

Marin County Psychological Association

A chapter of the
California Psychological Association

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2004 Officers

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Sue Fleckles, Ph.D.
927-7566

President elect & Program Chair

Grace Rogers, Ph.D.
662-2388

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456-1777

Treasurer

Fred Rozendal, Ph.D.
679-0997

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Ann Buscho, Ph.D.
456-0952

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Continuing Education

Carolyn Bray, Ph.D.
892-5639

Directory

Empty

Disaster Response

Tana Clark, Ph.D.
924-6935

Ethics

Sylvia Mills, Ph.D.
421-3030

Governmental Affairs

Mark Kamena, Ph.D.
460-6369

Information & Referral

Co-chairs

Christine Gazulis, Ph.D.
646-0822
Bethany Miller, Psy.D.
518-7999

Membership

Roberta Seifert, Ph.D.
457-1777

Newsletter – rotating

This issue: Mark Kamena, Ph.D.

Public Education & Marketing

Barbara Khurana, Ph.D.
460-9030

Student Member

Joy Stevenson.
459-5999X411

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Mark Kamena, Ph.D.

In this issue, we have a number of interesting committee reports and articles. Dr. **Seeman** offers us a procedure for creating a succession plan and Dr. **Hulley** reviews the films of director Alaxender Payne, including his newest release Sideways. Information is presented on the extension of **Tarasoff**, changes in supervision of technicians and others who provide testing, and upcoming changes to CPT codes. I also want to make you aware of an important issue that MCPA member **Ralph Lamson, PhD**, has brought before the CPA Board in his new role as the Chair of the CPA CLASP Committee. He is petitioning for California State legislation that would provide for implementation of a diversion program for psychologists. For 22 years, the State legislature has provided such diversion for other mental health providers including physician-psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses. The absence of such a program for psychologists may jeopardize public health and safety by providing a disincentive for psychologists to seek help because of fears related to enforcement consequences. Historically, the Board of Psychology has opposed such changes. At the January meeting of the CPA Board of Directors, we will be asking for CPA's support. If you would like additional information, please contact me or Dr. Lamson.

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President's Message

Sue Fleckles, Ph.D.

Well, this is my last column as President of MCPA. It has been both a very exciting and a very hard-working year. I had a vision of major changes for our Association to move it along into the twenty-first century, improve our income/expense balance, and offer more for both our own members and for the community. Lo and behold, the Association was blessed with a Board willing to put in the time, energy, and original ideas to make all this happen. Many of us have worked very hard, putting in a lot of extra time for additional meetings, phone consultations, and a humongous number of email consultations with the whole board (so things did not have to always wait until the next E.C. meeting).

We did not have a Newsletter Editor this year. I did not want this to be a year with no communication with our membership; so I did the first one in the traditional manner. Meanwhile the E.C. agreed it was time to try an on-line newsletter. After the first Newsletter, I called every member of the Association and obtained an email address to which we could send the on-line Newsletter. After putting Newsletter #2 together, and sending it to ten people, I sent the newsletter to **Roberta Seifert**, who posted it on-line and sent notices to everyone that it was there. Since then she has sent the Newsletter to each member for whom we have the email address. **Fred Rozendal** and **Mark Kamena**, each of whom has also edited the newsletter previously, volunteered to

do one of the last two of this year (even though each was already BUSY).

Barbara Khurana facilitated the publication of quite a few articles in our local newspapers during the first part of the year. **Heidi Cary** worked on our membership records, and kept in touch with **Barbara Nova**, who worked on keeping our directory database up to date. **Sylvia Mills** responded to phone calls regarding ethical dilemmas, and certainly was a big help to many of us. **Bethany Miller** and **Christine Gazulis** got the I&R up and rolling very efficiently and kept it going that way the whole year. During the year we discussed changes, such as possibly using smaller and fewer yellow pages ads, since many of our referrals were now coming off the web. Christine and Bethany put this into action when it came time to renew the ads, which are extremely expensive. Thus they have saved us a good deal of money for the years to come. Then the E.C. decided to try a year of not charging members to answer the Association's telephone calls, and Bethany and Christine also began this at the meeting in November.

