

MARIN COUNTY PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

A chapter of the
California Psychological Association

On-line Newsletter, February, 2006
Volume III, Number I

2006 Officers

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380-9985

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& Program Chair
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924-8496

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662-2388

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679-0997

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456-0952

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459-7707
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646-0822

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492-1171

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421-3030

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518-7999
Stacey Rodgers, Ph.D.
460-9107

Membership

Roberta Seifert, Ph.D.
457-1777

Newsletter

John Weir, Ph.D.
457-8886

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Keith Sutton, B.A.
847-7684

EDITOR'S COLUMN

John Weir, Ph.D.

Welcome to the first edition of 2006! Your Executive Committee has been very busy, already. Results of our **Planning Retreat** are reported by President, **Joanie Gillispie** (Page 2). **CEU opportunities abound**: two from our first **Dinner/Speaker Meeting on March 9** arranged by President-Elect **Sheva Feld**, (Page 4) and six more from a **March 11 Disaster Response course** described by our new Committee Chair, **Nancy Haugen** (Page 11). **Keith Sutton** "mixes it up" on Page 10, putting students together with the elder among us. **Mark Kamena** reports (Page 8) on the legislative battles in Sacramento. And the big event, of course, is the **CPA Convention in SF, March 23-26**. Look for **special details** from Joanie (Page 3) and from Mark (Page 9). Sometimes seem that life "creeps in this petty pace from day to day"? Well, consider life in Punxtutawney and see **Sue Hulley's** latest **Shrink-Rap on Film** (Page 14). And in a moment of looking back on 2005, special thanks are due for the valuable service of **Grace Rogers** as President, **Sue Fleckles** as Past President, and to **Tana Clark**, Disaster Response, and **Jacqui Coryell**, Public Education and Marketing who leave the Executive Committee

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Mission Statement

The purpose of the Marin County Psychological Association is to promote human welfare through diffusion and utilization of psychological knowledge, to increase public understanding of psychology as a science and as a profession, to promote and maintain high standards of professional ethics, conduct, education and training of psychologists, to promote fellowship among psychologists in Marin County, and to cooperate with other professionals and lay organizations in achieving mutual objectives.

President's Message **Joanie Gillispie, Ph.D**

Mark Your Calendars:

March 9	First Dinner Speaker Meeting, John Deri, M.D.
March 23-25	CPA Convention at the Palace Hotel, S.F., Be There!
April 18	CPA Leadership Day in Sacramento, come talk to your elected officials.
June 2	Second Dinner Speaker Meeting
August 10-14	APA Convention, New Orleans
September 14(Tentative)	Third Dinner Speaker Meeting
September or October (TBA)	All day CEU Presentation(s)
October 25	Annual Membership Meeting, all members welcome.
November 3	Mandatory I and R meeting for all those on the referral list
December 8	Holiday Party, celebrate and schmooze.

Greetings colleagues:

First, as your chapter president this year, I want to show you what's afoot behind the scenes (see proposed calendar above) and let you know how hard your Board works on behalf of MCPA. We are refreshed from our January Retreat where we processed and planned ways to give you more reasons to value your membership. We started harmoniously, listening to the Threshold Singers from Marin inspire us. Then our esteemed newsletter editor John Weir shared a 'drive by' in front of a local church: "Laughter is an instant vacation" which set the tone for the rest of the day. Our collective vision for MCPA included the words:

*fun, value, action, clarity, sublimation, laughter, support, community,
energy, connection, service, enthusiasm, learning, integration.*

Most of last year's goals were realized this year by your dedicated board members who met, emailed, telephoned, and met again: updating our By Laws (Sue Fleckles, Grace Rogers, Mark Kamena, Fred Rozendal, Roberta Seifert), bringing expanded CE opportunities (Beth Tabakin), trying out some different venues for social gatherings (Ann Buscho), and going digital with an electronic newsletter and a redesign of the MCPA web site.

