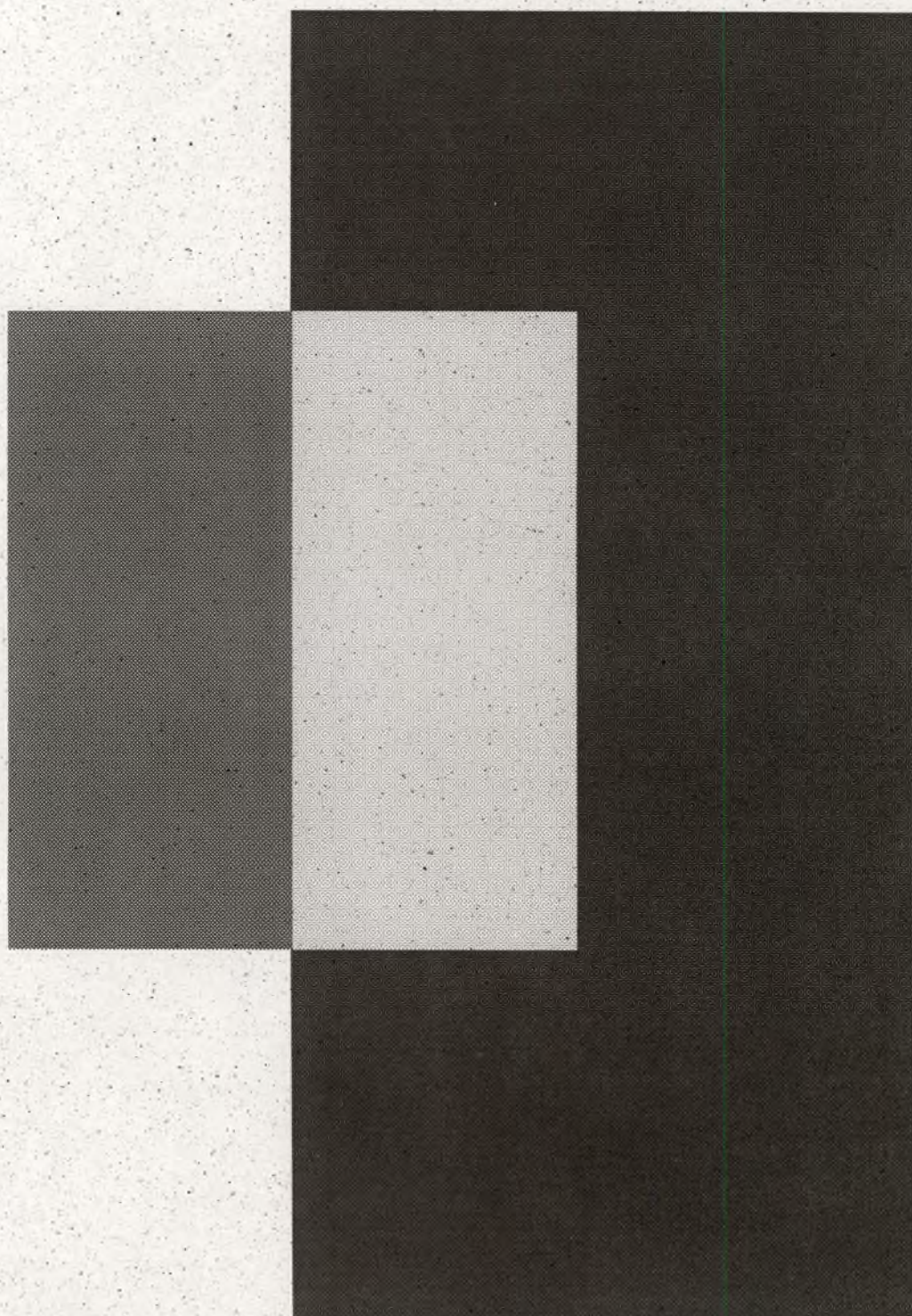


REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING



Volume 2, Number 4

Fall 1996

A Journal for the Helping Professions

REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

EXECUTIVE BOARD, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH (CSULB)

Catherine Goodman, Department of Social Work
Mary Ann Jimenez, Department of Social Work
John Jung, Department of Psychology
John Oliver, Department of Social Work
Nancy Oliver, Department of Nursing
Marilyn Potts, Department of Social Work
Madeleine Rose, Department of Social Work

Sonia Leib Abels, Editor, Department of Social Work
Paul Abels, Associate Editor, Department of Social Work
Janet Black, Associate Director, Department of Social Work
James J. Kelly, Director, Department of Social Work

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chauncey Alexander, California State University, Long Beach, Department of Social Work
Edward Canda, University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare
Kenneth Chau, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Department of Social Work
Suzanne Dworak-Peck, NCN, Los Angeles, CA
Suzanne England, Tulane University, School of Social Work
Sheldon R. Gelman, Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work
Jane Gorman, New Mexico Highlands University, Department of Social Work
Aaron Gresson, Pennsylvania State University, School of Education
Maulana Karenga, California State University Long Beach, Department of Black Studies
John A. Kayser, University of Denver, School of Social Work
Martin Kohn, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
Joan Laird, Smith College, School for Social Work
Edward A. McKinney, Cleveland State University, Department of Social Work
Emilia E. Martinez-Brawley, Arizona State University, School of Social Work
William Meezan, University of Southern California, School of Social Work
Samuel I. Miles, Psychiatry and Neurology, Los Angeles, CA
Moses Newsome Jr., Norfolk State University, The Ethelyn Strong School of Social Work
Julie O'Donnell, California State University, Long Beach, Department of Social Work
Julian Palley, University of California, Irvine, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Beatrice Saunders, Editor in Residence, Fordham University, School of Social Work
David Scardino, Screen Writer, Los Angeles, CA
Deborah Scott, Division of Forensic Medicine, Department of Mental Health, Hartford, Conn.
M. Christine Talmadge, California State University, Long Beach, Department of Nursing
John Wilson, Cleveland State University, Department of Psychology
Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, Boston University, School of Social Work
Gail Goldberg Wood, Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

REFLECTIONS (USPS 000-025), published quarterly as follows: one issue in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall by California State University, Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, California, 90840.
Periodicals postage pending at Long Beach, California.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: REFLECTIONS, Department of Social Work, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, California, 90840-0902.
Telephone (310) 985-4626.

REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

REFLECTIONS: NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING (ISSN 1080-0220) is published quarterly by The University Press, California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) under the auspices of the Department of Social Work. Annual subscription rates: individuals \$25.00, libraries & institutions \$35.00; outside U.S.A. add \$15.00. Single copy \$10.00. Make checks payable to **REFLECTIONS**, CSULB. Address: CSULB, Long Beach, CA 90840-0902. Subscribers please notify the journal immediately of change in address; provide both new and old address and zip. Allow six weeks for change.

COPYRIGHT © 1996. **REFLECTIONS: NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING**. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REGISTERED, U.S. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

REFLECTIONS' purpose is to publish narratives, personal accounts that describe and explain the process of helping others and shaping social change over time. The journal seeks to build a literary tradition and a record of wisdom for critical study and fruitful discovery. It encourages stories that convey a sense of immediacy, portray practice across diverse populations and capture the range and variety of strategies and systems within the helping professions. Priority is given to articles that provide new understanding of practice. The journal publishes stories of professional helpers such as ethicists, psychotherapists, community organizers, case and group workers, policy makers, family and child practitioners, health and mental health care providers; and educators, researchers, and administrators in the helping and academic professions.

REFLECTIONS' central theme is narrative inquiry of professional practice. It publishes personal accounts of professional action designed to aid and support human and social development. The stories have a literary presence, offer new perspectives on practice, and demonstrate the conceit of failure as well as success. The narrator explains the reasons for the action and freely identifies the mistakes made in the practice. The purpose of the narrative is not to demonstrate achievement; rather, it is to capture the experience.

THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE . A narrative is a story worth telling. Narratives are personal stories that give readers a fresh perspective about the practice of change. Written thematically and/or in a temporal sequence, narratives recount the helping process. Narratives are explored within a contextual frame and supply a rich textual description of the experience: They take into account time, place, action, persons, behavior and interaction. Narratives explain and describe events; results; conflicts; complicating actions; and how, why, and what was done. In narratives the writer evaluates the experience, whether or not there is a resolution. Some narratives end with a coda, that is, a perspective on what occurred.

A Journal for the Helping Professions

REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS AND SUBMISSION: Manuscripts are peer reviewed. Articles appropriate to the journal's purpose are reviewed anonymously by members of the Executive and Editorial Board. Articles are accepted based on their contribution to practice knowledge. Publication decisions require about four months.

1. Authors are expected to use the most recent APA publication format.
2. The manuscript length depends upon the temporal sequence of the event.
3. Include on separate page a brief abstract written in the same style as the narrative.
4. Place identifying information such as name, affiliation, address, phone and fax only on the cover page.
5. Send (3) printed double spaced hard copies of the manuscript to the editor.

Upon acceptance of the article for publication one (1) copy on disk in Rich Text Format (RTF), WP or Microsoft formatted for IBM or MAC and one (1) hard copy will be requested.

Names of persons and organizations mentioned in the articles published in **REFLECTIONS** have been changed to protect their privacy. **REFLECTIONS** disclaims responsibility for statements, either fact or opinion, made by contributors.

Manuscript/inquiries: **REFLECTIONS:** S. L. Abels, Editor; (310) 985-4626,
Fax (310) 985-5514; California State University, Long Beach; Long Beach, CA 90840-0902.

Cover: James F. Sullivan

Drawings: Beth Abels
James F. Sullivan

Printed by: CSULB Graphic Communication Services, Della Thomas, Robert Kurthy, and Eric Strauss

REFLECTIONS:

NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING

VOLUME 2

FALL 1996

NUMBER 4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
EDITORIAL	
Butting In	Paul Abels 1
MAIL	3
NARRATIVES	
Reflections On Practice and Life	Judith A. B. Lee 7
How One Informs and Creates the Other	
The New math of Grassroots Community Work	Peter Biehl and 21
(1=10=50,000: In Four and One-Half Months)	Rolene Miller
Commentary	Alosi J. M. Moloi 29
	Wynetta Devore 32
	Wilma Peebles-Wilkins 34
	Kenneth G. Lutterman 36
	Ruthann L. Rountree 38
Riding the Giraffe	Lonnie R. Helton 40
Swords to Ploughshares	Nancy L. Mary 49
Life Stories: Past and Present Construct the Future	Jennifer Davis-Berman 55
BRIEF REFLECTIONS	
How it Was: A Narrative Essay	Howard Goldstein 62
CRITICAL REVIEWS: ARTS, BOOKS, MEDIA	
Film Review: "Lone Star"	Mary Ann Jimenez 72
Book Review: <i>Narrative Therapy</i>	Paul Abels 74
CALL FOR NARRATIVES	76-77



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

EDITORIAL: "BUTTING IN"

"All lives are connected to other lives. Where all human connections are distrusted, the human being is quickly lost."

