



# MAGPS NEWS

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Volume 17, Issue 2

Fall 2009

## MAGPS Fall Conference

### Stimulating Emotional Wealth: Modern Analysis and Money in Group Psychotherapy An Interview with Michael Hegener, MA, LPC, CGP

*Venus Masselam interviewed Michael Hegener, the presenter for the Fall 2009 Conference in November.*

**VM:** When and how did the topic of money first tweak your interest?

**MH:** Early in my career I worked as a staff therapist in an agency which provided counseling on a sliding fee scale. I was being paid an hourly rate, whether my patients were at the top of the scale or the bottom. I began to notice how much of my feelings toward my patients were connected with the fee they were paying. For example, often I felt more pressure to do better

work with those who were paying more. This was at a time when lots of federal money was available to provide counseling for persons with HIV/AIDS. Initially, these people paid nothing for their therapy, and I often found myself feeling resentful that many of my patients were better dressed than me, and obviously had much more money than me, yet they were getting free therapy. I also began to notice the difference between the reality and the symbolism of money. I remember one patient who was an accountant for a large government agency, yet could not balance his checkbook, never knew how much money he had, and bounced so many checks that I had to ask him to pay cash. He obviously had the skills to manage money; what was his resistance to managing his own resources? I began to recognize how much I could learn about my patients by knowing more about their relationship with money. This is really the bedrock of our work together at the conference. I will be using money as a backdrop, as a medium for us to explore basic analytic concepts that for many years have helped us in our understanding of our patients – transference, resistance, countertransference. I'm hoping we can bring some vitality to these concepts as we explore them through the medium of such a highly charged topic as money.

**VM:** Did you recognize its centrality in your own  
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**Letter from the President**

As I write my first letter to you in the role of president, at this historic moment in US history, I am grateful for this privilege, and excited about the prospects for continued growth within MAGPS.

Your new Board was installed formally at the Spring conference, and a moving tribute was given to retiring Board members. I welcome and look forward to working with the new and returning Board members, bid fond farewell and gratitude to those who will hopefully continue to contribute to MAGPS in other ways.

The Board met in Columbia, Md. in July with enthusiasm and excitement as we reviewed the events of the past year and looked ahead to what we expect will be another exciting year. Our Fall 2008 Conference, which I chaired, featured guest speaker Bonnie Buchele, PhD, DFAGPA, former AGPA president, who presented on "Vicissitudes of Trauma in Group Psychotherapy: Little, Big, and Hidden". The ubiquity of trauma, the power of group in its treatment, and special problems in its management were examined. Our Spring, 2009 Conference, chaired by Margo London, featured guest speaker Jerome Gans, MD, FAGPA who presented on the theme of "Using One's Whole Self as a Group Therapist." The Conference celebrated the positive contributions that personal experiences, and lessons culled from them, contribute to group leadership.

This year for the first time, the Fall Conference will be chaired by an appointed member, rather than the president-elect, as has been the case for the Spring Conferences over the past three years. Our Fall, 2009 Conference, "Stimulating Emotional Wealth: Modern Analysis and Money in Group Psychotherapy" will feature guest presenter Michael Hegener MA, LPC, CGP. Fall Conference Chair George Max Saiger's conference preview, and an interview of Michael Hegener by Venus Masselam both appear elsewhere in this edition. Michael, comes to us from the Austin Group Psychotherapy Society, and AGPA, where he is Chair of the Affiliate Assembly. While George and the Fall Conference committee are busily putting final touches on the Fall conference, Margo London is putting together our Spring 2010 Conference, details of which will be available at the Fall conference.

**Board Briefs:**

- A proposed bylaws change to add additional ex-officio board positions as needed, will be voted on at the fall meeting. Our hope is to add the webmaster and mentor chair positions to the board in this capacity.
- A motion was passed to move forward with efforts to collaborate with the Washington School of Psychiatry in providing continuing education credits for our conferences, including CME units for physicians, which we have not been able to do in the past.
- Plans to organize a dinner for all MAGPS members attending AGPA in San Diego, February, 2010. San Diego were begun.

The themes of MAGPS Conferences and initiatives such as those discussed at this board's first meeting, typically lend themselves to the exploration of diversity within the organization and between MAGPS and the larger communities of which we are a part. I invite your comments and suggestions in this regard.

