



# MAGPS NEWS

www.magps.org

Volume 11, Issue 2

Fall 2003

## An Interview with Molyn Leszcz, MD, FRCP (C) by Nicholas Kirsch, PhD

**Nick:** Perhaps you could begin with an overview of what we can expect at the Fall Conference?

**Molyn:** The focus for the fall meeting will be the integration of interpersonal and existential approaches in group therapy. I will describe new developments in contemporary interpersonal theory and their relevance to clinical group work, building upon the model of group therapy described by Irvin Yalom. The interpersonal perspective is an integrative one, naturally synthesizing psychodynamic and cognitive perspectives. Additionally the interpersonal focus lends itself naturally in my view to a synthesis with existential considerations. The existential and interpersonal converge in particular around issues of the importance of social integration — what relationships can do for us and what they cannot; and, the interpersonal agency and effectiveness — the importance of responsibility and accountability in one’s relational world.

**Nick:** Would you say a bit more about the “interpersonal approach” as you see it?

**Molyn:** The interpersonal group therapist aims to: foster group cohesion; use the group as a social microcosm; work in the here-and-now; and utilize both peer feedback and therapist metacommunication i.e. process communication about communication. The group microcosm is the ideal setting for learning about one’s interpersonal impact and how it may diverge

*(Continued on page 11)*

## The Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE



### The Integration of Interpersonal and Existential Approaches to Group Psychotherapy

*With Molyn Leszcz, MD, FRCP (C)*

**Fri, Sat, Sun Oct. 31, Nov. 1 & 2, 2003**

**Holiday Inn Select, Solomons, MD**

**CEU’S AVAILABLE:  
12 CONTACT HOURS**

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### A Letter from the President by Emily Lape

MAGPS is alive and thriving. We currently have 170 members (109 full and 61 associate) including 22 new members in the last year alone. We are fiscally sound with an approximate net worth of \$25,000. We are very fortunate to still have Julie Bukatman, Barry's daughter, continuing to manage our account. Our conferences are growing with record numbers of members, including a strong turnout of trainees and first time attendees. We now have professional sound with lapel mikes to better hear our demonstration groups. We continue to attract top notch guest presenters and garner very high ratings for the quality of our conferences. The first year of the GPAA/MAGPS Cinema Series has been a resounding success. We have a state of the art website at [www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org) and Ron Kimball is our new newsletter editor. In addition to the Training Day, we will be offering the AGPA Core Principles of Group Psychotherapy course which will help people get their CGP credential (a required criteria for leading grant-based groups for AGPA) Our mentoring program is expanding and now includes all the members of the Board. We encourage each of you to think about mentoring as well. Scholarship opportunities have expanded so please look in our new Membership Directory and on our website for more information.

We have a wonderful new additions to the Board with Venus Massalam, Cooke Read, Paul Timin, Barry Wepman, and Cheryl Poe as the newly appointed Student/New Professional Representative. Trish Cleary has moved into the Secretary role so Venus can concentrate on graduate school work while staying on the Board as a Member-at-Large. At the June Board Meeting we started with a focus on what we value most about MAGPS and where we want to direct our efforts. Comments included:

*"It's not just an organization; it's community! MAGPS is a welcoming and inclusive group culture that encourages relationships with its non-hierarchical and collegial environment of professors, therapists, and mental health professionals at all levels. It provides a nurturing environment for learning, engagement, and connection: a place where members who come back after years away still feel connected. It is a wonderful opportunity for students and new professionals because it offers a good balance of experiential and conceptual learning. It is a place to keep oneself honest,*

*Continued on Page 9*

#### MAGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>President</b>	Emily Lape	434-243-5150	<b>Members-At-Large</b>	
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### FALL 2003 CONFERENCE by Bob Schulte, Conference Chair

Scenic Solomons, Maryland, a quiet waterfront retreat situated on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay just two hours south of Washington, DC, is the location of this fall's conference. Vivid fall colors, cool breezes off the Bay, and a relaxing learning experience await all who choose to attend. Historic Solomons Island is full of quaint boutiques, art galleries, antique and gift shops, a board walk, walking paths and a bike trail, all within walking distance of the Holiday Inn. The Inn also has a yacht-filled marina at its backdoor and a beautiful view of the evening sunset.

