

The NASAP Newsletter

May-June 2011

Volume 44, No. 3

Greetings NASAP Members! I hope this issue of the newsletter shows you some of the wonderful things that NASAP has to offer, from conference pictures to election results to other organizational news! Lots of changes have occurred this year and NASAP is stronger than ever. Thanks, as always, for your feedback and comments as well as your submissions!

Susan Belangee
Newsletter Editor

IN THIS ISSUE:

Adler's Ashes Found	Distance Training with Stein
President's Message (includes election results)	Wellness for Life
New Executive Director	Family Education Section
Watts Receives Honor	Resource Page (at end)
Adler in China	Certificate of Study Awarded
News from Frank Walton	Conference Photos
In Memoriam	Thank you from Bob and Jane

Adler's Ashes Found

(Article originally written by Severin Carrell, Scotland correspondent, and published through guardian.co.uk, Sunday 10 April 2011)



The remains of Alfred Adler, one of the founding fathers of psychoanalysis, have been rediscovered, and are to be returned to Vienna nearly 74 years after he died suddenly on a lecture tour. Their location: a crematorium in Edinburgh

Adler, a core figure with [Sigmund Freud](#) in the group that founded the psychoanalytic movement before the pair split in 1911, collapsed after a suspected heart attack in May 1937 while he was in Aberdeen for a three-week-long series of lectures and seminars at the university.

The Viennese doctor, credited with developing the theory of the inferiority complex, was cremated alone, and his widow and surviving children lost track of his ashes. For the following 70 years their location remained a mystery to his family, his followers and Adlerian scholars.

Later this month, however, his ashes will go back to Vienna for a civic ceremony following a remarkable discovery in 2007 by the honorary Austrian consul to [Scotland](#), John Clifford.

Asked to trace Adler's remains by the institute he founded in Vienna, Clifford traced the casket to a crematorium only a few hundred metres behind the consulate in Edinburgh. They had been stored there in a quiet, wood-panelled gallery rarely visited by the public, alongside dozens of other caskets and urns.

His US-based granddaughter, Margot Adler, said his family thought Adler's remains were lost. "The first story I had heard was that the remains had disappeared ... They thought they were supposed to be in Aberdeen.

"The next story I heard was that I got some letters or an article about three Viennese Adlerian students going on a search ... and then I heard about John's discovery."

Margot, the daughter of Adler's only son, Kurt, said it was customary within the family to be cremated. In 1937, Scotland had two crematoriums, at Glasgow and Edinburgh, so after a funeral attended by Aberdeen university's most senior academics, the body was sent south to Edinburgh's crematorium at Warriston.

It appears the family heard nothing more. [Europe](#) was on the brink of war, and Adler's wife, Raissa, had been living in the United States since 1932.

They believed he died partly from stress, she said. Then 67, he had just learned that his oldest and favourite daughter, Valentina, a committed communist, had been sent to a Soviet gulag in one of Stalin's purges. Many of the family were socialists, and the Adlers were friends of Leon Trotsky and his wife.

Margot Alder found references to Valentina's disappearance in her own family papers, in a letter from Albert Einstein asking about her aunt.

"Our family wasn't the kind of family which cared about remains. I don't think anyone gave it much thought. Remember this happened in 1937 and then the war came. I think during the war, that was the last thing on anybody's mind," she said.

She believes her father would have been delighted that Adler's ashes were being returned to Vienna. Adler was made a freeman of Vienna in 1930, before fascism took hold. "Vienna was essentially Adler's home, his birth home and there was the triangle, you know, Adler, Jung and Freud, and all had that sense of coming out of that place, so there's something rather fitting about him going back there. I think it's kind of wonderful actually."

Later this month, Clifford will represent the Austrian ambassador in a formal handover ceremony at the crematorium with Edinburgh's lord provost, George Grubb, and members of the Society for Individual [Psychology](#) established by Adler in Vienna in 1912.

The ceremony is likely to strengthen links between the Adlerians and the Scottish Institute for Human Relations, which practises psychotherapy. "They were overjoyed. These people have been looking for their father figure," Clifford said.

- This article was amended on 13 April 2011 to make clear that Adler's ashes were traced in 2007, not 2011 as the piece originally suggested. The original article also said that Warriston was the site of Scotland's only crematorium in 1937. This has been corrected.

