



West Hudson Psychiatric Society
of the American Psychiatric Association
-serving Rockland, Orange, Sullivan & Delaware Counties



P.O. Box 741
Pomona, N.Y. 10970-0741
Tel/Fax: (845) 638-6992
www.rfmh.org/whps

eSynapse: February 21, 2010

Editor's Comments

James Flax, MD, MPH, DFAPA

This is our fourth issue of eSynapse. If you speak to your colleagues who are not members of the APA, remind them to become members. If members, tell them you've received your eSynapse and ask if they received theirs. If not, tell them to email me at DrFlax@aol.com with their email address so I can add them to the list.

My goal in publishing is to increase communication between and among all of our members. I can only do this with your participation. I want a psychiatrist from every organization, clinic and institution in the counties of Rockland, Orange, Sullivan and Delaware to send me an article, of any length, describing any events, news, changes, presentations or opinion. That means that YOU can contribute by designating someone at your place of employment, or volunteering yourself, to send me something about where you work, how you practice, opinions about anything of relevance to psychiatrists, etc. Without your participation this is going to be a very short newsletter.

There are a myriad of opportunities for you to become involved in your community through your district branch. The advantages are numerous in addition to the pleasure of giving back. There is the true pleasure of working with your colleagues in psychiatry and/or in other mental health fields. There is the opportunity to be creative in developing a program around your interests. There is the joy of learning something new.

For example, there is now an opportunity to learn website development. APA is offering to help manage our website. The APA will provide unlimited tutorial time and phone assistance. We work with their template. We need a volunteer to learn how to put together and set up the website. It is a time limited commitment. The website can be tailored to what we want as a group. Anyone interested please contact Dr. Ferro at drferro@optonline.net.

Congratulations to Dr. Nauman Mansoor who has been designated a Fellow of the APA at the APA Board meeting in December. Welcome to Dr. Iva Lesniak who has moved to Orange County from Connecticut and joined our district branch.

If you are curious about what happens at our meetings, PLEASE JOIN US for the Executive Council lunch meetings. Our next meeting is Friday, March 26, 2010 at noon @ il Fresco Restaurant in Orangeburg. Contact Dr. Ferro if you are planning to come (drferro@optonline.net).

While some have indicated it is too costly to join the APA, I want to remind them of the many benefits of membership (<http://www.psych.org/Resources/Membership.aspx>). Membership in your district branch is one of the least costly in the nation and we hope to keep it that way. The benefits are numerous. As an example: the APA Malpractice Insurance offers many benefits not available through institutionally provided coverage to institutionally employed psychiatrists. When I was employed by Columbia University at Helen Hayes Hospital, a state facility, I would never have relied exclusively on the coverage provided by my employer.

SAVE THE DATE: Friday evening, June 18 at La Terrazza, New City. Nigel Bark MD speaking on "How Schizophrenia Changed the Course of England's History"

President's Column: New Year's Resolutions

Dominic Ferro, MD

It is a little late for New Year's resolutions. The gyms, so crowded a few weeks ago, have already emptied out. Our Executive Counsel had our first meeting of the year with the resolve to maintain the high level of activity of our very active District Branch. The minutes will reflect our progress on our usual activities: the model advocacy efforts of our Mental Health Coalition continue, our next educational dinner meeting is being planned, our Women's Committee continues to meet monthly.

Some of our other resolutions were to sharpen our governance. To that end, we have disseminated a digital copy of our constitution and by-laws, heretofore a document that was beginning to resemble parchment. We also passed our first formal budget in many years and it documents our resolve to continue to do more with the lowest dues of any North American district branch.

But I am most proud of the fact that we have some new members on our Executive Counsel. Diane DiGiacomo and Susan Hoerter are sharing the duties of Secretary. Lina Haber is our Treasurer. Mary Barber is helping with Membership. Each member that contributes to our activities, or that joins our Executive Council contributes noticeably the effectiveness of our DB. We do a lot, but with more involvement, there is more that we can do.

My resolution for 2010 is to continue to reach out to our members, to ask them to contribute their time and talents to our DB. It is not too late for a resolution to become more actively involved. What is your 2010 West Hudson Psychiatric Society resolution?

West Hudson Psychiatric Society
Executive Council Minutes
Date: 2/5/10 il Fresco Restaurant

Present: Lois Kroplick, Dom Ferro, Jim Flax, Jane Kelman, Nigel Bark, Diane DiGiacomo, Bob Sobel, Mary Barber

Absent: Syed Abdullah, Richard Brand, Mona Begum, Mary Mavromatis, Madhu Ahluwalia, Marc Tarle, Susan Hoerter, Lina Haber