This year our goals are just as ambitious: To present dynamic and interesting ways to get together and celebrate and share with others through: dinner speaker meetings (check out the new President-Elect Sheva Feld's article, soirees (contact secretary Ann Buscho), a day long CE workshop (thanks to CE committee co-chairs Beth Tabakin and Christine Gazulis), more outreach to students (check out our new student rep Keith Sutton's article) and most especially (this is where you come in) to increase our reach. We want to be more responsive and visible, meeting the needs of both new and seasoned members.

Here are some ideas generated from the retreat:

- Each member invite a new or seasoned colleague to join (remember new members who join at a dinner meeting can deduct the cost of the dinner from their dues).
- Reach out to students (remember they receive free membership for the first year), early career colleagues, and potential affiliate members.
- Be more responsive to needs of psychologists in Marin. We want new members and new member affiliates to join MCPA. If you know a psychologist who is not a member, ask why and then let us know.
- Improve collegiality at events: more informal soirees, opportunities for monthly case consultation, and increase networking at meetings by disseminating fliers and professional news etc.
- Be more visible in the community: offer to speak at CBO's, schools, community events, and health-oriented businesses.
- Offer to host, find interesting colleagues, or speak yourself at a soiree or as a discussant / panel member in the community on important or urgent topics in mental health.

CPA needs you.

The convention is in San Francisco's Palace Hotel, March 23-26. Local Bay Area chapters will have a table at the welcome booth where chapter news, events, and accomplishments will be available. We are making a list of "Docs' Quicklist: Best Places to....." (e.g., eat, walk, shop, sightsee, other?) for those who are not lucky enough to live in the Bay Area, so email your personal faves to drjoanie@hotmail.com. Also, if you have a book, workshop, or other event to share with participants, please let me know. CPA needs volunteers to sign up at their hospitality table Thursday 7:30-9 A.M., 4:30-7 P.M.; Friday 7-8 A.M., 12-1:30; 5:30-7:30; Saturday 7-8 A.M., 11-

In addition, the 7 Bay Area chapters are also hosting a hospitality evening at 9:00 Friday night, March 24 after the PAC dinner. There will be a dance (thanks to CPA \$\$), dessert (thanks to donation from local chapters), and a no host bar along with a quiet room for socializing. It's time to kick up your heels. The band that is on tap to play "could make a rock dance", or so say Beth Tabakin and Ann Buscho (from experience). Come and try to disprove their hypothesis and have-fun-watching-psychologists-have-fun!

Finally, much appreciation and acknowledgement to all of you who offer feedback and work behind the scenes for MCPA and for all things psychological. We are committed to having this organization grow (fiscal wellness achieved through Fred Rozendal's leadership and support) and want to make our vision for 2006 a reality. Let's say it again: *fun, value, action, clarity, sublimation, laughter, support, community, energy, connection, service, enthusiasm, learning, integration.*

President-Elect's Message **Sheva Feld, Ph.D.**

Our first **Dinner/Speaker Meeting** of this year will be March 9, at the West End Cafe, 1131 Fourth St, San Rafael, 6:30-8:30 PM. Invite colleagues! CEU's will be available.

As I listen to friends and clients these days, often what I notice is a search for meaning, a desire for some sort of spiritual connection. Perhaps as a culture we have become more and more competitive and materialistic, have seemingly more to fear, and are not sure whom or what to trust. Have we become more and more self-focused?

In light of this search, I am happy to announce John Deri, MD, as the presenter for our first dinner/speaker meeting. We welcome him also as the first psychiatrist affiliate (M.A. in Psychology) member of MCPA. The topic of his talk is, "**A Convergence of Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives.**" The Dalai Lama has stated that "In order actually to overcome our problems, we have to be willing to change--namely, to change our personality. We need to renounce and rid ourselves of those aspects of it that are causing us so much trouble." Dr. Deri's talk will expand on the Dalai Lama's assertion that negative character traits are a highly important determinant of psychic distress and difficulties in living. Narcissism will be highlighted as a paradigmatic example of ways that maladaptive character traits cause suffering.

