

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

Spring 2009 Presidential Newsletter

Photo Credit: Hank Stam

From Barbara Held

With the arrival of Spring comes news of the Society's Convention Program, Award Recipients, Candidates for Office, and other items. Before getting to all this, I again thank all the members of the Executive Committee, who worked tirelessly in the service of the Society. Special thanks this time go to Lisa Osbeck, Secretary-Treasurer, now at the end of her three-year term, who has served us efficiently, effectively, and admirably.

Elections

The candidates standing for office in the Society are:

President-Elect: John Christopher

Secretary-Treasurer: Steve Harrist and Amy Fisher Smith

Member-at-Large: Mark Bickhard and Michael Tissaw

Candidate statements appear at the end of this newsletter. Election ballots will be mailed by APA in late April.

You will no doubt notice that there is only one candidate for President-Elect. This reflects the fact that quite a few who have been nominated for this office have declined to run, which is of course the right of every nominee. Accordingly, two years ago the Executive Committee voted to amend the bylaws of the Society to read: "The Nominations and Elections Committee shall endeavor to provide at least twice as many nominees as there are persons to be elected for each office of the Executive Committee. In instances where the Committee has made reasonable effort to identify suitable nominees for an office, but determines there to be insufficient number, the Committee is empowered to place only one candidate for that office on the ballot."

This year, despite all best efforts, the Society's Nominating Committee was not successful in obtaining a second candidate for the office of President-Elect. Although John Christopher agreed to run unopposed, this was not his preference. Our thanks to John for accepting our nomination under these somewhat awkward circumstances.

Awards

One of the pleasures of being President is the opportunity to announce the winners of the Society's yearly awards. On behalf of the Awards Committee, I extend hearty congratulations to the following 2009 Award winners:

Award for Distinguished Theoretical and Philosophical Contributions to Psychology

This is the Society's highest award, and recognizes one of its members each year for lifetime scholarly achievement. This year it is presented to **Michael Wertheimer**, in recognition of his remarkably outstanding, creative, and prolific work in perception and cognition (including gestalt theory), psycholinguistics, the history of psychology, and the teaching of psychology. He has published hundreds of articles and has authored or edited a great many books. Among these are *Max Wertheimer and Gestalt Theory* (co-authored with D. B. King), *A Brief History of Psychology*, *Fundamental Issues in Psychology*, the series *Portraits of Pioneers in Psychology* (6 co-edited volumes so far), and *An Oral History of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology* (co-authored with S. F. Davis).

Michael Wertheimer will give an address at the APA Convention in Toronto entitled "Psychology's Promising Past and Enigmatic Future." Although not the reason for his winning this award, it should be noted that he has served two nonconsecutive terms as the Society's President. He has also been President of the Societies for General Psychology, the History of Psychology, and the Teaching of Psychology.

Distinguished Service Award

This award is intended to recognize substantial contributions to the division that further the goals of theoretical and philosophical psychology. This year it is presented to **Frank Richardson**, in recognition of his many years of unflagging, dedicated service in various capacities: council representative, two consecutive three-year terms as associate editor of the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, President of the Society, and Program Chair. I am personally pleased to see Frank receive this award, because, in addition to the aforementioned forms of service, he has in my estimation worried more about the Society than has anyone!

Sigmund Koch Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology

This award is presented to an excellent young psychologist each year who is normally within ten years of the Ph.D. degree and has made promising contributions to theoretical or philosophical psychology. This year it is presented to **Michael Tissaw**, in recognition of his excellent work on conceptual analysis in general psychology and in human development in particular, as well as his lucid work on Wittgenstein, especially as exemplified by his book *Wittgenstein and Psychology: A Practical Guide* (co-authored

with Rom Harré).

Theodore Sarbin Award

This award honors a specific body of work by an individual psychologist that demonstrates notable achievement in one or more of the fields to which Theodore Sarbin has contributed, including narrative psychology, contextualist theory, social psychological theories of hypnosis, and other innovative theoretical work that is “critical” in the broad sense of the term. This year it is presented to **Ruthellen Josselson**, in recognition of her careful, revealing longitudinal empirical studies on the development of life narrative over time (as exemplified in her book *Finding Herself: Pathways to Identity Development in Women*); her keen theoretical insights about the complex dynamics of interpersonal relationships (as exemplified in her book *The Spaces Between Us: Exploring the Dimensions of Human Relationships*); and her impassioned advocacy for qualitative research.