— James Baldwin

by Paul Abels

One of my major concerns, is that I am a "buttinsky." This may be the reason I became a social worker. They haven't yet discovered whether there is a genetic disposition for butting in, but I know it runs in the family. My wife Sonia, for instance, never misses an opportunity to approach a mother who is hitting her child and commenting that the mother must be upset about her child's carrying on, or whatever the behavior that led to the parental loss of temper. While this intervention stops the hitting, I have felt impelled to talk to her about the risk of getting hit herself, maybe worse, but to no avail. Whether supermarket or mall, her behavior has not changed. On the other hand, I butt in a lot at faculty meetings, poker games, and social occasions, when doodling instead, would save a lot of people aggravation. Lately I have had to rethink my butting-in-ness. Things I have taken for granted are under scrutiny and attack, while one definition of butting in is "intervention," another is "meddling." Helpers are vulnerable or helpful, depending on which interpretation those we care for and care to work with, assume about us.

A number of things occurred during the past year that have created an unbalance in my homeostatic existence. I was asked to write a chapter for a de-

bate, "Can ethnic agencies more effectively serve ethnic communities than mainstream agencies?" I was "con." Then the President passed the new welfare legislation, I questioned the moral stance of that position with my Democratic friends, that too was like taking the "con." Then I read the article in this issue by Howard Goldstein in which he discusses what I believe to be the coming asunder of our profession's historic mission. Both he and I are on the "wrong" side. That colleague from Newark, he talks about, whose dean called him "too moral," well I'm from Newark. "Con" again. I am out of balance, and the ground is swampy. Read on.

In Professor Lee's article we see an Anglo woman working with a group of young minority teen girls, by all "objective" observations, a very helpful process unfolds. In other times, there would be little question that it was a good match up, in fact, right or wrong, some might have felt there was a lot to be gained by that cross-cultural coming together. But in our times the question of the "right to," rather than the "ability to" becomes an issue of conflict.

The intervention dilemma is brought home most clearly in the Amy Biehl article. Here we see the ultimate consequence of interventions, welcomed by some, de-

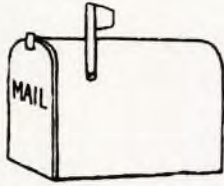
plored by others. We are faced with the question of whether anyone has the right to "butt in." Must we be invited, must we be selective, must we only help "our own?" Who gives us the sanction, what proportion of the population, which group? Who has the right to say "butt out?" These are important questions for those in the helping professions to consider, as the article's commentators attest. Research will not help us, moral imperialism certainly can't help us, but a sense of moral responsibility might. What is one life as measured by the death and oppression of thousands? No one can answer that for anyone, but if we can connect to the death of one, then we won't forget to connect to the death of the thousands of ones. It is not a matter of body counts, but a matter of what counts... Dunne said it best, perhaps forever...

No man is an island, entire of itself: every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thy own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send me to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

These are hard times for our profession. Society will soon tire of the stories and pictures of people saying "there is nothing left for them to do but starve without food stamps," or of mothers forced to work at below standard wages begging for a day care program for their children, or of the unions saying the new laws are 'union busting,' or of immigrant children fearful that they will be

put out of school. But not us! We will continue to intervene or meddle or butt in. That's what we're here for. Divided we still stand. But the bells are tolling. □





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Responses to "Do The Right Thing"
and accompanying commentaries
Vol. 2, # 3, Summer 1996

Dear Editor.

I have just finished reading "Do the Right Thing" and the invited commentaries on this narrative in the Summer issue *Reflections*. I believe that Ms. Houston did the right thing, and am surprised by the controversy which has surrounded its publication. I come to this decision based on a series of questions which I posed to myself and the answers I arrived at.

Q: Was there sex going on in the prison when Ms. Houston arrived for her field placement?

A: Yes, and the fact that this rule was broken was the precondition which set up Ms. Houston's dilemma. Had this rule not been broken, there would have been no need for Ms. Houston to take any action regarding the provision of contraband items.

Q: Did Ms. Houston in any way encourage sexual behavior in this setting?

A: No, unless one believes that providing protective devices further encourages sexual behavior, which I do not believe to be the case. Sexual behavior was occurring, and would continue to occur, prior to the provision of dams.

Q: Should Ms. Houston attempted to stop the sexual behavior which was going on, either formally or informally?

A: While one might argue that this might have been a way for Ms. Houston to have avoided her ethical dilemma, and thus to avoid needing "to engage in rule violation," it would have seriously harmed, if not destroyed, her ability to form relationships with both inmates and staff who were "looking the other way." Without this trust, she could not be an effective social worker within this agency environment. As she states "the informal structure really ran the facility."

Q: Did Ms. Houston break the law by providing the dams and therefore commit a clear violation of her professional ethics?

A: As Samuel Richmond notes: "Possession and transfer of dams is not inherently illegal; it is illegal only in prison." And it is illegal, not due to any "law," but due to an administrative regulation which many social workers would find unacceptable. Is there anyone who has practiced social work who has not broken a bureaucratic regulation when they thought it was in the best interest of our client?

Q: Given that sexual activities were occurring, did Ms. Houston have an ethical obligation to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS?

A: Yes. HIV infection usually leads to death within a decade. And despite recent advances in the medical treatment of HIV infection, marginalized populations are the least able to access either medications to treat the disease or social services to ameliorate its psychosocial impact.

Q: Did provision of barrier dams in any way undermine the goals of the social service program in which Ms. Houston was placed as a student?

A: No. Provision of these "contraband" devices, which were neither destructive or harmful to her clients, helped her gain her client's trust without undermining the programs purposes. If this program was the "ultimate in family preservation treatment," and Ms. Houston was expected to "advocate for the [prisoners] with foster parents and extended families where their children had been placed" then provision of the dams only furthered the purposes of the program. There can be no family preservation if a mother is incapacitated from or dies of AIDS; there can be no "bonding benefit" at all if the person to whom the infant bonds is dead.

Q: Could the provision of barrier dams further the treatment goals with the client?

A: If one believes in strengths-based treatment then the answer to this question is yes. If Tyrae (the client) was, in fact, "future oriented," and she "wanted to succeed as a mother, lover and daughter," she could only do so if she was healthy and alive. Her concern with safe sex, which led her to approach Ms. Houston about the dams, demonstrates this future orientation, and the provision of the dams may have reinforced this orientation. It certainly reinforced the importance of responsibility in sexual conduct to Tyrae. I believe, in Richmond's words, that the provision of the barrier dams led to the advancement of "human life, human health, and human personality."

Q: Does the "system's failure to act appropriately in enforcing policies... provide license for a social work professional to engage in rule violation?"

A: On this point, I disagree strongly with Gelman's remarks. If the system had enforced its rules about sexual conduct, then the student would not have faced the ethical dilemma she did. However, since the system was not enforcing a rule which led to the ethical dilemma, the student had the obligation to act in the best interest of her client — in this case a life or death interest. I believe that Jiminez is correct when she notes, "when prison officials implicitly allowed sexual contact to occur between inmates, inmates should have the power to protect themselves from life-threatening diseases." In opposition to Reamer, I believe that civil disobedience was warranted in this case, since, in my opinion, the student had "no reasonable alternative" which could have been implemented in a timely manner.

Q: Should Ms. Houston have consulted with appropriate school personnel before pursuing her course of action given the institutional consequences which her actions might have had?

A: There is no question that this should have been the course of action that the student should have pursued. And, we do not know if she did — the narrative, for whatever reason, is silent on this point. One can assume, however, that the student might have pursued such a course since she acknowledges a professor for "guiding [her] through this narrative and [her] own professional career." But even if she had not, or had she been told not to pursue the course of action she did based on institutional considerations, I believe that on ethical grounds the student's actions would have been upheld by a reasonable faculty or field instruction staff.

HIV infection and AIDS are preventable. It is a social worker's obligation to preserve the public health, alleviate potential suffering, and foster the human potential in all of our clients, even if we are hindered by the actions of our government and its agencies. Some, particularly those who have instituted needle exchange programs, have been particularly courageous and broken the law in pursuit of these principles. Others, like Ms. Houston, have broken agency regulations. Still others in our profession work tirelessly to combat the spread of this disease and work compassionately and professionally to tend those afflicted with it. To criticize such efforts as unethical, even if bureaucratic rules are broken or institutional relationships are jeopardized, is to give comfort and ammunition to those who believe that this disease is the just dessert of IV drug users, the poor, people of color, and gay men in our society.

William Meezan

(The author is a Professor at the University of Southern California School of Social Work)

Reflections,

I am an incarcerated Mother. I have no way to contact Annie Houston through your magazine. I speak for many of my sisters behind bars with me who have heard her article. I am asking please print my words so that Annie and others will know the truth.

Dear Annie.

I am an incarcerated Afro-American mother of three. Last week my caseworker brought me your magazine article "Do The Right Thing." I have shared this with most of my sisters in my block and talked with them about it. Words cannot begin to say the tears of hope and pain that ran down our cheeks as I read your story outloud to those who cannot read. The pain of your description that for us is a day to day existence for we could all be Tyrae. The hope that there are people like you who don't just care but care enough to risk. Hope that people like you can be our connection to another world that treats us as human beings. You brought dignity to women who love each other and want to live. We are humbled by your courage and strength and you must know that you are our hero

Thank you
Name withheld
Prisoner #16774922

Dear Editor:

This is just a quick note to let you know that I thought the summer issue of *Reflections* was terrific. There is no journal that I know of in social work or other fields that seems as close to real

life practice as *Reflections*. The article and response to "Do the Right Thing" were I thought excellent- and raised many thoughtful questions and ethical issues/ dilemmas to ponder. I also loved your editorial-the insurrection of subjugated knowledge-was very powerful in directing readers not simply to the content of the articles, but to the manner in which the stories are told. There seem to me to be many layers of embedded narratives implied in Annie Houston's article, such as the guards "looking the other way," which she also emulated-and (in a very interesting parallel) perhaps so did her field instructor, faculty liaison, University etc. Given so much looking away and secret keeping-it is amazing that there was still a stranger's need to tell the story in the form of a narrative. I wonder if Houston has any desire to respond to the comments and criticisms.

J. L. Kayser

(The author is an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver)

Dear Editor

I would like to reply to the published response on my article "Do the Right Thing," in the Summer 1996 edition of your journal. I am a 30 something Caucasian female from Italian American decent. I consider myself a progressive social worker and I am heterosexual. I establish my identity in this way to incorporate the stereotypes about what some readers thought I as the author was or wasn't. More than a few persons, upon personal face to face introduction with me later remarked

they were surprised at who I was. They had assumed I was older, probably Hispanic or African American and maybe lesbian. Such assumptions and stereotypes are learned behavior which I raise as an issue for colleagues to think about who and what we think our clients are as well as those who help them. The role of race, class, and gender is poignant in many aspects of my article.

First and foremost while I understand the critical debate seems to lie around my actions, it appears to reframe the real issue which is human rights and dignity for the disempowered. Instead of discussions about me, why are we not, as a profession, responding to the women who may be dying of aids in prison? The things I personally saw, felt, and experienced were impossible to forget and necessary to remember.

