

THE AMPLIFIER

MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY

DIVISION 46 OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Presidential Message

Rhoda L. Fischer, PhD



CHICAGO! CHICAGO!
YOU BEAUTIFUL
TOWN!

As my original home town and the site of our up and coming APA meeting, where would I take you to show off my old home town, Chicago? For me, it is home. I was born here. Raised here. Educated here. I learned to tap dance, ice skate, ride a horse here. My dad

would take me horseback riding here. He was super comfortable on a horse. He had broken wild horses out west when he was a young adult, and so whatever horse the stable had available was okay for him. I never ceased to marvel at how he chose his saddle horse. It was always the handiest one—the one available at that moment. Sometimes it was the one no one wanted to ride. I remember we were riding way out in the woods one gorgeous autumn day. The woods were, and are, beautiful, secluded, quiet—that special hush that one finds only in the wilderness. I was riding and watching the slim trail intensely when my dad called to me complaining that his horse had turned around somehow and he, my dad, was now sitting backwards on his mount. He seemed somewhat amused. I must have been about 6 years old. I was really puzzled. How could it have happened? Along these same lines of strange animal behavior, the Lincoln Park Zoo had an orangutan who was a most popular attraction because he would throw gravel and anything else that fit through the bars at the gawking crowds observing him.

This is a tour of nostalgia. But for you non-Chicagoans it is actually where and what I would find most interesting in Chicago, and hopefully, so would you. Along the lake, and close to our meeting site, in my own hometown, I want Chicago to be as I remember it, and yet in reality don't really expect to find it that way. I know we can't meet, if we were going to meet, under the clock at the old

Marshall Fields downtown. Rather we will meet at the “new” Marshall Fields on north Michigan Avenue. I'll meet you next to the moving stairs where the waterfall tumbles down parallel to the stairs. Going up these escalator stairs while the water rushes down brings you closer to the source of a chocolate frango soda. It is a Marshall Fields MUST. We could sit in the lobby of the Ritz and have our soda (or anything else) and just absorb the luxurious feeling of being there.

Not far from Marshall Fields is an old beautiful white bridge crossing Michigan Avenue and the river. It is an old ornamental white bridge. Tourists take sight-seeing boat rides below, and it is fun to watch the boats tread their usual path up and down the river and into the mouth of Lake Michigan. But for me, just standing there, leaning on the bridge with the good old Chicago wind swirling around and through me is enough. If the temperature is not too low—and I cannot imagine being concerned about that end of the thermometer on an August afternoon in Chicago—the swirling Chicago wind is like natural air conditioning. There is an excitement about it and an unruly quality to it. Once whooshed by the wind, it brokers a devil-may-care feeling. There is nothing one can do, so relax and go with it.

Another section of this ornamental white bridge is called the Hoover Hotel. It is a large section with car parking under it. It was dubbed the Hoover Hotel because during the Depression it became a refuge for the homeless. Because it was semi-enclosed, it was warmer and somewhat protective against the elements. If you had no place to sleep, this was better than the gutter.

And above, at street level, are more favorite spots: the Wrigley (the gum people) building, the Chicago Tribune newspaper building, FAO Schwartz, Pizzeria Uno, the Water Tower. I always made a point of stopping to check on the water basins surrounding the water tower that was apparently meant to be for horses passing and needing a drink. Was there water still in each basin? Finding a horse was certainly next to impossible. And if you by chance did, the horse would not stand a chance standing at the water basin with the traffic whizzing by in all directions. And what could it have been like to have a bunch of horses in the middle of Michigan Avenue slurping water with that traffic? What a sight it must have been. More places to savor. To add to the level of excitement I think I heard that there was a streetcar there.

But I'm getting ahead of myself—

(Continued on p. 2)

This should be at the end of my Michigan Avenue tour. So back up back to the beginning. McCormick Place. A peninsula with a convention center on it. APA will convene there. Chicago! LAND OF THE ONIONS (That is what Chicago means in the local Indian language). Chicagoans have a funny habit. They all seem wedded to the lakefront, and there is just SO much lakefront. Any address that acknowledges being east of Michigan Avenue is high status by definition. That is east in Chicago talk. How does one obtain such an address? More than likely some savvy developer got permission to fill in a spot of land on the lakefront and build on it some extravagant piece of property: a wonderful hotel, some glamorous store, some gorgeous building. Chicago has a lot of this. Addresses EAST have become much more common—and only because more and more EAST has been created. Our meeting is a case in point. McCormick place once did not exist. But in Chicago fashion, the powers that were filled in a chunk of lake so they could create McCormick Place and invite the APA.

Grant Park is a long skinny park. It runs alongside the lake and weaves in and out among the museums and park attractions. Basically it hugs the waterfront. There are all kinds of beautiful and interesting things that present themselves to the walker. Just being in the park is lovely. There are piles of rock and promontories for the active visitor to climb about. A good place to sit and contemplate. And I did. The Discussion section of my dissertation. Several themes in three-part harmony for my Music Composition class. And if they sound like wind, that is probably realistic and an accurate interpretation of the unconscious influence of composing in the Park.

The Planetarium is also there. The band shell is there. We would bring a lunch and take possession of seats for the evening concert. On a sunny summer's afternoon another good place to sit and contemplate.

