2007 is a very exciting year in many ways for Division 46. We are about to celebrate our twentieth year. A lot has changed since the beginning of the Division, but we have not discarded our history to only embrace what is new. The Division was founded as a home for psychologists working in the popular media. One of our earliest unique contributions was offering media training at the APA annual Convention to interested members and Divisions. APA has now essentially taken on this function.

Still, Division 46 members are visionaries and creative and have expanded their horizons to embrace the new media technologies. Some of our members were active and continue to work in telehealth and internet sciences or in the various aspects of information technology both involving mass media and personal media options. Others have focused on the role and regulation of virtual reality.

We have taken Ron Levant’s “household word” initiative to heart as pointed out in 2005 by Past Division President Lou Perrot and are actively promoting psychological health, wellness, and resilience through the media. Our members’ interests know no bounds. We are researchers, and academics, teachers and practitioners, as well advisors to media in all its forms, commentators, and occasionally critics.

As Fischoff (2005) (see Div. 46 webpage link) points out, we are a “media dominated society,” and the scope of media psychology includes “entertainment and advertising and their short and long term impact on values attitudes and behavior …media influences on education and strategic communications and Information Technology and telecommunications.” It also includes new and emerging technologies and their impact in a variety of fields from medical/health to education. We have become a media based world and our members possess the expertise to meet the emerging challenges.

My presidential initiatives are aimed at bringing the division into its proper place within APA. One of my goals is to increase the diversity of the division’s membership, not only ethnically, but also in terms of media interests. Whereas we welcome researchers, academics, and scientists, our APA membership demographics show us mainly as a practice division. I am interested in bringing in members interested in assistive technologies, the communications sciences, and other new and emerging fields that include the use of media including as a tool in the courtroom both in criminal and civil litigation.

From necessity, I am also working on a Policies and Procedures Manual for the Division. Ours is sadly out of date and does not address many issues that all APA Divisions may need to address.

My last initiative involves visibility. For a division whose focus is the media, we are sadly invisible and categorized/caricatured within APA to the point where others see us only as media performers. This limits our contact and cooperation with other Divisions and works against increasing our membership. Ironically, we may need to use the media to correct our image.

We invite you to join us in our quest to be ahead of the times we live in and ask that you bring along a friend or two to join us in this glorious journey. See you in San Francisco where you can sample some of our unique offerings which highlight a variety of areas of expertise.

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.
President-Elect’s Column

The Media Millenium

Frank Farley, PhD
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I am delighted to be president-elect of the world’s major professional society of media psychologists, Division 46, particularly as we have made our entrance into what will be the most media-saturated and media-driven period in human history. The 21st century and beyond will continue the trend to more media in our lives, more communication technologies, more global inter-connectedness via media, and more of our cognitive and affective lives influenced by the media. Indeed, children and adolescents will increasingly incorporate it into their lives, making it integral to their behavior, and will increasingly live “in the media.”

From my perspective, the multiple roles and impact of media in our lives now and going forward, is one of the great challenges for us in Division 46—understanding those roles and impact, and working to include sound psychology (no pun intended) in all aspects of the new developments. We also need to be adept at engaging the media in conveying our best work and ideas to the many publics.

One thing I would like to see us work on is the psychology we need to reason more effectively with children over appropriate use of media, reasoning that includes sensitivity to and understanding of the media smorgasbord kids have before them, and the healthy and unhealthy sides to it all.

Turning to the immediate business of our Division, our leadership in 2007 is of course in the very capable hands of Rochelle Balter. During my 2008 term one thing I will be working on is membership, both recruitment of new members and retention of current members. Recent statistics from APA show that over the past decade or so we have remained relatively stable in our numbers. We’re not on the increase, however. But very few divisions are increasing in size. Several divisions over the same time period have shown considerable decreases. We of course want every media psychologist as a member! So, please help us here by inviting any media psychologist you know who is not a member to join us. Also, if you are not on our listserv, please join now, so that we can use it as a means for communication with and among ALL of us. It can also save Div 46 a lot of money in mailing costs if we can email everyone. To get on our listserv address an email to: listserv@lists.apa.org Then type this note: subscribediv46-mediapsych

Finally, please contact me at frank.farley@comcast.net or 213 Ritter Addition, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122, with your suggestions for Division efforts in 2008. What do we need to do that we are not doing? How can we improve on things we are already doing? What should we scale back or abandon altogether?

Stay tuned.

With warm regards,

Frank
member writing, but primarily as a way to bring interesting material to our readers. I also have instituted an Asked & Answered column where people can write in for advice on working with the media or new technology. I hope to solicit answers for the various questions I receive from Division 46 members and the APA public policy office. I would also like to feature graduate programs and research projects in upcoming issues. In this issue, under Programs & Projects, Fielding University’s media psychology program submitted a description of research they are doing. This sort of information will help future media psychologists decide where they might study media and psychology given there are so few programs specific to the field. Sightings is a new column that will bring to readers’ attention the way psychologists and those with mental disorders are represented by the media. Finally, I hope in the future to bring short reviews of scholarly research relating to the media to the newsletter. As always, I welcome articles and news from members who work with the media and help to educate the public. My changes are intended to encompass the very diverse field our division represents.

And what are those fields? We have members who are doing radio, online, and TV shows, and members who regularly speak to the media about psychology as experts, helping them to understand research and theory. We have members who are interested in and investigate the way media and technology affect our emotional and cognitive experiences—our lives. We have members who examine the way various forms of media represent psychology and psychologists, as well as members who are interested in how specific forms of media, e.g. films, are understood, processed, and affect our lives. We also have members who theorize on and do research about media effects, looking at the frequency of use of various types of media and media representations and exploring how these have an effect on children and adults. In some ways, we members may not have very much in common. And yet each of these various interest groups can benefit from understanding the needs and perspectives of the other. I hope that the following issues of The Amplifier can serve such a diverse membership while also bringing us together in our mission.