I personally continue to see the issue of my behavior as one of advocacy. It is no secret we have lost our roots as a profession in the battle between political/social reform and clinical therapy. I think Harry Specht (1994) had referenced this ideal superbly in *Unfaithful Angels: How Social Work Has Abandoned Its Mission*. (N.Y: The Free Press). However, I don't think it needs to be one or the other. Clinical social workers have direct client contact and a wealth of knowledge to actively participate in social reform. The real question is why we don't and why we have formed two dichotomous camps finger pointing at the other. It remains my opinion, if we are not actively working for change through social action and organizing, we're on the

other side and are disloyal to our professional heritage.

Are we to always accept societal laws and do as we're told without question? Do we support the teachings of Dr. King or Malcom X? Civil Disobedience is often at a price but individually and collectively these decisions must be made. We must humanize the dehumanized as our mission.

Finally, I believe many of my critics (published and unpublished) have difficulty with an issue no one has raised: the population! Sadly, homosexuality is uncomfortable for some in our profession. Couple this with reactionary sentiments from the right re: individuals who are incarcerated and their status reduced to subhumans lacking all rights.

Sometimes from sheer exposure, social workers become numb to the lives we intersect with. Sometimes from lack of exposure, we forget the faces and circumstance behind the policies. As Kathleen Powell so eloquently states in her article ("Joshua's Story," *Reflections*, Winter 1996), perhaps it is a basic social work principle to understanding client experience by having to ask for help ourselves. The injustices against people perpetrated through current practices demand a response from Progressives concerned with social well being. We can only make the response reality if we continue to individualize and name our clients to open the eyes of those who cannot or refuse to see the uncomfortable sights, sounds, and smells of diamwowered people.

Yes, I am young, it is true.

*I don't remember when Dr. King
marched & Malcom went to prison. I
don't even remember the assassination
of President Kennedy or when Mrs.
Parks sat down on the bus.*

*But YOU remember,
I know you do.*

*For it is your experience
(perhaps you've forgotten);
but it is my history.
Smuggling condoms & dams into
prison so women don't die of AIDS.*

*You called it contraband and said I
didn't understand.*

This is my experience!

*What would you suggest my generation
give the next as their history if not
this?*

Sincerely,
Annie L. Houston, LCSW-C,
ACSW

REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE AND LIFE: HOW ONE INFORMS AND CREATES THE OTHER

I am standing at a crossroads. It is an uneasy place to tarry. I have been a social worker for most of my life. I have tolerated my own ambivalence about social work education, and about the profession of social work. In this narrative I will tolerate my own ambivalence about practice itself – and about myself in the process. I will explore themes and events that appear in my practice and my life – love and hate, joy and pain, trial and triumph. I will share my first formal group work experience in detail as it contains many metaphors for my ongoing struggle and commitment. I will also reflect on cases, other groups, and experiences that bring these themes into the present time. The story begins in 1966.

By Judith A. B. Lee

Judith Lee, DSW, is Professor, School of Social Work, University of Connecticut, West Hartford, Conn.



I have put this writing off because I am afraid to find out what I am really thinking about social work and life. Writing often takes on a direction of its own. It might take me where I am not prepared to go. I have been aware of standing at a crossroads.

I am alarmed at recent trends in the profession, particularly our acquiescent response to "managed care" and how it influences client service, practice, teaching and learning. Building relationships and space for reflection take too much time and energy. Time is money. Formulae and fast solutions are the order of the day. One must design succinct measurable objectives so one can prove that whatever it is that can be done so briefly actually works.

The handwriting has been on the wall for a long time. I anticipated aspects of this in earlier writing (Lee, 1983;1987). I identified many of the salient issues though I unnecessarily polarized the clinical and the political levels of practice. My recent book, *The Empowerment Approach To Social Work Practice* (1994a), was an attempt to unite the personal/clinical and the political in social work practice even as I have had no choice about uniting them in my life.

I view the narrative story as central to empowerment. Marsiglia and Zorita, in discussing the use of narratives with Latino/a students, acknowledge that stories are ideological structures produced by political realities which in turn influence the formation of the self. Further, they demonstrate how educators and social workers can help students and clients construct stories of their own affirmation and liberation (1996). *The Empowerment Approach* is replete with such stories. For the mature social worker and social work educator, we might say that the personal, the professional and the political are one. That is why it is scary to write the story.

I have tolerated my own ambivalence about social work education, and about the profession of social work. In this narrative I will tolerate my own ambivalence about practice itself — and about myself in the process. I will explore themes and events that appear in my practice and my life. I will share my first formal group work experience in detail as it contains many metaphors for my ongoing struggle and commitment. I will also reflect on cases, other groups, and experiences that bring these themes into the

present.

I stand at a turning point. It is an uneasy place to tarry. Some of it has to do with being 53 and having 32 years of paid formal social work practice behind me (including the practice of social work education). I have been a social worker for most of my life.

REWIND: STOPPING TO TELL A FEW STORIES

The year is 1966. Aretha Franklin is singing "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" and the Beatles are moving into a Yellow Submarine. The challenging and beautiful words of Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech still linger in the hearts of those transformed by the gains of the Civil Rights Movement (King, 1964). When Dr. King spoke at a Baptist church one block from my home in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant in the mid 1950s, we kids lined up outside and heard his voice on the loud speaker. The whole neighborhood was transfixed by his voice and the singing of the choir. By 1966, President Kennedy and Malcolm X have been assassinated. Hope has sustained mighty blows and there is a struggle against disillusion. In June of 1966, Stokely Carmichael

used Richard Wright's phrase "Black Power" to catalyze younger participants in the Freedom March through Mississippi after the shooting of James Meredith. Soon after, the Black Power Movement was born (Ansbro, 1982:211). "Black is beautiful" began to catch on though the term "Negro" was still popularly used by both African-Americans and Whites. The Watts riots were over and King worked toward mobilizing nonviolent direct action. He warned, "without another alternative Watts will look like a Sunday School Tea Party compared to what will happen" (Ansbro, 1982:249). King made the connection between war and resources. He began to identify poverty as a socioeconomic class problem, including the poor of all races in his concern. Poor Blacks, Whites And Hispanics were on the front lines in Viet Nam (Ansbro, 1982: 259). The Viet Nam War froze anti-poverty programs as it ushered in the beginning of a new era in human and civil rights history. Governments themselves could be challenged, or so it seemed. Many young people with means were "dropping out" even as they "dropped acid" (LSD). The Beatles sang - "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." But most young people of working class, poor or lower middle class background who had somehow managed to go to college sought jobs where they could have security, make a contribution, make something of themselves and reach back to pull others along.

In November of 1966, I am twenty-three years old. I have been married for three years. Af-



ter an unsettling period of acculturation and winning acceptance, I enjoy being part of an extended Chinese family. My own family and childhood home broke asunder after the death of my grandmother shortly after I married. Nana was my heart and I inherited her caretaking roles but not all of her wisdom. I am 5'3", trim and a little awkward in my bearing, having never been at home in high heels or dresses yet conforming to the "professional" norm to wear them. My lipstick never stays on and I have long light brown hair with golden highlights. I am self-conscious as usual and my green-blue eyes are intent as I pace back and forth nervously awaiting the arrival of my first experience in group work at "The Agency"—New York City Bureau of Child Welfare, Division of Foster Home Care.

I have been a social worker for two years. Like my coworkers, I carry 25 foster children, their foster families and biological "natural" parents under the supervision of a clinically trained MSW. The teenage girls coming tonight, all African-American, are not from my caseload and I have not yet met them. The office is on the eleventh floor of a skyscraper set in the Civic Center of lower Manhattan. Kids do not usually like coming here.

In 1965, William Schwartz established group work here at the behest of Manny Fox and Rose Gutman, dedicated and forward thinking agency administrators. There was an aura about group work. At first only the supervi-



sors could attend Bill's sessions or practice with groups (Schwartz, 1968). The work was shared with us in staff meetings and I very much wanted to learn group work. I caught glimpses of Bill as the supervisors gathered around him after his training. I took an exciting group work course at Hunter with Aaron Beckerman. I was fired up to practice. I did not dream then that I could pursue a MSW or that I would be able to go to Columbia and finally take group work with Bill Schwartz, the penultimate teacher. When I got there in 1967, I worked out a casework and group work "double major" and the world opened up with a panoply of colors, textures and opportunities.

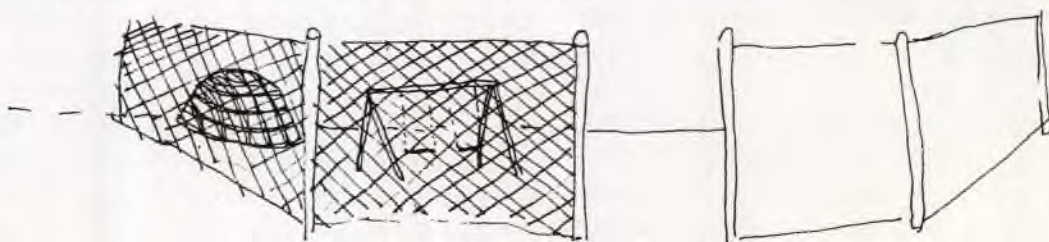
But as I waited on that Autumn day in 1966, I hoped I could do it. I knew it was hard for the agency to trust that I was ready for the experience. Finally, Mrs. Lovella Watson, a mature and charismatic African American supervisor, and I have been asked to start adolescent girls groups. I was to work with the older girls (16-19). Someone felt that would be easier! By now I was considered a fairly experienced foster care worker and I loved the work. But this very formal kind of group work was different. Sy Fass and Addie Dall, Assistant Directors, stopped my pacing by telling jokes. Addie added that she got the runs every time she began a new group. I sat down at my desk and closed my eyes to try to relax. It made me laugh to think about Mrs. Dall with the runs. I had "tuned in" to who the girls were a

million times (Schwartz and Zalba, 1971; Berman-Rossi, 1994). I knew they would be more scared than I was.

I remembered the church youth group that was so important in my teen years and the wonderful group leaders. I hoped I could offer that kind of experience and that the kids would accept me. A scene flashed across my mind. I am 18 and a PAL Play Street Summer Worker several blocks away from my own neighborhood. As usual I am the only White face around. My co-worker, a very tall and laid back African American college basketball player, was out ill. I organized some games and crafts. A fight broke out between Black and Puerto Rican boys. One had a stick. A smaller child was bleeding. I intervened. The angry eleven year old boy warned me to stay out of it. I didn't see how I could. Whack, his broomstick cracked across my face. I still remember the hurt—as much to my pride as to my head. The summer before, I was pinned to the wall by a huge Italian youth gang member in Red Hook as part of his flirtatious testing of the new playground worker. Somehow I got away. "Come on Vito, she's o.k.," the little kids screamed.

