

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

Fall 2012 Presidential Newsletter



From Blaine Fowers

October 5, 2012

Dear all,

Having the opportunity to serve you as President of the Society has given me a much broader perspective on our Society, our membership, and our work. The Society has been my primary intellectual home for 25 years, but I have a renewed appreciation for the hard work and dedication of those who have served us in the past, and of the important issues that face us in the future. All of this has given me unexpected energy to address the three primary challenges I see facing us as a Society:

1. Dramatic changes in the format of the APA Convention and the distribution of presentation hours
2. A history of flat or declining membership in the Society
3. The relative isolation and neglect of our Society in the discipline of psychology

I have devised several presidential initiatives to take on these challenges, buoyed up by excellent help and encouragement from you, the members of the Society, and from the wonderfully responsive staff of the APA Division Services Office.

Please bear with the length of this newsletter. There are many important items and opportunities in it, including the 2013 Mid-Winter Meeting, a divisional coalition, an innovative membership drive, a new symposium series, and leadership changes.

Changes in the APA Convention

The APA has decided to shorten the Convention once again, and also to claim a somewhat larger percentage of presentation time for the Association. This will likely result in a net loss of presentation time for our Society, beginning in 2014. The changes are being phased in

gradually, so we will have only a slight decrease in program hours in 2014, but by 2017, the system will be fully in place.

Responses

- The Executive Committee decided that **our Mid-Winter meeting will be an annual event**. This will give us more time to explore and discuss our work together in a friendly and comfortable environment. Accordingly, we will have the 4th Mid-Winter meeting in **Austin, TX, February 21-23**. **Jeff Reber** has graciously agreed to be the Program Chair for the meeting. You will receive a call for papers and symposia in November. (Look below for more information.)
- The new format of the APA Convention will offer additional program hours for divisions that cosponsor sessions. In order to prepare for this, I have invited **four other divisions to partner with us in a Divisional Coalition** focused on big questions, reflection, dialogue, meaning, and values. This invitation was enthusiastically accepted by Divisions 1, 26, 32, and 39. We are actively preparing to cosponsor sessions, share hospitality suites, and pursue other initiatives together.
- One particular initiative of the Coalition is **an annual symposium series call Big Questions, Essential Conversations** that is designed to attract large audiences of psychologists to discuss the kind of issues that are frequently ignored, vital to our profession, and a showcase for the special expertise of our members. I will send out a special call for proposals for this opportunity in the coming days.
- David Goodman has been good enough to agree to be the Program Chair for our 2013 APA Convention program. (See below for more information.)

Membership Concerns

Many of us are aware of the flat or declining trend of Society membership, and that our membership is aging. This is sobering to contemplate because the Society is so important to us, but has a dim future without membership growth.

Responses

- We are engaging in **an unprecedented membership drive**. **Sarah Hickinbottom** and her membership committee are actively inviting individuals who have shown a clear behavioral interest in the kind of work we do. We have identified over 800 individuals who have submitted manuscripts to theoretical journals or attended our Mid-Winter meetings, but are not members. We will approach them in 3 phases. First, we have identified 20 very promising prospects, and we are offering them a free membership for 1 year. This is limited to 20 people because there is a small cost to the Society for free memberships. Sarah has already received some enthusiastic acceptances. We plan to entice them to stay with us by being a welcoming and interesting Society. Second, we will send a personal invitation to the others to join us. Finally, we will upgrade our efforts to recruit members at our Mid-Winter meeting and at the APA Convention.

- Under **John Christopher** and **Jim Lamiel's** leadership and with **John Carter's** longstanding efforts, we have an **updated, more interactive web site** that can help us attract more members. Thanks for your work and perseverance, colleagues!
- **David Goodman** and **Sarah Hickenbottom** have been active in setting up a **Society listserv** that we plan to activate this month. This will allow members to post directly to the listserv, have ongoing conversations, and to share materials and resources with each other. The idea is to increase the interaction among us and make our Society a more interactive and interesting group.
- We want to continue to offer a very welcoming environment to new members and to student members. I thought the Mid-Winter meeting was a tremendous success in that regard, and we will work to continue that success. I would particularly invite **volunteers to serve as welcoming ambassadors to new members**. We all know how daunting it can be to join a new organization. Please contact me or Sarah Hickenbottom to volunteer: shickinb2@gmail.com or bfowers@miami.edu

Relative isolation of our Society

Although many of us have become used to being relatively isolated and unacknowledged in psychology as a whole, this is not a necessary or inevitable situation. We have vital knowledge and resources that can enhance the scholarly and practical work of other psychologists.