Dr. John Deri did his undergraduate work in psychology and anthropology at Columbia College. He received an M.A. in psychology from the New School for Social Research, pursued his medical studies at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University, and completed his psychiatric residency training at UCSF. He

subsequently obtained a certificate in object relations theory and therapy from the Washington School of Psychiatry. He has also pursued psychoanalytic training at the William Alanson White Institute, and at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. Dr. Deri has a private practice of psychiatry in Mill Valley. His outside interests include Tibetan Buddhism, Taoism and triathlon.

I am looking forward to this year as your President-Elect, and hope to see you at our dinner/speaker meetings and other events. Please do contact me with any particular topics of interest.

**Past President
Grace Rogers, Ph.D.**

The New Year brings many changes and exciting opportunities for new vision, and this is no less true for MCPA. We started off this year with a Board retreat, the next one of which is already planned for January of 2007! We continue to have a high priority of being able to understand and respond to the needs of Marin's psychologists. So, come on by, join us, and let us know what is important to you!!! We would love to have you participate in making it happen.

It was a privilege to serve as your President last year, and it was quite an opportunity to get to know many members more fully. It has also been interesting to better understand how important our state organization, The California Psychological Association, is in what we can do when we engage in our profession.

I hope to see you at our many events planned for the year. In the meantime, I hope that the rains were more cleansing than dramatic for you.

My job this year is to keep the website updated so if you want information about events you can count on it being current. Our webpage can be accessed through www.marin.calpsy.net/psy.htm

Minutes of the MCPA Board Meeting, 1/21/2006
Ann Buscho, Ph.D.

EC MEMBERS PRESENT: Grace Rogers, Sue Fleckles, Joanie Gillispie, Beth Tabakin, Ann Buscho, Fred Rozendal, John Weir, Sylvia Mills, Bethany Miller, Mark Kamena, Roberta Seifert, Keith Sutton, Christine Gazulis, Sheva Feld, Nancy Haugen

EC MEMBERS ABSENT: Stacey Rodgers

1. Call to Order & Review Agenda: Joanie Gillispie opened meeting at 3:30 p.m., welcomed board members reviewed the agenda.
2. President Joanie Gillispie's report: CPA Convention welcome event will be open to attendees of the convention. Each local area association is being asked to contribute \$1.00 per member, or for MCPA, \$100 toward this social event to be held Friday, March 24, 2006, at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Beth Tabakin moved, Sylvia Mills seconded, M/S/P.
Public Education and Marketing committee now needs a new chair as previous chairs have moved on. Anyone with an interest in become involved is asked to contact Joanie Gillispie.
Calendar of events for 2006 was discussed with tentative dates considered for speaker dinners, holiday party, annual meeting, I & R meeting, soirees, student events, etc. Dates to be confirmed on the website and in the newsletter.
3. Report from Sheva Feld, President-Elect. Speaker dinner meeting topics, speakers, dates and locations were discussed. EC agreed that John Deri, M.D., offered an interesting topic about spirituality in clinical practice. EC discussed that an event can be scheduled as long as it remains within budget. Ann Buscho moved, Mark Kamena seconded, M/S/P. Dates will be confirmed to membership. Dates under consideration for the first Dinner Speaker meeting are February 27 and March 9.
4. Report from Grace Rogers, Past President. She would like EC to discuss Healthy Workplace awards, perhaps the 2005 retreat item not addressed as a "local hero award," but deferred discussion to next EC meeting. She will email information to EC members in the interim.
5. Fred Rozendal presented the treasurer's report. Discussed the need to either break even or make a profit at all Continuing Education programs. The holiday party is the only event at which we expect a shortfall of about \$1000, and that is a gift to the membership. Overall, the budget is in good shape, but it is urged that all planning keep in mind the principle of breaking even or making a profit. Ann Buscho reminded the EC that our all-day workshop in 2005 would have lost money if not for the \$2500 grant from

GlaxoSmithKline. She reminded the group that another grant might be available from a pharmaceutical company if the topic of the workshop is related in any way to psychopharmacology.