Mark Kamena went back and forth to CPA meetings all year, and kept us up to date about CPA happenings, and legislative happenings, so we knew what was going on and what was coming up. He also regularly wrote these reports for the Newsletter, and so all members were regularly informed. Mark also reported back from the APA convention, most particularly with news about new codes for Medicare.

When originally planning the calendar for this year, **Grace Rogers** looked at the possibility of one meeting (the Annual Meeting) being on a Saturday night, as I had heard several requests for this. However, as the time came closer, Grace graciously changed the date to a Friday night, and quickly found a fine venue for the meeting, as people were giving her feedback that they didn't like this Saturday night idea at all. (Obviously not the same people who requested we do at least one Saturday night meeting.) Grace also put together three excellent speaker-dinner meetings, which included the joint mental health professionals meeting in June.

Carolyn Bray found a wonderful opportunity for our traditional Continuing Education Workshop /Seminar: APAIT, in conjunction with CPA, requested local chapters to host required Law and Ethics workshops. She brought the choices before the Board, and then decided on the most interesting of the three. Thus we were able to make a great contribution to our coffers. Carolyn and **Bob Lasser** worked hard to make it a success, setting up registrations and CEU certificates, and all the things which have to be done to make a large conference workable.

Roberta Seifert brought our website up to date, and then kept it current. She also agreed to take the new position of Membership Chair when **Heidi Cary** resigned. Roberta has held this position before, and moved right into it. As a Board, we had decided we wanted a welcoming letter to new members (which Heidi began), and a simplified application; Roberta is working on these now, with the assistance of **Ann Buscho**.

Tana Clark went to many meetings around the state, and did some research, for the ground work to reactivate our Disaster Response Committee. She prepared documents about which she had reported to the E.C., which I signed at the Annual Meeting, constituting a formal agreement between MCPA and the Red Cross in our multi-county area. She will be setting up trainings for our new committee during the first of the year. If you are interested, you may go ahead and contact her.

Ann, Mark, Fred, Roberta, Grace and I, had many consultations on a number of issues, and also had an extra meeting when things were getting bottled up. The six of us also worked on the Retreat agenda, and Ann found a trained, pro bono facilitator for us, with whom I met before the Retreat. **Mark Brand** is his name, and he did an excellent job.

We had the first Retreat of the MCPA Board. We met on a Sunday for six hours. Obviously, if we were going to donate this time, each of us was determined to get things done. The whole Board was there, except for Carolyn, Tana, and Joy, who were unable to attend.

We decided we wanted to increase the membership in the Association, and will do so by extending personal invitations to others to join, inviting members to attend meetings, work on a committee and/or to come to MCPA-sponsored events. We also decided to clarify roles and job descriptions in writing, and are working on this right now. Several people figured out that we can use the email list we have for the newsletters for urgent notifications, because they will not be added to List-Serv, and would be

sent “blind” so no one else can read your email address. We decided to attempt archives of the Association – so anyone who has old newsletters, minutes, whatever, which would contribute to the story of our history, please contact Grace.

We are increasing CEU opportunities.

Carolyn Bray submitted the paperwork to get approval for CEU in the next year, and we will be moving to two co-chairs for Continuing Education, as it will be becoming a much larger position.

Besides the once-a-year workshop or seminar, we will be presenting as many shorter, smaller, CEU opportunities as possible, many for a very small fee. We will also be offering CEUs for the speaker-dinner meetings, which were changed to offer four a year, instead of the previous two.

We will be increasing the number of consultation groups as members choose. Anyone can decide to start a new group; just notify someone on the Executive Committee. Bethany is going to set up an informal practice-building group.