- 1) President's Report –Dominic Ferro, MD
 - A. Creating list of Fellowship eligible members for APA. Dr. Ferro will contact those identified.
 - B. Budget – Dom Ferro submitted a budget based on last year's expenses. Income of \$8,540 (including charging Life Members (1-5 years) \$60 dues) and expenses of \$8,320. We have about 80 general members and 40 life members (currently not paying dues). A decision was made to charge life members (1-5 years) dues of \$60 given the fact that many other district branches do so and we cannot afford to maintain our expenses without doing so. The budget was submitted to a vote by the executive council and was unanimously accepted and approved.
 - C. APA is offering to help manage our website. They will provide unlimited tutorial time and phone assistance. We work with their template. It is easier to maintain. We need a volunteer to learn how to put together and set up the website. It is a time limited commitment. The website can be tailored to what we want as a group, i.e. link to synapse, etc
 - D. Marc Tarle, M.D. is applying for unrestricted grants to pharmaceuticals for our biyearly dinner meetings. We would like to be able to pick a speaker without biased interest. We unanimously approve this suggestion.
 - E. The biyearly NYSPA meeting is on 3/20. Dom Ferro, Nigel Bark and perhaps Lois Kroplick will attend.
 - F. Dom Ferro typed the bylaws of APA and created a hard copy of the paper version that he had been storing. Copies of the bylaws have been received by board members, who are in the process of reading them over.
 - G. Membership growth and retention. Mary Barber has been speaking to some of the psychiatrists in Middletown and is attempting to set up a lunch date with them.
 - H. Incorporation – Lina Haber, our treasurer, has volunteered to contact attorneys for incorporation of our district branch. The executive council unanimously approved putting incorporation on hold and looking into other options and prices for incorporation, especially given our current budget situation.
 - I. APA parity webinar 2/23 at noon – anybody interested in participating?
- 2) Public Affairs– Lois Kroplick, DO
 - A. February board meeting of Mental Health Coalition was cancelled.
 - B. MHC is planning yearly fall Public forum – considering showing Mary Barber's Abomination film (exposing harm caused by reparative therapy). Also considering a forum on PTSD. Exploring all options in the initial stages of planning.

- C. Some members of the group have volunteered to do pro bono work for patients experiencing loss related to the Haiti disaster.
- D. MHC planning a fundraiser to give back to NAMI-FAMILYA. It is a cookbook project. The planning meeting is on 2/18 at a restaurant in Orangeburg.
- 3) Secretary Report—Diane DiGiacomo, MD, Susan Hoerter, MD. A change of address for Dr. Iva Lesniak has triggered the automatic process to transfer his membership from the CT psych society to West Hudson. Transfer is approved.
- 4) Membership/Mentoring— Dominic Ferro, MD. Mary Barber exploring options to meet with Middletown psychiatrists and others in Orange County. Dom Ferro will reach out to Dr. Lesniak to welcome him to the West Hudson district branch.
- 5) Private Practice— Jim Flax, MD. 3 phone calls on average per week to private practice referral line.
- 6) Assembly – Nigel Bark, MD. Assembly Restructuring: West Hudson and Mid Hudson (90 members) will be alternating their delegates at the assembly. They will report to each other and collect opinions. We will also put them on our email list.
- 7) Professional Education –Jane Kelman, MD
Discussed possibilities for Spring dinner. Jane Kelman spoke to Nigel Bark about a dinner topic of cross-cultural differences in the diagnosis/treatment of schizophrenia. Nigel is very interested in discussing how schizophrenia changed the course of English History. If Lina Haber is interested, she may discuss cultural issues in psychiatry/schizophrenia related to Russia. If not, Nigel is willing to do the talk solo. Will see if Marc Tarle is able to obtain pharmaceutical sponsor for the dinner meeting. Discussed possible dates of June 4 or June 11. Jane will look into prices for the dinner at various restaurants and will get back to the group so that we can decide what the group can afford and whether or not to charge members for the dinner.
- 8) Synapse – Jim Flax, MD, Syed Abdullah, MD. Jim proposed that we continue to meet as a group about every 4 weeks rather than every 6-8 weeks so that we could keep the momentum going with brainstorming and keeping up with deadlines. Jim has been emailing synapse to the members who have given him their emails.
- 9) Women’s Committee –Jane Kelman, MD. Next meeting date in February to be decided.
- 10) Date of next meeting: 3/26/10 at Il Fresca at 12:15 PM

7 DBs Will Win Free Registrations to the 2011 Annual Meeting in Hawaii

We are pleased to announce that the APA will sponsor a contest among District Branches to determine the DB in each Area with the highest percentage of members attending the 2010 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Those DBs will each win a prize of THREE FREE MEMBER REGISTRATIONS to the 2011 Annual Meeting in Hawaii. The winning DBs may decide how to award the registrations.

CAROL DAVIS ETHICS AWARD

The APA Ethics Committee is pleased to announce that it has selected the Maryland Psychiatric Society's article, "Involuntary Treatment for Cancer: An Ethical Case Discussion" by Mark Komrad, M.D., and Debbie Weaver, M.D. to receive the 2009 Carol Davis Ethics Award. This award is given annually for the District Branch Newsletter article(s) which promote the education of ethics. The award winning article is posted online and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Congratulations to Dr. Komrad, Dr. Weaver and to the Maryland Psychiatric Society!

