

President-Elect Message

Beth Rom-Rymer, Ph.D.



Rabbi Hillel wrote: "If you are not for yourself, who will be? If you are not for others, what are you? And if not now, when?"

Having spent all day in synagogue yesterday for Yom Kippur, the most holy day of the Jewish year, I had a lot of time to reflect on my worldview as a Jew and to draw parallels between my ethnic/religious identification and my professional identification as a psychologist.

I have also had recent conversations with a young, early career, Muslim psychologist, active in APA, working in public health, who is wondering how IPA can fit into her professional life; with an early career Caucasian psychologist, who has successfully grown a large private practice in Rockford, who had been a music teacher before going back to school for his Psy.D., and has recently joined IPA; and with a more senior African American psychologist, who has had a career that has included academic research and teaching, consulting, and clinical work, and who has recently moved to Illinois and joined IPA.

Jewish culture and Jewish law urge us not only to love and appreciate freedom and justice for ourselves but to reach out to assist others so that all peoples can free themselves from their shackles,

whatever or whoever is the source of that oppression. We consider it sins to "turn a deaf ear to the cry of the oppressed" and to be "silent and indifferent" to the suffering of others.

Most importantly, the IPA is an organization of psychologists that puts the best interests of psychologists first. As I have discussed in recent articles, we have many challenges that face us: declining reimbursement fees from managed care companies; competition from other healthcare providers; competition from within our own profession; a poor economic climate. We are fortunate to have a strong group of active, energetic, and committed psychologists who are working tirelessly to advocate for fair reimbursement of psychologists' work and to create new practice opportunities for psychologists: our Executive Director, Terrence Koller, our president, Gregory Sarlo, our past president, Steven Rothke, our Director of Public Affairs, Lynda Behrendt, our Federal Advocacy Coordinator, Patricia Farrell, our Healthcare Reimbursement Committee, chaired by Randy Georgemiller and Beverly Matthews; our IPAGS Section, chaired by Molly Pachan; our ECP Section, chaired by Julie Atkins Waites and Helen Odessky; our Clinical Section chaired by Steve Kahn; our Consulting Section chaired by Chris Johnson; our Health and Rehabilitation Section chaired by Cindy Forster and Cathy McNeilly; our Sexual Orientation Section chaired by Gary Howell; our Social Responsibility Section chaired by Francine Smolucha; our Women's Issues Section chaired by Ann Sauer; our Public Information Committee chaired by Nancy Molitor, and our Committee on Public Affairs, chaired by Kathryn Klehr.

Beyond taking care of our own needs, we also concern ourselves with the needs of others: communities who desperately need mental health services but can't afford them. So, many of our psycholo-

Continued on page 3

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Continued from page 2

gists, some in addition to carrying a private practice, are also involved in caring for patients in public health settings where they do pro bono work or are paid by a governmental entity. Bruce Bonecutter, a veteran active IPA member, past IPA president and IPA representative to APA Council, has made his career working in public health and is now Director of Psychosocial Services, The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Kenya Key, an ECP psychologist and new IPA member, is a psychologist with The Women's Treatment Center and a mental health team leader for the W.I.N.G.S. Center at The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Janet Chandler, a veteran psychologist, has recently rejoined IPA, works with parents and children as a consulting psychologist to the Department of Children and Family Services and also works at The Women's Treatment Center.

In talking with my new friends and colleagues, the young, early career, Muslim psychologist, the early-career Caucasian psychologist/former music teacher in Rockford, and the senior African American psychologist, I was excited by the opportunities to learn more about their work and professional interests and to introduce them into our already increasingly diverse IPA community.

Who am I, as a psychologist and a Jew? I strive, every day, to live up to Rabbi Hillel's teachings and realize the urgency of "now." As IPA president-elect, I am eager to work with all of our psychologists in taking care "of our own" as well as taking care of those who, traditionally, have not had voices to ask for help. Do join us by signing up for Section and Committee membership as we take this fascinating journey together!