Barbara, Fred and Roberta will assist me in hosting a wine, water and cheese reception, probably at the Town Center, to invite prospective members to come and meet us. Additionally, I will be hosting Soirees starting the latter part of February; anyone who lives nearer to the freeway, or in a more central local, may take these over at any time. Anyone else who would like to plan/host a social event can let anyone on the Executive Committee know.

Hopes for the new Public Education and Marketing committee are vast, thus this committee also has two co-chairs. They

are planning possible brown bag lunch presentations to companies and organizations, a Speaker’s Bureau to promote MCPA and individual practices, regular press releases to local media, and promotions of Psychology within the community. Be sure to add your ideas and energy to these.

Mark and Fred and I, and Grace, Roberta and Ann, are working on getting the directory database repaired and running again (there is a glitch in the program), setting the information up on the website, and exploring a new website, or at least a completely new platform and design for our website.

During this year, we also reduced the membership dues to \$40 for one year only, for newly-licensed members. Also we will be hosting a CPA-PAC event (probably a luncheon) in the next year, and Mark, as the CPA rep, will make the arrangements for this.

That’s most of what we got done. What do we need from you? We need your energy and active participation. We need you to invite new members, bring others to a meeting. Ideas, Ideas, Ideas. Action. Help!

It has been a VERY GOOD year, we all worked hard, and we accomplished a lot! Grace is taking over the reins at the first of the year, and we on the Board already know she is going to be a great President!

Thank you very much for allowing me the privilege of serving as MCPA President for 2004!

President-Elect's Message Grace Rogers, Ph.D.

My very busy year as President-Elect draws to a close and I approach the challenge of being President for a year with both caution and excitement. We had a very energetic and fertile retreat this past year (October 3rd), and shepherding the ideas that came out of that along with revising our bylaws should keep me more than busy in the year ahead.

I want to thank everyone, and there were many, for their support and guidance in the planning of our many events. The confluence of interesting events and an interested membership makes for an exciting combination. We also had a successful Conference this year and our special thanks to **Bob Lasser, Ph.D.** for his efforts several years back for getting this benefit off the ground. He has put a lot into it.

In addition to acknowledging each and every one of our Board, I want to specifically mention Sue Fleckles, Ph.D. for her amazing ability to find a 25th hour in the day, and for her support of the rest of us as we embraced our own complex challenges.

I want to share briefly my current understanding of who will be filling our key board positions for the coming year, and to thank both those in the past and those in the future for all they do:

President: Grace Rogers, Ph.D.
 Past President: Sue Fleckles, Ph.D.
 President Elect: Joanie Gillespie, Ph.D.
 Treasurer: Fred Rozendal, Ph.D.
 Secretary: Ann Buscho, Ph.D.
 Continuing Education: Ralph Lamson, Ph.D. and Beth Tabakin, Ph.D.

Disaster Response: Tana Clark, Ph.D.
 Ethics: Sylvia Mills, Ph.D.
 Government Affairs: Mark Kamena, Ph.D.
 Information & Referral: Christine Gazulis, Ph.D. and Bethany Miller, Ph.D.
 Membership: Roberta Seifert, Ph.D.
 Public Education & Marketing: Barbara Khurana, Ph.D. and Jacqui Coryell, Ph.D.
 Newsletter: John Weir, Ph.D.
 Student Member: Joy Stephenson
 Directory: Open

We have a very energetic and supportive Board and I know many of these people welcome help, so let us know if you are interested. Board meetings are again planned for the 4th Wednesday of the odd months (January, March, May, July, and September) starting at 7:30 pm until 9:00 p.m. and are open to the membership. As we have a large and active Board, they are usually very full meetings. The November EC meeting is subsumed by our annual Membership meeting in November. Please let me know if you have questions (662-2388). Also please check the upcoming newsletters for the actual dates of events, such as Speaker-Dinner meetings as they will be published as they become firmed up. While we try very hard in our scheduling to be sensitive to the input we get from members regarding their scheduling requests, we have not yet figured out the magical formula to meet 100% of our memberships needs. We are also disappointed when people we very much want to attend events are unable to do so. We continue to look forward to your participation in the coming year.