President's Message

Dear Members,

The splendor of Victoria is behind us. The next annual conference is in sight. I look upon both conferences as goal posts and what lies in between is the work of NASAP. Our recent celebration was deserved; big points were scored. We've transitioned to **a new executive director**, the universally approved **John Newbauer**; and a very distinguished professor from Sam Houston State University became **president-elect. Dr. Richard Watts I presume.**

As we march down the field, in pursuit of Atlanta, three initiatives lay ahead--increased diversity, increased membership, plus the evolution of sections.

DIVERSITY: To say the least, minorities are under-represented in NASAP. The BOD/COR's first endeavor was the formation of the Diversity Task Force. Next, the Atlanta conference was themed, *Social Equality: Still the Challenge of Today*. Conference proposals are now being sought. And above all, encourage your colleagues and friends to join you at local Adlerian events. Advocate! Let it be known that Adlerian principles, values, and practice transcend barriers.

MEMBERSHIP: Here's my story. In 1973 I began my studies in Adlerian psychology. Soon thereafter, like many of you, I realized I was an Adlerian. **As I proceeded**, I would forever explain to friends, colleagues, students and all interested parties, "I understand all human behavior through the lens of Adlerian psychology." **Next, I joined NASAP. It was an act of pride, an act of common sense, and an act of identity.** But in today's choice filled world, there are many colleagues who need encouragement to enlist, **to identify.** Please add yours.

Even more, add your voice to the membership campaign by doing the following: Submit a few lines to the newsletter editor for the issues to come, in advance of Atlanta, Why I joined NASAP! We'll sparkle forthcoming issues with expressions of commitment and inspiration.

Recently, I have espoused this idea. Is it possible to concurrently join both your local affiliate and NASAP with one fee (somewhere in between local and national dues)? The practical application sounds daunting and maybe impossible, given some affiliates don't charge dues. Here's what I would like you to consider. I am seeking two affiliates to "test pilot" this endeavor. Please talk within your community. Send your affiliate representative to the COR meeting in October with a willingness to try to carve this out. Two affiliates will be enlisted. **We'll collaborate thoughtfully to forge a unique partnership between the national and the local. Ultimately,** we'll report at the business meeting in Atlanta the results.

SECTIONS: will need to become more vibrant. Sections will need to become more relevant. Actually, the Family Education section is exceptionally vibrant and relevant. Introspection and problem solving lies ahead.

The COR and the BOD welcomes your thoughts ideas and encouragement.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Stein

Welcome from the New Executive Director: John Newbauer



It's exciting to be writing this very short introduction as the new Executive Director of NASAP. This is a time of rather radical change for me as I am retiring from full time clinical work and moving to part-time administrative type work. While I tell my friends and myself that I'm on the way to full time retirement, I think that's a bit of private logic that may not pass scrutiny. Of course, my wife, Pidge, recognizes my private logic – it's always easier for someone else to recognize it. Having her to point out my private logic now and then is one reason it will be good to be working with her in this new role with NASAP. She will be working with me in this new endeavor, so don't be surprised if she answers the phone instead of me sometimes.

I just came home from Bloomington, Minnesota yesterday where I spent a couple of days with Roger Ballou and his team, Rachel Holtzer and Allen Burns, getting ready to move the NASAP office to Fort Wayne, Indiana. At this point, we still have some basic housekeeping and set-up to do but I am hoping that we will be up and running within the next month. So if you are trying to reach us or get some information, please be a little patient. We won't have all of the boxes and files and so on from Minnesota here in Fort Wayne for at least another week and then we'll have to remember where Rachel said all the different pieces are located. Therefore, we'll be organizing and working at getting familiar with things so that we can serve you well in the future.

It is truly an exciting adventure for me to assume the responsibilities of Executive Director for NASAP. As many of you know, I've been involved in the leadership of NASAP for the past 20+ years as a member of the Delegate Assembly, the Executive Committee, President, and subsequently a Director on the Board. So, many of the people and challenges that we face are not new to me. What is new is that I now have a different perspective from which to view them.

Of course, with the move, we will have new contact information.

