

**THE SOCIETY FOR THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY
DIVISION 24 OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**

Spring 2013 Presidential Newsletter



From Blaine Fowers

March 27, 2013

Dear all,

I am very happy to write to you with updates about many exciting developments in our Society. This newsletter contains the following updates:

1. A description of our Mid-Winter Meeting.
2. The establishment of a Society managed listserv.
3. The establishment of a Student Committee in the Society.
4. The preparation of the 2013 APA Convention program.
5. The first edition of the “Big Questions, Essential Conversations” symposium series
6. The bylaws vote. **Please vote when you receive the notice from APA!**

2013 Mid-Winter Meeting

A few weeks ago, we had a very successful and enjoyable Mid-Winter Meeting. It was the first annual Mid-Winter because we changed from a biennial schedule to an annual schedule. This is an important milestone in the development of the Society. When we began holding Mid-Winter meetings in Miami in 2008, we were not sure how many people would attend. The first meeting was a great success, but we did not know if the meetings would be sustainable. The 2013 meeting was the fourth Mid-Winter, and it is now very clear that these meetings are lively, valuable, and central to the flourishing of our Society. One very noteworthy aspect of the meeting was the attendance of a very large number of enthusiastic and promising students, as well as a number of potential scholarly affiliates. We will circulate the location and dates of the 2014 Mid-Winter meeting in the coming weeks.

As always, there were many excellent paper presentations and conversation hours. Our Mid-Winter meeting is one of the warmest, liveliest meetings I attend. It is wonderfully fun to get together with old friends and make new ones. I want to especially thank Jeff Reber, the

program chair for the Mid-Winter meeting, his assistant, Jordan Hyde, and Frank Richardson, the site chair for a wonderfully organized conference. Program committee members James Lamiell, and Alan Tjeltveit also made very valuable contributions to the success of the meeting.

In addition to the many papers and symposia presented, we had three sessions of particular value to the Society as a whole. First, we had a very valuable conversation hour about maintaining strong connections between students, early career psychologists, scholarly affiliates, and the Society. Jeff Reber and I will be following up on many of the suggestions made in this discussion. Second, we had a lively discussion of David Goodman's book "The Demanded Self." This session celebrated his achievement of publishing a book and fostered dialogue among Society members about the Levinasian perspective. Third, a preview of a new book under contract with Wiley Publishers entitled "The Wiley Handbook of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology: Methods, Approaches, and New Directions for Social Science" was presented. This marks the first text specifically explicating the sub-discipline of theoretical psychology, another milestone in the development of the Society.

In another wonderful development, Jack Martin announced that he will be editing a book series for Palgrave/Macmillan. The series will be entitled the "Palgrave Studies in the Theory and History of Psychology." Jack invited book proposals or discussions about potential books for the series. You can email him at jack_martin@sfu.ca.

New STPP Listserv

I am very happy to announce that we have begun the operation of a Society-run listserv. I want to thank Tyler Lefevor for his fine work in setting up the listserv. I hope this listserv will be a forum in which we can share resources, converse about upcoming events, make announcements, and build community.

This listserv has several benefits over the one currently managed for us by the APA. The most important advantage is that it is possible to post directly to the listserv and to reply to posts on the listserv and conduct conversations instead of just having occasional posts. We set it up with Google Groups, which allows users to manage the traffic on the listserv in several ways, including just letting the posts appear as they are sent, receiving a single daily collection of posts, or receiving only a digest of posts. I hope that you will find this listserv useful, informative, and worthy of your attentive participation. It is one of the ways that we are working toward greater interchange among members of the Society. If you have not yet been included in the listserv, please email Tyler Lefevor at tyler.lefevor@hotmail.com and ask him to add you to the list.

You can opt out of this list at any time or manage the number of emails you receive from the list. To change your account settings, go to <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/society-for-theoretical-and-philosophical-psychology> and click on the membership and email settings.

By law, the listserv cannot be used for any political or commercial agenda because we are a non-profit group. The value of the listserv depends on maintaining civil discourse. Infractions will lead to restrictions in posting privileges.

Student Committee

When students join the Society, they are often interested in becoming contributors to the Society and its work. When students have mentors who are members of the Society, this involvement can be relatively easy, but many students do not have ready access to opportunities for involvement. In many formal and informal conversations that I have had with student

affiliates, they have frequently expressed the desires to have a more active voice and to contribute to the Society in an ongoing way. I think our student members are tremendous assets to our Society, and that we should open some avenues for heightened involvement.

For these reasons, I have established a standing student committee in STPP, with the enthusiastic support of the Executive Committee. Elisabeth McClure (em443@georgetown.edu) and Tyler Lefevor (tyler.lefevor@hotmail.com) have agreed to be co-chairs of the student committee. The committee will be comprised of students with a senior member of the Society as a mentor. The primary charges of the committee are to (1) welcome students into the Society, (2) provide a voice to the student affiliates, and (3) recruit student involvement in the operations of the Society.

Elisabeth and Tyler have already begun their work. Two other students have already volunteered to be involved. If you would like to be involved, please email one or both co-chairs so that they can include you. They have many wonderful ideas about how the Student Committee can enhance students' experiences in the Society and contribute to the Society, so I encourage students to get involved.