Please check future newsletters for information about the many events we are planning for the coming year, including informal gatherings, dinner-

speaker meetings, and CEU opportunities.

Minutes of the MCPA Annual Meeting Ann Buscho, Secretary

The 2004 Annual MCPA Meeting was held at Inn Marin on 11/19/04. This dinner meeting was our Annual Business Meeting, the final meeting each year of the Executive committee. It is for the full membership, and this year, as in years past, was well attended. Each officer and committee chair reported to the membership on the year's activities by her/his committee. Absent were Mark Kamena PhD, CPA Representative & Governmental Affairs Chair; Silvia Mills, PhD, Ethics Chair; and Joy Stevenson, Student Representative to the Executive Committee.

Outgoing President **Sue Fleckles**, PhD, presented a "year in review" report, and also presented Dr. Kamena's report regarding recent CPA activities. Incoming President **Grace Rogers**, PhD, reviewed her work with Dr. Fleckles, focusing on the three successful speaker-dinner meetings held this year. The new President-Elect, **Joanie Gillespie**, PhD, was introduced to the membership. **Roberta Seifert**, PhD served as past-President and is now chair of membership. She reported that MCPA currently has 108 members and is growing. **Christine Gazulis**, PhD, presented the I&R committee report, including the expanding use of the internet over the yellow pages as a marketing strategy. **Fred Rozendal**, PhD, presented the Treasurer's report, noting that the online format for newsletters and other communications has saved the MCPA several thousand

dollars. **Carolyn Bray**, PhD, Continuing Education chair, reported that the Ethic workshop, co-sponsored by MCPA, CPA and APAIT will deliver a profit to MCPA of \$4,000 - \$5,000. **Tana Clark**, PhD, Disaster Response Chair, reported on laying the groundwork for a new Disaster Response Committee by aligning MCPA with local, state, and national organizations (e.g., the Red Cross). **Barbara Khurana**, PhD, Marketing & Public Education Chair, reported on her efforts to better publicize MCPA and psychology in the local media. She announced that **Jacqui Coryell**, PhD, will be working with her this coming year.

Post Script by President: All Reporting Chairs of the Executive Committee received Kudos for their hard work this year. There were additional kudos to Dr. **Ann Buscho** (for work done this past year), Dr. **Bob Lasser** (for work done for several years), and Dr. **Betsy Levine-Proctor** (who is currently running for Secretary-elect of CPA).

Treasurer's Report Fred Rozendal, Ph.D.

As of Dec. 1, 2004, MCPA has \$13,551.84 in assets. This amount is \$2652.15 more than the treasury had on the same date a year ago. Additional dues received after December 1 are not included. Also, there will be a substantial income from our recent Continuing Education event when the accounting is completed.

Several expenses have been reduced this past year (the largest comes about through e-mailing this newsletter, leading to a saving of approximately \$3600 in 2005). A major new expense is

anticipated in implementing an electronically-based membership database which will also serve as the basis for a directory. Associated with this project is the development of a web site that we expect to allow for on-line search for members of MCPA by the public. The early cost estimate for this project is \$3000.

Holiday Lighting on the Continuing Education Committee Grace Rogers, Ph.D.

When sending a particular thanks I am often plagued by the imaginary ghosts of those who could possibly feel that their extraordinary work has not been noticed. So, at this Holiday time I hope that those imaginary ghosts are festive and in the spirit and knowingly letting their owners know in the absence of clearly visible print that they are and have been very much noticed and genuinely appreciated.

The MCPA Executive Committee as well as many MCPA members want to extend at this time a special thanks and expression of appreciation to **Bob Lasser**, Ph.D. for his efforts. Back in 1997 he came up with an idea and followed it through, and in the spring of 1998 we became a CEU provider. He then proceeded to work with the very visible and valuable support of **Joan Sommer**, Ph.D. and **Carolyn Bray**, Ph.D. putting on an annual conference over the next 6 years. Taken all together, these interesting and professional conferences have ended up helping other efforts that MCPA does for the community and as well as for its members (including the Holiday Party).