Phone: 260-267-8807

Fax: 260-818-2098

Mailing address: NASAP, 429 E. Dupont Road, #276, Fort Wayne, IN 46825.

Our office hours will remain M-F from 12:00 to 5:00 EST.

Please remember that we're in a state of transition, with my current full time position tapering down until June 17. We (Pidge and I) are looking forward to working with all of you.

John F. Newbauer, Ed.D.
Diplomate, NASAP
Executive Director

Watts Receives Honor

Richard E. Watts, professor and director for SHSU's Center for Research and Doctoral Studies in Counseling Education, has been recognized for his scholarship and service to the university with the title of Distinguished Professor.

"Distinguished university professor recognizes faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to their discipline, who have received national recognition for their scholarly contributions and their service contributions to their discipline," said Provost and vice president for Academic Affairs David Payne. "Dr. Watts has been recognized by his national organization as an outstanding scholar and an outstanding leader," Payne said. "He's a nice guy. You could say he's a genuinely decent and caring human being who has demonstrated on campus that he cares for his students and models hard work and integrity."

Watts has taught in the College of Education's educational leadership and counseling department since 2005. According to Watts, "Being recognized as Distinguished University Professor is such an honor and is a humbling experience as well. Success is a communal endeavor and I am very grateful for the support of my colleagues in the College of Education and in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling. As I look back to the time when I was an undergraduate here, and then look forward to today, I'm continually amazed at how fortunate I've been to be both a student and a faculty member at SHSU. I am very grateful for this recognition and extremely proud to be a part of the SHSU family."

Adler in China

Lois Ingber

In October of 2010, I had the honor of traveling to Shanghai (along with my husband and daughter) to provide six days of training to parents, teachers and others in Positive Discipline (Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott authors). Susie Zhang (recent Adler devotee), Richard Lu (director of Anray Family Education Center) and I coordinated for over a year making arrangements and preparing translated materials for workshops and presentations to parents, social workers,

teachers, community center employees and others. Approximately 400 parents learned the principles and tools of mutually respectful parenting, and 35 people became "Certified Positive Discipline Parent Educators," prepared to teach Positive Discipline parenting classes.

Family is a foundational part of life in China, and the participants were very open to Adlerian-based parenting. Their parenting challenges are similar to ours (at least with these participants): children not picking up after themselves, selfishness, lack of follow through with homework, defiance, etc. If their society takes on more "Western" influences, they may see more of the same kinds of issues we see here (too much "screen time", outright rebellion, drug use, etc.). As a societal value, the Chinese strongly emphasize education and excelling in diverse areas (music, sports, art, etc.) which has led to conflicts from over-structured schedules, hours of homework seven days a week, lack of opportunities for spontaneity and choice, and internal stress. Another societal challenge is that with both parents working (to be part of the growing economic boon in China), grandparents, using more traditional parenting approaches, are caring for the children, creating conflict with the parents' more open and flexible views of parenting.

I came to see in a more profound way how much of a genius Adler was, that the principles of mutual respect, belonging and significance are universal. These people, who live in a Communist country, who cannot own property, who are restricted to one child per family (with some limited exception to this policy), who have survived thousands of years of oppression and continue to live with repression (censored news and internet access - no YouTube or social network sites), are keenly aware of the concepts of dignity and respect, and it was encouraging and inspiring to see how readily they recognized the importance of these. I was deeply humbled that they wanted to learn and practice more respectful ways of parenting and teaching to benefit their precious children in hopes of a better future for them. I admire their courage and vision, and their willingness to take the steps forward to make this happen.