Closer to Michigan Avenue is Buckingham Fountain. A big old fountain that rains down buckets of water and at night is lit up by a myriad of lights. To me, somehow it always smacked of European grandeur. My pediatrician's office faced the fountain from a high-rise office building. I think he was on the 12th floor. It was one way to get me to go to the pediatrician because I so much enjoyed looking out his office window at the billowing water.

The Aquarium was there. And in the Aquarium was a monstrous fish that sat in the back of his gigantic tank, on the floor of the tank with nothing to do but look out menacingly. I remember him with a gray sign in front of him: COW FISH. I don't know whether it was one word or two. But he was big enough for two words—even more. I think it would have not been too far off to call him a rhinoceros fish—most assuredly he was bigger than a cow!

Coming from my elocution lesson, I was to walk as though I had a book on my head. This activity was intended to improve my posture. I had two songs that I sang to myself to give my steps rhythm: "Stars and Stripes Forever" and "Tiptoe through the Tulips." I could always hear the whine of that comic's voice as he played his

ukulele and sang "Tiptoe Through the Tulips." It was equally exciting to just sit and read or do my homework, hearing only the noise of Buckingham Fountain splash so loud that all the noises of the city were swallowed up. I was alone with the wind and the water of the fountain—and of course, my homework. It was as close as I could imagine it felt like to be an American in Paris.

Turning a page was a major undertaking. Many is the time I chased pages as the wind picked them up off my lap and sailed them in random fashion through the air at supersonic speeds. Part of time in the Park was retrieving the flying pages.

Orchestra Hall and the Art Institute are virtually across the street from each other. On Saturday nights my music school friends and I would volunteer to usher for the Chicago symphony concerts. As payment for our services, we were permitted to attend the concert, sitting on the stairs in the balcony.

During an afternoon when nothing was musically on at Orchestra Hall, we would spend time at the Art Institute, especially in the basement area, where they displayed larger-than-life Greek and Roman, perfectly figured statues of naked men. What a flimsy excuse to pretend to be sketching and all the time to be able to "study" these magnificent bodies. I think we all realized that our sketching was nothing more than a thinly veiled excuse. But the grown-ups seemed to believe our story and would even encourage us to go!

I know that the authorities will no longer permit me to sit on the stairs at the concert. Fire orders! I know that I no longer have to hide under a sketchpad to look at nudes in the Art Institute. Some of the excitement is gone. But the beauty of it all remains.

Here's to the LAND OF THE ONIONS! YOU GOTTA LOVE IT!

From the Editor

Louis A. Perrott, PhD

This Summer issue leads off with an article that invites consideration

of how terror, fear, and media stories might all relate to adult versions of play. In "Fun with Fear: Playing the News for all It's Worth," **David L. Altheide** suggests that some of our contemporary societal ways of having fun have media themes woven into them regularly. His article is adapted from *Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis* (2002, Aldine de Gruyter).

He is Regents's Professor in the School of Justice Studies at Arizona State University.

Mary B. Gregerson, PhD, a disaster site volunteer in Washington after September 11, puts some media moments that are related to our national tragedy into a historical context. She suggests that the demeanor of media representatives in covering a tragedy can have healing effects on recipients of the news.

Harriet T. Schultz, PhD, chairs the Division 46 Media Watch Committee, which honors media events and people by conveying the Golden Psi Award. As these awards are presented, our members may wonder what goes into selecting the winners. Dr. Schultz explains the process and criteria that the committee makes use of in deciding who will receive the Golden Psi.

Elizabeth K. Carll, PhD, discusses how the News Media, Public Education, and Public Policy Committee is being active in influencing media coverage of Psychology.

It's Convention Time! Program Chair **Eve Whitmore, PhD**, lets our readers know what our Division has planned as we "blow into Chicago." Inside, you will find the full Division 46 Convention Program included. Oh yes, and the widely heralded Media Mavens Talent Show will be appearing at **President Zimbardo's** Presidential Reception on Saturday, August 24. Producer **Florence W. Kaslow, PhD**, has been hard at work assembling talent and a show that hopes to rival or even exceed last year's beauty. Come one, come all!

This issue also includes our usual array of APA and other divisional information, as well as something about our members who have been "in the news."

Media Psychology Book Series

Perspectives on Psychology and the Media is the title of the first book of this series. Edited by Sam and Diane Kirschner, this 1997 book has chapters on current research and practice issues in media psychology, as well as an epilogue pointing to future directions.

The second volume, *Psychology and the Media: A Second Look*, was edited by Linzer Schwartz and published in 1999. A third volume, with the proposed title *Media Psychology: New and Future Technologies*, is underway and being edited by Harvard Professor Larry Kutner. Past Division 46 President Florence Kaslow is consultant for the book series.

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Fun With Fear: Playing the News for All It's Worth

David L. Altheide

Americans like hoaxes about fear and dread because we have become preoccupied with fear-as-entertainment in our popular culture. From horror movies to a fascination with sensationalized crime reports, audiences increasingly play with fear through conversation, jokes, parodies, false confessions, and hoaxes. Audiences participate in hoaxes directly as perpetrators and indirectly as recipients of scenarios that are accepted as credible because they appear as news reports.

Fun and games look different in a mediated society. On the one hand, we continue to enjoy life in conventional and traditional play and games. On the other hand, more of our lives, identities, and concerns are informed by popular culture as we participate as audience members. Of course, popular culture producers do not merely reflect the broader culture, but rather they draw on some aspects of everyday experience, and then mold this into entertainment formats that are known and "experienced" by audience members as familiar or vicarious experience with an emotional familiarity and attraction.