A summary of these conferences are:

- 1999: Chuck Harris, Ph.D. presenting on Individual & Couples Therapy in the Presence of Personality Disorders (as I recall this was a 2 day conference). (2 days)
- 2000: Nancy Olesen, Ph.D., Margaret Lee, Ph.D., and Marjorie Gans-Walters, Ph.D. on the Treatment of Families of Divorce and the Treatment of Children of Divorce. (2 days)
- 2001: Michael Gray, Ph.D. on Intersubjectivity & Object Relations Theory (2 days)
- 2002: Guy Gullion, Ph.D. on the Psychopharmacology of Mood Disorders and the Psychopharmacology of Anxiety Disorders and Psychosis (2 days)
- 2003: Guy Gullion, Ph.D. on Mood Disorders and Igor Weisz, M.D. on Geriatric Psychopharmacology (2 days)
- 2004: Ed Harris, Ph.D. on Ethics and Risk Management (1 day)

Bob, I hope that I have done you justice here. Please accept our appreciation for bringing this committee into being and shepherding it towards its new home as part of the MCPA board. Thank you.

Membership Report

Roberta Seifert, Ph.D.

I am pleased to report good news from the membership Committee. First of all, renewals are going very well this year and we are ahead of schedule for getting our Members signed up. Secondly, Dr. **Ann Buscho** and I revised our application materials so that they are more streamlined and easier to use. They are also now available on line at our website, which is at <http://www.marin.calpsy.net/psy.htm>. The URL for the application is <http://www.marin.calpsy.net/dues.htm>.

Our new application can also be sent as an email attachment. That should make it easier for any of you to invite a colleague to join MCPA. People are far more likely to join us if they receive a personal invitation from someone they know. I would be happy to send the application to anyone who wants one! Just email me at <rtsphd@pacbell.net>.

I would like to welcome several new members to our association. But before doing so, I want to thank the MCPA EC, and especially Drs. **Heidi Cary, Grace Rogers, Sue Fleckles, and Mark Kamena** in helping me get up and running. And a very big thanks to Dr. Buscho for the time and effort involved in revising our application.

Some of these folks sent in their applications a while ago, so they aren't all very new Members, but I'm not sure if they were noted in the newsletter. If I've left anyone out, please let me know.

Full Members:
Julie Austin, Psy.D.
Kirsten Bauer, Psy.D.

Corey Bercun, Ph.D.
Ann Bernhardt, Ph.D.
Deborah C. Clark, Ph.D.
Phil Erdberg, Ph.D.
Sheva Feld, Ph.D.
Rebecca Foote, Ph.D.
Nancy Haugen, Ph.D.
Ralph Lamson, Ph.D.
Frances Rapoport, Ph.D.
Michele Saloner, Ph.D.
Mark Zaslav, Ph.D.

Student Members:
Leslee Kassing
Christine Pappas
Sharon Rose
Joy Stephenson, M.A.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

<u>Member Category</u>	<u>Dues</u>
Full, working in Marin	\$75
Full, working outside Marin	\$45
Full, living outside Marin	\$45
Associate (non-doctoral)	\$45
Student	\$20
Emeritus	\$15
After Jan. 1, 2005	\$10 late fee

You can mail your dues to me, Roberta Seifert, Ph.D., at MCPA, P.O. Box 150001, San Rafael, CA 94915.

Governmental Affairs

Mark Kamena, Ph.D.

Ewing v. Goldstein is a recent California appeals court decision, which extended the interpretation of the law commonly referred to as the **Tarasoff warning**. The appeals court stated that a therapist has a duty to warn if, and only if, the threat which the therapist has learned - whether from the patient or a family member - actually leads him or her to believe the

patient poses a risk of grave bodily injury to another person.” That is, the duty applies to credible threats received from the patient, or the patient’s family.