The conference features Melyn Leszcz, MD, FRCP (C) who will address the Integration of Interpersonal and Existential Approaches to Group Psychotherapy. Dr. Leszcz is a popular national and international conference presenter known for his grace, intelligence and compassion. He is an Associate Professor and Head of the Group Psychotherapy Program, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto. His academic and clinical work has focused on broadening the applications of the contemporary psychotherapies, particularly group psychotherapy, within psychiatry. His recent research has focused on group therapy with the medically ill. He completed a large, multi-site, across Canada clinical trial in the application of supportive expressive group psychotherapy in the treatment of women with metastatic breast cancer. His work is published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Presently Dr. Leszcz is co-writing, with Dr. Irvin Yalom, the 5th edition of The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy.

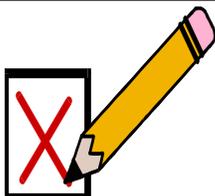
The small group leaders include Richard Beck, MSW, CGP, from the Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society; Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, MA; Theodore Grant, PhD; George Saiger, MD, CGP, FAGPA; and Michael Stiers, PhD, CGP.

Be sure to make your hotel reservations by October 5, in order to insure the special rate of \$99 plus tax per night (call 1-800-356-2009). Conference registrations are due by October 20. Late registrations are accepted on a space-available basis.

MAGPS continues to encourage attendance by students, interns, residents, and new professionals by offering reduced rates for first-time attendees. Scholarships in exchange for volunteer on-site assistance, and help in finding a roommate to share hotel expenses. For more information or to volunteer to help at the conference, contact Bob Schulte, MSW, at 703-838-1633. □



Cordially,  
*Bob Schulte*, MSW



**May 1 & 2, 2004**

**2004 Annual Spring Conference**

**Topic and Presenter to Be Announced**

**Holiday Inn Select  
Bethesda, Maryland**

***Small group leaders needed. If interested, contact the Conference Chair***

**Pre-conference Institute April 30, 2004 AGPA Course:**

**Principles of Group Psychotherapy**

# COMMUNITY

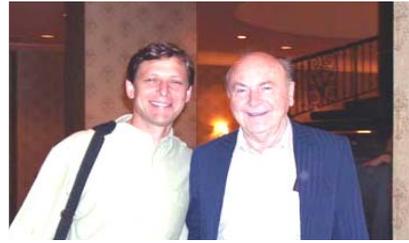
## Spring 2003 Conference by Bob Schulte, MSW, Chair

Over 100 persons attended the Spring 2003 MAGPS Conference featuring Howard Kibel, MD, CGP, DFAGPA from New York. Highlights of the weekend included the relocation of the conference to the Holiday Inn Select in Bethesda; attendance of 8 past presidents and their recognition at the conference luncheon; the induction of a new board of directors and recognition of retiring board members Joan Medway, John Thomas, Norma Caruso and Tom Wessel; and amplification of the demonstration groups. Attendees gave highest evaluation scores to the excellent ten-person small group leader team, the relevance of the conference theme and the guest presenter's effectiveness in leading the demonstration groups. Next Spring's conference will again be located at the Holiday Inn Select in Bethesda on May 1 & 2, 2004. □



# CONNECTIONS

Photographs by Linda Parkes



## COMMUNITY

**The Center for Integrative Medicine & The Menopause  
Counseling Center of Washington DC Present:**

**HEALTHY EMOTIONS AND AGING:  
A WORKSHOP FOR MIDLIFE WOMEN  
IN FOUR SESSIONS**

In a relaxed setting we will explore emotional wellness and healthy aging as we share personal experiences, expand our knowledge, and set goals for balance, creativity, and renewal at midlife.

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- How can I feel attractive when my body is aging?
- How can I keep my mind active for satisfaction in life and work?
- How can I maintain health-promoting habits?

**You will learn and share experiences about these issues in the following four sessions:**

- Session I: Body Image and Chin Hairs  
 Session II: Aging and Our Sexuality  
 Session III: The Mind and Expression of Creative Potential  
 Session IV: Sustaining Healthy Lifestyle Changes

**Dates:** Thurs. Oct 2; Thurs. Oct 9, Thurs. Oct 16  
& Thurs. Oct 23, 2003

**Place:** The Menopause Counseling Center  
2000 P St., NW Ste 720  
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**Cost: \$20 per session**

To Register Call The Center for Integrative Medicine  
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**You will take with you:**

- Self-assessment of current attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors
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**Co-facilitators:** *Lenore Pomerance, LICSW, psychotherapist, Certified Menopause Educator, founder, Menopause Counseling Center of Washington;*  
*Deborah Prawda, M.A., Counseling Psychology*