**From the Associate Editor**

Jenny Whittemore Fremlin, MA

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It is with great enthusiasm that I embark upon the adventure of working with Executive Editor Sharon Lamb as Associate Editor of The Amplifier. Not only is publishing a passion of mine, so is spreading awareness of media psychology. As a member of the first phase of the Media Psychology Awareness survey team (see the article by Pamela Rutledge in this issue) I became acutely aware of the ambiguity surrounding our field. It is my hope that through tools such as The Amplifier and the Division 46 listserv we will be able to share enough information about our pursuits, research, and professions, that we can begin to disseminate a consistent message to the general public about what Media Psychology is and facilitate universal understanding. One simple way for psychology to benefit from media is by creating a consistent message in the media, it can do wonders for public awareness.

My interests in Media Psychology are ever evolving, but I always seem to come back to center on media creation. From the open source movement to media literacy, I always see the ability to create as having a central role. I grew up playing on BBSes, using LEXIS/NEXIS, and waxing up content for newspapers and ‘zines. When the Internet arrived I thought it was about time, and I was constantly expecting it to do more, to be more. It was not until much later that I realized what a phenomenon it was no matter how simple. Yet despite the brilliance of everything online today, I still expect everything to evolve faster and work better. People who are willing to tinker, explore, and build make new features available every day. These features enhance interpersonal connections, increase access to independent publishing, and can even draw us back to the world of print and broadcast media by raising awareness and interest. What sets apart those who create, and what creation offers them, is one of my main interests.

Spreading this ability to others is another active interest of mine. For the past two years I have been able to work with Dr. Jason Ohler at the University of Alaska Southeast in presenting media literacy materials concentrating on history, use, and implications of blogging to his digital storytelling and education classes. I hope to continue bringing the power of media creation to others, because I believe that the power to create leads to the ability to understand.

This journey into the world of Media Psychology began in the summer of 2004 when I took a monumental leap by deciding to pursue a PhD with Fielding Graduate University. For nearly a year I had been researching media-related graduate programs, hoping to find one that I could balance with my career. Living in a small town that is only accessible by airplane or ferry, commuting to a university other than the University of Alaska Southeast was not an option. Fielding’s distributed learning program offered me the chance to enter a ground-breaking field, remain in Juneau, and pursue a degree all at the same time. It was the program’s founder, Dr. Bernard Luskin, who encouraged me to join APA Division 46. Since then, reading The Amplifier and participating in the listserv has encouraged me to join other divisions and promote involvement among my fellow students. I look forward to my involvement with the future issues of The Amplifier.
From the Secretary

Pauline Wallin, PhD
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Here are some highlights of the Division 46 Board meeting, held on 2/15/07. We currently have 472 members, up from 458 in 2005. The Division had a net loss of $7,800, which was covered by reserve funds. The budget for 2007 includes a loss of $5,400. The Board voted to maintain a zero-based budget, with reserve funds used only upon a 2/3 vote of the Board. Division 46 gives several awards, some by the President and others by committees. The Board voted to consolidate the awards under one Awards Committee, chaired by the Past President. Members will include one Member-at-Large and representatives of other committees that give awards. Also, the committees that give awards will be asked to clarify their missions and their procedures for deciding on the winning candidates. President Rochelle Balter will be appointing a committee to update the recently revised Bylaws, particularly in the areas of elections, requirements for Board membership, and responsibility of the Board regarding public statements by individuals and committees. Also, she is developing a Policies and Procedures manual, with input from officers and committee chairs.

Among the many fine Division 46 programs at the upcoming APA convention, President-Elect Frank Farley will be moderating a membership recruitment event with icons Drs. Aaron Beck and Philip Zimbardo, who have never shared a stage at the convention. During the presentation, student volunteers will pass out Division 46 brochures.

Guest Columnist

Identity, Ingenuity, the Media, and Kids

Dr. Dianne Lynch, Dean
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In the fall of 1997, when I began writing as a journalist about the emerging cultures of cyberspace, I quickly became intrigued by the possibilities of the medium—not only for contemporary forms of commerce and democracy, but for the development of new kinds of social relationships. As early as summer 1998, I was among scores of journalists interviewing and profiling Net-savvy technophiles who had established full-blown social communities and were helping others do the same. To bring those early adopters into conversation, the first conference on virtual communities was convened in Bath, England, in March 1999. Among its keynote speakers was Salon.com columnist Cliff Figalo, an early Net expert and for six years manager of thewell.com. In his opening remarks, Figalo described the characteristics and qualities of an effective online community, starting with trust and working around to more pragmatic issues like bandwidth and effective hosting policies. But it was his closing observation that stuck me most then and that remains most relevant a decade later:

What we deal with today in terms of tools and human behavior is still on the level of the frontier...It’s novel and new and experimental...Sometimes, we get confused about who we really are because people respond so strongly to the personas we create in the world, where only our written words exist. This is a result of novelty. Virtual communities will find their places in our lives as we all become more comfortable with who we are in their environments. (Figalo, 1998, http://www.infonortics.com/vc/1998/figallo/figallo.htm)

At the point in time when Figalo was predicting what was in essence the melding of Donna Haraway’s “fiercely material realities and imaginary zones,” the first generation of digital natives was just finishing first grade. In the decade that has elapsed since that time, the Internet and the children who frequent it have grown up together. And the Internet has become a personal medium in ways even the experts didn’t anticipate: blogs, interactive messaging, and social networks—from facebook.com and myspace.com to itsjustlunch.com and hookingup.com (Conhaim, 2004). These have redefined social communication and eliminated physical contact from the mix (Conhaim, 2004).