Gittler Award (Administered by the American Psychological Foundation)

In the Fall 2008 Newsletter, I announced that the APF’s first Joseph B. Gittler Award in recognition of “the most scholarly contribution to the philosophical foundations of psychological knowledge” was bestowed upon Jerome S. Bruner. Here I remind the members of the Society that the deadline for nominations and self-nominations for the 2009 Gittler Award is June 1, 2009. The eligibility criteria stipulate that “The Joseph B. Gittler Award goes to a scholar whose body of work or whose individual work is of such consequence to have transformed the field of psychology” (as outlined in the first sentence of this section). Please see the APF link on the APA website for more information, including how to submit (self) nominations: <http://www.apa.org/apf/gittler.html>.

The 2009 Convention Program, Toronto

Program Chair **Michael Tissaw** has put together a diverse and stimulating program for the 2009 Annual APA Convention in Toronto (August 6 – 9). The theme is “Luminaries and Legacies: Perspectives on Noteworthy Theorists,” with presentations by distinguished scholars who are prominent members of the Society, prominent members of other APA divisions, prominent internationally, and/or prominent in Philosophy. Michael and I are happy to report that students are represented among those giving oral presentations as well as poster presentations. Please note that undergraduate students are encouraged to attend and participate in the Annual Convention, along with graduate students.

Highlights include:

Daniel Robinson, Invited Address: “Consciousness—The First Frontier”

Daniel Robinson is a member of the Philosophy Faculty of Oxford University, where he has taught since 1990. He is Past-President of both Divisions 24 and 26, having been given lifetime achievement awards from each. His published work ranges over the brain sciences, law, moral philosophy, and intellectual history. He is currently writing a book on Kant, the working title of which is *How Is Nature Possible?* Prior books include, among many others, *Consciousness and Mental Life* (Columbia University Press, 2008), *Praise and Blame: Moral Realism and Its Applications* (Princeton University Press, 2002), *An Intellectual History of Psychology* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), and *Aristotle’s Psychology* (Columbia University Press, 1989).

Amie Thomasson, Invited Address: “A Realist Ontology of Human Kinds”

Amie Thomasson is Professor of Philosophy and Parodi Senior Scholar in Aesthetics at the University of Miami, FL. Her work focuses on metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of art. She is the author of *Ordinary Objects* (Oxford University Press, 2007), *Fiction and Metaphysics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), and co-editor of *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2005). She has also published in the areas of consciousness and self-knowledge, the natures of cultural and social kinds and their relation to the kinds of the natural sciences, and the ontology of artifacts and works of art. She is currently working on necessity, existence, and the methods of metaphysics.

Professor Thomasson’s address will follow an invited symposium entitled “**Do Human Kinds Have Essential Qualities?**,” chaired by phenomenological psychologist **Frederick Wertz**, with presentations by Frederick Wertz, Jonathan Raskin, Ronald Miller, and Barbara Held (discussant).

Invited Symposium entitled “Carl Rogers, Rollo May, and Humanity’s Dark Side,” chaired by humanistic psychologist **Art Bohart**, with presentations by Art Bohart, Kirk Schneider, Peter Schmid (Sigmund Freud University, Vienna, Austria), and Maureen O’Hara (President of Division 32).

Michael Wertheimer, Invited Address (in honor of his Distinguished Contribution Award, see Awards): “**Psychology’s Promising Past and Enigmatic Future.**”

My special thanks to Michael Tissaw, whose painstaking work as Program Chair cannot be praised enough.

Student Paper Competition

The deadline for the submission of papers for the annual student paper competition is

May 15. Students should send their papers to this year's Program Chair, Michael Tissaw, at tissawma@potsdam.edu. The winner is awarded a small monetary prize (and our hearty congratulations). Please note that papers eligible for this award must have been submitted as possible papers or posters for the Society's program at the Annual APA Convention.