These memories were not helping now. I thought about the job. I considered it providential that I was chosen for the foster care division along with four oth-

ers out of a large group of applicants who passed a Department of Social Services test. I was learning social work. The starting pay was around \$4,000. I thought that was good. Foster parents only received about \$100 a month per child and the biological parents got much less from public funds. My training supervisor, Miss Edna May Davis, MSW, a gentle, wise and wonderful teacher and clinician of West Indian background, liked to tell the story that she took one look at me on my first day at the agency and said, "She'll never make it." This was confirmed after I yawned and almost fell asleep during our first unit meeting. As usual, I had taken the wrong train into Manhattan and walked so far I was exhausted. Miss Davis was a very bright and very structured woman whose air of authority could stop you dead in your tracks. By the time I left her unit, she admitted she was wrong about me, that I had miraculously turned into a good social worker. I was reassured when she came over to my desk and asked me if I were sleeping again. She retold the story of my first day and reminded me that I was well prepared to meet the girls tonight. Her smile and hand on my shoulder gave me the strength to get up and greet the first girl who eyed me cautiously from across the room.



THE FIRST GROUP

(The practice vignettes are excerpted from the actual process records written after each group meeting. The parentheses indicate a summary or paraphrase. It is easy to see that process recordings are also narratives and important qualitative data.)

THE BEGINNING

Cora arrived early. A timid, shy girl she was uneasy as we set up the room. Mary's arrival made it a little easier. She smiled warmly and moved close to Cora. I said that I knew it was hard to find the building as Mary spoke of getting lost. Bev then entered the room ushered by her social worker. She had an angry look on her face, slumped heavily into a chair and faced away from the group. I made introductions and Bev flashed a mock smile. Peg then entered in an animated way. Bev remained sullen and looked away and soon Peg stopped talking.

I got up and shut the door to draw us together symbolically and begin the meeting. Bev rolled her eyes at the closed door and turned to face the group. I said it was time to start and repeated my name and that I was the social worker who would be working with the group. Val then cheerfully entered and I encouraged introductions... I told them about the agency's group program for adolescents. Bev remained scowling. (I noted Bev's expression and) wondered what each felt about coming and what each thought the purpose of meeting together could be. Bev smiled to herself, pleased that I was recognizing her unpleasant negative expressions. The group looked at her. I smiled openly at her and she caught my eyes and looked quickly down. Peg said, No offense, but that she felt this group was formed to pry. She stopped and I repeated her feeling and encouraged her to go on. She said that social workers always pried into personal affairs and that she expected to see one way-mirrors in this room. Val said she thought Peg's thought was kind of odd. The group was formed so that they could talk about their problems together. Bev mumbled inaudibly. I asked what she said. She said, Nosy, Peg is right, social workers are just plain nosy. Val laughed and said she didn't think so — social workers try to help you. Bev replied, they never helped me....(six other girls then entered, one shortly

after the other so, we began again).

Larice, who walks with leg braces, a cane and a "tough girl" stance, had been in the same foster home as Val. She quickly began to say negative things about the foster parents and Val squirmed. I intervened. Val said it was O.K. as long as she could tell it her way too. Lari said O.K. and angrily proceeded with details. Val responded and concluded that it was a good home. Bev said, "Val, it was good for you but not for Lari." I reinforced this and added that one of the group purposes was for them to be able to talk about their foster homes. I praised the group members for working on this.

(They then added boys, school, jobs and being in foster care to the contract.) Bev told how embarrassing it was to have her White social worker come to the school...Then Cyn arrived with a disruptive air. She said, Let me tell you about my social worker. Bev insisted on telling more about hers first and proceeded to mimic her worker. After much laughter, each one shared feelings about social workers. (They also asked questions about allowances, and clothing money, which I answered honestly, and they volunteered for some commitments.)

Bev took a poll on who would return. All except one would. Bev concluded, I came because I had to, my social worker made me. But now I see for myself and I want to come back. Almost all agreed. I was elated and said that I thought they had begun to help each other already, and that I hoped this would be a place where they could trust each other as each member had something to give and to gain from the group. (I discussed confidentiality and the kinds of things I would have to tell workers and when I might ask their permission to tell something.) After refreshments and just before the end of the meeting, Dot asked why social workers keep you from knowing about your real mother? This opened the door and stories poured forth. Cyn shared that she wished she never knew her mother was a prostitute and her father was unknown. "Social workers should sometimes not tell, especially when you're younger." The group fell silent. I sat back in my chair to listen. She elaborated. I said this was a most hurtful thing to learn and ...even now she finds this difficult to deal with. She said she did. I praised her strength in sharing this with the group. Bev, Peg and Eve, replied, it is hard, hard,

hard. I agreed with the sadness, and noted the time, adding I hoped we could talk like this again next time. Peg said, guess we got to go but when we talk about social workers we don't mean you, you're different. I said I was a social worker too, and we could talk about that again next time. I walked them to the elevator and said goodbye.

I was overwhelmed but pleased that I lived through my first meeting. I was delighted that the anger softened and the girls began to work. I worried about the scapegoating of the quieter girls. I felt especially pleased (and relieved) that Bev and Cyn were engaged. I had missed a lot but also caught a lot. I breathed a great sigh of relief, not fully realizing that it would take all 16 meetings and all I had in me to "reach" some of the girls and to help them develop a well functioning group. So far I had passed the tests but I did not realize what was ahead. I did not yet know that balance was needed in uncovering pain and learning new defenses to help bear it (Lee and Park, 1978; 1983). I did not yet know that the worker might be punished as if she caused the original hurt. I was to learn this. I was also to learn about love as well as hate and healing as well as hurting. It was a lot to learn at 23 but I have never forgotten these teachers. Some teaching\learning moments from the group follow.

TESTING AND SCAPEGOATING

I know now that the second meeting represented a classic power and control struggle as leadership was established and limits were tested, including how much bullying among the members could be tolerated (Garland, Jones and Kolodny, 1973). I also know that Cyn needed to run from the feelings evoked by sharing so quickly about her "natural" parents and that in her pain she would strike out. Bev, her new friend and her rival for group leadership, would join in the attacks. Bev seemed to enter a battle for her very heart and soul.

In response to my reaching for what they thought about sharing many important concerns last meeting Cyn said she was glad to get "it" off her chest but didn't want to talk about "it" again since no one can do anything about it. Bev and Peg agreed. Cyn announced that she was tired and bored and we should talk about the coed party meeting. In the course of her report, she offended several group

members, including Bev, who took her on. Bev then asked if I would give them something else to talk about. In a too early attempt to make it their group, I didn't do this and their frustration began to grow.

Cyn then reengaged Bev by putting me on about using the refreshment money to buy beer. What was I going to do about it? I said I'd wait until I saw the beer. Everyone laughed and I passed the test. Cyn then grabbed a piece of paper from Bev and began to show it to others. It was a hand drawn pornographic picture. I said that I guessed I was supposed to be shocked, but sex was something they could talk about here. As the others relaxed at my response, Cyn snatched the paper back and said that was the last thing they ever wanted to talk about. Some disagreed but didn't say more. Bev then attacked: "This group can't help me — all they do is sit there ...There's such a thing as giving and taking and I'm doing all the giving." I tried to get a response from the others but Cyn jumped in and said "I can't wait forever— They're so damn slow." She got up to leave the room and I asked her to return. She did so angrily. Dot said she was not interested in talking about sex. Cora said she was, but it was difficult to get started. Bev then attacked Cora, "you say you're interested but you just sit like a dumb bump on a log. Are you stupid or something?" Lari intervened — "Bev, you and Cyn are dirty. When Cora has something to say, she'll say it. Why not pick on me instead..." Bev apologized to Cora and said she just wanted people to talk. Cora agreed.

I nodded toward Bev to continue. Cyn started laughing — "look at her nodding her head. I think its a damn habit." Peg, Bev and Cyn laughed and Peg apologized. Bev said I think she's testing us. Peg responded, no, I think we're testing her. I said I thought they were too. Most agreed. Val then suggested that they each bring something on their minds next time so the group could work on something that interested everyone. We are not empty heads to be filled and she just wants to be sure we're talking about what's really on our minds. And people will talk when they want to. All except Cyn agreed. I reinforced what Val said and added that I knew it was difficult to learn how to get along with each other. It was painful for everyone concerned but I was glad they were learning how to be a group. Bev took her poll and everyone said they were com-

ing back. Cyn said she'd get the beer and Lari replied I'm waiting to see it. Everyone laughed and relaxed a bit with the refreshments. I said this was a difficult meeting wasn't it? and looked around. There were nods and smiles all around and spirits seemed lighter as they left.

In my *Impressions* I recorded: This was a very difficult meeting for myself as the worker and for the group as a whole. I was somewhat threatened by Cyn's aggressive challenge and by Bev joining her...I expected to be tested. However, the directness, force and variety of the testing was something I had not fully anticipated nor prepared for... Bev's grappling with the contract and my role ("give us something to talk about") was very frustrating to her and to the group. I was so concerned over the theoretical, "let the discussion come from the group," that I failed to be more directing when it may have been comforting and helpful. Bev's impatience with the "quiet one's" may also be her impatience with me. She needed to share and could not.... Cyn was of even more concern as she was unfeeling in the way she attacked the others. I had to resist the urge to be more protective of the quieter ones. I welcomed Lari's defense of Cora (and Val's wisdom on how to proceed with the group). In retrospect this very difficult meeting may be seen as a painful and crucial growing point for the group and for me.

I have learned to be more direct in reaching for the work and in naming what the painful or taboo "it" is. But the mysteries of power and control, caring and love, set out in my early practice experiences return again and again. An example of hostility on another level comes from a later meeting of the group. In this case it was about race.

HOSTILITY AND RAGE

This meeting began with a discussion of popular books and T.V. shows about Black people... They said that Bill Cosby in "I Spy" was the only Negro on T.V. who didn't look like a stereotype of someone who would say "Yassuh, Boss." They began to talk about music, sharing their favorite songs—"Reach Out, I'll Be There" was #1. They were pleased that it was one of my favorites. I said I hoped that this group and I would also be there for them. Some affirmative nods and skeptical

looks. They were surprised that I had enjoyed *Manchild in the Promised Land* (Brown, 1965). Cyn then said, White folks' music was dumb, just like White folks. Bev said the best part in *Manchild* was where he beat up a group of White boys. Cyn then said that she hated her White English teacher because he told the class that she was a foster child. Bev said most White teachers are prejudiced anyway. Trying to encourage this expression about racism, I asked if the others felt this way? A few yesses and sharing of stories. Cyn then said, its not just teachers, the whole world is prejudiced. She added White people are ugly anyway and drew a verbal caricature. Bev agreed she hates White people with their ugly old pimply faces. Peg and Viv seemed uncomfortable and changed the subject back to Bill Cosby. I said I could understand the anger, things were pretty tough for them. Cyn said it was and heads nodded solemnly. I said that many of them had White social workers and asked if they felt that they, too, were prejudiced. Cyn and Bev said yes. Peg said they probably are but they don't show it. I said it must be hard to tell me these things because



I'm White too. Bev said that if I don't like what they say I can ask them to leave. I said I wanted to hear what they had to say. Cyn continued that they can say "cracker" but no White person can say "nigger." It's a fighting word. Bev told stories of a group of kids slashing a teacher's tires and smashing a store owner's windows because they were prejudiced. Cyn clapped her hands. Feelings were building ...