For adults in the post-information age, such seismic shifts in the way we conduct and communicate our lives have been the topic of great debate and widespread discussion; we have moved from the gee-whiz novelty era described by Figalo to more substantive analyses and understandings of the medium’s implications for everything from crime to community. For the wired children in our lives, however, membership in a virtual culture has occurred without disruption or dissent. The first generation of cyberchildren now populate our high schools and undergraduate colleges and arrived unwittingly at the intersection of technology and identity with little understanding of—or concern about—their parents’ pre-Internet lives (Meszaros, 2004). When the children in this study passed the developmental threshold of self-awareness, they “woke up” into a digital world.

That stark difference between the experiences of children and adults is not unique to the digital age (Meyrowitz, 1985), but the interactive nature of the Internet presents particular challenges to adult authority. For the first time in history, technology provides children with around-the-clock access from the convenience of their own homes to an authority-free environment populated and manipulated by adults, infused with adult images, information and identity performances, and interactive—which means children are...
no longer simply observers or voyeurs, as was necessarily the case with print and electronic technologies. In cyberspace, children of all ages can choose to participate as full members of the digital culture (in nearly any community they choose to join) and to become through sheer presence and experience the cultural leaders of those communities.

Consider, for example, a few examples of today’s cyberkids:

- Blake Ross started to play around with computers as a toddler. By the age of 15, Ross was working full-time at Netscape. Three years later, as a freshman at Stanford, he was teaching computer programming. And in his spare time he co-founded FireFox, now one of the most widely used browsers in the world. Today, at 21, he’s taken some time off from school to co-found yet another Internet startup, this one a user interface that integrates the desktop and the Web.

- At the age of 14, Heather Lawver launched The Daily Prophet, an online educational portal for kids. Run as a newspaper based around popular works of literature, children volunteer to write as columnists in the fictional worlds of their favorite books. By the time she was 15, The Daily Prophet had evolved into a global nonprofit with more than 100 staff volunteers, and teachers around the world had integrated the newspaper into their curricula. In 2001, Warner Brothers decided that the program’s Harry Potter content infringed on its copyright. Lawver and a UK politician fought back, mobilized thousands of The Daily Prophet fans worldwide, and launched the first successful fan-based boycott of a major multi-national entertainment corporation over fan rights on the Internet. She was 16.

- Ashley Richardson was only 12 when she ran for mayor in Alphaville, the immersive online community that preceded Second Life. She lost by a couple dozen votes. But only after her modeling agency in Alphaville hit the charts as one of the most successful new businesses in the community. Unusual? Perhaps. Unique? Absolutely not. In fact, the activities of kids like Ross, Lawver, and Richardson reflect the operating assumptions of all digital natives: authority—formerly a matter of credentialing and yes, age—is now a matter of practice and experience. When age is invisible, and authority results from individual experience rather than external standards, virtually anybody can take on a corporate giant or run for mayor.

Even if you’re 12.

Footnotes

1 The WELL was established in 1985 and was among the Net’s first highly successful virtual communities.
2 See, for example, such national summary reports as A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet (2002) and Falling through the Net (2000), both by the Economics and Statistics Administration, as well as research conducted by private organizations such as the Pew Internet and American Life project and Grunwald Associates (Children, Families and the Internet, www.grunwald.com/surveys/ch/overview.html)

**Asked and Answered**

**Q:** I’m a fairly liberal psychologist and am a bit worried about an upcoming interview with a very conservative radio host who is asking me about some controversial research. I worry he will distort what I say or overpower my view with his own. Should I cancel?

**A:** This interview request is a strong example of the need for doing one’s homework before agreeing to any interview. The psychologist is already familiar with the radio show—that’s a good start. If you receive a request from an outlet you are not familiar with ask lots of questions during this initial contact with the show’s producer. You should also do some research on the show’s format and leanings before agreeing to be interviewed. One critical question about this radio invitation is if other guests will also be invited to participate in the interview. If so, who are they? Do they have extreme positions? Are they likely to be respectful or disrespectful during the broadcast? A simple Google search will help you answer these questions. Your research will surely influence your decision to accept or decline the interview. If you accept the invitation make sure that you have prepared message points so you know exactly what you want to say about your research—and keep your message points brief and in plain English. It will also be important to anticipate how your research could be sensationalized or misrepresented and be ready to counter any misinformation. (Answered by APA Office of Public Affairs)

**Q:** I am a heavily sought-after Keynote Speaker for mental health, substance abuse, education, and healthcare conferences. However, APA rejected both my submissions for the upcoming SF convention (which I would be doing for FREE). Both presentations/topics were tailored specifically for the convention, timely, relevant, practical, and include a mix of videos and audience participation in addition to lecture/PowwerPoint. What’s the “secret” of getting to present to your peers?

**A:** Almost EVERYBODY presents for free at APA, including really big-name speakers, so know you’re in good company when you do present. The big-name speakers at APA (plenaries) tend to be people who have published quite a bit in their area. Also, depending on the division, various people run the program committees through a blind review. Sometimes they are desperate to find reviewers and so have to settle on people who don’t really know the field very well. That is, the people reviewing your proposal might not be the most competent to judge your work.

(continued on p. 6)
Another thing to consider is that APA rarely accepts a one-person session. The one-person sessions are chosen by the program committee or program chair. If you meet other people in your field at APA, think about organizing a panel for next year’s convention where each of you speak about 12 minutes (!). This will give you a greater chance of presenting, having people hear you, and making further APA connections. About the workshops: They make those decisions based on estimated attendance. I have noticed that CE workshops are often composed, once again, of two or more people sharing research data that has ended up influencing a treatment approach, etc. (SL)

If you have a question related to working with the media or Division 46 in general, please send it to the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter. She will find an appropriate Division 46 member to provide an answer!

Member News

**Dr. Jenn Berman** will be releasing her first book *The A to Z Guide to Raising Happy Confident Kids* (New World Library) on April 28 of this year. The book is based on her award-winning “Dr. Jenn” column that is printed in *Los Angeles Family Magazine* and has been running for five years. For more information please go to www.DoctorJenn.com.