CPA's general counsel, William Gould, believes that the court made clear that its decision did not go beyond “family members.” Further, with this opinion, it is advised that patients be made aware of this exception to confidentiality and psychologists should appropriately change any forms that inform patients about the limits of confidentiality.

Test publishers have taken exception to recent changes in the 2002 APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Specifically, Section 9.04 states that psychologists must “...provide test data to the client/patient or other persons identified in the release.” MHS, a major publisher of psychological and neuropsychological tests, has recently issued a comprehensive privacy policy that prohibits disclosure of test materials. They advise that test materials, such as test protocols, items, scoring criteria, and manuals are not “identifiable health information” and are thus not releasable. They state that health care providers are not required to disclose any information that is a trade secret or confidential commercial information – which they state applies to their proprietary test materials. In the event that files are subpoenaed, MHS requires qualified purchasers to bring to the court’s attention concerns regarding test security and to take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner, asking the court to restrict access to materials and give assurance that materials will be returned, sealed or destroyed.

The APA Practice Directorate and the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN) reported that Medicare rule

changes affecting our ability to supervise others will go into effect beginning January 1, 2005. Clinical psychologists in the Medicare program will soon be able to supervise technicians and other ancillary staff who perform psychological and neuropsychological testing. The level of supervision required for these tests would be general supervision, which is the same level required of physicians supervising the same services. General supervision means that the test is furnished under the psychologist's overall direction and control, but the psychologist is not required to be present during the performance of the procedure.

The rule change is a significant acknowledgement of the role psychologists play in testing and their ability to supervise others engaged in diagnostic testing. It is important to note, however, that this proposed change will not alter the existing conditions which must be met for reimbursement when outpatient testing services are provided "incident to" the services of a psychologist. According to Medicare rules, psychologists seeking reimbursement for services provided by ancillary staff "incident to" the psychologist's services must engage in direct supervision of that staff. The requirement of direct supervision means that the psychologist must be present in the office suite and immediately available to furnish assistance and direction as the service is being performed. Billing for "incident to" services is only allowed when working with outpatients. Psychologists cannot bill for "incident to" services provided to hospital inpatients.

Also of interest for those of us who do testing is an announcement from the APA Practice Organization (APAPO). The American Medical Association's CPT editorial panel approved APAPO's request to replace the current Central Nervous System testing and assessment codes. APAPO will gather data to establish professional work values that reflect the degree of skill and complexity involved in furnishing psychological and neuropsychological testing. Beginning January, 2006, CPT codes 96100, 96115 and 96117 will be replaced by an expanded series of codes. The new codes will capture the same types of testing services but will distinguish between tests administered by psychologist and those administered by a technician or computer. Interpretations and report writing by the psychologist will be a key component of the new codes. Dr. Puente reported at the NAN convention I attended in Seattle last month that our reimbursement will likely increase to provide for parity with physicians.

Information and Referral Christine Gasulis, Ph.D., Co-chair

Our annual Information and Referral Committee meeting was held in early November. Both a social gathering and a meeting, this event was well attended and helped to maintain collegial contacts. Thanks to all nineteen of you who are willing to rotate through a "tour of duty" in 2005.

Christine Bouchaert
Alan Boyar
Carolyn Bray
Ann Buscho
Laura Dunning
Sue Fleckles
Christine Gazulis

Melanie Johnson
Mark Kamena
Richard Levy
Gail Matthews
Bethany Miller
Art Raisman
Grace Rogers
Fred Rozendal
Paula Sitelman
Gary Stolzoff
Beth Tabakin
Nick Nichols

ARTICLES

Sudden Illness: Planning Continuity of Care Gary Seeman, Ph.D.

Not long ago, I made a sudden trip to the hospital for a condition that was potentially life-threatening (I'm now quite well). I was fortunate to be comfortable and conscious when at rest. Thus I was able to improvise a succession plan to ensure continuity of care for my psychotherapy clients. I share this experience with you, my colleagues, to encourage establishing such a plan beforehand and updating it periodically.