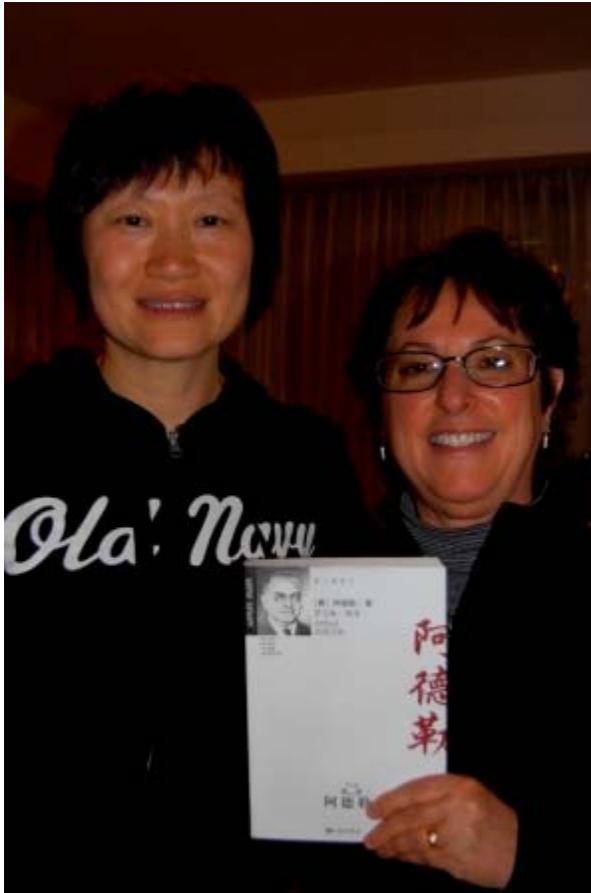
I also came to appreciate on a societal level the struggle inherent in moving from superior/inferior relationships to those based on equality. I became aware of how much the Chinese are used to being "told" things: by the government, by "experts," and that their "job" is to listen to these "authorities." This was very evident in the trainings when they also regarded me as an "expert." It required repeated explanation that it takes everyone's contribution and expression to co-create our world through dialogue, empathy and through making agreements together, all tools of mutually respectful parenting. In the trainings, we discussed the role of a leader or, "facilitator," that parenting and teaching are about offering leadership that invites participation, connection and encouragement. One woman shared, "I thought this was going to be about parenting, but it is really about being a better human being and creating relationships." She got it! And there were many other "aha" moments which left me with reverence and humility.

I was very moved by the story of another woman, an elementary school teacher who had learned about Positive Discipline only six months prior. She had been holding weekly meetings with the parents of her students. Upon hearing about the trainings only two weeks earlier, she quickly registered and rode 16 hours by train from a different province, just to attend.

Many of you know that we adopted our daughter, Brianna (9), from China eight years ago, when she was just one year old. She was thrilled about her first trip back to her birth country, and

made fast friends with Susie's daughter, Joy, age 8. She attended Joy's school while I addressed the parents. Making these kinds of connections, and being able to share my passion for IP, made the trip feel like destiny for all of us!

It was an amazing experience, an inspiring cultural exchange, and my family and I made new friends and lasting memories. I hope to return again in the near future, to share Adlerian principles with parents, teachers and others, and to learn together with these warm and gracious people how to create more peace in homes, schools and in the ever smaller and connected world.



Susie and Lois, holding translated book



New Parent Educators in China



Richard and Susie with Lois (center)

News from Frank Walton

South Carolina Conference of Adlerian Psychology (SCSAP)

SCSAP has scheduled its 29th annual conference for September 23-25, 2011. The conference will again be held at Springmaid Beach Resort at Myrtle Beach. It will feature four full day workshops and eight half-day workshops in addition to twenty 75 minute presentations on

Saturday. Each hotel room has a balcony overlooking the ocean. The program features a complimentary hospitality gathering Friday evening and musical entertainment as well as a sing-a-long Saturday beside the pool. Typically the conference features presenters from 10 to 13 states. The primary emphasis is upon improving the skills of practicing therapists, counselors, parent educators, and teachers. Moderate hotel, food and conference fees help this conference to be regarded as one of the most reasonably priced high-quality opportunities for continuing education units in the U.S. Access the SCSAP web site at www.adleriansc.org.

New Website

Frank Walton has created a web site that offers the opportunity to purchase his DVDs, publications and those of other Walton family members online. In addition, a number of Frank's journal articles, papers and speeches may be downloaded free of charge. The site may be accessed at www.DrFrankWalton.com.