News organizations market news-as-entertainment through a "discourse of fear," or the pervasive communication, symbolic awareness, and expectation that danger and risk is a central feature of everyday life. My analysis of more than a decade of relevant reports in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Arizona Republic*, and some network TV newscasts shows the word *fear* appears a lot more in news reports and that politicians and law enforcement agencies are dominant news sources that promote fear by sending strong messages about our most precious symbols of "evil," such as drug dealers or terrorists, through the mass media.

Research also shows that the news coverage of the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, brought out a lingering and pervasive preoccupation with fear that has been exploited by government officials seeking to expand social control and limit civil liberties. After all, fear—more than danger or risk—is a pervasive emotional orientation that calls for strong action against those responsible. The remedy usually involves state authorities taking more control. The terror attacks were presented, essentially, as a "crime story," albeit a "big crime," and language that was developed over two decades of crime reporting was applied to terrorism. President Bush said, "It's important for Americans to know that trafficking of drugs finances the world of terror, sustaining terrorists." The fear focus provides more revenue for news organizations and related popular culture outlets (e.g., "America's Most Wanted"), while giving police and law enforcement agencies more credibility and control. The audience participates through hoaxes of fear.

The massive number of news reports about terrorism and alleged links to anthrax mailings sparked numerous "hoaxes" in the United States and around the world. The postal service received nearly 16,000 anthrax reports, and an additional 60 reports have been investigated in which

people claimed to have mailed or received anthrax in a letter. Clayton Lee Waagner, a petty criminal and self-proclaimed “anti-abortion warrior,” is suspected of sending some 550 letters containing harmless white powder to abortion clinics with the letters “Army of God.” While this zealot clearly intended to frighten and intimidate recipients, several dozen people around the world sent similar “harmless” letters, intended as a “practical joke,” to friends, co-workers, neighborhood foes, and news organizations. At least one postal worker has been indicted for scrawling a note on a package about anthrax in order to take advantage of the public’s fear “to settle a score to pull off a prank.” Several others claimed that they received anthrax filled letters. One Missouri woman, who initially claimed to have been sent a poisoned letter, admitted that she put flour and roach killer in the envelope, and then delivered it to police some 80 miles from her home.

These hoaxes are part of a much longer trend involving fun and participation in fear of crime, drugs, gangs, and violence. In 1999 a mother in Mesa, Arizona, claimed that she was sexually assaulted last week in her child’s school’s restroom during “Meet Your Teacher” day, as some 500 parents were visiting their children’s teachers. Upon leaving a doorless restroom that opens onto the school’s courtyard, she claimed that a “man with cigarette breath, dirty fingernails and long, messy hair had placed a sharp object to her neck, knocked her unconscious and assaulted her.” It was later established that she had wounded herself and cut up her clothing in order to get some attention, particularly from her husband. As the woman spent two days in a hospital, school officials, police, and parents acted as though it were all true, and “safety was on the minds of everyone.” A school spokesperson agreed with the Mesa police that the schools are “safe places for students, teachers and parents.” Despite the hoax, security procedures that emerged remained in place, including identification badges.

It is commonplace that entertainment formats increasingly shape public and private life. What we enjoy, dread, and laugh about is tied to mass media technology. My research examines how news sources, news reporters, and audiences use and enjoy fear as a feature of TV and newspaper entertainment formats. Particular attention is paid to the use being made of children as a topic of “protection” and “dread.” The aim is to get serious about fun and identify new forms and consequences.

My general argument is that we need to reconsider fun in a mass mediated world. A partial beginning to this ambitious endeavor might be to suggest that fun be viewed as a social ecology involving context and relationships with a media environment, select social institutions (e.g., occupations, media), friends, and family. I am not focusing merely on media information, but rather on a more encompassing mediated experience such that it becomes a frame of reference that is shared by others (as audience members), as well as organized claims makers, who week to week become news sources in order to gain access to news media outlets so that their messages will be heard, seen, and accepted and will eventually find their way into public discussion and, ultimately, become a staple of everyday life for others to have fun with and enjoy.

Fun in social life resonates play and games, but it is different. Following the insights of various sociologists (e.g., Greg Stone), I regard play as contextual, usually linked to other activities and concerns, including

socialization and social control. Stone argued that play helps selves imbue social worlds with significance. For one thing, we encounter roles and identities; often fantastic ones maintain social myths, legends, villains, and heroes. I suggest that mass media involvement is a central feature of how adults play, particularly since entertainment is a critical feature of everyday living outside the workplace, and it is important to recognize the place of fear in news reports, particularly how certain role performances of victim have become so institutionalized that they are quite acceptable and credible and therefore useful for certain dramatic enactments. Media portrayals of danger, particularly fear, provide opportunities for 1) audiences who play with the repetitive reports as dramatic enactments of fear and dread in our lives and 2) individual actors who seek roles that are accepted as legitimate “attention-getters” in order to accomplish favorable identity vis-à-vis particular audience members.

A key role that is part of audience play involves victim and victimization. Popular culture plays to victims in several morality plays featuring good versus evil and strong versus weak (e.g., “David and Goliath”). Played out in entertaining news reports, “reality TV shows,” “crime dramas,” and “TV documentaries” (e.g., the Jon Benet story), as well as more graphic (i.e., more explicit violence), it is the world of predators and prey, criminals and citizens, violent men against women, and, increasingly, adults against children. Stories tend to be told from the perspective (“voice”) of the victim or criminal justice agents; seldom do we hear or see the accused outside of a prescribed role, for example, in handcuffs.