Many therapists prepare for disability or worse by creating a professional will. However, I believe that such planning can also include instructions for the uncertain period of a sudden illness. The uncertainty in my situation included not knowing for the first couple of days whether I would be absent for one week, for six to eight weeks, or longer. My professional will provided for the worst case, but what about this grey area? I wanted to make sure that my clients continued to receive confidential and professional attention - attention that

reflected my personal consideration of their needs to minimize feelings of abandonment if their care had to be transferred to someone else. I also didn't know whether such a transfer might need to be temporary or permanent.

Creating the succession plan, itself, is not difficult. Here are the nuts and bolts of my plan, which has only five elements: 1) a professional will; 2) a list of therapists to whom referrals would be made; 3) a smaller list of therapists who would make referral calls; 4) a referral sheet that matches clients, therapists or agencies I would personally recommend; and 5) a schedule for updating the succession plan.

1. Professional wills are on the radar of most licensed therapists. These documents assign a professional executor and a backup executor who would take custody of records if a therapist becomes unable to provide care or maintain records. The will also offers instructions for accessing those client records, including the locations of physical files and passwords for accessing electronic files and voicemail. You may find guidelines or examples of professional wills online, but be sure to have your professional will reviewed by your attorney.

2. Over time, I've assembled a preferred list of therapists to whom I make referrals, including a description of their specialties to guide my decision-making. My succession plan includes a sheet that doesn't include all of that detail but gives therapist names, phone numbers, and license type. I assign each therapist a number. I also assign numbers to other referral sources and community agencies that may be appropriate for my clients.

These numbers keep my other succession plan documents brief and easy to read.

3. The smaller list of therapists who would make referral calls is intended to spread the workload of contacting my client list. The list assigns clients by numerical code to each therapist.

4. The primary document for my succession plan is a referral sheet, which lists clients by numerical code. The document lists three therapists or appropriate agency referrals for each client.

5. Finally, I've placed a reminder in my electronic schedule to update my succession plan every three months.

I was lucky that my condition could be resolved with minimal physical trauma or sedation. I was well enough to call my clients the next day. I told them I was okay and would see them as scheduled the following week.

When I assembled my succession plan, I realized that no one had ever suggested that I put such a plan in place. After this recent adventure, I am able to sleep better at night, because I've given clear instructions that convey my support for each client, maintain confidentiality, and minimize the impact of any disruption to their psychotherapy.

Humans in trouble: The films of Alexander Payne Sue Hulley, Ph.D.

Can a director find success by chronicling the lives of middle class men in Omaha? If you ask Alexander Payne, the answer is definitely yes. After

making Citizen Ruth in 1999, he explored this territory in Election and About Schmidt. However, while his dark and zany tracking of the meltdown of high school civics teacher Jim McAllister (Matthew Broderick) got raves from many fans and critics, it was About Schmidt which put Payne on the map, and resulted in Jack Nicholson's Oscar nomination.

And why Omaha? Payne told a recent interviewer that in his opinion, American movies haven't spent much time on the Midwestern experience and ordinary people; he went on to say that he intended to rectify this situation. Luckily for film fans, the result has been several challenging movies.

Payne loves plots in which his characters experience maximally stressful (and mostly self-created) situations. His usual M.O. is to transform a novel into a screenplay with his longtime writing partner Jim Taylor, and then direct the heck out of it. In Election, we are treated to a wildly black romp through American high school culture. He wickedly sends up many of the usual suspects, including lame student government assemblies; the teacher who never left high school; and spurned teen lovers. Matthew Broderick is perfectly cast as the idealistic, hypocritical teacher ruled by his libido and demons, while Reese Witherspoon, most recently seen as Becky Sharp in Vanity Fair, excels as the bright, driven student candidate Tracy Flick.