**Lisa Boesky, PhD**, has a new book coming out in July 2007, *When to Worry: How to Tell If Your Teen Needs Help—And What to Do About It*. She writes that the book provides essential information on the full spectrum of problematic teenage issues, including mood swings, depression, rebellion, low self-esteem, delinquency, school difficulties, alcohol and drug use, worry and stress, cutting, aggression, eating disorders, and more. Lisa is also a clinical psychologist and her publications and workshops can be found at www.drlisab.com.

**James H. Bray, PhD**, Division 46 Treasurer, is pleased to announce that he is running for APA President. James is a clinical psychologist and associate professor at Baylor College of Medicine. As a scientist-practitioner-educator, he is an effective advocate for all of psychology. He has extensive experience within APA, having served on Council, boards, and committees, and in state and division leadership roles. Feel free to contact him at jbray@bmc.tmc.edu.

**Jonathan Cabiria, MA**, a doctoral student of Media Psychology at Fielding Graduate University, presented a workshop at the LIFT07 International Media and Technology Conference in Geneva, Switzerland on February 7, 2007. The focus of the workshop was on psychological responses to media-related information overload (media stress) and ways to deal with attention demands while increasing stress capacity.

**Linda De Villers, PhD**, has been selected to be in the in-house regular sex columnist for *Health* magazine, a national Time, Inc magazine with a readership of 8 million. Her first column will appear in the April issue.

**Irene Dietch, PhD**, writes that she is scheduled to do a presentation called “Challenging Cancer; Screening & Prevention (focus on teenagers)” for her program *Making Connections*, which she produces and hosts. Her guests are members of the Professional Education Committee of the American Cancer Society. She also writes that she has done several media interviews on pet loss and pets and their owners, commenting on an AP story dealing with a cat nurturing a puppy.

**Carol Goldberg, PhD, ABPP**, in addition to being a Fellow of Division 46, has been elected a Fellow of Division 42. Her web site is www.WebSitesandSoundBites.com

**Douglas Gentile, PhD**, has a new book out with Craig Anderson and Katherine Buckley, *Violent video game effects on children and adolescents: Theory, research, and public policy* (2007). New York: Oxford University Press. Division 46 member, Dorothy Singer writes of it, “The authors present an excellent blend of theory and research, including their own studies, and numerous suggestions for public policy debates that will hopefully lead to more positive game content and a more considered use of videos. The chapter on methodology is particularly well written and is a must for anyone contemplating entering the field of video game research.”

**Dr. Mary Gregerson**, Division 46 Member-At-Large 2005–2008, will co-chair the symposium “Advances in Behavioral Informatics: Using Cell Phone Technologies to Promote Health Behavior Change” for the Society of Behavioral Medicine on March 24, 2007. She is also editing a volume on movies and psychology for the APA Division 46 Media Psychology Book Series. In addition, Dr. Gregerson is working on behalf of APA Division 46 to form a film and psychology committee, which will consider nominations from within and outside the Division for a Divisional Award of excellence in psychology.

**Florence (Florrie) Kaslow, PhD**, Division 46 Past President, writes that she continues to be a prolific writer and editor of books. Her 2007 book *Handbook of EMDR and Family Therapy Processes*, Shapiro, Kaslow, and Maxfield (Eds.) is hot off the press (NY: Wiley). She writes that she served as a discussant at the annual Jewish Film Festival in Palm Beach Gardens in December 2006. Florrie also is Series Editor in Chief of a Division 46 book series. She writes that Mary Gregerson has volume 3 well along and it is entitled *And They Lived Happily Ever After: Moore Magic Guide.* Anyone interested in proposing a volume that they would like to edit for the book series is welcome to contact her.

**Sharon Lamb, EdD**’s book, co-authored with Lyn Mikel Brown, *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers’ Schemes*, won the 2006 Books for a Better Life award in the Childcare/Parenting category. The Books for a Better Life award is sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and this is their 11th year.
Dr. Dennis Marikis is on Mansfield, Ohio’s WMAN as the “Radio Psychologist” and has been for the past 20 years. The “Radio Psychologist Show” has been a weekly call-in radio show and ranked as the highest rated local program. In addition to the “Radio Psychologist Show,” Dr. Marikis does a local FM show called “Dr. Dream,” which helps listeners understand dreams and sleep issues.

Anne Marshall, PhD, longtime journalist and Division 46 member who specializes in both coaching therapists in using media and coaching/psychotherapy with members of the media, is one of a three-member Northern California team assessing applicants for CPA’s Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award (PHWA), an APA outreach and promotion effort aimed at raising awareness among employers of the importance of psychological health in the workplace.

Linda Sapadin’s new book, Now I Get It! Totally Sensational Advice for Living and Loving, has just been published by Outskirts Press. It is a collection of 62 of her columns that she has written for the Herald chain of newspapers on Long Island. Now I Get It!, Linda writes, is comprehensive in its scope of advice, offering readers’ savvy counsel for enriching their lives, enhancing their relationships and overcoming self-defeating patterns of behavior. The book is oriented toward the general public; however, Linda hopes that Division 46 psychologists will find many of the topics informative and entertaining. For more information about her books, visit her website: www.psychwisdom.com/.

Paul Schienberg, PhD, writes that he continues to have his online sport psychology magazine, Psyched (www.psychedonline.org). Its mission is to translate and distribute sport psychology scientific information to the public. He also has a regular column, “Ask Dr. Schienberg!” in Golfin Magazine which answers psychological questions from readers.

Erika Yomtobian co-hosts a weekly radio program in Los Angeles which centers around Women’s Issues (http://www.kcsn.org/programs/womensinspiration.htm). She and her co-host have interviewed individuals such as Christiane Northrup, Jane Elliott, Harvey Karp, and Louann Brizendine. She is also writing a book on women oppressing women which will be published by New Harbinger Press next year.