A related aspect of fear play involves cultural oppositions characteristic of morality plays that are often repeated, and eventually become taken for granted and implicit. These include good–evil, innocence–evil, men–women, adults–children, majority–minority, and more recently school–community. Typically, the false reports are presented as news, and then when scrutiny and reflection dethrone them, they are referred to as hoaxes. One case involving alleged violence occurred in Tucson, Arizona. Kathy Morris, a veteran teacher in Tucson’s La Cima Middle School, launched a police and SWAT team response when she called police and said, “PLEASE help me. I’ve been shot.” Initial public sympathy for a shoulder wound was withdrawn over the next few days when it was revealed that she had shot herself with a .38 revolver and hid the gun in a false-bottom purse, but not before leading authorities to investigate a 12-year-old Hispanic youth. Morris believed that she and other teachers were in danger, and even sent herself threatening letters. This did not produce the kind of reaction she desired, so she dramatized the threat. When the hoax was exposed, a banner was hung on a school fence, “We’re very sorry, Hispanics.”

The oppositions that become part of the discourse of fear can be illustrated in another way as well. Repetitious news reports that make connections between fear, children, schools, and suspected assailants who fit stereotypes are easy to accept even when they are false. Katheryn Russell’s study of 67 publicized racially tinged hoaxes between 1987 and 1996 illustrates how story tellers frame their accounts in social identities that are legitimated by numerous reports and stereotypes of marginalized groups, such as racial minorities. For example, in 1990 a George Washington University student reported that another student had been raped by two black men with “particularly

bad body odor,” in order to “highlight the problems of safety for women.”

In spring, 1999, two Mesa, Arizona, fifth-grade girls, playing a game of Truth or Dare, told a detailed story about a knife-toting transient who grabbed them as they were leaving an elementary school. They fought off the man, whom they said “chewed his nails,” and escaped to a neighbor’s house. For a day, police and neighbors patrolled the neighborhood questioning various people, only to have the girls admit that it was made up.

It is not too surprising that many people would accept and, indeed, enact scenarios of strangers—usually poor, crazy, unkempt, and minority—assaulting children and others at schools in view of the numerous news reports that are repeated following any incident. When people “pretend” that they have been assaulted, abducted, or in some way harmed by strangers, they are acting out a morality play that has become part of a widely shared discourse of fear. The scenario, cast of characters, even detailed descriptions, resound through popular culture, as audiences become participants in constructing the social reality that constrains them. News formats and story sequencing in providing familiar information may, as Karen Cerulo argues, unintentionally form public images of right and wrong.

We communicate best with what we take for granted. Cultures command, convey, and ultimately are constituted by the discourses they reflect and speak. An expansive discourse of fear in public discourse can contribute to stances and reactive social policies that promote state control and surveillance. Fear is a key element of creating “the risk society,” organized around communication oriented to policing, control, and prevention of risks, and children are an important part of such policing efforts.

Fear accumulates and is deposited over a wide social terrain. Like agates that were formed some 40 million years ago in the interstices of cooling magma and have been transported by rivers to oceans and then beaches ever since, fear retains its essential elements. The chemistry of agates can be uncovered through analysis, although most people who find them don’t really care about that; they are merely pretty rocks, which, when polished, assume a gemlike character that separates them from other earthen surfaces. The origin of a specific fear can also be uncovered in specific instances, but most people do not care about where it began; one fear merely gets compiled with others on the beaches of our experiences and social encounters.

Social fears are related to personal fears in complex ways. Unraveling the relationships for specific fears is an avowedly psychoanalytical task that has been largely neglected, thus opening up another opportunity for social researchers. For example, fear of crime may be connected to certain compulsive behaviors, paranoia, and so forth, but these are now sanctioned as reasonable activities (e.g., locking doors, double-checking windows, avoiding strangers) by public officials as prudent, responsible, and even intelligent.

We are the sum of our emotions, including our loves minus our fears. As fears accumulate, the love portion must also increase if we are to avoid deficit being, a condition that befalls more individuals. These

circumstances are known by various terms, including anomie, alienation, paranoia, and residences of gated communities. I am suggesting that we can also know them as play, as an emerging form by which individuals participate through media logic in an increasingly mass mediated society.

David L. Altheide is Regents’ Professor in the School of Justice Studies at Arizona State University, where he has taught for 28 years. This article is adapted from *Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis* (2002, Aldine de Gruyter), his most recent theoretical and methodological statements on the relevance of the mass media for sociological analysis. He has published numerous scholarly articles on the news media and popular culture, including *An Ecology of Communication: Cultural Formats of Control* (1995, Aldine de Gruyter) and *Qualitative Media Analysis* (1996, Sage). He has also applied qualitative research designs to investigate the nature and process of educational reform, with particular emphasis on school context and culture. His interest in fear and the news media was sparked by previous work on propaganda and social control as well as friends’ and elderly parents’ comments about imminent threats from criminals and strangers at home and abroad.