Bev said we were in the bathroom smoking at school. A White girl came in mumbling something about niggers. We grabbed her and stuck her head in the toilet bowl with all of the mess in it and flushed it. She had that long hair and you should have seen it swishing around. Several group members said "Ugh." Cyn said she saw that done too. She then described an incident where a White boy called a Black girl a nigger and a group of Black boys jumped him and shoved a stick up his rear end. It messed him up so bad he had to have a tube put in his side so he could urinate. Peg, Mary, Val and Viv said they didn't believe it. They turned to me and asked me if that could happen. I said I'm sure a stick could cause real damage, but I wondered if these actions were a solution to the problem of prejudice that they had presented. Cyn said well, in school they tell you the world is all peaches and cream, but it isn't. It's lousy. I agreed that prejudice was really lousy. I wondered what other solutions they thought of. Cyn said it's hard to do anything, look what happened to the Jews. Viv talked about Anne Frank. The others had read the book and they were animated. Cyn then said she hated yellow skinned Black people, they were as ugly as



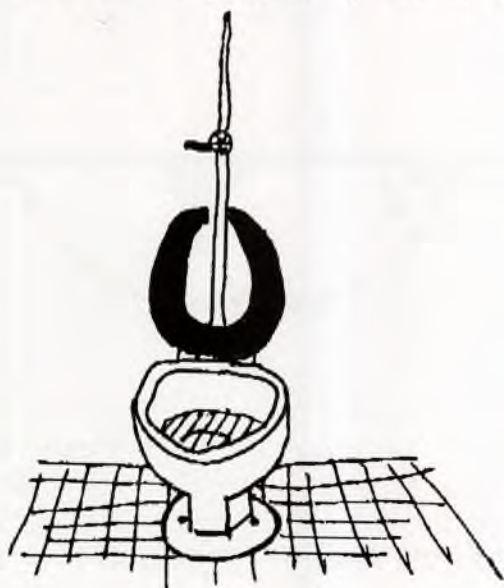
puke. Viv, the lightest in the group, said that interracial children were cute. Cyn and Bev disagreed. Cyn then changed the subject by bringing up a problem. She said she needs help because she steals and can't seem to stop....

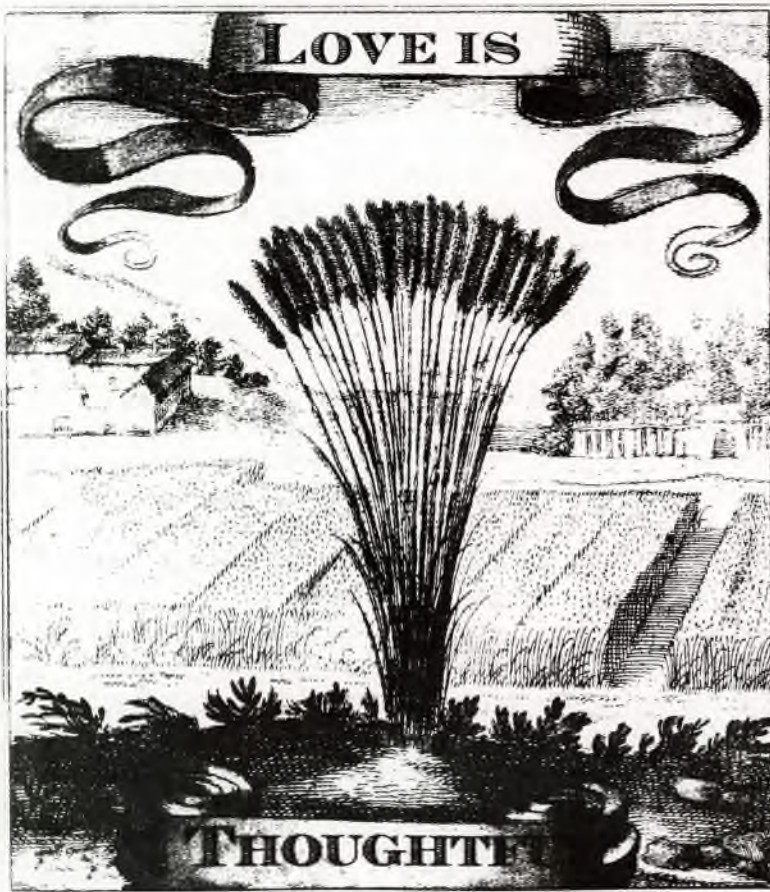
I wrote in my *Impressions*: Cyn and Bev worked hard today. When Cyn shared her problem the others gave caring responses that seemed to soften her responses toward them Viv seemed O.K. although they gave her a hard time.... Bev seemed very relieved by the release of her hostility in the area of race. The group seems to feel comfortable enough with me to be uninhibited in this area and I feel gratified in being able to create this kind of atmosphere for them...

In retrospect, I truly meant that, but I also remember feeling threatened, almost frightened by the stories of violence and I remember seeing myself in the story of the long hair swishing in the toilet. I am sure that was intended. I remember feeling hurt, angry that I had been almost violated in effigy even as they had been violated by racism and hate. When I was 23 I couldn't admit such "unprofessional" thoughts to anyone, not even myself. At 53, with many more experiences of this kind under my belt, I realize how valuable it would have been to have shared those feelings with group members and colleagues. Yet I miss the selfless idealism and caring of my youth. Mayeroff describes the importance of such caring (1971).

CARING AND LOVE

Many foster children feel totally unloved. This may be a function of depression or it may be tragic reality (Lee and Park, 1978). They long for love and caring. One of my individual cases was a thin, dark 14 year old boy raised in a religious foster home. One day he asked: if there is faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love, why doesn't anyone love me? I put my arm around his shoulder and sat close as he cried and shared his longing for a "real mother." We talked. I wished I had the answer. I wished I could adopt him. I wished I could fix it. I left no stone unturned in locating his mother. A product of the rape of a





teenager by an adult man, he would be released for an adoption that would never happen. There was no glib answer to his pain. I remember leaving him feeling so thankful for the love of my own mother and grandmother. I wished I could give him a piece of that rich birthright. I knew the theme would emerge in the group. I also knew it explained much of the rage.

In the seventh meeting of the group, Peg brought in a newspaper article about three children being removed from their affluent foster home by our agency. This unleashed all of the projections of pain onto the agency and social workers who take children away...Bev noted, its not the home but the parents themselves that are important. Her former foster mother loved her but she died several years ago, she said softly. And, she heard that her real parents both died in a fire. Her present foster mother just wants that check, she said angrily. Several related feeling the same way. Peg said that her foster parents love her and give her a lot. She hates her

natural mother, who ran around with any man. Social workers mess up your happiness by reminding everyone that you are a foster child. Bev excitedly agreed. She said suppose you had an operation and they cut off your left breast. You disguised it and went to work and no one knew. You came home and your husband said, ho,ho,ho, you have no breast. How would you feel? That's what a social worker does, constantly reminding you that you are a foster child. Peg said that's right. I said that I could hear the pain they felt and it was very heavy pain. They were able to say that's why they want to forget it but they can't...

(We took a refreshment break, as much for me as for them). Mary shared that she was glad she was removed from her last foster home as she was abused by the foster father. Val said that happened to her too... Bev said she didn't fear removal as no one would want her anyway. Peg was drawing as she said we're just different. We're phony kids, not real. Sometimes I play with my foster Mom and say how was it when I was born. But you both know its not real. I said this

hurt very much; she wants to be her foster mom's biological child. She and the others sadly agreed. Peg then produced an unflattering caricature of the Director. They all laughed. I said — I don't think you are really angry at the Director. Bev said no, we're angry because we're foster. Everyone agreed. I nodded in understanding. I asked if it helped to talk about it today, or did it rub salt into the wound. Bev said softly, it helped and the others nodded...

In the eleventh meeting Peg shared that she had been asked to write an article about our group for the agency's newspaper. She asked what the members had gotten or wanted to get out of the group. After joking that they got nothing and watching me squirm, Bev said sheepishly that she wanted love from the group and that she had gotten some affection. She added she wasn't sure she knew what love was. The group members struggled with whether they loved their foster parents, natural parents or boyfriends...

I was amazed that Bev could articulate that



she wanted love from the group. I learned then that the group could become a substitute family. It was very hard to end with these youngsters. From the 12th meeting on I began to gently echo the ending that would come. All of the group workers enjoyed the teen party, coed trip and individual group trips as they were pure fun for kids who had so many cares, and workers who could not take the pain away. Including the fun times, the group met 19 times.

THE ENDING

Cyn, maintaining her hard exterior, said she got nothing out of the group anyway, but she'd return next year to see if it got better. After some hesitation Bev said that she had grown a lot in the group. Peg sensitively agreed that Bev had grown. Everyone was moved as Bev stated in a small voice — "I have grown from hate into kindness." She added that she hated me just for being White. This was a 'deep feeling,' but as meetings progressed she found herself not even thinking about it. She felt that I cared about her and that the other group members did too. We each said we did. She said now she likes her funny White social worker and it's even better at school. Peg said — "Judy, Bev really likes you, we all know it and feel the same." My voice cracked as I said I cared very much about Bev and each of them and ending was very hard. Lari said she didn't like me at first just because I was a social worker but she wished she had attended more meetings... They spoke of next year. They knew now that I would be leaving for school. They were sad. I said that it was the group that was important, not me, that they gained so much from each other. Bev said — "Well, I still have a problem and went on to

share it..."

This remains in my mind the most poignant of endings—especially Bev's precious gift of her transformation into caring. In my final group summary I wrote:

The ventilation of anger and hostility in the areas of foster care status, race and school had a cathartic effect on the group members. The opening up in the area of sex also gave some relief to guilt feelings and fears. For some problems were worked through while in the group. The White social worker and the hated authority figure (personified in the worker) turned into a positively seen helping person. I was able to encourage the group to use me as the object of their anger. At times it was hard to take, but the end result was more than worth it. I was especially gratified at Bev's metamorphosis as she grew in caring relationship to the leader and to the group.... I reached her...though I could not really reach Cyn. The scapegoating lessened. The group became cohesive and developed a sense of group identity. They made a positive identification with the agency. This was a most valuable experience for the group members and the leader.

IN RETROSPECT

I am in awe of the young woman that wrote that summary and did that work. It is undoubtedly the love in the work and the experience of reaching the other that keeps me going. The caring is its own reward. But, I'm glad that by 24 I was able to admit that being the object of anger "was hard to take." It still is hard to take. I may not be as eager to encourage it as I was then although I can "handle it" more easily. I am better in pacing painful and consciousness raising experiences and it is a lot easier to talk about oppression now. Coming out as a lesbian in my thirties landed me in even greater solidarity with the oppressed than female status, a family that was different, or poverty. Yet, there is a cumulative effect to absorbing and carrying the pain of oppression whether in one's self or



to help others empower themselves. I am getting tired. I always believed that training top-notch African-American, Latino, and other minority group students, and mentoring their growth as social workers is most empowering to all concerned. But I must admit that just a corner of that is self-serving. There are times in the kitchen when I can't stand the heat!