**MAGPS**

**2003-04 EVENTS CALENDAR**

**September 12, 2003**

**GPAA/MAGPS Cinema Series**

**Babette's Feast** (1987)

Pat McCallum

WSP Conference Room

5:45 ~ 9:30 pm

**October 31 - November 2, 2003**

**Annual Fall Conference**

**Integrating Interpersonal & Existential**

**Approaches to Group Therapy**

Molyn Leszcz, MD, FAGPA

*Solomons Island, MD*

**December 12, 2003**

**GPAA/MAGPS Cinema Series**

**Down By Law** (1986)

Mike Stiers

WSP Conference Room

5:45 ~ 9:30 pm

**March 12, 2004**

**GPAA/MAGPS Cinema Series**

**Strangers in Good Company** (1990)

Trish Cleary & Macario Giraldo

WSP Conference Room

5:45 ~ 9:30 pm

**April 30, 2004**

**Pre-Conference Institute**

AGPA Course:

**Principles of Group Psychotherapy**

*Holiday Inn Select, Bethesda, MD*

**May 1 & 2, 2004**

**Annual Spring Conference**

**Theme and Presenter to be Announced**

*Holiday Inn Select, Bethesda, MD*

**For More Information:**

**[www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org)**

# FOCUS

## PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUPS FOR OLDER ADULTS

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**Amy Bush, PhD, CGP**  
**Larry Leisner, BA**

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### **Reflections on MAGPS, Spring 2003    By Reginald Nettles**

I attended the spring conference this year out of an interest in re-connecting with MAGPS and the group psychotherapy community it represents after a hiatus of 10 to 15 years. Had I read the conference brochure carefully prior to registering, I might have decided not to come. I am therefore glad I did not read it until after I registered, and I am glad I came.

My experience of MAGPS many years ago certainly reified the concept of the “social unconscious at play”, though I did not need to be convinced of its importance, even that long ago in my career. In contrast to my earlier experiences (a “prodigal son” returning is always in for a few surprises), I found MAGPS has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with an awareness of diversity that offers a refreshing contrast to my expectations, based on earlier perceptions. Visible as well as invisible diversities among its members and leaders, including ethnicity, disability, gender, and sexual orientation appeared to be accepted and incorporated into the fabric of the weekend conference. While not without conflict, denial, minimization, and projection, that this diversity was contained and given voice was encouraging.

Conference events including large group plenary sessions, demonstration groups, and small groups each contributed to the learning in different ways. Howard (Howie) Kibbel was masterful in his command of the demonstration group, which met several times with rotating membership representing the larger group as a whole. His infusion of central concepts provided an excellent representation of our culture and its impact on our work in groups. The “chosen trauma” of September 11, 2001 and its sequelae, followed by the Washington D.C. area sniper attacks of fall 2002, were at once galvanizing and dividing as the conference reflected on traumas chosen and traumas expunged from “national” consciousness. Similarly, the demonstration group reflected the dynamic culture of MAGPS, as its container, with its intergroup tensions borne of parallel choices. That these traumas could be contained and studied in the conference environment speaks to the strength of MAGPS today compared to 10 to 15 years ago.

As clinicians working with traumatized individuals and groups, we are subject to vicarious trauma in our daily work. As individuals, we ourselves are subject to the national tragedies that affect us all. The small group provided an opportunity to advance our capacity to manage as well as to be of help to others facing trauma and its aftermath. At least one small group (Rachel Lenn) was outstanding in that regard. □

### **Spring, 2003 From a Newcomer’s Perspective    By John Craig**

As a newcomer to MAGPS, I had heard from several members that the spring and fall conferences were special events, and not to be missed. Still, I was amazed at the impact the recent April conference in Bethesda had on me—not only on a professional level, but, most of all, on a personal level.

I had been to similar conferences before, but there seemed to be a very special quality to this one, especially in my own small group (with Venus Masselam). In this group there was plenty of opportunity for taking personal risks, but there was also a feeling of safety that seemed to have an exceptionally solid foundation. I felt that the organizers of the conference—and the participants as well—knew a great deal about how to create an unthreatening environment for self-disclosure and self-exploration, and that they had been unusually successful in doing this.