Analyze This: How We Choose Golden Psi Awardees

Harriet T. Schultz, PhD
Chair, Media Watch Committee

The Media Watch Committee developed the Golden Psi award about two years ago to reward the producers of a movie or TV show for excellence in portraying high standards of behavior by a mental health professional. The award can also be given if the behavior shown is inappropriate but is clearly labeled as such. Our hope is that by bestowing this honor, we can start to shape Hollywood’s behavior in the direction we’d like to see them go—the portrayal of mental health professionals as competent and adhering to our ethical code. If boundaries are crossed in the portrayals, we would like to see the producers point out the ethical violations. Broken boundaries are typically shown as humorous or as curative for the patient.

This article describes the process by which we choose awardees. The first year we gave the award to two TV programs—one to HBO’s *The Sopranos* for five episodes in which the psychiatrist set firm boundaries with her gangster patient. The second award recognized *Chicago Hope* for ably portraying the transference and countertransference issues involved when a male psychiatry resident develops romantic interests in both a female patient and his female supervisor.

We skipped the award the second year for lack of worthy candidates. By that season, *The Sopranos* psychiatrist had fled the city, terrified of her patient’s associates, who wanted to kill her; she was practicing out of a sleazy motel room and drinking between sessions. She may have been reacting in a human fashion—but she was not deserving of the Golden Psi.

Last year we again gave awards to two TV shows—one to *Law & Order*, the other to *Once and Again*. I can elucidate the process by recounting what we did last year. For starters, our committee members are **always** on the lookout for worthy nominees—we really do **media-watch**. Episodes from both shows were recommended as possibilities. There was some discussion about giving *Law & Order* the award for the show's body of work, since it regularly features a competent forensic psychiatrist. Because some individual episodes may not qualify, we decided to continue giving the award only for specific shows portraying specific behaviors.

Once we identify the episodes, producers are contacted for tapes to send to our members for viewing. The producers have been very responsive. In the case of *Law & Order*, they practically insisted that we also consider their spin-off show *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* because they felt that that show dealt with psychological issues more often than the original program. They sent tapes of seven episodes—the ones we wanted plus some that they chose. Anyone on the committee who was interested rated the tapes; seven members participated.

Then came the crux of the process—rating the behavior of the mental health professional portrayed in the show, using the rating system we developed a few years ago. Developing this system during many email exchanges was our committee's first major project. Originally we considered rating the professional's behavior according to stereotypes that had been mentioned in the literature, like Schneider's Drs. Dippy, Evil, and Wonderful. Then we expanded the list to include Dr. Know-It-All and many others.

Finally we realized we had too many categories and were straying from the *raison d'être* for the committee—concern over Hollywood's portrayal of unprofessional behavior. We felt it was more important to educate the public—and the producers—about appropriate versus inappropriate behaviors that could lead to sanctions by a licensing board rather than to complain about goofy bumbling therapists. So the final rating system focuses solely on professional/ethical behaviors. On a 5-point scale, we rate the professional's competence or skill at the task being portrayed, respect for boundaries, protection of confidentiality, and overall professional conduct. (Interrater agreement has been very good.)

Last, we rate the producers for their portrayal of professional standards—and it is this rating that is a major determinant of who gets the Golden Psi. A show will be considered award-worthy if the psychologist's behavior is either exemplary or is poor *but* the producer clearly states there are ethical problems. There may be other considerations, as well.

For example, getting back to the *Law & Order* episodes, two were chosen to receive the award. In one, confidentiality was the issue. An initially reluctant school psychologist gave the police the name of a student she suspected could be a shooter. The police supervisor talked with his men about how they had urged her to act unethically. In the same episode confidentiality was handled well by the forensic psychiatrist who told the suspect that information would be shared with the court.

The other episode depicted a witness testifying in the defense of a mother who murdered her child, then covered up the crime by setting a fire. The witness, a so-called therapist, was shown to have bogus credentials, plus she was using a made-up diagnosis called Acute Caretaker's Syndrome. In this case, kudos to the producer for pointing out how to determine appropriate credentials!

We did not give awards to the other episodes, because they did not meet our standards, despite the producer's recommendation. In some cases the psychological issues (e.g., attachment disorder, sexual addiction) were discussed only briefly or were right out of a textbook, and there was no mention of the professional's ethics or competence. Another case dealt quite well with issues around forcing a mental patient to take medication so he could be a witness at a murder trial, but he ended up committing suicide after he testified. We felt this was too controversial an ending.

The two episodes of *Once and Again* that were honored portrayed a therapist treating a teenage anorexic girl. He handled this difficult patient and her divorced parents with competence, compassion, humor, and excellent boundaries, always focusing treatment on the girl and not letting himself get pulled into the family tensions. He was the type of therapist that would encourage the public to seek help.

As of this writing, we are still searching for a good nominee for this year's award—we'll keep you posted!

Hinges on the Media Melting Pot

Mary Gregerson, PhD

After terrorist acts like 11 September 2001, the media reportage provides equal opportunity for trauma. On that date regardless of race, creed, nation, region, religion, life-style, gender, ethnic group, and occupation/profession one voice cried in alarm. Differences melted into the background as our unified horror took the foreground.

What of media professionals themselves? Were they immune to the shock? The surreal picture of Katie Couric and Matt Lauer's Today outdoor concert interrupted by the smoke plumes in the two towers of the World Trade Center shows the struggle to maintain professionalism in the face of deeply riveting events. The Today hosts blasély glanced at the downtown activity, briefly musing what could have possibly had happened. Then Katie and Matt gamely attempted to keep attention focused on the concert. Their nonchalance punctuated how "unreal" the terrorists events were. Even seasoned, highly respected reporters did not surmise immediately the tragic proportions of the "fire."