Proposal for Dues Increase

In an effort to keep dues to a minimum, the Executive Committee has operated for many years on a shoestring budget. That shoestring has now begun to fray; the problem is of course compounded by loss on our investments. Although the Society anticipates eventual revenue from royalties stemming from our publishing agreement with APA Journals, we estimate several years before these funds are sufficient to allow the Society to operate independently of its membership dues. In short, we have reached the point where we need to raise our dues. At the 2009 Business Meeting at the Convention in Toronto, a proposed dues increase will be put to vote. The proposed increase is from \$29 to \$35 for Members, Fellows, and Associates. This increase will make our dues equivalent to those of Divisions 26 and 32, which are often considered cognate divisions. The rate of \$9 for student members will remain unchanged. The Executive Committee requests your support of this proposal. It is essential to maintaining the financial health and thus the viability of the Society.

Please note that the APA Division Services has just announced that membership dues for the Society may now be paid online at this secure APA website: www.apa.org/divapp.

Professional Affiliate Category

During the Mid-Winter Conference Call of the Executive Committee, we discussed ways to bring attention to our Professional Affiliate category, which allows scholars to join the Society without joining APA. Indeed, part of the reason for our move to Society status was to help us compete with smaller organizations that have lesser dues (Professional Affiliate dues are \$20). Fred Wertz, our Fellows Chair, suggested that the term "Professional Affiliate" itself might attract those interested primarily in practice, when we seek affiliates who are non-practitioners as well. We discussed changing the category's title to that of something like "Scholarly Affiliate." Some such change would require a vote to change our bylaws, and we can discuss this at the Business Meeting in Toronto. Meanwhile, we request that members of the Society do what we each can to promote attention to and membership in this broadly construed category, especially among those outside of APA who share our interests in any capacity. See the new "Welcome" letter on the "Prospective Members" link on our website: www.theoreticalpsychology.org.

Interested scholars can now join the Society online at this secure APA website: www.apa.org/divapp.

New Website Design

Another way to increase our visibility is via a new, more appealing website design, especially one with improved connectivity. This is now in the works under the excellent and steadfast leadership of our Acting Webmaster, John Carter. Having now gotten our website up to date with the new url of www.theoreticalpsychology.org, John has requested input from interested members. Please contact him at jcarter@westga.edu, if you would like to get involved in this project in some way. My special thanks again to John for his tireless work in getting us to this important stage in our website's development.

Student Travel Fund

In 2008 students received contributions of \$50 each from our Student Travel Fund. With no end in sight to the financial crisis, we are in the difficult position of desperately needing more contributions to this fund, at the exact time when everyone has less to give. I request nonetheless that all members who are in a position to do so (especially tenured faculty members) contribute whatever they can. Donations of \$10, \$20, \$50, or \$100 will be greatly appreciated by many. Please send donations to Lisa Osbeck, Department of Psychology, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA 30118. On behalf of the Executive Committee, please accept my advance appreciation for anything you can give to this worthy cause.

A Note of Thanks

As this is my second and last Presidential Newsletter, I conclude by expressing my deep appreciation to all of the Society's members, for the opportunity to serve as its President. I again thank the Executive Committee for keeping me on track, with additional thanks to those with whom I have worked most closely; they have made this year of service a pleasure: John Carter (Acting Webmaster), Lisa Osbeck (Secretary-Treasurer), Jeff Reber (Membership Chair), Michael Tissaw (Program Chair), and the other two members of the "triumvirate," Jeff Sugarman (Past-President) and Kareen Malone, our incoming President.

As always, please feel free to contact me by e-mail or US Mail with any comments, questions, or concerns. I hope to see you in Toronto.

With all best wishes,
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Appendix: Candidate Statements

These statements can also be found online by April 10, 2009, at www.theoreticalpsychology.org. On the ballot you will receive from APA in late April there will be a website address where you can read any candidate's statement.

President-Elect

John Christopher

While a member of other APA divisions and professional organizations, Division 24 is my professional home and I am committed to honoring the past and promoting our future. I am interested in emphasizing the practical ramifications of theoretical work and I believe this can be done by re-establishing the links between the personal and praxis.

I am a Professor of Counseling Psychology at Montana State University. Since high school I have been interested in cultural meaning systems, understandings of personhood, and the nature of healing. I first pursued these interests at the University of Michigan and then continued exploring them in graduate school at Harvard and the University of Texas. As a professor at the University of Guam I began research with traditional healers in Southeast Asia. My publications include articles on how individualistic cultural presuppositions influence psychology as well as on alternative models of the self, personality and moral development, and culture based on philosophical hermeneutics and interactivism. I recently co-edited forthcoming special issues of *JTPP* on cultural theorizing and *Theory & Psychology* on positive psychology. I was a Member-at-Large of Division 24, and have been Division Liaison, Cluster Representative, and 2005 APA Convention program chair. I was awarded the Sigmund Koch Award in 2003.