6. Secretary's report: Request to EC members to update their email addresses as some members have three or more email addresses.

7. Report from Nancy Haugen, Disaster Response committee. She is working with CAMFT and with Elizabeth Thompson to coordinate mental health response to local disasters. She will attend a state-wide meeting in April and report back to the EC.

8. Roberta Seifert, membership chair, announced that we now have 109 members. Only 13 members have not sent in their renewals yet. She will contact them. There are a handful of new members. An ad-hoc committee will look at ways of increasing membership. All new members will be contacted personally by Joanie Gillispie, in her capacity as President, and they will be listed in the newsletter.

9. Mark Kamena, CPA liaison and Government Affairs committee, informed the EC that the annual Leadership and Advocacy Day in Sacramento will be on April 18, 2006. All interested attendees can contact Mark. He also announced that there will be a PAC dinner at the CPA convention on March 24. He also recommended that Beth Tabakin serve as an alternate for government affairs meetings. Sheva Feld moved to accept this, John Weir seconded, MSP.

10. John Weir, newsletter, reminded EC members that all reports are due within one week of our meeting. He again invited members to interview other members and write up bios for the newsletter. He suggested that this is a way of networking and contributing to the membership. Many types of classified advertising are now free to members in the newsletter. Contact him for info.

11. Continuing Education co-chairs, Christine Gazulis and Beth Tabakin discussed possible topics and dates for the annual CEU all-day or half-day workshop. The pros and cons of two day, full day or half day workshops were discussed. More specific proposals to be forthcoming.

12. Keith Sutton, Student rep, proposed a mentorship program, whereby psychologists would volunteer to mentor students or newly licensed psychologists who join MCPA. Members agreed that this would be a benefit to new members and an opportunity for all members. Keith will email the membership with details, and to solicit volunteers for the program.

13. NEXT MEETING –March 29th, 2006, at 7:00 p.m., at Ann Buscho's home.

14. Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Buscho,
Secretary

Treasurer's Report Fred Rozendal, Ph.D.

As of January 20, 2006, MCPA has \$23,542.36 in funds.

Using the MCPA year (Nov. 1 to Oct. 31), we are currently two and a half months into the MCPA year, which is near the high point for our financial reserves; from this point on, they generally decrease with expenses that are not matched by income. We are back to the state of reserves held approximately five years ago before we suffered a sharp decline; the improvement comes as a result of a CE workshop cosponsored by MCPA and CPA, and significant cost-cutting by MCPA (particularly publishing the newsletter on line).

In the current MCPA year, our biggest income as might be expected has come from dues (\$7185). Our largest expense to date stemmed from two dinner meetings, the Annual meeting in November and Holiday party in December (\$4444), while income from the two dinners amounted to considerably less (\$2095). Later this year, our goal is to match expenses with equivalent income for dinner meetings and the CE program (two of the large expenses coming up). Other major expenses anticipated during the year will be our Yellow Page ad (estimated at \$3000) and new web site with directory (another estimated cost of \$3000).

Additional expenses are considerably smaller. If you want a more complete copy of the MCPA budget, please contact Fred Rozendal

Governmental Affairs/CPA Board Mark Kamena, Ph.D.

CPA scored quite a coup in January. Dr. Faltz received word while we were attending the CPA Board of Directors meeting that the Attorney General's office will be filing a brief in support of allowing psychologists in State hospitals to diagnose, admit, and treat patients. We had wanted their support, but they had resisted and wanted our attorneys, paid for by the non-profit Psychology Shield, to do all the work. However, it turns out that the psychiatrists' filing of a law suit to block implementation of the law actually backfired on them and precipitated this action by the Attorney General. If you are interested in supporting Psychology Shield, please consider sending your tax deductible donation to Dr. Sallie Hildebrandt, 4130 La Jolla Village Dr., Ste. 301, La Jolla, CA

92037-1481 as Division 1 will be matching your donation. See Page 11 in this Newsletter issue for more information about Psychology Shield

Thanks for your support in defeating AB 894 (La Suer) which would have established a licensed professional counselor (LPC), a Master's level position that would have the ability to diagnose and treat without the necessary training and education.