What of those reporters who knew the gravity of the situation? A number publicly commented that the world would never be the same again. French documentarian Jules Gideon concluded his serendipitously secured documentary 9/11 by facing the camera and blinking back tears. Jules said that every day now was the same as the day he filmed. He relived over and over the terror he experienced filming at Ground Zero that day.

On 14 October 2001, the Washington Post's Joel Garbeau questioned whether this terrorist attack was a historical hinge. Such momentous occurrences pivot our experience from one consciousness to another. For instance, on the day of John Kennedy's assassination almost forty years ago, many of us can still recall in vivid detail where we were, how we learned of it, and how we responded.

Was the world ever the same again? No, a hinge had occurred. In 1963 the leading television nightly news anchor Walter Cronkite tearfully reported the aftermath events of this historical hinge. Being visibly moved at a very human level, allowing a throat catch and bowing his head to convey his personal sorrow, Mr. Cronkite brought each of us more fully into our own humanity.

Publisher Stuart Rosenthal in the October 2001 issue of the Washington Senior Beacon titled his column "Where Were You?" The planned front-page news of this edition had been World War II and Pearl Harbor, an apt parallel to what Mr. Rosenthal now faced in his own adult lifetime. As he listened to his radio the afternoon of 11 September 2001, Mr. Rosenthal sensed how "the American people are coming together as one." He then apologized for the upbeat tone of the rest of this edition and promised more relevant gravitas in following issues.

About the 2001 terrorist attacks, the Post's Mr. Garbeau noted that "detachment makes you sound like a sociopath." Although I don't recall their names now, I do still recall vividly my disgust at a Washington, DC, reporter interviewing his colleagues on the loss of one of their own, political journalist Barbara Olson, on the Pentagon hijacked plane. Gruffness characterized the interviewee's chronology to the experiences he and friends were having around Barbara's tragic fate. The interviewer kept pressing with ever more personal probes and even seemed shocked when the interviewee abruptly vanished rather than answer more. I did not want to know: the exquisite detail of Barbara's distinguished husband's fortitude, her eerie equilibrium on cell phone calls while the hijacking was in progress, nor her desire to wake with her husband on his birthday having caused her to replace a previous day's planned flight to the fateful one of 11 September. Now I cannot forget these details of her private life. Have we no shame? The interviewee answered with his feet.

For those losing loved ones, certainly their lives will never be the same. A personal hinge occurred. Did a national/global hinge accentuate this personal fulcrum like the proverbial ripples from throwing a stone into a pond?

What of us who were more remote to the tragedy? Dr. Rochelle Balter, who lives and works near the New York terrorist attack site, has suggested that Division 46 offer a special award for excellence in reporting 11 September 2001 events. When will we have enough perspective to determine if a historical hinge has occurred? Do we need such momentousness to award a special citation to a journalist whose professionalism psychologically ameliorates trauma after tragedy? Does a particular name of a journalist come to mind that you would like to nominate? If not, you may join me in bemoaning the dearth of modern day Walter Cronkite's. His dignity, respect, intelligence, humor, and gravity proved the salve to believing we could

and would survive whatever shock he was reporting. After 11 September 2001 I certainly could have used some of that salve.

Nominations and Elections Committee Report

*Elizabeth K. Carll, PhD
Div 46 President-Elect and N&E Chair*

The Nominations and Elections Committee is pleased to announce the newly elected 2003 Officers and Members of the Board of Directors. We were fortunate to have an excellent slate of candidates and encourage those who were not elected to run next year. The future for media psychology is very exciting, and we urge Division 46 members to become more involved in special projects or governance or both.

President-Elect: Lou Perrott, PhD

Secretary: Sarah Benolken, PhD

Members-at-Large: Irene Deitch, PhD
Dorothy Singer, EdD
Kate Wachs, PhD

Congratulations! We are fortunate to have so many dedicated people on the Board.

Nominations and Elections Committee
Elizabeth Carll, PhD, President-Elect and Chair
Rhoda Fisher, PhD, President
Gloria Gottsegen, PhD, Treasurer

Correction

Helen Friedman, PhD, was Mistress of Ceremonies for the Media Mavens Talent Show at the 2001 APA Convention on Monday, August 27, 2001. This information was inadvertently left out of articles about this event in the Fall 2001 and Spring 2002 newsletters. We sincerely apologize for this error and oversight. Division 46 very much appreciates her contributions, her participation, and her enthusiasm.

Amplifier Statement

The Amplifier is published three times a year by APA Division 46, the Division of Media Psychology. Unsolicited contributions from members are welcomed and encouraged. Send articles directly to the Newsletter Editor (loupero@inf.net). Deadlines for receipt of articles are as follows: March 1 for Spring Issue; June 1 for Summer Issue; and October 1 for Fall Double Issue. Articles submitted must be relevant to media psychology and should not have been published elsewhere. Authors should ensure that their articles are in accord with APA guidelines regarding client confidentiality, use of research participants, format, etc.

News Media, Public Education, and Public Policy Committee

Elizabeth K. Carll, PhD

It is likely that in the 21st century, the primary source of information for the public will be the news media. Therefore, this avenue will become increasingly important in the dissemination of psychological information. The News Media, Public Education, and Public Policy Committee (NMPEPP) focuses on the effective dissemination of psychological information to the public through the news media and facilitating the development of relevant social policies.