Sincerely,

*Reginald Nettles*

*From Page 1*

**life before you focused on it in relation to client and therapist? Was it from your own reaction to money or from clients ' or group's response? How did it surface?**

**MH:** From a very early age, we all receive messages about money, and I was certainly no exception; some of these messages were helpful, others were not. My mother grew up during the Depression, and instilled in me the message that no matter how much money you have, it could disappear overnight. On the other hand, she was a pragmatic businesswoman, and taught me the value of hard work and the importance of money. I am passionate about my work for many reasons; I never lose track of the reality that it is how I earn my living, and I must attend to the business of my practice while attempting to be an instrument of healing and of peace. Harold Searles wrote eloquently about "The Patient as Therapist to His Analyst." My groups are tenacious in their attempts to help me with my conflicts around money.

**VM: Power and love are two feelings one might connect with money. Are there differences in how you might interpret or work with these two feelings related to money? Do you have a novel twist to your interpretation? Or do you see other feelings more strongly connected to money?**

**MH:** In Modern Analysis, the emphasis is on exploration, rather than interpretation. At best, only about 15 per cent of what we communicate is in words, so a large part of our job as group therapists is to be translators of all the symbolic communication that happens between group members, and between members and ourselves. Words are the currency of group therapy, and members' use of that currency is what we study. We try to help our groups be curious about all forms of communication. Especially in the current economic climate, it is easy to focus on the reality of money. Of course we have to be sensitive to our patients' difficulties with the nuts and bolts of trying to stay financially alive, but I also keep in mind the idea of money as a metaphor, a "royal road" to studying resistance, transference, and conflicts around dependency.

**VM: What would you like attendees to take away from this conference? What might be an emotional awareness as well as an intellectual understanding?**

**MH:** We can certainly exchange some ideas and experiences about our intellectual experience of money. I have found that people need little encouragement to talk about their frustrations and fears about fees, billing, collections and other concrete issues associated with money and their groups. In a Modern Analytic group we try to work with the wealth of emotions that can be put to use in an interpersonal way; this can lead to new experience with people, and can help members have new introject substitutions (in plain English, they can replace some of the "tapes" playing in their minds with more vital and relational ones). You learn about yourself from other people, and incorporate those ideas about you to have more effective emotional relationships. In my office I have a small plaque with a quotation from Carl Jung. It reads "Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside awakens." I hope we will all be inspired to have the courage to look inward at our own ideas, fears, and dreams around money and be able to take some of that vitality to our groups.

**VM: Are there any ways you would like attendees to prepare for this conference?**

**MH:** I will be sending some articles to be included in the registration packet. The articles are basic information about symbolic communication, money and group, and basics of Modern Analytic group work. Our work together will be enriched by reading these articles in advance.

## Stimulating Emotional Wealth: Modern Analysis and Money in Group Psychotherapy The MAGPS Fall 2009 Conference

By George Saiger

I don't suppose any of us chose psychotherapy as a career with the hope of getting rich quick. However, for all of us, getting paid for what we do figures into the equation. This is true whether we do fee-for-service work, or are salaried by an agency, or provide therapy on an unpaid volunteer basis. Sometimes, that means elevating the money question to the very top of the list. Sometimes it means devaluing its significance, not thinking about it. Like everything else in psychotherapy, we would do well to pay attention to the multiple meanings that money has in the transaction between provider and consumer.

The MAGPS fall conference will provide an unmatched opportunity to do just that and in the leisure and safety that our semiannual meetings have long provided. We are fortunate to have with us as our guest presenter, Michael Hegener, MA, LPC, CGP, a past president of the Austin Group Psychotherapy Society and the current chair of the Affiliate Assembly of AGPA. Michael has long written and taught about money matters in group therapy. Some of his thinking on this matter can be found in Venus Massalem's interview (Page1) in this newsletter. That interview is just meant to wet our whistles. The real learning opportunity will come on November 6-8 in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. There, via lectures, demonstration groups, an application group, Q&A, and of course, ample opportunity for learning through participation in a small process group, attendees will be able to understand how the exploration of patients' relationships with money will facilitate a fuller understanding of many aspects of their lives – and our own.