CPA will be starting a new listserv shortly and plans a new website for April, 2006.

The annual CPA convention will be held March 23-26 in San Francisco at the Palace Hotel. Changes this year include having several master lecturers and an expanded exhibit hall. Please consider attending the Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology workshop on Thursday, March 23, 1pm to 5pm, as all proceeds will be donated to Division V. Also, MCPA and other Bay Area chapters will be hosting a party following the PAC dinner, a unique opportunity to socialize with colleagues and dance the night away.

Please consider inviting a student or newly licensed psychologist to one of our events as a way to introduce them to MCPA. Also, you may want to invite a colleague to attend the annual lunch and speaker CEU at the convention on Saturday; the presentation will be made by Dr. Joseph White, entitled "Learning to appreciate diversity – the browning of America: Implications for counseling, psychotherapy, and psychological training." If you make your reservation before February 22, the cost is \$45.

If you are not currently a member of CPA, and would like more information about joining (or even why you should join!), please call me at 415-878-0454.

Membership

Roberta Seifert, Ph.D.

I would like to welcome several new members.

Joan Cartwright, Ph.D.
Beverly Matsuishi, Ph.D.
John Deri, M.D.
Andrew Harlem, Ph.D.
Sandra Shelley, Ph.D.

I would also like to welcome back.

Sophia Reinders, Ph.D.

As of Feb. 1, 2006 there are 110 members of MCPA.

Student Representative
Keith Sutton, B.A.

Mentors for Student Members Needed!!!

As part of our efforts to involve students in the Marin County Psychological Association, we're trying to connect students with members in a mentoring relationship. Many psychologists have told us that they really enjoy working with students and new psychologists because they are able to pass on their experience. They also say that they find it rejuvenating to be working with someone who is so excited about becoming part of this profession. After becoming matched with a student, you and the student will determine how often you will meet (phone contact, once a month for lunch, once every few months, etc.). This will be a small commitment that will have a big effect on both you and our student members. I encourage you to e-mail me, Keith Sutton, MCPA Student Representative, at wkeithsutton@comcast.net to let me know that you're interested, and we will get you matched with a student based on shared interests. Hope you can get involved, we would love to have you.

Involving Students in MCPA

In order to involve more students with the Marin County Psychological Association, we're proud to announce two new projects. First, we are developing a mentoring program where students and psychologists will be matched by areas of interest. This will be a great chance for students to begin to form a connection with the professional community, and learn from a successful psychologist. Also, it's a chance to give back and pass on wisdom that you have acquired. The second is a student event, where a panel of psychologists will discuss their career paths, the various roles they are in today, and advice that they have for students starting their journey in psychology. It will give a chance for our student members to connect with other members, and learn how others have become successful in their career.

If you are a student member, please contact your Student Representative, Keith Sutton wkeithsutton@comcast.net, because we would love to get your feedback and involvement in the program. If you are a psychologist, please contact Keith if you are interested in participating in the mentorship program. It will be a great opportunity. Also, please pass on the word to students about becoming a student membership. If you are at a practicum, internship, school site, or other setting where you interact with students who might be from Marin or might know students from Marin, let them know the benefits of joining the MCPA. We would love to have their involvement.

And here is a first opportunity in this request from a Bay Area student:

“I am due to defend my dissertation this April, and am seeking either a well paid internship, or ideally, an affiliation as Psych Assistant that will allow me to build my practice. I have experience working with children as young as four years through adolescence, with developmentally disabled adolescents and adults, eating disorders, trauma, and adults and children with severe mental illness. Currently, I am teaching for Argosy University's Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology program, as well as being the Assistant Coordinator of Practicum Training. I am happy to forward my CV to anyone who is interested. Christine Mayerchak, M.A. (415) 897-2804 or Email to cmcopedoc@cmc.net .”