The recognition of excellence in reporting of psychological information is important, as this information will be utilized in many ways, including developing public policies. This year, NMPEPP will be recognizing an outstanding newspaper journalist and giving Division 46's first "News Media Recognition Award" for excellence in news reporting of psychological information and research. The development of this award was first discussed in 2000 and, having received a budget allocation for this year, it has come to fruition. The award will be given at the Media Town Hall Meeting at the 2002 APA Convention on Saturday, August 24th, 3:00–4:50 pm.

NMPEPP has supported the development of professional programs focusing on the news media reporting of psychological information. At the 2001 APA Convention, I organized the first of its kind symposium on "Psychology, News Media, and Public Policy: Effectively Promoting Social Change," which examined the news portrayal of mental illness, violence, and minorities and implications for public policy. At the 2000 APA Convention, I organized a symposium on children, media, and violence, which also addressed legislation. We will continue to develop additional programs.

The committee will continue to focus on effective methods to disseminate psychological information through the news media and work toward influencing social policy to benefit the public.

Hold on to your Hats: Division 46 Blows Into Chicago!

Eve F. Whitmore, Program Chair

This year's 2002 APA Convention in Chicago looks exciting with its diverse array of programs. Division 46 programs, listed below, will focus on technology as it relates to practice, psychology, and media after the 9/11 disaster, media and entertainment, and behavioral telehealth. Some of the programs at the convention are highlighted as follows. The "News Media Award for Excellence in News Reporting of Psychological Information and Research," an APA Presidential plenary program, is scheduled for Saturday, 3:00–4:50 pm, chair, Roger Klein. Our president-elect, Elizabeth K. Carll, will be presenting the award to a newspaper journalist recognized for his or her contribution to psychology. Media Watch is looking for

an award-worthy candidate to receive the "Golden Psi Award" for excellence in the fictional portrayal of mental health professionals. If you have any suggestions for the award, contact Harriet Schultz, chair. You won't want to miss the presidential address by Rhoda L. Fisher, "Pretend the World is Funny: Comedic Heroes to the Rescue," Saturday, 5:00–6:00 pm. Join in the fun at this session as members of Division 46 receive special awards. Check your convention schedule for programs co-listed with numerous divisions and boards this year including the Board of Educational Affairs. Also, media will be cosponsoring a program with Division 52 titled "Terrorism and Psychology," chaired by Elizabeth K. Carll. One of our objectives this year was to broaden our contacts and recruit new members from other divisions. Take the opportunity to meet members from Divisions 10, 24, 26, 32, and 36 at our cosponsored social hour on Friday at 6:00 pm.

I would like to thank Harriet Schultz, Berry Gordon, Mark Whitmore, and Lilli Friedland, who generously volunteered their time to serve as program reviewers. Special thanks go to Elizabeth K. Carll, the previous program chair (2001), for her guidance and to President Rhoda Fisher for her thoughtful vision and many contributions to this year's convention.

APA 2002 Division 46 Convention Program

THURSDAY, 8/22/02

8:00–8:50 AM Symposium: **Movie Psychologists—Their Influence on Clients and Students**

Harriet T. Schultz, Chair; Dana B. Wasserman; Mary Banks Gregerson; Shirley A. Maides-Keane; Angela Lipsitz; Shirley P. Glass.

9:00–9:50 AM Paper Presentation: **Cyber-Infidelity and Other Internet-Related Problems**

Marlene Maheu, Presenter.

10:00–10:50 AM Symposium: **You Think You Have Problems? Humor and Psychotherapy**

Irene M. Deitch, Chair; Rhoda L. Fisher; David Shapiro; Margot Tallmer; Shirley Glass; Joseph Richman.

5:00–7:50 PM **Executive Committee Meeting (Hilton Hotel, Conference Room 4B, 4th Floor)**

FRIDAY, 8/23/02

8:00–8:50 AM Symposium: **Appeal and Relative Efficacy of Online Counseling: Preliminary Findings**

Aaron Rochlen, Chair; Jason S. Zack and Natasha Beretvas; Jonathan Cook; Michael Mallen and David Vogel; Jayne Gachenbach.

9:00–10:50 AM Symposium: **Terrorism and Psychology**

Elizabeth K. Carll, Chair; Chris E. Stout; Clark McCauley; Thomas Greening; Elizabeth K. Carll; Discussant: Ron Levant.

11:00–12:50 PM Symposium: **The Innovator's Forum: From Virtual**

Reality to the Internet

Eve F. Whitmore, Chair; Marlene Maheu and Mary Gregerson, Co-Chairs; Frank Wilhelm; Skip Rizzo; Maria Schultheis; James Carter; Ken Graap.

6:00–7:50 PM **Social Hour**

Co-sponsored by Divisions 46, 10, 24, 26, 32, 36.

SATURDAY, 8/24/02

1:00–2:50 PM Symposium: **Psychology in the News: Helping People Cope After September 11th**

Roger Klein, Chair; Elizabeth K. Carll; Mary Gregerson; Susan Kastl, and Discussant: Rochelle Balter.

5:00–6:00 PM **Presidential Address and Awards-Rhoda L. Fisher, President; Pretend the World Is Funny: Comedic Heroes to the Rescue.**

SUNDAY, 8/25/02

8:00–8:50 AM Symposium: **Being Media Savvy in the Millennium-Media and Psychology**

Louise Peloquin, Chair; C.C. Clauss-Elders; Jill Herzog.