The award will be presented at the Ethics Luncheon at the Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana. The luncheon will be held on May 25, 2010.

Allison Moraske
Program Manager
Office of Ethics & District Branch/
State Association Relations
Tel: 703.907.8662
Fax: 703.907.7849
amoraske@psych.org

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Synchronicity According To Jung

Syed Abdullah, M.D.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) believed the traditional notions of causality were inadequate for explaining some of the more improbable forms of coincidence. Where it is obvious that no causal connection can be demonstrated between two events and yet a meaningful relationship exists between them, a wholly different type of principle is operating. Jung called this principle *Synchronicity, An Acausal Connecting Principle*.

In his research into the phenomenon of the collective unconscious, Jung observed coincidences that were connected in such a meaningful way that their occurrence seemed to defy the calculations of probability. He provided many examples from psychiatric case histories one of them is as follows:

"A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab (an insect that plays an important role in Egyptian mythology). While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the window-pane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to the golden scarab that one finds in our latitudes, Scarabaeid beetle, the common ro se-chafer (*Cetoaia urata*) which contrary to its usual habits had evidently felt an urge to get into a dark room at this particular moment. I must admit that nothing like it ever happened to me before or since, and that the dream of the patient has remained unique in my experience."

Who then was responsible for the synchronous arrival of the beetle — Jung or the patient? On the surface reasonable, such a question presupposes a chain of cause and effect, which Jung claimed was absent from such an experience. The scarab, in Jung's view, had no determinable cause yet becomes a doorway that provides us a glimpse of a meaningful coincidence.

In another case, a woman whose husband Jung was treating told him that when both her mother and grandmother had died birds had come and sat outside the house. Her husband developed some physical symptoms, and Jung sent him to a heart specialist who could find nothing wrong with him.

After he left the doctor's office he collapsed and dying in the street was carried home. His wife was already upset, for a large flock of birds had landed about the house after he had gone off to see the doctor.

Implicit in Jung's concept of synchronicity is the belief in the ultimate "oneness" of the universe. As Jung expressed it, such phenomenon betrays a "peculiar interdependence of objective elements among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers." Jung claimed to have found evidence of this interdependence, not only in his psychiatric studies, but in his research of esoteric practices as well.

Freud was alarmed by Jung's interest in synchronicity, the paranormal rankled the strict materialist. He condemned Jung for wallowing in "the black tide of the mud of occultism." Just two years earlier, during a visit to Freud in Vienna, Jung had attempted to defend his beliefs and sparked a heated debate. Freud's scepticism remained calcified as ever, causing him to dismiss Jung's paranormal leanings, "in terms of so shallow a positivism," recalls Jung, "that I had difficulty in checking the sharp retort on the tip of my tongue." A shocking synchronistic event followed.

Jung writes in his memoirs:

"While Freud was going on in this way, I had a curious sensation. It was as if my diaphragm were made of iron and were becoming red-hot — a glowing vault. And at that moment there was such a loud report in the bookcase, which stood right to us, that we both started up in alarm, fearing the thing was going to topple over on us. I said to Freud: 'There, that is an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorization phenomenon.' 'O come,' he exclaimed. 'That is sheer bosh.' 'It is not,' I replied. 'You are mistaken, Herr Professor. And to prove my point I now predict that in a moment there will be another such loud report!' Sure enough no sooner had I said the words that the same detonation went off in the bookcase. To this day I do not know what gave me this certainty. But I knew beyond all doubt that the report would come again. Freud only stared aghast at me. I do not know what was in his mind or what his look meant. In any case, this incident aroused his distrust of me, and I have the feeling that I had done something against him. I never afterward discussed the incident with him."

In formulating his synchronicity principle Jung was influenced to a profound degree by

the "new" physics of the twentieth century, which had begun to explore the possible role of consciousness in the physical world. "Physics," wrote Jung in 1946, "has demonstrated ... that in the realm of atomic magnitudes objective reality presupposes an observer, and that only on this condition is a satisfactory scheme of explanation possible." Jung felt that, " modern physics, in developing quantum theory, had broken with causality. He reasoned: if the connection between cause and effect turns out to be only statistically valid and only relatively true, then the causal principle is only of relative use for explaining natural processes the connection of events may in certain circumstances be other than causal, and requires another principle of explanation."

This means "that a subjective element attaches to the physicist's world picture, and certainly that a connection necessarily exists between the psyche to be explained and the objective space-time continuum." Jung recognized intuitively that matter and consciousness - far from operating independently from each other – are, in fact, interconnected in an essential way, functioning as complementary aspects of a unified reality.

Synchronicity reveals the meaningful connections between the subjective and objective reality. Synchronistic events provide a direct encounter with the patterning of events in nature as a whole, both inwardly and outwardly.