Bulgarian Society Of Adlerian Psychology Is Founded

The first president of the Bulgarian Society of Adlerian Psychology is Professor Zhanetta Stoykova of Trakia University in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. After becoming exposed to Adler at ICASSI in Hungary in 2008, Professor Stoykova invited Frank Walton to be involved in a three year effort to bring the teaching of Adler and Dreikurs to students and faculty members in social work, psychology, counseling and education as well as to practitioners in surrounding cities. The university invited early childhood education specialist, Kathy Walton to strengthen the early childhood and primary school in 2009 and 2010. Professor Stoykova and nine other students and members of the faculty were able to attend ICASSI in Romania in 2010. The three-year project has been completed and has left Trakia University and Stara Zagora with an Adlerian presence that is only likely to grow due to the number of professionals and students who are dedicated to making the Individual Psychology of Adler a permanent fixture in their professional and private lives.

In Memoriam: Robert G. Willhite

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Robert G. Willhite on April 28, 2011.



Bob was associated with the Adler Graduate School since its inception in 1968 as the Alfred Adler Institute of Minnesota. He was even involved in its precursor organization, MINSIP (Minnesota Society of Individual Psychology). Bob served on the Board of NASAP (North American Society of Adlerian Psychology) and its predecessor organization, ASAP (American Society of Adlerian Psychology), serving as Secretary of the Executive Committee from 1966 to 1972. He lectured on Early Memory Analysis and Dream Analysis at several NASAP conventions.

Bob re-joined the faculty of the Adler Graduate School in 1999. He taught Advanced Adlerian Approaches to Counseling, Psychotherapy and Treatment Planning, Clinical Assessment and Advanced Life Style Analysis. He was involved in research in creative uses of Adlerian Theory.

A remembrance page has been created at the Adler Graduate School website. Click [here](#) to leave a message for Bob's family and colleagues.

Bob is survived by his wife, Jean and four children - Randy, Richard, Ronald and Roxanne. His daughter, Ruth, preceded him in death. He is also survived by seventeen grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday May 4, 2011, at 1:00pm at the North Ridge Senior Living Center. Memorials may be made to the Cerebral Palsy Foundation or Alzheimer's Research.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Bob's family and his many friends and colleagues.

Distance Training with Henry Stein

Distance training in Classical Adlerian Brief Therapy is now being offered by the Alfred Adler Institute of Northwestern Washington. Based on the original teachings and therapeutic style of Alfred Adler, and the innovative techniques of Anthony Bruck, who studied with Adler, this 18-month, mentor-oriented program leads to Certification, with options for including training in Career Assessment and Organizational Consulting. A unique blend of Socratic questioning and creative graphics provides efficient, time-saving strategies for the rapid resolution of many client difficulties.

Our mentors guide students through self-paced home study of selected books, published and unpublished articles, audio and video recordings, and weekly one-to-one telephone or Skype discussions. A personal study-analysis, case supervision, and a 3-day, experiential workshop ensure the effective fusion of theory and practice.

For additional information about distance training and Certification in Classical Adlerian Brief Therapy or Depth Psychotherapy, go to www.Adlerian.us. For further discussion, call me, Dr. Henry Stein, Director of the Alfred Adler Institute of Northwestern Washington, at (360) 647-5670.

Wellness for Life

Lois Marecek

An Idiomatic Perspective

Words, words, words! Words seem to be a part of our lives in one form or another.

A few months ago, I was asked to come in to one of my former schools and cover for a teacher. She has the middle age rug rats of fifth and sixth grade combination Montessori. It's always fun being a part of their lives.

Of all things, students were working with *idioms* as part of their journal writing. Each day they are given a different *idiom* to define and state how it relates or may relate to their life.

One might say Adlerian psychology has roots in *idioms*. Yes, I said *idioms*. *Idioms* by definition are a natural way of speaking to a native speaker of a language. How would Adler and Dreikurs view things? Let's take a moment to look into that 'Adlerian crystal ball' and see what we can see.

Back To The Drawing Board: When an endeavor fails – it's time to start all over.

Don't Put All Your Eggs In One Basket: Explore your options / possibilities

Finding Your Footing: Developing confidence

It Takes Two To Tango: A conflict usually results from the input of more than one person

The Ball Is In Your Court: Make a commitment toward....