Talking about money both in reality and as a symbol in treatment will:

- Increase participants' understanding of their own relationships with money.
- Provide an avenue to exploring resistance to cooperation.
- Enhance understanding of patient conflicts about basic dependency needs.

As we have done for the past several conferences, we will have a visiting small group leader joining us. We are fortunate that Alexis Abernethy PhD, who began her career here in DC when she got her BS from Howard University, has agreed to join us. Those of you who have had the pleasure of meeting her know that she has gone on from there to become a nationally respected leader in the two areas of psychology/ spirituality interface and cultural competence in psychology. The small group leadership team will include similarly talented MAGPS members Rosemary Segalla, Steve VanWagoner, Carolyn Angelo, Sally Brandel, Rob Williams, Tom Large, Paul Timmin, Henry Morris, and Nina Brown.

This promises to be a powerful and enriching experience (*double entendre* intended). We hope you will join us. Registration information is available at our website, [www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org).

### Meet Your Board

This edition we would like to introduce new MAGPS Board Member *Matt Fleming*, one of the two New Professional/Student Representatives with the Board.

Matt graduated with his doctorate in clinical psychology from the George Washington University's PsyD Program in 2003. He received his post-doctoral training at the Georgetown University Counseling Center, where he was then hired on as a staff psychologist. He left that position last year to work full-time in private practice in the Dupont Circle area of Washington DC. In his new role with the MAGPS Board he looks forward to reaching out to find new members as well as help current new members have the most rewarding experience possible with the Society.

## Scholarship Recipients Reflect Upon the Spring Conference

*Below and on the following pages of 10 and 11 are letters written by several of the scholarship recipients to the Spring 2009 conference. I have left them unedited (except for format and spelling) so readers can get a clear idea of what the writers felt and expressed. Ed.*

### Ryan Logue

Slowly I enter center stage  
Trepidation with every step I tread  
Eyes, real and imagined, scale up and down  
To be a jester to this court, I do dread

I took my seat and got lost in space  
It filled with racial tension  
The unfinished business presented upfront  
I spoke soft, with apprehension

Everyone was cordial  
Filled with sunshine and smiles  
Attempting to ignore the heavy  
Discomfort of privilege with denial

As I bobbed and weaved  
The spotlight scorched my skin  
The changing dynamics of here-and-now  
I felt lost and dizzy deep within

An attempt to discuss stereotypes  
We dropped it like it's hot  
We preferred to act as good neighbors should  
Afraid of what could happen if we did not

Although saccharine smiles still taste sweet  
Growth felt stagnant and hollow  
Despite the stickiness of this awkward bake sale  
There were still a few goodies I could swallow

I am but a small seed;  
Covered in fertilizer and water  
A damp and lonely place to be  
As if I'm growth's cannon fodder

### Natasha Sharma

As a graduate student of clinical counseling at The Johns Hopkins University, I attended the 2009 MAGPS conference as part of the requirements for my Group Counseling and Experience course. I can honestly say that I was completely unprepared for just how much I would actually obtain out of the two days I spent attending this event.

Although I found the entire experience worthwhile, it was this year's keynote speaker, Dr. Jerry Gans, who had the most impact on me. Dr. Gans' daily lectures, in which he provided his own personal lessons and insight into both counseling and life in general, and in the most subtle

*Continued on Page 10*

Reaching roots through the dark  
Push past cracks and crevices of fear  
Finding pieces I thought I'd lost  
The promise of self-actualization near

In this condition I reclaimed space  
I stared into the eyes of anxiety  
I reclaimed courage I forgot  
So I must thank the Mid-Atlantic Group Psycho-  
Society

In this condition I reclaimed space  
I stared into the eyes of anxiety  
I reclaimed courage I forgot  
So I must thank the Mid-Atlantic Group  
Psychotherapy Society

For it is in this place I learned to give  
Myself the permission to activate  
Deadened places within myself  
Re-gifted to others; to celebrate

To use my whole self  
It shatters Freudian tradition  
No more stoic Tabula Rasa  
Instead a Humanistic condition

So I tip my hat to this Spring convention  
To Dr. Gans, who left it better than it was  
found

I am looking forward to this coming Fall  
To spending time with family in  
Shepherdstown

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Photos courtesy of Paul Timin and Jay Casey. Many more are available on the website at: [www.magps.org](http://www.magps.org)



## Spring 2009 Conference

by Margo London

Our Spring 2009 conference, "Using One's Whole Self as a Group Therapist," was a lively, intense, often highly personal, and successful two-day event, on a lovely spring weekend, at the Johns Hopkins University campus in Shady Grove, MD.

