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# Extraordinary Exaltation

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# THE GROUP PSYCHOLOGIST

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A Newsletter of Division 49 of the American Psychological Association

## Convention Issue

### President's Column

*Don Forsyth, PhD*

#### Extraordinary Exaltation

The Internet, with its listservs, web pages, and video-conferencing, provides us the opportunity to join together in a virtual space, but despite technology's charms there is still nothing like that quaint once-a-year gathering of psychologists known as the Annual Meeting. Leave it to Émile (Durkheim, that is, and a true lover of groups if there ever was one) to describe the importance of a face-to-face ritualized gathering of members, for when all "are once come together, a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation" (1912/1965, p. 262). Durkheim was describing the large gatherings of local communities in New Guinea, but "extraordinary exaltation" seems to be a worthy goal for any group to pursue via a collective enterprise.

This year will find us streaming into Boston for what promises to be an outstanding series of presentations, meetings, and workshops all focused on group psychology and group psychotherapy. The content of the APA program represents the hard work of a group, of course. The Division owes a debt of thanks to the diligent work of Jeanmarie Keim (chair of the convention program committee), and its members Jennifer Harp, Joshua M. Gross, Maria Riva, Janice Delucia-Waack, Kathleen Ritter, and Nina Brown. Their efforts mean that there is much to see and do at the convention, as members will need to divide their time between presentations that stretch from Thursday to Sunday (August 14–17). The full division 49 program is previewed in this newsletter, which provides those of us who like to prepare for their collective experiences with the data they need.

All the sessions should prove edifying, but I would like to draw your attention to three in particular and urge you to work them into your schedule. On Friday afternoon the membership committee

has put together a session on mentoring, and invites all members to join in. Following the structured program members will have the opportunity to meet and mingle more informally. On Saturday afternoon the division has its more business-focused meetings, with my presidential address followed by a business meeting and then the Group Psychologist of the Year address. This year we recognized

Richard Hackman, Edgar Pierce Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology at Harvard University, who will be discussing his work on high-performance teams. That evening will be our traditional Division 49 APA reception, to be held from 6 to 9 in the Division 49 Hospitality Suite. APA assures us that the suite will be in the Boston Marriott Copley Place, but we won't know the room number until we check-in. That ambiguity creates, though, one of our long-standing Annual Meeting rituals. Like a secret handshake or a clandestine signal shared with insiders, Division 49 members will pass the suite location from one person to another. (And for those who prefer less intrigue, there will also be signs posted at the Marriott Copley and you can use the house phone to call the suite, registered under my name.)

Groups people recognize the value of good process as well as good content, so we know that the interpersonal machinations that will unfold across our 4 days in Boston—the exchange of greetings with colleagues and friends, the search for the location of the reception, the pro-forma business meeting, and the clustering into subgroups for forays out to find restaurants—are as important as the scientific and professional material embedded in the Division's

*(Continued on page 4)*



*Don Forsyth PhD*

**Division 49  
Convention Program  
pp. 7–9**

**You are invited to the Division 49 party at the APA Convention on Saturday, August 16, 6–9 pm, in President Don Forsyth's Suite, Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel.**

## President's Column

(Continued from p. 1)

many presentations and workshops. They are the means by which our group is transformed from a professional affiliation into a more personally meaningful membership. I must admit that I have joined a good many groups and professional associations, but I identify with relatively few of them. For example, I've been a member of the alumni association for my alma mater for a good many years, but since I've never really done any alumni stuff I don't really feel like a *member*. What is needed, to spur greater identification with the group, is some type of collective action that changes mere affiliation into identification and membership; the Annual Meeting provides us with just such an event, as we can join formally and informally with like-minded theorists, practitioners, and researchers to celebrate our unique interest in groups. So, if August finds you in Boston at the annual convention, be sure to join your fellow Division 49ers for a celebration of all that is group.

By the way, if you can't make the Annual Meeting (what, late summer in Boston is not your idea of a great vacation spot), don't forget that there are many other ways to strengthen your connection to Division 49. Submit a paper to *Group Dynamics* or an article to the *Group Psychologist*. Join the discussion-oriented listserv, *Group-Buz*, and take part in its online discussion of issues in research and application. Serve as an officer of the association or a liaison for the division to another association. Or, volunteer to work on one of the committees of the association—a number of them are listed in a feature in this issue, along with the contact information for the chairs of each one.

See you in Boston.

## President-Elect's Column

*Robert K. Conyne, PhD*

### HEAR YE, HEAR YE: 49's FUTURE IS BRIGHT!



*Robert K. Conyne, PhD*

Okay, I'll stop shouting now. But I do want to proclaim, as a town crier might have done around Faneuil Hall during the time of the American Revolution, what I perceive to be both good news and a current truth: Our Division is in fairly good shape now, it needs to expand, and it's moving toward a state of being hale and hearty in the years ahead.

What motivates this optimism? In one word, STUDENTS. Oh, sorry, there I go again, yelling. No more, I promise. I'll try to share my enthusiasm more appropriately. (An aside: Do you ever grow weary with "constant appropriateness"? Ahh, that's a whole other matter, I won't go there...)

In the last wonderful ("Election and Memorial" issue, April 2008) Leann Terry began the "Student Section" column with the following "warning": "Watch out Division 49...the graduate students are mobilizing!" (p. 30).

Given the Boston context of our upcoming APA convention, when I read those words from Leann I couldn't help but think of the midnight ride of Paul Revere, made famous in Longfellow's poem, "Paul Revere's Ride." Lore has it that Revere alerted those along the road to Lexington, "The British are coming, the British are coming!"

But that's where the analogy ends abruptly. After all there's no battle here, no foe. But our students bring palpable energy, enthusiasm, and plenty of ideas for action, some of which might cause us to stretch as a Division.

Frankly, the idea of a "friendly revolution," is one to embrace. These students that Leann mentions are full of vim, vigor, warmth, and great ideas. They are group savvy and view 49 as their "home" within the APA superstructure. And they are not shy about expressing what's on their mind about how 49 can continue to build and broaden.

Lynn Rapin, immediate Past President, and I (full disclosure reveals that we also are married) hosted a meeting of some of these 49 students at our home one Saturday afternoon in April. Those from the student committee who were able to make it included Kyle Barry, Greg Capriotti, Leslie Markowitz, and Leann Terry.

This meeting was not our idea, that belongs to the students entirely, but we were delighted to host it. Members of the student committee were coming to Cincinnati, which turned out to be a kind of cross-roads location for them to—get this—meet on their own volition to outline how they might continue to contribute to the Division in general and to expand opportunities for students in particular. Lynn and I suggested they alight at our house, have some lunch and carry on their business. We sat in and participated some, too. But it clearly was their meeting.

I'll refrain from reporting the results of the discussion. These were numerous, positive and invigorating. Please see Leann's summary in her column. But I'll comment a little on my reactions during the meeting, trying to give you a sense of its tenor.

After a delicious lunch, I quickly become aware as the meeting progresses that these students sure seem committed to groups and already to Division 49. I marvel at the surging energy, the ideas being offered and how the students are able to build on each other's input. Note to self: "This is great group work!" After a short while