Make No Bones About It: Give factual information so there are no doubts or objections

Know The Ropes: Be able to apply the information in problem solving / decision making process

On The Same Page: All parties get the same info at the same time to come to an agreement

Rome Was Not Built In A Day: It takes commitment and practice for a positive change

Practice Makes Perfect: Process that builds confidence which includes encouragement and support

Drastic Times Call For Drastic Measures: Sometimes we have to 'spit in your soup' (Dreikurs)

Get Over It: Ability to move beyond the concern

Wear Your Heart On Your Sleeve: The ability to safely and freely express your emotions

Variety Is The Spice Of Life: The more positive experiences, the more exciting life can be

Last But Not Least: All are respectful, equal contributors – a democracy

Tongue And Cheek: Let's not forget the value of humor

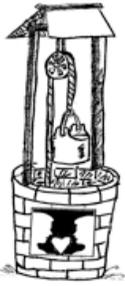
These are just a few that I feel are grounded into Adlerian psychology. Hope you can see it, too.

Who would I be, if I didn't leave you with an *idiomatic* look into the end of the school year?

ANIMAL END OF SCHOOL YEAR TWIST

We often worked like a horse.

At times, we ate like a pig.



WELLNESS FOR LIFE
by Lois G. Marecek M.Ed., NCC, LPC
Copyright ©2000

Sometimes, we had to play chicken.
On occasion, we got someone's goat.
We had to be slippery as an eel.
Quite often, we got dog-tired.
And, although quiet as a mouse.
We had to be as quick as a cat.

Inside, we were as strong as an ox.
We had to buffalo a few.
Which made us feel as ugly as a toad.
But, outwardly, we were gentle as a lamb.

Sometimes we were as happy as a lark.
It made some of us, on occasion, drink like a fish.
While some students made us proud as a peacock.
Others made us feel as hairy as a gorilla.

Leaving friends might put a frog in our throat.
Different routines will make us feel like a lone wolf.
But, like an elephant, let's never forget....
Summer renewal should be a whale of a time!
Author unknown

Now that I'm about '*idiomed*' out, let me leave you, as I.... and perhaps you will....
Out On The Town: Take time to go out and enjoy yourself!

Warm Fuzzies!

Family Education Section

The Representatives for the Family Education Section would like to share the following with NASAP members.

The membership of the Family Education Section crosses a broad spectrum including both professionals and nonprofessionals.

We support the purpose of our Section in a number of ways:

1) By creating a forum and network for exchanging ideas, materials and resources related to Adlerian Family Education and to reduce isolation and discouragement among individuals and small groups who do not have access to on-going community support:

- Our newsletter, *FAMILY!*, is distributed up to three times a year to Section members. It features members' activities, a "Dear Addy" advice column, upcoming events, and tips and strategies meant to improve members' skills and knowledge base. Online, you can read back issues at the NASAP website, but the current online issue is available to paid members only.
- We have an active listserv that keeps our Section connected: Need a good book recommendation for a client? Looking for a new experiential activity to drive home a point in your presentation? Want a handout that reinforces the material you are using? Needing to clarify how to present information on (e.g. teen brain development)? Wondering if there is a parenting group in a certain location?

Are you looking for support in the field of family education? Would you like to connect with others who share similar interests? Are you able to offer support and / or share your knowledge, experience, and wisdom?

Do you want to reach out to others across the world, who are interested in family education? These are all ways you can get involved with our listserv.

- Members are invited to present at the annual NASAP conference. Attending members receive educational enrichment by being present at these sessions.
- Networking. Our membership works very collaboratively and openly to help one another grow personally and professionally. Sharing of resources, making introductions, helping people with similar challenges is what we are about!

2) Encouraging the development of increasingly effective methods for the research, collection and dissemination of information related to Family Education:

- One of our long standing members, Jody McVittie along with her colleague, Al Best, led a research study of Adlerian based parent education classes. They wrote an article on the very favorable outcomes for Adlerian parenting techniques. You can find the results of their findings in the Fall 2009 edition of *The Journal of Individual Psychology*. This type of research really helps to give credibility to the work we do, in a society that increasingly wants to see quantitative as well as qualitative results.

3) Supporting and highlighting the work already in existence in Family Education:

- We have a number of authors in our midst (book reviews are often in our newsletter, *FAMILY!*)
- We have many innovative family educators who are using YouTube, Facebook, Webinars and Twitter to connect with parents.