RECENT HEAT IN THE KITCHEN THE STORY CONTINUES

In 1974 I began my full time academic career as a Faculty Field Instructor/Assistant Professor for Columbia University School of Social Work at a Housing Authority Unit in the embattled South Bronx. The unit was originally set up by Alex Gitterman who mentored me in the effort (Gitterman, 1976). The full-time social worker job had been eliminated so I directed the agency; supervised 6-8 students; continued to develop the services; carried some direct helping responsibility; and taught at the School (Lee and Swenson, 1978).

This was on the front lines. The students were diverse. The initial response to this huge housing project and devastated area was fear and revulsion. The office was located in a first floor apartment of a 34 story building. In most buildings the front door locks were broken, the elevators did not work and the stairwells reeked of urine. It was a scary location, even for me. But I soon got involved in the work and got to know our clients. Their strengths and will to work toward a better

life won me over completely. I was then better able to handle the students' fears.

One African-American woman student, whose father was a doctor initially was in great shock. As she learned to trust me, she shared her dismay at the plight of her people. She was then able to turn her anger toward working with a tenants group in our building. I remember a talented Puerto Rican student throwing up her arms and exclaiming in despair that she could no longer visit her favorite client in a situation of domestic violence. She was afraid. I had to agree. We were delighted when the battering man was jailed on another charge. There was a thoroughly frightened young White man from out of state and I could do little to unthaw him. He called the boys in his group "you people." They retaliated with ridicule. This was the first student I had to bring before the Educational Review Committee and ultimately fail. This was very difficult as I knew how hard this placement was.

Then there was a young Orthodox Jewish woman who did beautiful work with children. To the girls she was doubly different but she was experienced at handling her difference. She also worked with an elderly Jewish woman living on a top floor who refused to give up her apartment and enter a nursing home. Mrs. A. was a virtual prisoner of the broken elevators and her fear of muggings. The student was a faithful visitor. As Mrs. A. became more frail she realized it was time to go. The student held the tiny old woman in her arms and sang

with her "Pintele Yid," a Yiddish song about the little Jew. They cried together and I cried with her in supervision as we shared the woman's pain. She went to a Jewish Home where she eventually



thrived, with the help of the student who was her only visitor long after the student placement ended. The student broke the rules about "making clean endings" with my blessing. I understood that she had to respond to a higher calling in her sense of responsibility not to further abandon the Pintele Yid. There were times when I broke the rules for similar reasons, especially when working in War Zones.

ANOTHER KIND OF WAR

After two years, when our office was robbed and the typewriters were thrown from the roof at us, I took an assistant professor position at NYU School of Social Work. My revered teacher, Hy Weiner, was now Dean and he encouraged me to come. He also mentored and supported me. I did not realize I was entering another kind of War Zone—academic life. When I was pursuing my Doctorate at Yeshiva, Lloyd Setleis, then Dean, observed that

the battles were so bad in academia because the stakes were so low. He was right, but it was hard for an idealistic young teacher to avoid the jousting. I loved teaching but the ideological battles were discouraging. I did not know how to stay out of it without distancing myself. I did this in three ways. I relied on friends like Lucretia Phillips and others. I practiced in the New York City Women's Shelters near the School, and eventually I left.

Practicing social work in New York City's Women's Shelters was like doing triage during a disaster (Lee, 1986, 1990, 1994a,b). In one shelter there were 150 women and only one part time MSW (Jean Anmuth) to assist essentially paraprofessional staff. It was painful to see women warehoused and so roughly treated, and this was relatively good as shelters go. While some women, unused to human caring, cursed you for reaching out, most grabbed on for dear life. I involved students and other professionals but one could never do enough. Tragic faces haunted me as I tried to intervene on the direct practice level, doing group and individual work, and at the system level with top administrators (Lee, 1994b). Once again, the clinical job included absorbing rage and pain, but this time, going beyond words to the remedies for homelessness was imperative, and the lack of resources was shameful. Yet, the quality of caring and mutual aid was inspiring. There were some women who literally had no one in an outside support network like Nina, a mentally and physically challenged member of the "primary

group" I developed (Lee, 1990;1994b). A few years later I learned from Lorna Rabinowitz, the indigenous leader of the group, that Nina contracted the HIV virus. Lorna was her only visitor in a state facility where people lived and died with AIDS. Nina died alone and uncared for, except for Lorna.

Lorna, now 59, has only one old friend in her support network. I am also her friend. She is the unpaid group leader and counselor for many of the residents of the Psychiatric "Halfway House" where she continues to live with over 300 others. During our last visit last we sat on the beach in Brooklyn and reflected. She was scared to leave there and take a chance on the unknown but she also felt she had purpose in her life: "to be there for people who were pushed aside by the system." She was angry at the "new breed of social workers who showed no caring for people with mental illness." She cited endless examples of client neglect. I advised her on what she might do. She advised me on teaching students to care. I am glad to have her as my friend. It is sometimes important to break the rules.



CONNECTICUT

In 1984, I left NYU and joined my friend and mentor, Carel Germain, on the social work faculty at the University of Connecticut (UConn). Sharing our work as teachers and our joys and struggles kept me alive in academia. Though, even as I adjusted to my new outsidership, I remained angry that Carel was not treated with the utmost respect and dignity she deserved befitting her well earned status in the profession. Her retirement in 1987 was hard for me, but we were still in close contact. Her death last August left me feeling alone (despite my friends on faculty) in another kind of academic battle zone. I'm getting better at distancing to survive. Ruth Martin, Mark Abrahamson and others have helped me use my sense of humor. But battlefields have no redeeming features. People say "that's par for the course in academia. It happens in every school." Human beings are the casualties. This crossroad has a clear sign: "This way out of the war zone."

And then there is an additional factor. At NYU my coming out as a gay faculty member in 1982 broke a norm. It was not welcomed. At UConn there were other openly gay faculty members. Another drawing card. But I have realized that I must deal with homophobia and judgment in every class I teach and in everything I do. Just this past semester a middle-aged White male student bravely shared in our class evaluation that he was relieved that I had not lived up to his stereotype of what a "man-hating

lesbian teacher" would be like. I was "fair to all, gentle of spirit, and a good teacher." Another student said it was "amazing to find a lesbian with a faith commitment and compassion." Ouch! When I take difficult positions, or fail a student, especially a minority of color student, or speak out on an unpopular point of view, I inevitably fulfill someone's stereotype about strong women or lesbians. That's the thing about stereotypes. You're damned for all occasions as long as they are safely harbored in the collective or individual unconscious. I sometimes wish I was a more timid sort that would evoke less response. But at 53, I am finally comfortable with myself. The golden hair is short and silver-white with just a hint of color. Overweight and sturdy in bearing and soul, I wear what I want, say what I want, think what I want, and do what I think is right. My eyes are still intense, but not as often. Sometimes I look as tired as I feel yet I am rounded at the edges and confident where I was anxious. There are some good things about growing older. But growing older and still caring deeply is not easy.

RECENT PRACTICE

Practice intersects at the crossroads. In Hartford it has been my work with the Coalition to End Homelessness and My Sister's Place(MSP), now a four tier agency serving homeless and formerly homeless individuals and families that has challenged me and formed the basis for my theory development and teaching (Lee, 1994b). I have always enjoyed practice, especially when

clients genuinely struggle to change the conditions of their oppression. Yet the work is hard in a number of ways.

I think of Betty, once beautiful and bright, a 32 year old individual client who developed AIDS dementia, other AIDS related symptoms and full blown rapidly cycling manic depression at the same time. I helped her extended family to arrange care for her two children. Her brother curtly told me the family preferred a Black social worker for the children. I arranged it. He did not care if I kept Betty as he thought she was "too far gone." The family later thanked me profusely for my work. But I could no longer handle Betty alone, I needed agency and team support. MSP III was able to accept her into the residential program for women with mental illness. Gail Bourdon, friend and program director, and I brought her to emergency psychiatric intervention during a manic episode. Once there she refused to be admitted. We could not talk her into it but thought it was not the time for an involuntary commitment. The admitting psychiatrist angrily challenged me to take her home for the night and get her reestablished on her meds. With some trepidation I did. I was ashamed of my own gnawing doubts about bodily fluids—on glasses, toilets, pillow cases, and my cheek as she hugged me goodnight. I knew better, and I dealt with my irrational side. Gail was on call and my partner, Judy Beaumont, was right there by my side, reassuring Betty that she was welcome in our home. Betty calmed down. Thank goodness the medication

began to work. I kissed her on her forehead and tucked her into bed. Then I stayed up half the night watching her. She slept peacefully, a beautiful ebony angel. The next day I got her family to do round the clock monitoring and she was O.K. for a few months. She had some quality time with her family. There would soon be an endless circle of involuntary and voluntary hospitalizations punctuated by drug abuse. Now in hospice care, she is a thin, ashen and foreboding shadow of herself. It's hard to witness. I'm glad I broke the rules and gave her a night's peace and a few good months. I couldn't have done it without support. I do not recommend it for students or unseasoned professionals. It was a difficult judgment call.

Many of the women of My Sisters' Place, staff and clients, are my teachers and friends. Judy is the Executive Director. We met when I consulted on setting up the MSP III program. She is the blessing for the second half of my life and her courage is greater than mine. I think of Tracey, the President of the Successful Women's Group (Shelter Alumnae) that Judy and I co-led (Lee, 1994b). This young mother works two jobs and struggles hard to overcome the effects of poverty and the segregated second-class education she received in Hartford. She has a complex, usually supportive family network. Each Mother's Day she sends us a card as her "Other Mothers, who believed in me and asked the best of me." And there is Shandra, Tracey's buddy, who still struggles against depression and extricating herself from abusive

relationships (Lee, 1994). She has proudly completed nine college credits and often shares her excitement at the world that is hers through her courses. She calls us Grandmothers. Her mother has now come into the MSP Program, is in recovery from her drug addiction, and making marvelous gains in reaching back and helping others. She has recently been hired to work part time in the Shelter. With these women and several of the staff and other clients there is a genuine experience in sistering and in sharing a common struggle. But it is not all rosy. There are Fran, Keisha and Leola, clients whose homophobia caused them to spread vicious rumors which were hurtful to Judy, to My Sisters' Place and to me. Fran had a gay teenage son that she publically called "the scum of the earth." Unable to deal with his gayness, she also told the children in residence to beware of us as "white lesbian bitches." This made it especially hard on the three foster children we cared for whose siblings were in residence. This "struck home" for us in ways Fran could not have envisioned. Some staff members supported the rumors. Perhaps most tragically, a few homophobic "professionals" in the surrounding community also echo the same words as they attempt to block some of the new program initiatives. To them we are freakish enemies, not co-laborers in a common cause.

