. I have never gone an entire day in the past decade without at least once checking my email, and as a good clinical psychologist, I’m fully aware that this compulsive need borders on the pathological. Likewise, I worry about the long term effects of instant access to pornography on teens and children, who may feel compelled to engage in full sexual activity too early and without ever knowing the simple erotic joy of a prolonged kiss. Because I’m never far from a laptop, I work around the clock, and often work on PsycCRITIQUES in the middle of the night because of recurrent insomnia. I now read too many blogs and too few books. However, these concerns aside, I’m thrilled to be living in the twenty-first century, and I look forward to all of the technological wonders yet to come.
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