Disaster Response
Nancy Haugen, Ph.D.

A Red Cross course on disaster mental health being offered in Marin on Saturday, March 11th, will allow you to be involved with disasters here in Marin as well as in the rest of the country. Whether or not you ever have thought about being “deployed” to a disaster site, this day of training would give you some structure to deal with an emergency in your own family, neighborhood and community. Given the recent floods, it could not be more timely. The cost is free and you will receive 6.5 CEUs with a \$20.00 processing fee.

HURRICANES, EARTHQUAKES, MUDSLIDES AND FLOODS
AIRPLANE CRASHES AND TERRORIST ACTS
American Red Cross

Licensed Mental Health Professionals are invited to attend the new ARC course

Foundations of Disaster Mental Health

March 11, 2006 - 9AM to 5PM

712 5th Av San Rafael, CA 94901

6.5 CEUs for LCSWs, MFTs and RNs,

BBS provider # PCE1972

BRN provider # CEP8528

AND

6.5 CEUs for Psychologists

through the APA Practice Directorate

\$20.00 administration fee for CEUs

No charge to attend but Pre-registration is requested

CALL 510-595-4470 to REGISTER

ARTICLES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Division I Announces a Matching Grant for Psychology Shield Sallie Hildebrandt, Ph.D., Chair, Division I

At the December meeting of Division I Board, Directors approved a matching grant of up to \$10,000 to fund Psychology Shield's efforts to force implementation of state laws governing the practice of psychology in California. The matching grant will apply to gifts received from October 2, 2005 through June 30, 2006.

Dr. Bill Safarjan announced in March 2005, that the California Department of Health Services (DHS) had issued new regulations that authorized psychologists in state-owned and operated facilities to independently admit, transfer and discharge patients, and order restraint and seclusion. These regulatory changes were authorized by the California Supreme Court (CAPP v Rank, 1990), but took 15 years to realize. The new regulations are a first step in fully implementing California law that grants psychologists the authority to direct treatment when patients receive both medical and psychological care. The victory came after more than a year of legal and political maneuvering by the Psychology Shield, a non-profit organization of California psychologists, in close collaboration with the California Psychological Association (CPA) and the APA Practice Organization. The Board of Psychology Shield includes Bill Safarjan, Ann Carson, Gilbert Newman, and me.

A related Psychology Shield victory recently came when the Board of Psychology (BOP) issued a formal statement contradicting ongoing claims by organized psychiatry. The Board acknowledged that psychologists are authorized to have overall responsibility for inpatient care and that state law does not require a psychiatrist to do so. This statement by the BOP is important because the BOP is charged with the responsibility of compiling state laws and using them to define the scope of practice of psychologists. Other state agencies typically look to the Board for direction on how to utilize psychologists and the services they provide.

The Division I grant is important and especially timely because organized psychiatry is fighting back by filing a lawsuit to block implementation of these new Title 22 regulations. The Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD) and the California Psychiatric Association assert that the changes to Title 22 required a public hearing; however, changes under Rule 100 do not require formal hearings because, in the present case, the changes were made simply to comply with the CAPP v. Rank decision. Other regulatory changes recently proposed by Psychology Shield will require public hearings because they go beyond CAPP v. Rank to implement changes in state law occurring after CAPP v. Rank.

Psychology Shield is now in the midst of a major fund-raising drive and will take donations of any size. The Shield has until June 30, 2006 to raise the matching

funds. Please lobby your CPA Chapter Boards of Directors to contribute to this important effort which will help psychologists in private practice as well as those working in state hospitals. Contributions should be made payable to Psychology Shield and sent directly to Bill Safarjan at 5100 Cascabel Road, Atascadero, CA 93422. Bill will keep an accounting of the funds and let us know when we've met the \$10,000 goal. Our goal is part of a broader fundraising effort to enable Psychology Shield to continue fighting for psychology. Recently, the APA Board of Directors issued a \$50,000 grant to help pay existing bills, and Alliant University (CSPP) also made a significant contribution. Now it's our turn to help.