CODA

Life and practice are filled with experiences of love and hate, joy and pain. Risking these moments makes us human. There

are times when anger is the appropriate response. But, what sticks with me most in these reflections are those times when hate and pain were transformed by love and caring. In my first group, when Bev said, "I have grown from hate into kindness" it was such a moment. The transforming power in social work practice and in the group first appeared for me then — bright, alluring and real. Practice with people who have been deeply hurt by hate and oppression is not easy. It changes some of the easy formulations we cut our professional teeth on. It requires authenticity and it costs a lot. It necessitates risk. Absorbing hate for a reason is a form of caring which transforms and deepens. When there is no reason, hate should neither be tolerated nor permitted. All of this is experienced personally and, even as it wearies, it carves compassion and activism deeply into the soul. As Gisa Konopka amply demonstrates, life and practice demand both courage and love (1988). The deepened knowledge of racism, classism, homophobia, and academic politics necessitates and activates the power to bring about change in a world gone wrong. How much more I want to bear or know remains a question at the crossroads. The kind of social work practice and living discussed here does not leave the practitioner unscathed. Only the strength of loving support makes it possible. I am so thankful for that in my life. This is the real story here. □

REFERENCES

- Ansbro, John J. (1982). Martin Luther King, Jr: *The Making of a mind*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.
- Berman-Rossi, Toby (Ed.) (1994). *Social Work: The Collected writings of William Schwartz*. Itasca, ILL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.
- Brown, Claude (1965) *Manchild in the Promised Land*. New York: Macmillan.
- Garland, James, Hubert H. Jones and Ralph Kolodny (1973). A model for stages of development in social work groups. In Saul Bernstein, (Ed.) *Further explorations in group work*, pp. 17-71. Boston: Milford House.
- Gitterman, Alex (1971). Group work in the public schools. In William Schwartz and Serapio Zalba (Eds.) *The Practice of Group Work* (p. 45-72). New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1964). *Why we can't wait*. New York: A Mentor Book.
- Konopka, Gisela (1988). *Courage And Love*. Edina, Minn.: Burgess.
- Lee, Judith A.B. (1983). Weeping for a lost profession: Social work in transition. *Jewish Social Work Forum* (19) (Spring): 20-32.
- Lee, Judith A.B. (1987). Social work with oppressed populations: Jane Addams won't you please come home? In Joseph Lassner, Kathlee Powell, and Elaine Finnegan (Eds.) *Social group work: Competence and values*

in practice, p. 1-16. New York: Haworth.

Lee, Judith A.B. (1990). When I was well I was a sister: social work with homeless women. *Jewish Social Work Forum*. (26) (Spring): 22-30.

Lee, Judith A.B. (1994a). *The empowerment approach to social work practice*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lee, Judith A.B. (1994b). No place to go: Homeless women. In Alex Gitterman and Lawrence Shulman (Eds.) *Mutual aid groups, Vulnerable populations, and the life cycle*, 2nd ed., p. 297-314. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lee, Judith A.B. and Danielle N. Park (1978). A group approach to the depressed adolescent girl in foster care." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 48(3): 516-517.

Lee, Judith a.B. and Carol R. Swenson (1978). A community social service agency: Theory in action. *Social Casework* 59 (June): 359-369.

Mayeroff, Milton (1971). *On caring*. New York: Perennial Library, Marsiglia, Flavio F. and Paz M-B Zorita (1996). Narratives as a way to support Latino/a students in higher education. *Reflections* 2(1): 54-63.

Schwartz, William (1968). Group work in public welfare. *Public Welfare* (4):322-370.

Schwartz, William and Serapio Zalba (Eds.) (1971). *The practice of group work*. New York: Columbia University Press.



The New Math of Grassroots Community Work (1+10 = 50,000: In Four and One-Half Months)

This narrative is written by Peter Biehl, father of Amy Biehl, who was murdered in South Africa in 1993. It chronicles the Biehl family's effort to honor Amy's life and her commitment to social justice. Following her death, the family created the Amy Biehl Foundation. Co-author Rolene Miller never met Amy. With her own commitment to social change, Rolene began MOSAIC — a program addressing domestic violence in South Africa by training township women as community workers. She describes MOSAIC's genesis and how the Amy Biehl Foundation provides support for the program's continuation. Many parallels and coincidences resulted in the intersection of Amy's dreams, the Amy Biehl Foundation, and MOSAIC.

By Peter Biehl and Rolene Miller

Peter Biehl is Director of the Amy Biehl Foundation, PO Box 14, La Quinta, CA 92253

Rolene Miller is Director of Mosaic, 4 Church Square, Cape Town 8001 South Africa

South Africa's searing climate of unrest and upheaval took a violent turn in April, 1993 with the deliberate assassination of ANC(African National Congress) leader, Chris Hani, in the driveway of his home. Within hours of Hani's death, members of our family reached Amy by telephone

in Cape Town and expressed fierce concern for her safety. She was incredulous. "My God, how can you be worried about me? Chris Hani is dead!"

Amy knew that Chris Hani was Nelson Mandela's vital link with the impatient Black youth of South Africa. Hani was credible to young people. His reassurances of victory at the polling place kept a lid on emotions. His murder by White extremists torched a wave of violence which engulfed the entire country — much of it directed at the White population, the "settlers."

Experienced observers have suggested that Amy Biehl might be alive today, were it not for the murder of Chris Hani.

AMY BIEHL, HER VISION AND HER WORK

Stunned residents of Guguletu looked on as Amy Biehl, an energetic, young Fulbright scholar from California, died violently in the dust at the hands of a mob of young Black township men and boys. The youth, members of the Pan African Congress (PAC), returning to Guguletu from a march where they had shouted their slogan of "one settler, one bullet," saw a young White woman driving a motor car. She became the target of their anger. They stoned her car and stoned her. In shock as she lay there, she had asked "...Will someone please help me?" Within min-



utes, Amy's twenty-six purposeful years on this earth were over. Terror froze the moment — August 25th, 1993.

The following day Amy's identity was revealed. Front page headlines in South Africa and across the world expressed shock and horror. The Black community in general, and especially the many members of the Black community who had worked with and had loved Amy dearly, grieved her death. A large group of Black women, the township "Mamas"¹, marched to the site of the murder, lit candles, sang hymns and prayed for their fallen sister. She had been their comrade in their struggle for a free and democratic South Africa. They were not PAC supporters, yet they were determined to demonstrate their courage borne of grief by holding a vigil in a PAC area. The women had taken charge — just as Amy knew they would.

Amy was drawn to Africa and the plight of communities on this turbulent continent. Her vision of a fair and better world became her passion. She was particularly drawn towards women's struggles in new social orders.

Instrumental in the development of a program to empower women to enter government in Kenya, she moved further south, to work in the newly independent Namibia, doing voter education with previously disenfranchised Black communities. So many pictures bear testimony to the pro-

grams she set up and to the visible camaraderie and loving relationships she forged with men and women in this country.

Finally, at the age of twenty-five, Amy focused her boundless energy on aiding Black communities in South Africa, and Cape Town in particular. She was in South Africa to encourage dialogue among women and to ensure that their rights were protected in the drafting of the country's new Constitution. She was based at the University of the Western Cape working in the Gender Equity Unit and networking extensively with students, key role-players, and ordinary citizens. She interacted, observed, drafted speeches, documented and wrote endless articles on topics related to the emerging democracy of the New South Africa.



Amy always believed in women's capabilities and their leadership potential. In South Africa, she noted that women were the backbone of the struggle and that they would carry the struggle to the ballot box. She knew that these township women would spearhead the process of healing and reconciliation. She was also aware of the lamentable absence of women in transitions to democracy in developing countries — in stunning contrast to their efforts and achievements in organizing change. Amy was committed to helping Black South

African women to empower themselves to assume their rightful roles and responsibilities in their homes and their country.

Amy was also aware of the level of violence in South Africa, especially the endemic violence perpetuated towards women in the form of domestic abuse. She discovered the widespread abuse of women in the dormitories of the University of the Western Cape. She encouraged women students to empower themselves through election to dormitory governing bodies to gain parity with their male abusers. She educated and encouraged women students to resist the violent sexual harassment which was compounded by the traditions of paternalistic tribalism in the culture. She gave her time, knowledge and possessions to friends and colleagues in a constant effort to help them improve their quality of life.

Amy observed and battled the terrible violence, domestic and other, in the townships and squatter camps around Cape Town — a violence born of frustration and anger fomented by the injustices of the apartheid system of the Nationalist regime. She died providing transportation to Black women students of Guguletu who had to deal with unreliable transportation to and from the University of the Western Cape.

THE AMY BIEHL FOUNDATION

Conceptually, the Amy Biehl Foundation was born within hours of Amy's death.

"Our family neither

¹ "Mama" is a term of respect and endearment often applied to the strong and mature Black women of townships and squatter camps.

wanted to lose contact with Amy nor see her work and her motivating purposes dropped or abandoned. There was no choice for us but to continue working for her in her name."

Officially, the Amy Biehl Foundation was created, in February, 1994, when it was granted tax-exempt status as a California Charitable Corporation. It was clear to us that the Amy Biehl Foundation must be committed—in significant part—to the process of empowering women, and that its charter must give some emphasis to Amy's unfinished work for human rights. With a modest endowment but with a clear sense of purpose, the Foundation set out to identify Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and individuals whose work and purposes were consistent with Amy's, and with whom a modest grant investment would accomplish or facilitate the greatest possible results.

For obvious reasons, the search was initiated in and around Cape Town, South Africa. The first exploratory, fact-finding trip was made by Peter and Linda Biehl in July, 1995. As a result of this trip, several grants were made in support of impressive works to improve the human condition in South Africa.

Once such grant was made to a promising new NGO program called MOSAIC — TRAINING, SERVICE and HEALING CENTRE FOR WOMEN. This program was targeted at empowerment through training, serving and healing women — especially abused women — in Cape Town. The name MOSAIC was chosen to sig-

nify the bringing together of women of all colors, communities, and life experiences to support each other within a therapeutic, holistic organization.

"We arrived in Cape Town the week before commencement of the pilot program designed to train women community workers to help abused women. We held hands with the first group of trainees and their trainer on their first day in class. We spoke to and observed these women of MOSAIC and found within them the wisdom, purpose and strength which Amy had spoken of so frequently. We believed that our daughter would have loved this program and this simple fact made MOSAIC an obvious choice for support from the Amy Biehl Foundation."

EVENTS LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF MOSAIC

At the time of Amy's death, Rolene Miller searched for a meaningful methodology to empower and to help the women of South Africa.

Born in Johannesburg, Rolene taught primary school after receiving her Teacher's Diploma from the Johannesburg College of Education in 1964. She then married, moved to Cape Town, had children, and attended the University of Cape Town (UCT) where she received a Post-Graduate Diploma in Special Education with emphasis on clinical remedial teaching. Up to this point her focus had been on children and their learning problems. She felt that many children's re-

medial problems were linked to psychological issues, so she returned to UCT and in 1983 earned her Bachelor's degree in psychology.

"At this point my career focus shifted to an interest in women's situations. I counseled women as a volunteer for Life-Line, a telephone counseling organization, and came to know that there were no services or organizations in Cape Town responding specifically to women's needs."

With her new interest in women's issues, Rolene returned to UCT and graduated with a social work degree in 1992. In her final year of training she was placed at the National Institution for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO) working with the victim care team and Co-ordinated Action for Battered Women (CABW).