Elisabeth and Tyler will be included in Executive Committee meetings and correspondence so that they can serve as liaisons. They are creating a student listserv, and exploring other options for enhancing communication among students. The other members of the Student Committee will be assigned to assist on other Society committees such as membership, web site management, and conference planning.

I look forward to great things from our students!

2013 APA Convention program

I want to thank David Goodman for his excellent work in completing the program for the 2013 APA Convention. It promises to be an excellent meeting with many top-flight papers, symposia, and posters. The Convention program has not been finalized by APA yet, but we will share the Society program with you once the APA completes its work. The Convention will be held on July 31-August 4 in Honolulu. Because it is Honolulu, the schedule is unusual, with all of the Convention events scheduled between 8am and 2pm. This made David's scheduling efforts very challenging, but the APA Program Office believes that leaving afternoon time for sightseeing is important to the success of the Convention.

We are currently working out the details of sharing a hospitality suite with Division 1. This is a very exciting development because it will make it possible for us to have a venue for more informal gatherings and discussions. David is considering a variety of events such as continuations of symposium sessions, a movie night, and a social hour. We will share that schedule with you as soon as it is available. We are not planning a program of presentations in the hospitality suite that is separate from the Convention program.

The "Big Questions, Essential Conversations" symposium series

As I announced to you in the Fall newsletter, I have been active in creating a divisional coalition with Divisions 1, 26, 32, and 39. These efforts have borne fruit in a few ways. The most significant outcomes at this point are the hospitality suite and the first edition of the "Big Questions, Essential Conversations" symposium series. The concept of this symposium series is to address big questions for psychology with the unique resources of psychologists who have strong expertise in historical, theoretical, humanistic, psychoanalytic, and general psychology

perspectives. The plan is to present 2 symposia per year to share our valuable knowledge with a broad audience in the discipline.

We have scheduled 2 symposia for the August, 2013 Convention. Each program will be co-sponsored by two coalition divisions and co-listed by all five divisions. The topics and speakers were selected by committees made up of members of the coalition divisions. The two panels are:

Subject Matters in Psychology. What should Count as Psychological Data?

Chair: Blaine Fowers

Participants:

Andrew S Winston, "Metaphysics, variables, and causes: Historicizing the subject matter of Psychology"

Harry Heft, "Why is psychology Darwinian, but not ecological? The need for a situated psychology"

Hank Stam, "Experience as data: Why phenomenology won but no one knows"

Discussant

Brent Slife

The DSM-5 and the Future of Mental Health Diagnosis: Critical Responses

Participants:

Joshua Clegg, "Reflections on Revolution: Paradigm Shifts in DSM Classification, Their Historical Conditions, and Contemporary Parallels"

Brent D. Robbins, "The 'Open Letter to the DSM-5': History, Impact, and Future Directions"

Nancy McWilliams, "DSM's Evolving – and Problematic – Classification of Personality Disorders"

Philip Cushman, "'Your Cheatin' Heart": From Scientism to Medicalization to an Unethical Psychotherapy"

I hope you will plan to attend these symposia as they promise to promote a great deal of excitement and conversation. The divisional coalition will be revising its symposium selection process, and I will let you know more about that as soon as possible.

The Bylaws Vote

Members of the Society will receive an electronic ballot to vote on Bylaw changes in the coming weeks. Please make it a point to vote on the Bylaws. Your voice is important. The ballot will come from the APA and you will vote through a web site. I want to thank Jim Lamiell for his leadership in preparing these Bylaw changes.

We have made a number of changes to the Society Bylaws to bring them up to date and to initiate important changes. For example, we have separated the offices of Secretary and Treasurer of the Society and we will include the Student Committee in the Bylaws to give it the institutional foundation for continuity and contribution.

DIVISION BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nominations for Awards: Nominations are also now being accepted for Division 24 Awards: *The Award for Distinguished Theoretical and Philosophical Contributions to Psychology*, *The Sigmund Koch Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology*, and *The Distinguished Service Award*. Details regarding awards and former recipients are available on the Division website: www.theoreticalpsychology.org
Please forward nominations to me bfowers@miami.edu.

The **Joseph B. Gittler Award** is also a very appropriate award for members of our Society. It was established through a bequest from Dr. Joseph Gittler. The award acknowledges scholarly contributions to the philosophical foundations of psychological knowledge. Nomination information and materials may be found at <http://forms.apa.org/apf/grants/>, or may be coordinated and collected by the nominator and sent to:

APF Joseph B. Gittler Award
American Psychological Foundation
750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242.

Student Professional Support Fund: The fund was established to help students with expenses related to attending the APA conventions and other meetings involving the Society. We have a somewhat spotty record of contributing to this fund, but there is some money available. Please know that all donations, however modest, are most welcome, and go exclusively to student travel to meetings. This is one concrete step that we can take to recruit younger members. I am hereby pledging an annual donation, and encourage you to do so as well. Please send any donation you might be able to make to: Dr. Amy Fisher Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Dallas, 105 Augustine Hall, 1845 E. Northgate Drive, Irving, TX 75062.

I hope to see you in Honolulu in August. I look forward to continuing to pursue the presidential initiatives I outlined above in the service of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology. I feel honored to be entrusted with this position, and I take the well-being of the Society very seriously. Please feel free to email me with comments, questions, or concerns that you might have.

Best wishes,

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