Philip Zimbardo’s The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil (Random House) was published in March 2007. The Lucifer Effect raises questions about the nature of Human Nature: How is it possible for ordinary, average, even good people to become perpetrators of evil? Visit www.LuciferEffect.com for supplementary materials and tour information.

Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls

Excerpts from the EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (with regard to the MEDIA)

APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (Members: Eileen L. Zurbriggen, PhD (Chair); Rebecca L. Collins, PhD; Sharon Lamb, EdD; Tomi-Ann Roberts, PhD; Deborah L. Tolman, EdD; L. Monique Ward, PhD; Jeanne Blake—Public Member)

…APA has long been involved in issues related to the impact of media content on children. In 1994, APA adopted a policy resolution on Violence in Mass Media, which updated and expanded an earlier resolution on televised violence. In 2004, the APA Task Force on Advertising and Children produced a report examining broad issues related to advertising to children. That report provided recommendations to restrict advertising that is primarily directed at young children and to include developmentally appropriate disclaimers in advertising, as well as recommendations regarding research, applied psychology, industry practices, media literacy, advertising, and schools. In 2005, APA adopted the policy resolution on Violence in Video Games and Interactive Media, which documented the negative impact of exposure to violent interactive media on children and youth and called for the reduction of violence in these media. These resolutions and reports addressed how violent media and advertising affect children and youth, but they did not address sexualization.

The APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls was tasked with examining the psychological theory, research, and clinical experience addressing the sexualization of girls via media and other cultural messages…

This report examines and summarizes psychological theory, research, and clinical experience addressing the sexualization of girls. The report (a) defines sexualization; (b) examines the prevalence and provides examples of sexualization in society and in cultural institutions, as well as interpersonally and intrapsychically; (c) evaluates the evidence suggesting that sexualization has negative consequences for girls and for the rest of society; and (d) describes positive alternatives that may help counteract the influence of sexualization.

There are several components to sexualization, and these set it apart from healthy sexuality. Sexualization occurs when

- a person’s value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics;
- a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy;

(continued on p. 8)
APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls Report
(continued from p. 7)

- A person is sexually objectified—that is, made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and/or
- Sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person.

All four conditions need not be present; any one is an indication of sexualization…

Evidence for the Sexualization of Girls
Virtually every media form studied provides ample evidence of the sexualization of women, including television, music videos, music lyrics, movies, magazines, sports media, video games, the Internet, and advertising (e.g., Gow, 1996; Grauerholz & King, 1997; Krassas, Blauwkamp, & Wesselink, 2001, 2003; Lin, 1997; Plous & Neptune, 1997; Vincent, 1989; Ward, 1995). Some studies have examined forms of media that are especially popular with children and adolescents, such as video games and teen-focused magazines. In study after study, findings have indicated that women more often than men are portrayed in a sexual manner (e.g., dressed in revealing clothing, with bodily postures or facial expressions that imply sexual readiness) and are objectified (e.g., used as a decorative object or as body parts rather than a whole person). In addition, a narrow (and unrealistic) standard of physical beauty is heavily emphasized. These are the models of femininity presented for young girls to study and emulate.

In some studies, the focus was on the sexualization of female characters across all ages, but most focused specifically on young adult women. Although few studies examined the prevalence of sexualized portrayals of girls in particular, those that have been conducted found that such sexualization does occur and may be increasingly common. For example, O’Donohue, Gold, and McKay (1997) coded advertisements over a 40-year period in five magazines targeted to men, women, or a general adult readership. Although relatively few (1.5%) of the ads portrayed children in a sexualized manner, of those that did, 85% sexualized girls rather than boys. Furthermore, the percentage of sexualizing ads increased over time.

Although extensive analyses documenting the sexualization of girls, in particular, have yet to be conducted, individual examples can easily be found. These include advertisements (e.g., the Skechers “naughty and nice” ad that featured Christina Aguilera dressed as a schoolgirl in pigtails, with her shirt unbuttoned, licking a lollipop), dolls (e.g., Bratz dolls dressed in sexualized clothing such as miniskirts, fishnet stockings, and feather boas), clothing (thongs sized for 7- to 10-year-olds, some printed with slogans such as “wink wink”), and television programs (e.g., a televised fashion show in which adult models in lingerie were presented as young girls). Research documenting the pervasiveness and influence of such products and portrayals is sorely needed.…

Parents may contribute to sexualization in a number of ways. For example, parents may convey the message that maintaining an attractive physical appearance is the most important goal for girls. Some may allow or encourage plastic surgery to help girls meet that goal. Research shows that teachers sometimes encourage girls to play at being sexualized adult women (Martin, 1988) or hold beliefs that girls of color are “hypersexual” and thus unlikely to achieve academic success (Rolon-Dow, 2004). Both male and female peers have been found to contribute to the sexualization of girls—girls by policing each other to ensure conformance with standards of thinness and sexiness (Eder, 1995; Nichter, 2000) and boys by sexually objectifying and harassing girls. Finally, at the extreme end, parents, teachers, and peers, as well as others (e.g., other family members, coaches, or strangers) sometimes sexually abuse, assault, prostitute, or traffic girls, a most destructive form of sexualization.

Girls also sexualize themselves when they think of themselves in objectified terms. Psychological researchers have identified self-objectification as a key process whereby girls learn to think of and treat their own bodies as objects of others’ desires (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). In self-objectification, girls internalize an observer’s perspective on their physical selves and learn to treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated for their appearance. Numerous studies have documented the presence of self-objectification in women more than in men. Several studies have also documented this phenomenon in adolescent and preadolescent girls (McConnell, 2001; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002).

Consequences of the Sexualization of Girls
Psychology offers several theories to explain how the sexualization of girls and women could influence girls’ well-being. …Although most of these studies have been conducted on women in late adolescence (i.e., college age), findings are likely to generalize to younger adolescents and to girls, who may be even more strongly affected because their sense of self is still being formed.