For the past two or three years I have been working in a fast-paced corporate environment, and have not been much involved in group work, either professionally or personally. Perhaps this is one reason the MAGPS conference had such a powerful impact on me: the group interactions I was part of during the weekend brought me suddenly back to the powerful emotional arena that group therapy can provide. The conference renewed my awareness of how easy it is, in a high-pressure world, to drift away from the most important issues in one's life—and how rewarding it is to get back to those issues, especially in a supportive group environment. □

### Letter from the President *(continued from Page 2)*

*a barometer of when one is too full of oneself and when one is not full enough. It nurtures leadership by recognizing ability and provides opportunities for members to realize their potential. It's the best deal in town with two conferences a year, the new cinema series, professional quality newsletters, a website, and mentoring throughout one's career.*

Where else do we want to direct our efforts?

*“Increase the diversity in all areas and appeal to a greater number of disciplines. Pool our resources to reach more people and target specific populations. Increase outreach and generate more interest overall by sending presenters out to graduate programs, internship sites, and agencies with group therapy workshops.”*

Cheryl Poe is heading the Student Outreach Activity Recruitment (SOAR) committee. Board members have committed to serve and we also need volunteers from general membership to serve on this committee.

In June, the Board voted to separate the Conference Chair role from the President Elect position. A Conference Chair could still opt to run for President if interested but it would not be an automatic (Conference Chair, President, Past President) 6-year term. We plan to develop a Co-Chair model and a strong working conference committee with a seasoned senior Conference Co-Chair paired with a Co-Chair in training. By staggering their terms, we will be providing built in training and smooth transitions. For those of us who have held various leadership positions within MAGPS, the Conference role has been a favorite for many of us. It draws on untapped talents and helps develop new skill sets. There is a true camaraderie in working closely with others on the committee and the guest presenter, and a real sense of accomplishment that grows out of a successful conference. I also welcome your involvement in any of the many activities and committees that make MAGPS a community and look forward to your participation.

I look forward to seeing each of you at our next conference. Please come introduce yourself if we don't know each other yet. I'd like to know what you value most about MAGPS and where you'd like to see us go. □



With Warm Regards,  
*Emily Lape*, LCSW, CGP, FAGPA

### Membership News by Amy Bush

The new Directory is now out and hopefully being used by all. The work that went into the new format seems well worth the finished product. Please send or give me feedback about its utility and presentation.

A supplement will be printed and mailed by Thanksgiving. It will include new members as well as corrections for current entries. Send any corrections to [amybush.phd@verizon.net](mailto:amybush.phd@verizon.net) or call in to my voicemail at **(703) 442-8088**. □

### **The Women's Center/MAGPS Group Training Program**

Hilary Casaretto, Director

Participation in various group training activities has declined in the last year. As a result, we have decided to assess interests and needs by sending a questionnaire to all Women's Center clinical staff. We want to continue offering opportunities to therapist that meet their learning needs.

Inservices continue to be held on a quarterly basis. In June, Bea Leibenberg presented on the topic of preparing individuals for group. Karen Porter volunteered to participate in a role play which demonstrated many of the concepts Bea discussed. In September, Tybe Diamond will speak on combined group and individual therapy. If anyone has a topic they would like to present, please contact Hilary Casaretto at (703) 281-4928, extension 422. □

### ***The Women's Center/MAGPS Group Training Program***

Hilary Casaretto, Director  
Karen Porter, Assistant Director  
Kirstin Pickle, Training Director

### **MAGPS Awards & Scholarships**

The Society maintains and funds four types of awards that are available to various persons in the group psychotherapy community. Please consider a contribution.

**Barry Buketman Memorial AGPA  
Scholarship**

**Louisa Schwartz Memorial Scholarship**

**Affiliate Institute Training Group**

**1st Time Attendees Scholarship**

***See Website or Directory for more  
information***

### **The Cinema Series**

Trish Cleary, Chair

The Seminar Series, chaired by Trish Cleary MS, LCPC, CGP and sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society and the Washington School of Psychiatry, offers free psychoeducational programs to both the mental health and group psychotherapy communities.

The Cinema Series, the first Seminar Series program, was successfully launched by Trish Cleary and Nancy Swain last year. It promotes the scholarly exploration of group themes and dynamics in film and features members of the group psychotherapy community as moderators. Each evening runs approximately three hours and provides a networking supper, the evening's film selection, a post film discussion and 3 CEU's through the Washington School of Psychiatry.