Sallie E. Hildebrandt, Ph.D.
Chair, Division I, CPA
4130 La Jolla Village Dr., Ste. 301
La Jolla, CA 92037
Phone: 858-453-1800
Fax: 858-452-3992
sehphd@cox.net
www.sallieCPA2003.com

The CPA 2006 Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award Program **Grace Rogers, Ph.D.**

This is my understanding of this CPA Program.

- Established by APA
- CPA solicits the nominations
- Designed to honor:
 - Business who provide a psychologically healthy working environments
 - Businesses who develop an awareness of services offered by psychologists
 - To strengthen relationships between psychologists and local business people
- Size of organization doesn't matter
- Past winners include:
 - Johnson & Johnson
 - LA dept of Mental Health
 - Cox Communications
 - Irvine Ranch Water District
 - Law Offices of Rogers Joseph O'Donnell and Phillips
 - City of Redwood City
- Past nominees have expressed interest in working with psychologists on employee services and programs

Last Year's deadline was due December 1st, which gave us less than a month to pull this together; however, we can assume a 2006 award.

There is a brochure detailing the benefits of a psychologically healthy workplace put out by APA which the rep can use when contacting companies.

CPA is requesting MCPA to nominate a member of our chapter to serve on the PHWA committee. It doesn't have to be a Board member. If you want more information on what this might entail, contact me, call Beverly Ford, Ph.D. at 530-898-4645 or bford@scuchico.edu. Presumably the MCPA person would work on completing the application with the local business.

**SHRINK-RAP ON FILM:
Groundhog Day—Shadow Dance Anyone?
By Sue Hulley, Ph.D.**

Well, at the end of the last piece, I was making a pre-New Year's resolution to watch some original Scrooges next year. Apparently, that got me thinking about seasonal myths. As Groundhog Day got closer, I found myself having that hankering again, the one I've fought off for years, that "Why don't you do the column on Groundhog Day?" urge.

Not that I have anything against the movie--in fact, it's one of my top ten. It's just that it's one of those films that virtually every religious group feels was made by one of theirs. When that happens, I always suspect that there just might be less to the work involved than meets the eye.

To find out, we made a trip to our local Video Droid and voila! The DVD was temporarily ours, along with the Special Features, including a little number called The Weight of Time. I sure love this DVD development, where you get to hear the director, writer, producer, and sometimes the actors, talk about the film. This one was quite interesting.

Danny Rubin, the writer responsible for the screenplay, went first, explaining that he came up with the movie concept, but had a hard time selling it because "there are a lot of existential issues" that aren't being addressed in the movies. Trevor Albert, the producer, added that "people's eyes glazed over" during their pitches.

But they got lucky; Harold Ramis, the veteran director of Animal House and Ghost Busters, balks at very little. In fact, he described himself as "completely engaged" by Rubin's screenplay.

I, along with an awful lot of people I know, fell in love with the premise--that a jaded, obnoxious weatherman (played By Bill Murray--who else?!), covering Groundhog Day in Punxtutawney, Pennsylvania, wakes up the next day to find that he is reliving Groundhog Day in Punxtutawney. Sort of like the "What's the second prize--two days in Philadelphia" joke, only as far as he or any of us know, he could do this until he dies--on Groundhog Day in Punxtutawney....

The script gives no cause for this dilemma; instead, it is mined for its existential human potential. Rubin seems to love the situation itself, and the idea of Bill Murray's character becoming almost omniscient about the town and its inhabitants. In fact, his original screenplay begins in the middle of the plot, with Murray astounding the locals with his knowledge of their intimate details. In classic Hollywood fashion, Ramis reassured Rubin that this element would stay, only to ditch it fairly early on in favor of a more linear plot format.

The movie does retain some surreal elements, though. One of my favorites is the clock radio, which turns from 5:59 to 6:00 at the beginning of each repeated day's adventures. On one day, you are treated to a close-up, along with the numbers turning in slow-motion, accompanied by a very loud crash--the "Weight of Time" referred to by the gang who made this. And of course, the song blasting forth is "I Got You, Babe" by Sonny and Cher--a great mocking touch, because of course Bill Murray has no one! And, as Bill, my fellow filmgoer, points out, "They've got him!" existentially speaking.