Cognitive and Emotional Consequences
Cognitively, self-objectification has been repeatedly shown to detract from the ability to concentrate and focus one’s attention, thus leading to impaired performance on mental activities such as mathematical computations or logical reasoning (Frederickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Gapinski, Brownell, & LaFrance, 2003; Hebl, King, & Lin, 2004). …thinking about the body and comparing it to sexualized cultural ideals disrupted mental capacity. In the emotional domain, sexualization and objectification undermine confidence in and comfort with one’s own body, leading to a host of negative emotional consequences, such as shame, anxiety, and even self-disgust. The association between self-objectification and anxiety about appearance and feelings of shame has been found in adolescent girls (12–13-year-olds) (Slater & Tiggemann, 2002) as well as in adult women.

Mental and Physical Health
Research links sexualization with three of the most common mental health problems of girls and women: eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed mood (Abramson &
Sexual well-being is an important part of healthy development and overall well-being. Yet evidence suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences in terms of girls’ ability to develop healthy sexuality. Self-objectification has been linked directly with diminished sexual health among adolescent girls (e.g., as measured by decreased condom use and diminished sexual assertiveness; Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006). Frequent exposure to narrow ideals of attractiveness is associated with unrealistic and/or negative expectations concerning sexuality. Negative effects (e.g., shame) that emerge during adolescence may lead to sexual problems in adulthood (Brotto, Heiman, & Tolman, in press).

Attitudes and Beliefs

Frequent exposure to media images that sexualize girls and women affects how girls conceptualize femininity and sexuality. Girls and young women who more frequently consume or engage with mainstream media content offer stronger endorsement of sexual stereotypes that depict women as sexual objects (Ward, 2002; Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999; Zurbriggen & Morgan, 2006). They also place appearance and physical attractiveness at the center of women’s value.

Impact on Others and on Society

The sexualization of girls can also have a negative impact on other groups (i.e., boys, men, and adult women) and on society more broadly. Exposure to narrow ideals of female attractiveness may make it difficult for some men to find an “acceptable” partner or to fully enjoy intimacy with a female partner (e.g., Schooler & Ward, 2006). Adult women may suffer by trying to conform to a younger and younger standard of ideal female beauty. More general societal effects may include an increase in sexism; fewer girls pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); increased rates of sexual harassment and sexual violence; and an increased demand for child pornography.

Positive Alternatives to the Sexualization of Girls

Some girls and their supporters, now and in the past, have resisted mainstream characterizations of girls as sexual objects. A variety of promising approaches exist to reduce the amount of sexualization that occurs and to ameliorate its effects.

Because the media are important sources of sexualizing images, the development and implementation of school-based media literacy training programs could be key in combating the influence of sexualization. There is an urgent need to teach critical skills in viewing and consuming media, focusing specifically on the sexualization of women and girls. Other school-based approaches include increased access to athletic and other extracurricular programs for girls and the development and presentation of comprehensive sexuality education programs.

Strategies for parents and other caregivers include learning about the impact of sexualization on girls and co-viewing media with their children in order to influence the way in which media messages are interpreted. Action by parents and families has been effective in confronting sources of sexualized images of girls. Organized religious and other ethical instruction can offer girls important practical and psychological alternatives to the values conveyed by popular culture.

Girls and girls’ groups can also work toward change. Alternative media such as “zines” (Web-based magazines), “blogs” (Web logs), and feminist magazines, books, and Web sites encourage girls to become activists who speak out and develop their own alternatives. Girl empowerment groups also support girls in a variety of ways and provide important counterexamples to sexualization.

For recommendations, citations, and the full report: www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html

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Public Education Outreach

Peter Kanaris

A recent issue of Professional Psychology: Research & Practice (Vol. 37, No. 5) includes “Public Education Outreach and the Use of the Media: A Springboard to Making Psychology a Household Word” by division member Peter Kanaris. Here are some excerpts from the article.

ABSTRACT: Have you considered participating in a public education campaign? What are the personal, professional, organizational, and overall benefits of participating? Have you thought of using the media, but feel unsure of what to do or even if it is worthwhile? This article tells the story of how a local group of psychologists used the American Psychological Association’s public education campaign as a springboard to the completion of a variety of successful projects. Particular attention to the use of the media is given. Strategies and resources for developing a public education campaign that utilizes the media are presented from a perspective of benefit to the individual psychologist.

(continued on p. 10)
Here’s how the article begins: It has become increasingly challenging in recent years to be a psychologist in professional practice. The proliferation of managed care and overemphasis on cost-driven limitations have been major factors (Ackley, 1999; Phelps, Eisman, & Kohout, 1998). Few psychologists have been unaffected.

Consistent with Ron Levant’s American Psychological Association (APA) initiative of “Making Psychology a Household Word” (Levant, 2005b), participation in public education outreach and utilization of the media can be a route to empowerment, professional fulfillment, and opportunity. Outreach has been defined by Siegel and Doner (1998) as the application of commercial marketing methods to programs designed to influence target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of society. Siegel and Doner described the use of mass media or news coverage in newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, and the Internet as important in determining what we think about and how we perceive health-related issues and behavior. What follows is a useful model of public education for practitioners illustrated by personal experiences.

And here’s how it ends: Psychologists are commonly motivated by the desire to help people through methods that are informed by social science. The benefit to the public by providing education about what psychology and psychologists have to offer seems obvious. Although this is of importance, because of the great demands on the contemporary psychologist, a more personal benefit must be demonstrated in order to justify the extra time and effort required to participate in successful public education campaigns. During the years that I have participated in public education I have both heard and experienced many reasons given by psychologists for participation, such as the following: to develop friendships with other psychologists; to meet new colleagues and have the opportunity to network; to access job opportunities; to hear what colleagues are doing and how they are doing it; to indirectly market clinical services for independent practice (Martin, 2005); to overcome public speaking anxiety and improve public speaking skills; to become the “local face” of psychology in the region; to learn how to use the media to present special services and programs; to gain the added exposure and credibility that indirectly accrues through appropriate media exposure; to influence responsible and scientifically informed mental health reporting; to publicize important psychological research, making it available and easily accessible to the public; to become a more valuable faculty member and reach students in ways in which they can relate; to better prepare students and supervisees for entry into the field; to get out of the office, classroom, and so forth and do something different, exciting, interesting, and of value; and to increase professional esteem. Finally, perhaps the most important reason given for participating in public education campaigns is that it is fun.