9:00–9:50 AM Symposium: **Dateline 9/11/01: Fear and Hope After the Terrorists' Attacks**

Mary B. Gregerson, Chair; Kelly L. Schmitt; Rochelle Balter; Discussant: Patrick DeLeon.

10:00–11:50 AM Symposium: **Behavioral Telehealth and the Internet: A Glimpse into the Future**

Marlene Maheu, Chair; Monica E. Oss; Marie-Helen Pelletier; Dale Masi; Mark Shader; Holly Russo.

11:00–12:50 PM Symposium: **Integrating Online Services Into Clinical Practice**

John M. Grohol, Chair; Craig Childress; Jason Williams; Iverson C. Bell, Jr.; Ron Kraus.

People News

Helen Friedman, PhD was interviewed in *USA Today* on the emotional aftermath of 9/11, in *Cosmopolitan* on difficult breakups, and on KDHX-FM Radio on how to make relationships work. She authored an article on personality disorders that appeared in the Mental Health Association's "Open Mind" syndicated newspaper column. Dr. Friedman gave a series of workshops on sexual compulsivity, as part of the Episcopal Diocese's Addictions Education Day. She also did a Continuing Education program on humor for the St. Louis Psychological Association.

Elizabeth Carll, PhD, Div 46 President-elect, continues her work with the media. Recent interviews include the *Washington Post* on coping with long-term trauma; CBS TV *Early Show* on how to find a therapist; *AERA*, Japan's equivalent of *Newsweek*, with a circulation of 85 million, on trauma and suicide; *New York Post* on children and trauma; *Health*

Magazine on eating disorders and dieting; and Web MD on stress and illness. She also wrote an Op-Ed article on youth violence and gangs for *Newsday*.

Steven Hendlin, PhD is writing a weekly online column for the popular investing and trading site TheStreet.com and its sister site RealMoney.com on the psychology of investing. His column is a public forum, answering readers' questions on the mental side of the market. He is the author of *The Disciplined Online Investor* (2000, McGraw-Hill), recently translated into Spanish.

Dr. Irene Deitch was appointed by the International Council of Psychologists to be NGO Representative to the United Nations. She also was co-presenter for a workshop on "Pathways to Successful Aging" for the Central Psychological Association, Syracuse, New York. Dr. Deitch has been interviewed by *Glamour Magazine* (June–July issue) on the topic, "Why Women Lie About Their Age."

Dr. Florence Kaslow, a Past President of Division 46 who is now a Member-at-large of the Board, Chairperson of our Publications Board, and Producer of the Media Mavens Talent Show, has just had a monumental 4-volume collection of books published by John Wiley in April, 2002. She served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Comprehensive Handbook of Psychotherapy*, which includes the following volumes:

Vol. 1: Psychodynamic/Object Relations – J. Magnavita, PhD, ABPP (Ed.)

Vol. 2: Cognitive Behavioral Approaches – T. Patterson, Ed. D, APBB (Ed.)

Vol. 3: Interpersonal/Humanistic/Existential – Robert F. Massey, PhD, and Sharon Davis Massey, PhD (Eds.)

Vol. 4: Integrative/Eclectic – J. Lebow, PhD, ABPP (Ed.)

Purchases by libraries and practitioners and adoptions by professors have been rapid, and the books are receiving many accolades.

Second Annual Media Mavens Talent Show

Florence W. Kaslow, PhD, Producer

Our second annual Media Mavens Talent Show takes our show on the road to Chicago in August. The show will be dedicated to Ray Fowler—with love and admiration. APA President Phil Zimbardo has graciously invited us to hold this production at the Presidential Reception on Saturday evening at the Palmer House, from 10:00 pm to 11:15 pm. (The rehearsal will be held from 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm that evening.) All members of our impressive cast, which includes singers, dancers, comedians, and musicians, will receive invitations as well as others on the President's list. Both the Division and the President's office are underwriting this venture, and our committee consisting of Lilli Friedland, Susan Kastl, Lou Perrott, and I have been working diligently for months to get the show up and running. We appreciate the cooperation and able assistance of Judy Strassburger and Liz Kaplinski from the APA Executive Office. So, if you can, Come to the Cabaret.

**INSERT “MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: JOIN DIVISION 46 NOW!”
IN WHITE SPACE**

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Division 46 Listserv and Website

Join the Division 46 listserv by sending an e-mail to the listserv@lists.apa.org address. Leave the subject line blank. In the message, type the following: **subscribe DIV46-MEDIAPSYCH first name last name**

Also, be sure to check out our website, created and designed by Joe Ceniti. The website is located at www.apa.org/divisions/div46.

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Inside This Issue

Presidential Message	1
From the Editor	2
Fun With Fear: Playing the News for all it's Worth	3
Analyze This: How We Choose Golden Psi Awardees ..	5
Hinges on the Media Melting Pot	6
Nominations and Elections Committee Report	7
Correction	7
News Media, Public Education, and Public Policy Committee	8
Hold on to Your Hats: Division 46 Blows into Chicago!	8
APA 2002 Convention Program	8
People News	9
Second Annual Media Mavens Talent Show	9
Membership Application	10
Division 46 Board Directory	11
Division 46 Listserv and Website	12
Division 46 Officers	12

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