- Some of our family educators are expanding into parent coaching and parent "boot camps"

Why not join the Family Education Section and see what we are all about?

For more information, please feel free to contact our governance team:

Co-Chair Terry Lowe thlowe@sasktel.net

Co-Chair Patti Cancellier patriciacancellier@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer Kerry Mayorga kerry@mayorgacoffee.com

FAMILY! Newsletter Editor Bryna Gamson ParentEd@comcast.net

Certificate of Study Awarded

Jon Sperry completed the requirements and earned a Certificate of Adlerian Studies. His certificate was acknowledged at the conference in Victoria, BC. Congratulations to Jon on his achievement!

For more information about the Certificate of Adlerian Studies, please visit the NASAP website, Professional Development section.

NASAP Conference Photos



Picture of The Fairmont Empress from ferry



Bob Powers giving Ansbacher Lecture



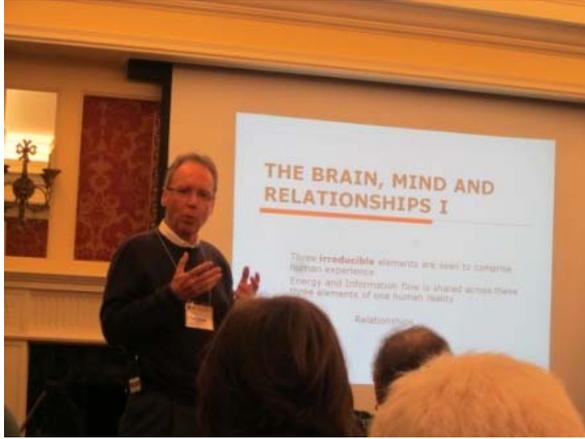
Attendees enjoying the Beecher reception



View of Canadian Flag from Empress



Steve Stein (at podium) and Becky LaFountain present award to keynote speaker Martin Brokenleg



Bob Armstrong gives presentation



Steve Stein and Susan Burak present Social Interest Award to Betty Murray (left)



Jane Griffith and Bob Powers receive Lifetime Achievement Award



Bob and Jane with their award



Marion Balla speaks with Raffi at the banquet



Attendees enjoy the banquet



Raffi speaks about his work with and for children



Raffi sings one of his songs



Raffi invites the audience to join in



The audience listens to Raffi's keynote speech



Becky Lafountain (left) and Teal Maedel present Raffi with plaque



The Council of Representatives meeting on Sunday

We are deeply grateful
for this recognition and
encourage to think we might
have made a contribution
to advancing the work of
Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs.

Sincerely,

Jane Gryffain
and
Bob Powers

May 28, 2011

Dear NASAP Friends and Colleagues,
Thank you for honoring us at
The recent Annual Conference
of the Society, meeting in
Victoria, British Columbia, May
12-15, 2011.

We were completely surprised,
when NASAP President Steve Strain
and Congratulate Chair Betty
LaFontaine called us forward to join
them at the Podium. There, they
presented us with a Lifetime Achievement
Award in the form of a bronze plaque
engraved with both our names and
a paragraph setting forth our
Adlerian-related activities over the
combined 85 years of ^{our} professional life.

Winning the Whining Wars

The Parent Encouragement Program, an Adlerian based family education center in Kensington, Maryland, contributes parenting articles to local parent magazine as a way to both market their program and spread the word about Adlerian parenting. Below is one example. Others are available on the PEP website at: www.pepparent.org/peppubs.html.

By Emory Luce Baldwin, LCMFT

After rushing to finish her work early, Marta arrives with her son at the pediatrician's office for his 4-year-old checkup. Checking in with the receptionist, she learns that the doctor is running late and they will have to wait another 30 minutes. "At least," Marta thinks, "there is lots of kid stuff here to keep Tomas entertained."

After a few minutes with the toys, however, Tomas complains that he is bored and wants to go--now.

"No, we can't."

"I don't wanna stay here, Mami. Wanna go now, Mami, now!" says Tomas, in a petulant sing-song.

"Stop it!" Marta replies, a bit more sharply. "You're talking like a baby. Go play with the toys over there."

"Wanna go now, Mami, wanna go now, Mami," Tomas continues to drone, his voice even more irritating.