Efforts in public education are almost always uplifting, revitalizing, and joyous. Approach in a way that is made to fit reasonably into a psychologist’s schedule and is respectful of personal needs and life balance, participation in public education campaigns that include outreach and/or media work is rewarding. Through careful scheduling, it need not take time away from practice. While keeping in mind the importance of being timely and responsive, particularly when dealing with the media, public education campaign participation is a win-win for the public and the psychologist. It is important to take the long view. Whether going it alone or as part of a group, the success of a public education campaign is not by a single spectacular effort, but rather a sustained effort over time. The final critical factor to recognize is that success is predicated on relationships with colleagues, public education partners such as coparticipating or cosponsoring organizations, and the media. In order for the media to think of us, we must meet their needs and develop positive relationships. This makes it more likely that they will return with future requests.

Reprint requests may be sent to Peter S. Kanaris, Kanaris Psychological Services, P.C., 496 Smithtown By Pass, Suite 304, Smithtown, NY 11787; E-mail: drpit1@aol.com.
of the news and entertainment media? Considerable! My own research, for example, on images that are conjured up when one thinks about various classes of mental illness revealed that, except for drug addiction, TV and feature films are the principal imaginistic headwaters for endless streams of visual prototypes which warp viewer expectations of what mental illness typically looks like. Classic commentaries on Hollywood’s distortions of mental disorders are found in the works of Gabbard and Gabbard (e.g., Psychiatry and the Cinema) and Wedding and Boyd (e.g., Movies and Mental Illness).

Author-UC Berkeley Psychologist Stephen Hinshaw has written a passionate, personal and inquiring book on how mental illness has been incarnated, personified, and stigmatized throughout the ages. His book is part history of the stigma of mental illness and part recipe for change so that those most affected by it (patients, their families, their treaters), or those who exploit it in the various media (e.g., journalists, writers, artists, directors), can rethink, retool and recalibrate their take on the treatment and portrayal of this protean, often tragic human condition.

Mental health activists like Hinshaw who argue for breaching the walls of fiction factories make eminent sense because serious-minded documentaries, while potentially valuable aids in public education, rarely get the attention or make the impact of vehicles of filmic fiction. Research has shown that suggesting behavior or attitudes within the context of storylines or roles (especially recurring ones) is superior in terms of memory and attitude change and superior to infrequent appeals via ads or public service announcements (PSAs).

This is because mental censors and sensors, like Star Wars energy shields, are relaxed during regular programming, but activated during commercials; at the same time, attention generally degrades during commercials and PSAs while it sustains during regular programming. Examples of mentally healthier “product placements” on TV include the psychologically struggling, paraplegic quarterback in the series Friday Night Lights or Monk, the OCD detective, or House, the pain-killer-addicted medical diagnostician in their eponymous series.

Hinshaw usefully enunciates strategies that concerned consumers may deploy to “raise the consciousness of members of society with regard to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma that exist for many devalued groups” (p. 202). Strategies he recommends include letters to editors of periodicals, confrontation of producers and sponsors of biased programming, boycotts of groups which promote insensitive and demeaning portrayals, picketing films, to name but a few. The author also highlights the value of “Media Watch” groups (Division 46’s own Media Watch Committee is illustrative) which monitor scheduled programming as well as news programs and, lest we overlook them, commercials. “Watchers” notice when commercials promoting fast food or elixirs depart from the numbing routine of insulting the IQs of Everyman and Everywoman and insult instead the mentally ill. The author cites the now (in)famous commercial touting a “schizophrenic” lawnmower which sported three separate personalities, err, functions. Today, some local Crazy (or Mad) Eddie is still out there pushing cut-rate appliances, but Media Watch protesters did get John Deere to pull the emotionally challenged lawnmower commercial.

Hinshaw also looks at kindred spirits of TV commercials, buzz or stealth advertising or product placement, but from the oddly positive perspective. He boldly encourages the use of various marketing strategies to sell accurate information about mental illness. For example, product placement (think Reese’s Pieces in E.T.) is everywhere. Hinshaw advocates encouraging writers and producers to place characters in film or TV series/shows, characters which more realistically and/or positively portray mental illness. The product, in effect, is the character occupying the mentally ill role. One could expand on this idea. This “product” could obviously be a lead or minor part, or even a walk-on role that identifies a mentally ill character but at the same time counters culturally hard-wired stereotypes with more benign, self-aware images (e.g., a person with OCD joking to a friend about his germ-phobic affliction as he plucks a sanitary wipe before he touches the grocery cart... oh, wait a minute, that’s now considered normal!).

Hinshaw’s book is an interesting walk though the history of mental illness and its myriad etiology-related (bad genes or bad parents) stigmas and masks. His thoughtful remonstrations and bold recommendations for activism are written in a clear, non-pretentious style that jostles the activist in us all. Hinshaw is no latter-day Howard Beale, but he effectively beseeches us to get up, open the window, and yell at the media until they listen—and listen well!

Join the Membership Committee!

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

Frank Farley, Membership Chair

Subscribe to Division 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 to 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.)
The Fielding Media Psychology Research Project: A Summary

Pamela Rutledge on behalf of the Fielding Graduate University
Phase II Media Psychology Awareness Research Team

In May 2006, a Fielding Graduate University research group formed to explore the changing attitudes and definition of Media Psychology. Under the direction of the Division 46 Education Committee chair Dr. Bernie Luskin and Fielding Graduate University professor Dr. Erik Gregory, the doctoral-level project is aimed at promoting understanding of and increasing familiarity with Media Psychology. To support this goal, the researchers are currently measuring how Media Psychology is perceived by the psychological community as well as by the greater public.