Website previews of the newest Cinema Series features, including film reviews, the moderator's approach to viewing the film, and learning objectives, are available online at [www.wpsych.com](http://www.wpsych.com) and [www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org). □

**09/12/2003**

**Babette's Feast** (1987)

Moderated by Pat McCallum, LCSW

**12/12/2003**

**Down By Law** (1986)

Moderated by Mike Stiers

**3/12/2004**

**Strangers in Good Company** (1990)

Moderated by Trish Cleary & Macario Giraldo



*For more information and to volunteer contact:  
Trish Cleary, Cinema Series Chair, by phone:  
301-654-4936 or email: [trishcleary@erols.com](mailto:trishcleary@erols.com)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

from one's intent or generate maladaptive interpersonal loops by "hooking" others into predictable interpersonal reactions. The degree of therapist involvement is probably greater in this approach than with psychodynamic or analytic approaches, ideally in the shape of therapeutic facilitation.

**Nick:** I also understand that you are referring to the group being a place of guided learning of new responses to old interpersonal dilemmas.

**Molyn:** Absolutely. As group therapists we aim to create a cohesive and secure environment in which our clients can bring themselves as they genuinely are to the therapy so that the entire sequence of interpersonal learning can take place. Then the client is in a position to choose — is this what I want? Am I achieving the kind of relatedness that I want?

**Nick:** You mention that the interpersonal therapist is "transparent."

**Molyn:** I believe that therapist transparency is one of the most important, potent, and challenging aspects of being an effective therapist. It underscores the joint creation of the relationship and the mutual, interactive, and transaction nature of therapy. Awareness of one's responses to one's client and the distinction between those reactions that reflect what you bring characteristically to the work and those that the client characteristically elicit in others are critical. The therapist's feedback and metacommunication requires the therapist to remember that the therapy is always about the client. If we believe that the power of change in group therapy comes from both the client's increasing understanding and reparative relationship experiences, the therapist's presence, disclosure, and feedback are essential elements of change, both directly and as modeling effects in the group.

**Nick:** It's clear from your writing that you've been powerfully affected in a very personal way by your work with breast cancer patients.

**Molyn:** Of the many ways that I have been impacted constructively by working with clients facing mortal illness and death, perhaps the most important ones relate to using time and energy wisely, and the importance of relationships. When we work with clients facing premature death, who so much want to live, we cannot avoid our common vulnerabilities to the existential challenges of life. Then it is always about "we," not "them." Engaging these challenges can enrich the therapist's life and serve as an effective way to catalyze the group in its examination of interpersonal processes.

**Nick:** Do you have suggestions, tried and true methods, for working existentially with clients/groups who are not defining themselves as facing particular life or death crises?

**Molyn:** I know more about the "tried" side than the "true." I believe we can make very good use of the existential perspective in all our therapeutic work. Each group session ends; each course of treatment will end; each relationship and encounter ends. How does a client want to be known and experienced? What form of engagement would be meaningful? What needs to be said before time runs out? Are we "killing time" or living time? How might one want to reduce regrets about what has been unsaid or undone, if we knew that this might be our last time together? Working this way demands genuineness and authenticity on the part of the therapist. I suggest that it is less that we have to create opportunities for this work than that we need to be alert and seize upon what is all around us. I am a big baseball fan and was pleasantly surprised while listening to a game when the announcer stated to his co-host, "This player is on the 15-day disabled list, but is listed as "day-to-day." To which his co-host replied, "Aren't we all?" Baseball is life, after all. □

*For a full, unedited version of this interview, go to [www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org).*



# MAGPS NEWS

Ron Kimball, PhD, Newsletter Editor  
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## MID-ATLANTIC GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY SOCIETY



**SAVE THE DATES October 31—November 2, 2003**  
**2003 ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE**

**Integrating Interpersonal & Existential Approaches to Group Therapy**

*with Melyn Leszcz, MD, FRCP (C)*

**Holiday Inn Select - Solomons Island, MD**



### GPAA/MAGPS CINEMA SERIES

Trish Cleary, Chair & Nancy Swain, Co-chair

Friday September 12, 2003

### GPAA/MAGPS Cinema Series

**Babette's Feast** (1987)

Pat McCallum

5:45 to 6:30 PM - Light Supper & Wine  
6:30 ~ 9:30 PM Feature Film & Discussion

Washington School of Psychiatry Conference Room  
**For Reservations - Call 202-237-2700**



### SAVE THE DATE

**May 1 & 2, 2004**

**2004 Annual Spring Conference**

Topic and Presenter to Be Announced

**Holiday Inn Select  
Bethesda, Maryland**

*Those interested in being small group leaders, contact  
Bob Schulte*

**Pre-conference Institute April 30, 2004  
AGPA Course: Principles of Group Psychotherapy**