However, Payne is not simply engaging in a retro romp; a lesbian subplot anchors Carver High in the present. Moreover, Election is dealing fundamentally with the nature and

effects of human choices. In addition to the obvious reference to Carver's school elections, people's moral choices are also at issue, as signaled early in the movie, when we see Mr. McAllister at the blackboard, helping his students distinguish between morals and ethics. The movie is a virtual exercise in "instant karma," showing us all too quickly the effects of its characters' choices or "elections."

But it is in About Schmidt that Payne indulges his Midwestern flavor to the max. From the opening credits-- a pan of a washed-out downtown Omaha and a series of sidewalk-eye views up the sides of insurance company skyscrapers--we inhabit this bleak, windswept terrain. Later, when we travel cross-country with Schmidt, we absorb huge, grey skies and wide open spaces.

With Schmidt, the action is on the inside. Where Election vibrates with almost manic energy, plot twists, and quirky characters, Schmidt takes place at an almost monotonous, even pace. Payne takes us along as Schmidt appears to sleepwalk through his retirement dinner and lifeless marriage, and we experience along with him the subsequent loss of his remaining touchstones.

Jack Nicholson shines as never before as Schmidt, playing the man in such an unerringly understated fashion that even "small" moments take on great power. I confess to not being a fan of Nicholson, and admit that I avoided Schmidt until now because I wasn't ready for another arrogant, angry, smirking character. But I'm a convert. He actually displays a sweetness and simplicity which enable us to care about Schmidt as a man trapped and isolated within his conventional persona. Nicholson's

restrained portrayal made me feel deeply the poignancy and pain in Schmidt's dilemma and in his largely futile attempts to resolve his situation.

The enormous success of Schmidt has allowed Payne to operate with more latitude. He commented recently that he no longer needs a major star to carry a movie, a fact he took advantage of when casting Sideways, his most recent film. Here he used Paul Giamatti (Miles); Thomas Haden Church (Jack); Sandra Oh--Payne's wife--(Stephanie); and Virginia Madsen (Maya). Although the setting is the Southern California wine country, Payne displays lingering touches of Midwestern sensibility, notably in placing the action in Buelltown and Solvang.

Based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Rex Pickett, Sideways tells the story of two former college buddies--Miles, a divorced, depressed aspiring novelist/high school English teacher and Jack, a fading former soap opera star about to marry into a rich Armenian business family. The two are spending the last week before Jack's wedding visiting wineries and golfing. Miles is a wine snob, and is hoping to educate Jack's palate, while Jack, at first solicitous about Miles' love life, is really out to have a last fling before his gilded domesticity sets in.

Both Miles and Jack are struggling. From a clinical perspective, it's as if we are seeing poster boys for depression and mania. Additionally, as the plot develops, both characters are caught in increasingly extreme, bizarre, and, let's face it, funny situations and dilemmas. Payne and Taylor avoid a clichéd

treatment--no mean feat with this material.

One of the delights of this movie for me was the camera work. Although no expert in this field, I enjoyed the technique of zeroing in on some object or person in the foreground, leaving the background blurry, focusing your attention on the action while keeping you aware of the larger picture. As in Schmidt and Election, aerial shots were also used very effectively as a variation of the usual long shots. The result of these techniques was to give the movie an offbeat character.

The rich language was another delight. Richness begins with the title itself, which alludes slyly to the positions of wine bottles (with respect to storage and aging) and its two main male characters (with respect to morality and truthfulness). Then when Miles and Maya, a waitress he met at the Hitching Post and is tentatively wooing, explain to each other why they are interested in wine, each gives us a poetic and self-revelatory verbal bouquet. In another scene with Jack, Miles describes himself as "shit washing out to sea..." I won't tell you the punch line, but hope you enjoy the "literary" humor.

The bottom line is that Payne is making movies about ordinary people in meaningfully difficult situations. He shows real humans, warts and all; he also continues to care about people and to help us to do so as well. And it's so much fun NOT to be able to predict what he'll do next! I rejoice in his films, wish him every future success, and hope he will give us many more.

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