I guess I should catch you up, though, if you haven't seen the movie. I can see that I've been assuming that everyone has! Of course, there's a love interest, Angie McDowell playing a producer along for the assignment--radiant, glowing, a magical presence. Murray becomes increasingly interested in her, and in the values she holds dear. Having treated her shabbily during their original day together, he next tries to make a move on her, using his repetitive experiences with her to find out her preferences and then dazzle her with their supposed similarity to each other.

Of course, Andie, equipped with an amazingly sensitive b.s. detector, exposes him, and he's back to Square One in the romance department. However, somewhere along the line, Murray begins to do things for people, and to take a genuine interest in beings other than himself. Gradually, he becomes the hero of the town.

Interestingly, to Ramis and his pals, this isn't the important aspect of what Murray does. Rather, "It's about doing what you can in the moment to make things better instead of making things worse. That isn't his aim--to be the hero of the town." Sounds existential all right, with some humanism thrown in for good measure.

It's no wonder that religions of all stripes claim that the writer must be one of their ilk. Ramis said he heard that "Buddhists love this movie." Then he found out that Jesuits, Jews, and even fundamentalist Christians identified it as espousing their values. Finally, it appears that even "People with no particular religion find this a spiritual movie

because it causes them to look inside and see what is important in their lives..."

I found it interesting that the filmmakers believed that Murray had to be convinced that there was no hope of escape in order to change his ways. I think they were right, that having a few experiences wasn't going to make a difference to him, as his nasty ways smacked of sociopathy as well as plain old childhood heartbreak. There are some wonderful scenes of his engaging in what they call "mock romantic" behavior with Andie. The phrase is wonderfully descriptive of the high "smirk factor" of Murray's pursuit of her.

Being of the Buddhist persuasion myself, I've always liked the way that Murray ends up loving the whole village rather than focusing just on getting the girl. Like Scrooge (also played by Murray in Scrooged, you may recall), he had an opportunity to rethink his behavior and try something new, an opportunity few of us unmythic creatures are given (of course, my daughter, who had egged me on in the Scrooge column, pointed out that we can always take that opportunity ourselves--that you don't need Jacob Marley dragging around those chains to rethink your life--don't you hate it when your kids grow up and get wiser than you!)

However, Murray's character in Groundhog had an interestingly more pervasive opportunity for self-reflection than Scrooge. Because although each day was the same in many ways, people did react to him differently depending on what he did, he could compare his experiences. This sounds like fun in a way, a chance to experiment with different behaviors. However, Murray's character has no reason to believe that he will ever see February 3rd. He has to decide within each day what he will do, who he will be, and he can carry nothing outside of himself into the next day. Sort of an endless values clarification exercise!

I can see why all the other religions love Groundhog, given how it extols caring for others. Oh, with one exception, the fundamentalist Christians--I mean, there is sex before marriage, and not just once! In fact, I was wondering about the Jungians--there's that juicy symbolism of the groundhog himself, right?! He comes out and if he sees his SHADOW, there's more winter! Counterintuitive, yes, on the manifest level, but on the deeper level, he's got more work to do. When he has conquered the shadow, spring can come.

I got confused about that last bit. Groundhog.org (yes, Groundhog.org), revealed that "According to the legend, if Punxutawney Phil sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter weather. If not, an early spring." In fact, according to this source, Phil himself gets to relive Groundhog Day ad infinitum, as there has only been one Phil since 1887, the first year of this event (for the secret of his longevity, check the website--I've given away ENOUGH secrets!).

So there you have it, sports fans. The movie works on many levels, and at least for us, holds up on repeat viewing. Andie alone is worth it--that girl is incandescent! Check it out--it could help with those New Year's resolutions....

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Deadline for April Submissions: April 1, 2006