Responses

- The Divisional Coalition I mentioned above will help to widen our involvement and influence in the profession by pooling our efforts and increasing our conversation partners.
- The Big Questions, Essential Conversations symposium series will provide a key venue for publicizing the resources and knowledge we have to the broad membership of the APA.
- **The Society's 2013 APA Convention theme is "Enriching Dialogue within and beyond the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology."** It is specifically designed to encourage greater dialogue with psychologists and philosophers outside of Division 24. I want to highlight many prominent examples of how our members share their expertise to help other psychologists enhance the work that they do.
- The 2013 Convention theme is also meant to encourage **vibrant dialogue among our members** with differing perspectives on important issues. One of the best ways to attract interest is to create an exciting environment. In the intellectual work we do, exchanges across different viewpoints can create significant excitement.

Awards

Many members of the Society were honored with awards to recognize the excellence of their work. Congratulations to all of you!

Karl Pribram - Distinguished Contributions to Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology Award
Suzanne Kirschner - Distinguished Service Award
Lisa Osbeck – Theodore Sarbin Award
David Goodman – Sigmund Koch Early Career Contributions Award
Barbara Held – Joseph B. Gittler Award
Tyler Lefevor – Student Paper Award

Comings and Goings

We owe our gratitude to the people who have served the Society in various roles who are now cycling out of those roles. We thank you for your many hours of service and the generous gifts of your attention and efforts!

John Christopher completed his term as Past President and cycles off the Executive Committee.

Michael Tissaw has completed his term as Member at Large.

Alan Tjeltveit has completed his term as Society Historian and as Program Chair of the 2012 Mid-Winter meeting.

Kate Slaney has completed her role as Program Chair of the 2012 APA Convention program.

Amy Fisher Smith has completed her term as Society Secretary, but will continue in a second term as Treasurer.

Our leadership ranks are being replenished by the wonderful volunteer spirit of additional colleagues. Thank you for stepping into these vital roles with energy and commitment!

Jeff Reber joins the Executive Committee as President-elect of the Society and as Program Chair of the 2013 Mid-Winter meeting

Naomi Lee joins the Executive Committee as Member at Large of the Society

Steve Harrist joins the Executive Committee as Secretary of the Society

David Goodman has agreed to be the Program Chair of the 2013 APA Convention program

2013 APA Convention Program

The 2013 APA Convention will be held in beautiful Honolulu, Hawaii, July 31 - August 4, 2013. The Society's convention theme is "Enriching Dialogue within and beyond the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology." Proposals that emphasize work that cuts across subdisciplines of psychology or that features dialogue between different points of view within Division 24 will receive preference. The aim of this program theme is to increase the vitality and interest value of papers and symposia for members and non-members of the Society.

David Goodman is the Program Chair for the Convention Program

(goodman.davidm@gmail.com) . Please note that proposals are due much earlier than usual this year. Proposals must be submitted electronically via the APA website by midnight on **November 16, 2012**. All proposals must be submitted online at <http://apacustomout.apa.org/ConvCall>.

General information on the 2013 Convention can be found at:

<http://www.apa.org/convention/proposals.aspx> .

Please draw this information to the attention of your students, and be sure to inform them of the annual student paper competition, the winner of which is awarded a \$200 prize. Students are asked to indicate their status on their proposals so that they can be considered for the award.

2013 Mid-Winter Meeting

The 2013 Mid-Winter meeting of the Society will be **the first annual mid-winter meeting**. It will be held in **Austin, Texas, February 21-23, 2013**. **Jeff Reber** (jeff_reber@byu.edu) is the program chair for the meeting. A call for papers will be sent in November, with a due date in December. Please distribute this call for papers widely to interested students and colleagues, and to appropriate listservs. **Frank Richardson** has graciously agreed to be the Site Host for the meeting. We had a wonderful meeting in Austin in March, 2012, headed up by **Alan Tjeltveit** as Program Chair and Frank as Site Host, and we are looking forward to continuing with a fine program next year as well. Alan remains as a member of the planning committee.

DIVISION BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nominations for Officers: Nominations (including self-nominations) are now being accepted for President-Elect (to succeed Jeff Reber, who will become President in 2013) and Historian/Documentarian (to succeed Alan Tjeltveit). Please email nominations to me at bfowers@miami.edu.

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*, *The Theodore Sarbin Award*, 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.

Apportionment Ballots: In early November, you will receive an apportionment ballot from APA. This vote determines divisional representation at Council and is the key to allotting convention programming time for the 2013 Convention. Please consider allocating *all* your votes to Division 24.

I hope to see you in Austin in February and in Honolulu in August. I look forward to pursuing 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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