Guest presenter Jerry Gans, MD, an excellent speaker with an open style, serious and humorous, led the three plenary sessions, presenting on the positive contributions that personal experiences, and the lessons culled from them, contribute to group leadership, and including the role of courage. Jerry is knowledgeable, thoughtful, self-revealing, and accepting, and our members joined with him for lively dialogue and animated discussions throughout the weekend.

We had 100 participants – including long-time members of MAGPS and AGPA, faculty from the National Group Psychotherapy Institute, first-time attendees, and graduate students from Johns Hopkins, Catholic, Loyola, Old Dominion, and Howard Universities. MAGPS hosted a reception for first-time attendees after the Saturday session and also matched them with Mentors to facilitate their joining into the conference.

Ten small groups met for three sessions of process experiences over the two days, with each group having a mix of seasoned clinicians, newer group therapists, and graduate students. Our guest small group leader was Libby Shapiro, PhD, from the Northeastern Society for Group Psychotherapy Society. The leaders from MAGPS were Molly Donovan, Wendy Fischer, Ron Hopson, Susan Jacobson, Emily Lape, Joan Medway, John Thomas, Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, Matt Fleming, Ted Siedlecki, and Lew Weber. The conference faculty and Jerry Gans met as a consultation group periodically throughout the conference.

Our conference gathering exuded energy and excitement, in sessions and during breaks, as people met, talked, laughed, explored, and discussed our "whole selves as group therapists."



## ***LIVE THEATER AND GROUP THERAPY: Kindred Spirits that Inspire and Soar***

By Bob Schulte

Being the third of seven children, I began my training in both the theater and dynamic group therapy at a very early age. The most mundane of family events were inevitably a ‘production’ and getting along with my siblings and parents always a ‘process’. Being a middle child, I routinely had both member and leader opportunities afforded me, often simultaneously. I am now a group therapist and a (sometime) theater director. No surprise there.

I now have the good fortune to know others who share my love of theater and group therapy. Together we founded Red Well Theater Group in 2008 after a few years of presenting occasional play readings at group therapy conferences. Some will remember our presentation of ‘*Art*’ at the 2002 MAGPS Fall Conference. To have started our project in MAGPS’ backyard is a source of pride and joy for us.

The Red Well Theater Group includes Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, John Dluhy, Mary Dluhy, Molly Donovan, Matt Fleming, Sheela Kadekar, Hallie Lovett, Paul Timin, Rosemary Segalla, Barry Wepman and Rob Williams.

RWTG presents dramatic readings of stage plays that feature group themes followed by a moderated audience discussion with the cast and director. Red Well’s mission is to combine traditional theater and dynamic group process to illuminate the complexities of relationships and the universal need for mutual recognition. We aspire to the Athenian ideal of a public space where all are welcome to bear witness and share their experience openly with one another in community. For us the covenant between therapists and patients and actors and audience is more similar than different—to create a safe space for joining, reflecting and healing.

A favorite inspirational quote guiding our work is by Sigmund Katerud, from the book *Self Experiences in Group*. His eloquent recognition of the theatricality of the group experience is affirming:

“The therapeutic group self is a project . . . It is the ambitions and ideals of a healing community set into action by a particular group analyst and a particular selected brand of patients . . . If the group analyst has learned his lesson well, he manages through his directorship, group analytic dramaturgy and interpretations to set in motion healing forces . . . He opens a healing text and lets the text play with himself and the group members. Imbedded in the text are stories about what is true and false, about lies and honesty, frankness and hypocrisy, about what is morally right and wrong, about oppression, seduction and evilness, about human rights, belonging and trust, and authentic encounters in contemporary societies.”