The group formed in response to the many people from both academia and business who expressed interest in understanding and knowing more about Media Psychology. In the process of answering that question, the group has discovered that there are many different ideas and definitions. Because Media Psychology overlaps with disciplines such as communications, critical studies, and popular culture, many people are unclear as to the distinctions. The group felt it was important to address this gap, especially since many communications practitioners have come to be perceived by some, not always accurately, as psychology practitioners.

The primary goals of the group are to create a current working definition of Media Psychology and to devise plans using the fundamentals of Media Psychology to promote the field in and out of academia with an emphasis on increasing the awareness of the breadth and significance of its applications. As a first step, the research group developed a survey designed to explore the changing attitudes and definition of Media Psychology. Using the Luskin and Friedland (1998) APA Division 46 study Task Force Report: Media Psychology and New Technologies as a foundation, the researchers are also examining whether the eleven areas of Media Psychology applications outlined in the Task Force Report need to be updated.

Beyond the Task Force study, an examination of the literature confirms that there is little agreement as to the definition of Media Psychology. There is, however, widespread agreement that a better understanding of the field is critical. Areas of discussion include ethics (e.g., Diesch & Caldwell, 1993), public opinion of professional psychology (e.g. Carll, 2001), and the need for expanded definitions of media in research (e.g., Fischoff, 2005).

The interest in Media Psychology is on the rise, both in research and practice (e.g., Luskin, 2002; Oliver, Shrum, & Vorderer, 2006). As an emerging field, Media Psychology will be defined by the actions and accomplishments of its students, scholars and practitioners. Media psychology applications cover a broad range, including education and learning, health care, technology development, business communications, interactive technologies, public policy, social welfare, and entertainment. Yet this breadth is not apparent in the literature, where the preponderance of research examines effects and interactions within a narrow field of Media Psychology: broadcast media, advertising, the cinema, and video games.

This research project plans to address the current need for an expanded awareness that minimizes the gap between existing research and real world application. Phase I results, drawn largely from the Fielding community, suggested that while there is uncertainty as to the purview of Media Psychology, there is widespread and positive interest in gaining a better understanding. Most notably, most respondents stated that Media Psychology is an extremely important field. Phase II will focus on the feedback of Division 46 to help identify emerging trends and current practical challenges, as well as possible evidence of diversity and/or dominant issues in a historical perspective. A comparative analysis of Division 46 and Fielding group survey findings will elucidate positioning and awareness-building opportunities in a variety of target populations. The Phase II research group, which includes Erik M. Gregory, PhD, Jon Cabiria, Jerri Lynn Hogg, Pamela Rutledge, Lynn Temenski, and Timothy Wells, will present the results at the 2007 APA Annual Convention in San Francisco. Additionally, the survey results will be available through a link at the website http://www.mediapsychology.info.

Division 46 members who have not had a chance to complete the survey are encouraged to do so at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=193053389966

Questions regarding the survey or study are welcome at mediapsy@gmail.com.

References

For more information or questions regarding this copy, please contact Pam Rutledge at PamelaRutledge@earthlink.net.

If you have a program or project you would like to describe for The Amplifier, please send this information to the editor for an upcoming issue.
Call for Nominations for 2007 News Media Recognition Award

Elizabeth Carll, PhD, Chair
News Media, Public Education, Public Policy Committee

The News Media Recognition Award for excellence in the reporting of psychological information and research was developed in 2002 by the News Media, Public Education, Public Policy Committee. The annual Award is given to a journalist from either print (newspaper) or broadcast (radio, TV, Internet) media.

Previous recipients of the News Media Recognition Award have included Marilyn Elias from USA Today, Peggy Girshman from NPR, Andi Gitow from Dateline NBC, Pat Bellinghausen from The Billings Gazette, the “The CBS Early Show” team, and in 2006 the award went to Michelle Trudeau from NPR. The award to Bellinghausen was unusual as she was from a regional media outlet. However, her track record of stories was unique as they influenced public policy in her state, regarding mental health.

The recipient of the News Media Recognition Award will be announced at the 2007 APA Convention in San Francisco.

Please make suggestions for nominees who have a track record of reporting stories in the areas of mental health and psychology. Include the nominee’s current news outlet affiliation, bio if available (often on the Internet), and some of the news stories they reported. News stories should be relatively current ones published, aired, produced in the last two years and if older stories are available that would be helpful to include as well. Deadline for nominations is May 15, 2007.

If you would like to nominate a journalist with a track record of excellence reporting about psychology and/or mental health issues/policy, please contact Elizabeth Carll, PhD, Chair, Division 46 News Media, Public Education, Public Policy Committee at ecarll@optonline.net or 631-754-2424.
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Publication and Submission Guidelines

The Amplifier is the official newsletter of APA Division 46, Media Psychology, and is published periodically throughout the year (Spring, Summer, Fall/Winter). Unsolicited contributions from members are welcomed and encouraged. Articles must be relevant to media psychology and should not have been published elsewhere. All submissions should be sent to the Executive and Associate Editors, Sharon Lamb, EdD, and Jenny Whittmore Fremlin, MA (see Board Directory for contact info). Submissions must be received by February 1 for the Spring issue, May 15 for the Summer issue, and September 15 for the Fall/Winter double issue. Authors should ensure that their manuscripts comply with all APA publication and ethical guidelines.

Invite a Friend to Join Division 46

Know someone who should belong to the Division of Media Psychology? Ask them to send this form to: Frank Farley, PhD, Division 46 Membership Chair, 213 Ritter Annex, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122; e-mail: frank.farley@comcast.net.

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