"Stop whining!" Marta repeats, impatiently. She tries to distract him by opening one of the children's books. This seems to work for a few minutes, until Tomas begins to complain again.

"The book is dumb, Mami. I wanna go . . . I wanna go . . ."

A Most Annoying Sound

The buzz of a mosquito, the screech of a power drill, the scratch of fingernails on a chalkboard--parents compare their children's whining to the most annoying sounds ever heard. No wonder mothers and fathers feel so irritated with whiny children and try so hard to get their children to . . . Just. Stop. Whining!

As annoying as it is, not all whining is equal. Sometimes young children are genuinely fretful or uncomfortable because they are very tired or feeling sick or may be frightened. At such times, it is normal for children to ask for soothing and comfort in a more baby-like way than usual. This type of whining is rare, though, and can be quieted quickly with some well-placed cuddles and kisses.

Truly troublesome whining is different. This is the exaggerated and irritating complaining that a child uses to create a show of phony distress and gain the parent's attention. Whining, like all misbehavior, serves a purpose. The whiny child is exaggerating, creating drama and intensity by using a cranky and disagreeable voice that cannot be ignored. A child may whine about a problem, but the whining is not for the purpose of solving the problem. The only purpose accomplished through whining is to annoy the parent and keep the parent busy attending to the child.

The Solution

Therein lies the solution. Make it your family policy not to grant any request that is made with a whiny voice. One clever mother always pretended to be deaf when her children whined, tapping her ears dramatically and wondering out loud whether there was a magic spell making her unable to hear. Her children responded first with surprise and then with giggles. Limits on whining can be upheld in fun ways, as well as firm ones.

"Whining Doesn't Work" is a practical family policy and an effective way to discourage whining in your home. It works well when children are taught appropriate ways to ask for what they want and courteous ways to complain about things they don't like. These are lessons your children will enjoy learning, especially when you teach them in a playful manner.

Four-year-olds love drama and are captivated by theatrical demonstrations of courtesy and respect. You might instruct your child in "royal etiquette" by saying, "Princess Daisy, when you ask the royal King for his help, you must do so politely. Such as, 'Father dear, would you grant me the favor of your assistance?'" "Curtseys and bows and other flourishes add to the fun of these lessons.

Children also can be taught how to complain courteously. "Cowboy Zachary, you better talk real nice to the cook, or else she might just quit the cattle drive! How 'bout sayin', 'Pardon me, Ma'am. But I'd sure appreciate it if you made my pancakes bigger, please.'"

Of course there will always be times when a fretful child doesn't want to be cheered into politeness or playfully encouraged to be courteous. Even so, an unhappy child can be offered the choice of winning your attention in useful rather than useless ways.

"Tomas, I need your help," says Marta. "Next Sunday is your grandmother's birthday, and I want to make her a special dinner. But I can't remember--what kind of cake is her favorite? And what kind of ice cream does she like? Can you give me your advice?"

Learning to Cope

Finally, every child must learn how to cope with small irritations and big problems in life. Whining is often a young child's response to dissatisfaction and discomfort. But in the long run, children need to discover that they have the strength and resilience to deal with tough situations and hard times. Every child, even an unhappy child who has something to whine about, can be encouraged to remember that he has what it takes to face his problems courageously.

"Yes, Tomas, it is hard to wait when you want to go home. But I remember other hard things you have done, too. I guess that a boy who could learn how to put his face in the water and blow bubbles like you did last summer can also learn how to wait even when he doesn't want to. What do you think?"

Tips for Minimizing Whining

Adopt a "Whining Doesn't Work" policy for your family. Ask your child if he would like to try his request again without whining.

Teach your child how to make requests and complaints appropriately. Have fun with playful demonstrations of courtesy.

It's natural to want to complain right back to a whiny child, but listen to your own tone of voice. Be careful not to whine about how much you dislike whining.

Remember that every child can eventually learn to face difficulties and discomfort with patience and fortitude. Whiny children respond better to encouragement than to criticism or pity.

Copyright © 2010 The Parent Encouragement Program.

Emory Luce Baldwin is a family therapist and certified parent educator with the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP). www.emorylucebaldwin.com This article first appeared in Washington Parent in the October 2010 issue.