RWTG currently offers five plays in repertory, with a new script introduced each year. They include ‘*Art*’ by Yasmina Resa, *Rounding Third* by Richard Dresser, *Off the Map* by Arlene Ackerman, *Someone Who’ll Watch Over Me* by Frank McGuinness and *Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay-Abaire. To inquire about performance availability, contact Bob Schulte at 703-838-1633 or Molly Donovan at 202-882-8070. Visit us at our website, [www.redwelltheater.com](http://www.redwelltheater.com).

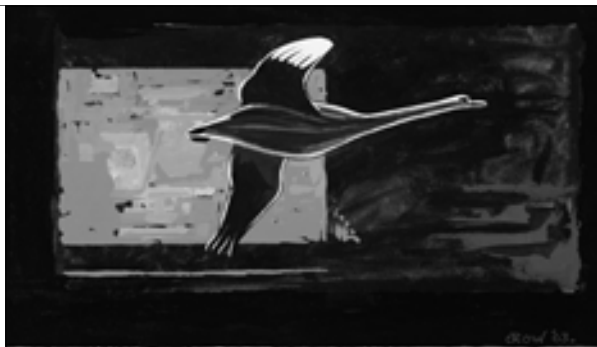


## RWTG in Rome

Red Well Theater Group presented *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* by Frank McGinness at the IAGP Congress in Rome, Italy on August 27, 2009.

Congratulations to John Dluhy, Barry Wepman and Rob Williams for outstanding performances. Thanks to Molly Donovan, Maryetta Sachs-Andrews and Mary Dluhy for facilitation of the audience discussion, and Bob Schulte for stage direction.

Visit us at [www.redwelltheater.com](http://www.redwelltheater.com) for the full story



2010 AGPA ANNUAL MEETING  
Open Session # 2669

**RED WELL THEATER GROUP**  
presents a dramatic reading of

***RABBIT HOLE***  
by David Lindsay-Abaire

Co-Chairs  
Molly Donovan, Bob Schulte

Actors/Panelists  
Maryetta Andrews-Sachs  
John Dluhy  
Hallie Lovett  
Rosemary Segalla  
Rob Williams

*Rabbit Hole* portrays the day-to-day heartache of complicated grief in a family mourning the accidental death of a child. A discussion with the actors and director will follow the reading.

### *Letters from Scholarship Recipients Continued from Page 5*

yet direct manner, was an absolute treat. He in every way embodied the theme of this year's conference "Using One's Whole Self as a Group Therapist" through his open, honest, and humble narrative of his own life experiences, both personal and professional. Observing his demonstration in leading an actual group was not only educational but also enlightening. To see someone of great accomplishment so unaffected, and so obviously as 'human' as anyone else, capable of errors in judgment and moments of emotional insecurity, and in addition willing to show this of themselves to a large audience was remarkable. It was comforting to me as a graduate student to see and know that even reaching the pinnacles of excellence in the field of counseling does not render one immune or superior to the basic flaws that, at the end of the day, make each and every one of us gloriously and frustratingly human.

I enjoyed participating in the individual small group breakout sessions as well, and found it to be an entirely different and more authentic group experience as compared to my experience in the classroom. Without any mandate at all, I am certainly looking forward to attending the conference again in 2010.

#### **Randy Smith**

Watching Jerry Gans' masterful leadership of the demonstration group in the large meeting room heightened my frustrations about my own small group experience. In our first session, the leader had given some opening ground rules and then announced, "OK. It's your group." Silence. Long silence. Really. Like 10 minutes of people looking at each other and staring at the floor. I wanted to pipe up because the clock was ticking away, but I was curious to see what the leader would do. Awkward silence at the beginning of a group is to be expected, but is not productive. Had I been leader, I would have intervened and said, to no one in particular, "*This silence feels awkward and uncomfortable to me. I wonder if anyone else feels that way,*" to see if that sparked a response. Instead, our leader did nothing and later told us at the wrap-up debriefing that the group's initial silence had been frustrating for her, too, yet she chose to let it continue.

At lunch, I heard from other student attendees how lively their small groups had been – with anger, crying, and powerful emotions – so I really felt cheated. I expressed my frustrations in the following group session, but our group apparently was just naturally tentative and cautious – a group of shy introverts. We were two students and four therapists. Several of the therapists said they were not used to *not* being in the leader's position. In retrospect, I wonder if there was a chilling effect to the leader's opening statement about confidentiality, when she also noted that the small size of Washington's group therapist community made it likely we would cross paths again.