Another interest of mine is the application of mindfulness to counselor training. My graduate class "Mind/Body Medicine and the Art of Self-Care" was recently featured in *Counseling Today*, the magazine of the American Counseling Association, and has been a source of qualitative research.

Secretary-Treasurer

Steve Harrist

Steve Harrist is an associate professor and associate head of the School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University. His Ph.D. is in clinical psychology from the University of Tennessee. He received the Regents Distinguished Teaching Award in 2004 and was named the Hyle Family Endowed Professor in K-20 Leadership in 2008. He helped develop and co-directs the OSU Leadership Minor. He developed and teaches *International Perspectives in Ethics and Leadership* and *Foundations of Ethical Leadership* for the minor program; he developed and taught

Ethical Theory and Leadership Praxis in Britain at Magdalene College, University of Cambridge for the OSU Scholar Development Program in 2008. His scholarly interests include philosophical psychology, ethical theory, and narrative. He has been a reviewer for the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* and for APA Division 24 and has presented at Division 24 meetings. He has published in *Theory & Psychology*, *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, *Journal of Research in Personality*, and *Forum on Public Policy*.

Secretary-Treasurer

Amy Fisher Smith

Amy Fisher Smith joined the University of Dallas in 2001 and is an Associate Professor in the Psychology Department. Her training is in clinical psychology and she is a licensed psychologist. Her research and scholarly interests include the critical examination of material reductionist trends in psychotherapy, the role of values in psychotherapy, multicultural psychology, and more recently, the role of contemporary psychology to holocaust studies and comparative genocide. She has a long affiliation with Division 24, having served as co-program chair and Member-at-Large for the division. She is committed to an integrated view that includes psychology and philosophy and would be happy to serve the Division in the role of Secretary/Treasurer.

Member-at-Large

Mark Bickhard

My graduate training focused on research methodology and clinical psychology, but, starting at least with (actually, before) a theoretical dissertation, my career has been focused in theoretical and philosophical domains for over thirty years: I have a strong commitment to theoretical and philosophical psychology. A primary interest has been in models of the ontology of psychological phenomena, such as representation and cognition, learning, emotions, reflexive consciousness, language, and so on, and I have published well over a hundred books, chapters, and articles attempting to address such phenomena. A current project is a book with the tentative title of *The Whole Person*: the draft is now over 800 pages and growing (people are complex!). I organize a biennial workshop on the model involved in this work: the Interactivist Summer Institute. We are planning for the fifth of these in June 2009 in Vancouver. I am editor of *New Ideas in Psychology*, a journal that has been open to wide ranges of work in theoretical and philosophical psychology since the early 1980s, and my current position is as the Henry R. Luce Professor of Cognitive Robotics and the Philosophy of Knowledge at Lehigh University.

Member-at-Large

Michael Tissaw

Michael A. Tissaw is Assistant Professor of Psychology at SUNY Potsdam, where he teaches courses on research methods, human development, and philosophical psychology. He earned his A.B. in Philosophy at Duke University and Ph.D. in General Psychology at Georgetown University, with emphasis on the application of methods of philosophical

analysis to theorizing and research in psychology. He is the Division 24 Program Chair for the 2009 convention and he has served previously on the division's convention proposal review committee. His publishing and presentation record includes co-guest-editing a special issue of *Theory & Psychology* (with Lisa Osbeck), a co-authored book on Wittgenstein (with Rom Harré), a forthcoming contribution to a special issue of *New Ideas in Psychology*, serving as symposium chair at a conference of the International Society for Theoretical Psychology, and presenting at APA and other conferences and meetings. Also, he has served as *ad hoc* reviewer for *History of the Human Sciences*, *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, and *Theory & Psychology*. If elected, he intends to continue his predecessors' efforts to recruit graduate and undergraduate students into the division and enhance the division's profile. He believes strongly that such efforts should include a cross-disciplinary approach, particularly at the undergraduate level.