At the Sunday morning group, I bluntly expressed my frustrations with the lack of interaction and the leader's hands-off approach. She became more involved in the group discussions and was much even more engaged in Sunday's final session. In her debriefing, the leader indicated that my criticism had prompted her to take a more active role in the sessions.

The session-ending debriefing process was fascinating to observe. The leader came up with all sorts of transference reactions and unconscious meanings to comments made by various group members that she thought reflected on the job she had done as leader. The remarks she attributed to me gave them a twist I hadn't intended. But who knows? Maybe in talking about my abandonment issues with my mother I was unconsciously reflecting on the leader's abandonment of the group in the beginning instead of just talking about my mother.

Overall, the MAGPS conference was a unique learning experience and a wonderful immersion into the world of group therapy. The here-and-now experiential quality of the small group sessions provided a vibrant link to the observations Dr. Gans made in the large-group sessions and made the practice of group therapy come alive.

#### **Naomi Nim**

Did the wise folks who established the Louisa Schwartz Scholarship know that by acknowledging the newcomer to an obviously vibrant community that they made it possible to feel one could join? Did they know that acknowledging a newcomer who is not new in any other way than professionally, and in fact old, was even a greater good deed? Perhaps they did.

I was very touched by how warmly I was welcomed, and how easily newer therapists were integrated into informal conversations and the formal process groups. I am very grateful and honored to have been that newcomer as a 2007

*Continued on Page 11*

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graduate of Pratt Institute's Dance/Movement Therapy graduate program and a recent graduate of the Clinical Theory and Practice Program at Washington School of Psychiatry.

Dr. Gans was captivating and inspiring; so was the honest and courageous dialogue that followed with the conference participants. This capacity to use the self as a starting place to access, name, and speak truth, even when it is a risky or painful step to take was very moving and exciting. I am always reaching for that core of honesty and courage within myself. It was beautiful to witness that process in action at the conference.

### **Cornelia Groat**

My first experience of a MAGPS conference left me energized by all that I learned, touched by the interest and willingness of members to mentor students, and impressed by the level of knowledge and authenticity brought to all interactions. I witnessed many acts of courage, defined as dealing with emotions honestly without guarantee of a positive response, by the conference's guest speaker, Jerry Gans. As I thought about my interactions, as well as those that I witnessed in both the large and small group, I came to reflect on the concept of honesty in relation to courage. My reflection brought to mind a song, *Honesty*, popular in the 1970s, and the following lines that I have always remembered:

*Honesty is such a lonely word.  
Everyone is so untrue.  
Honesty is hardly ever heard.  
And mostly what I need from you.*  
Billy Joel

Courage, as well as honesty, is a lonely act which can lead to connection. As Jerry described, it takes courage to honestly reveal one's emotions and risk disconnection. Yet honesty is essential to truly safe, connected, satisfying emotional relationships. And that takes me back to courage, which, in a relationship, is not a one-time act, but an ongoing necessity. Honesty requires courage and courage does not exist in the absence of honesty. Jerry, as well as others, exhibited both honesty and courage throughout the conference. I experienced the MAGPS community as one in which authentic connection is made possible because honest communication is supported, courage is acknowledged, and both honesty and courage are mindfully cultivated and present in an ongoing way. It is my hope that I will learn to create an atmosphere that supports honesty and honors courage in groups that I lead so that group members can experience the healing and transformation such a setting provides.

I appreciated the support that I received as a newcomer to MAGPS and I look forward to continuing to learn from and contribute to the organization. I am grateful for the support of the scholarship, which, along with the weekend format, made the conference accessible both financially and in terms of schedule. Thank you MAGPS for your generous support and an enriching experience!



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## MAGPS ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

*Stimulating Emotional Wealth:  
Modern Analysis & Money in  
Group Psychotherapy*

*Presenter*

Michael Hegener, MA, LPC, CGP

**Clarion Hotel and  
Conference Center**

*Reservations:*  
**Shepherdstown, WV**

**November 6-8, 2009**

**SAVE  
the  
DATE**

**MAGPS SPRING 2010  
CONFERENCE**

*The Favored Child  
with*

**Ellen Weber Libby, PhD**  
April 24-25, 2010