"I counseled abused women in shelters and gave workshops on abuse to women in factories. Through the work with CABW I learned about the shocking statistics on abuse — 1:4 women were abused by their male partners. I was deeply concerned with the extreme shortage of Black social workers in the poverty communities of Cape Town. I believed that a professionally administered program to train Black women in skills and knowledge to help abused women was vital for the healing of the society. I knew that the training had to be within the feminist framework, that of empowering women to help themselves improve their lives."

Rolene concluded that she

had to formulate a program to address South Africa's daunting challenge of improving the human condition of its most disadvantaged majority — Black women.

According to Rolene "higher education, such as a 4-year degree in social work is inaccessible to the majority of community women. It is expensive in terms of time, academic requirements and money. A research project conducted at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in 1987, noted that 21,000 Black social workers will be needed in South Africa by the year 2001. In 1987 there were just over 1,800 trained Black social workers.

I believed that the university system could not produce enough social workers to meet the demand within the above time-frame. Academic pressures are extreme and many students drop out. Many required readings contain concepts written in academic jargon which students, especially those speaking English as a second language, find difficult. In addition, social work training at university is not gender focused nor does it sufficiently address cross-cultural issues. I also believed that university training is not geared to the adult learner, and most of the students who would have the life experience necessary to empathize with their women clients would be adults."

Rolene devised a one year, inexpensive and innovative training program. In 1993 she visited women's organizations in England, Canada and the US to in-

vestigate services. She returned to Cape Town and registered MOSAIC as an NGO in November, 1993.

For many reasons, the types of services that she had visited in the other countries, were inappropriate for South Africa. MOSAIC had to meet the needs of the communities it was going to serve. Township "mamas" who needed help could not afford to visit traditional agencies located downtown and far from their homes, so services had to be free and easily accessible.

Most abuse happened after hours and over weekends (the "weekend specials,") when most "traditional" agencies were closed. This meant that the community workers ought to be located in their own communities readily available to abused women, who knew them, were referred to them; and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Community workers who lived outside the townships and squatter camps in which they worked lacked credibility and respect in these communities. They also lacked the relationships, networks, and knowledge of the opinion leaders in these communities.

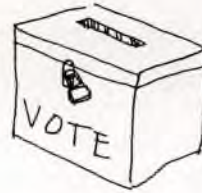
Virtually all social workers in South Africa were White and did not speak the African languages. This meant that women could not communicate their problems in their mother tongues. The apartheid system had divided the communities so com-

pletely that there was little or no understanding by White social workers of the cultures of Black clients.

Social work caseloads in traditional agencies were so enormous that women who needed help had to wait for hours before seeing a social worker, who then gave inadequate help which turned women away from using any form of social services.

Women's organizations and agencies which Rolene visited abroad most often focused on specific areas of services delivery. Because of local conditions, MOSAIC wanted to offer as many services as possible within a holistic therapeutic framework. Although the program focus was specifically on women, men also needed to be educated about abuse and its effects. This would take the form of educational presentations on abuse offered in venues frequented by men and women, such as churches, day hospitals, community centers. (Anyone can be abused. However research statistics in South African showed that approximately 90% of those abused were women, and 10% were men.)

In South Africa, individuals and corporations do not receive tax relief for donations to charitable organizations. Because we wanted to be — and establish accountability: all records of training and practical work application had to be extensively and carefully documented and filed; Every day's lessons evaluated; and regular contacts maintained with Mosaic sponsors and supporters. This was all fundamental to the responsible functioning of the organization. Maintenance of the



group in the form of caring for the care-givers was of primary importance and had to be built into the program. MOSAIC had to heal the healers. Black South African women had always experienced crippling oppression through race, culture, class, and gender and had borne the brunt of the devastating effects of racist apartheid. No organizations existed in South Africa or abroad which could provide a precedent for MOSAIC. MOSAIC formulated a completely new concept in training and service delivery to meet the specific needs of the communities it intended to serve.

Throughout 1994 Rolene developed the pilot training program for MOSAIC community workers. The pilot course consisted of: five months of full-time classroom training; dynamics of abuse; women and the law; women's health; feminist counseling/ workshop/ support group facilitation; assessment and evaluation; educational presentation, managerial and leadership skills. For a further 5 months the program included professional supervision of the community workers in training as they put their newly acquired skills into practice in the different communities.

In July, 1995, the first group of twelve trainees from ten different communities in and around Cape Town were selected. Two trainees, themselves abused, did not meet the standards required for service delivery and dropped out of the course. Ten trainees completed the program and graduated as MOSAIC community workers in June, 1996.

Amy and Rolene never

met. Yet, both observed the same phenomena in the lives and plights of Black women in the townships, squatter camps and rural areas. Both were activists in different aspects of the women's struggle in Cape Town.



FULFILLING THE DREAM — MOSAIC'S COMMUNITY WORK TRAINEES

At the same time that Rolene formulated her vision for MOSAIC and Amy was at work in the Western Cape, disadvantaged women — working as domestics or restaurant dish washers or being unemployed — dreamed of becoming social workers. They knew that they had the intelligence and the ability to learn how to help their neighbors improve their conditions but they never had the means to realize their dreams.

Hilda Mtshazi of Khayelitsha had literally cried with frustration as she spend hours ironing clothing for her employers. Lulu Mzomba from Guguletu, Noxolo Guma from Langa and Ntabi Motspai from Nyanga lived with the certainty that they would never be given the opportunity to fulfill their potential and become professionally trained community workers. Dawn Keytle from Mitchell's

Plain and Bertha Esbach from Elsies River had engaged in voluntary work all their lives but did not have the skills or knowledge which they desperately wanted. Alice Khochlakala from Mbeke-
weni, Jean Maqula and Caroline Tsetsana from Khayelitsha longed for meaningful involvement with the abused women in their communities and had long since given up their dreams of being able to help them. Shiella Buso of Nyanga realized the importance of education but had no ways of obtaining this. She, too, nurtured the dream of

becoming a social worker without believing that this would ever be realized.

It was known by Amy and Rolene, but regarded as amazing by the Amy Biehl Foundation that women could nurture such lofty and incredible dreams in the face of such punishing violence, oppression, and domestic abuse. Silent strength and hope in the midst of total disenfranchisement.

JOINING PATHS

An announcement advertising the MOSAIC training course was sent to community organizations in May, 1995. Approximately 50 applicants responded. Interviews took place in late May/early June of that year.

Of the various selection criteria applied in the interview process, the five most significant were:

1) Candidates were required to read and write English (as instruction was to be in English and not all candidates were of Xhosa-speaking backgrounds);

- 2) Candidates should reside in as many different communities to ensure the broadest coverage of the Cape region;
- 3) Candidates should be capable of financing their own transportation to and from class (MOSAIC had no funds available for this purpose);
- 4) Candidates were given priority if they appeared to be "natural" community workers, sought-after for help in their communities even before training and skills development; and
- 5) Candidate families had to be capable of supporting them in their work (even if called out at night or during weekends).

In early June, 1995 a friend of Rolene's informed her of the existence of the Amy Biehl Foundation.

"I had used my own savings to register MOSAIC in 1993, to have the lesson plans drawn up in 1994, and to employ two part-time social



workers and a community worker to help network, do a needs assessment, and get MOSAIC on the welfare "map" in Cape Town. At this point there was virtually no funding left. I was running MOSAIC alone."

To start the training program, funding had to be found. It was estimated that it would cost R6,000 (approx US \$1,600) to train each trainee. Corporate and individual sponsors were asked to support a trainee for R5,500. All

trainees were contracted to pay R500 (approx US \$150) for the year's course so that they knew that they had bought their course and it was not a disempowering charitable handout. This was to be paid back when they could afford to do so. It was felt that they should receive modest remuneration for the supervised work which they were doing in the field during the practical half of their training. Therefore, part of the trainee sponsorship money was earmarked for trainees: They received R100 (US \$30) each week.

Rolene sent a proposal to the Foundation. She had been aware of the tragedy of Amy's death through the media and had heard of the valuable work which Amy had done in Cape Town. She thought that the Amy Biehl Foundation might be interested in sponsoring a trainee.

Shortly before Peter and Linda Biehl's departure for Cape Town in July, 1996, "We received a proposal requesting funding for the fledgling pilot program to train MOSAIC community workers. We were excited. The proposal was interesting and in a field of concern for Amy. Within a week, Peter and Linda Biehl met and spoke with Rolene and met the women of MOSAIC on their first day of class. Peter and Linda handed the women of MOSAIC a cheque for sponsorship. It was an emotional day for all."

The spirit of Amy was ever present as the MOSAIC/Biehl paths crossed and joined. She remains the guiding light in a relationship of love and respect grown closer and stronger

throughout the year.

1+10=50,000 IN FOUR AND ONE-HALF MONTHS

After completing the classroom training, ten MOSAIC trainees began to work in the communities in which they lived. From February, 1996 Rolene supervised them twice weekly and filed their written reports of the services rendered to clients and community members.

Statistics recording the kind, amount and nature of services as well as the numbers of people given therapeutic help and participating in educational workshops were meticulously kept. A student of the University of the Western Cape used MOSAIC statistics and report documents for her research thesis (to be completed in 1996), on the effects that the MOSAIC training course has had on the lives of the trainee community workers.

Working together with community police, priests, nurses and doctors, teachers and principals of schools, MOSAIC trainees educated men and women on issues of abuse. They spoke at police stations, churches, schools, day hospitals, clinic and community centers. They educated men and women informally in taxis, trains, doctors' waiting rooms, at funerals and friends' homes. They counseled women referred by other abused women who had been counseled. They conducted workshops on abuse, and facilitated support groups for women for whom the concept was entirely new. They accompanied raped and abused women to police stations, hospitals, and sup-

ported them through court procedures. They referred men and women to other organizations when appropriate. They worked day and night and especially over weekends when women had time off from work and were able to see them.

Word about MOSAIC spread quickly and requests for services increased daily. In four and a half months of professionally supervised field practice, ten MOSAIC community work trainees reached over 50,000 men and women in their different communities.

As the numbers increased, it became necessary to recruit assistants to help the trainees with their workload. From May to July, 1996, assistants were found by the trainees to serve as apprentices, thus becoming oriented to the work of MOSAIC. The formal training course for these assistants

began in August, 1996.

Because the assistants had MOSAIC community workers to train them, the assistant training program will become a modified version of the pilot training course and may be cut down to five or six months. This is a more manageable period of training for most women. The eight week intensive training in feminist counseling will remain the same.

WHERE TO FROM HERE? — LONG TERM GOALS

On the 29th of June, 1996, MOSAIC's trainee community workers graduated in a joyous celebration at the University of the Western Cape. We sent a fax addressed to the women of MOSAIC that was read during the graduation ceremony. Amy's presence was clearly felt.

All of the graduates

wanted to remain as MOSAIC community workers despite the lack of funding for salaries. We devised a plan so they could continue to receive the token remuneration they had obtained in training, and open a loan account in each of their names until funding was obtained. We also plan to employ MOSAIC assistants bringing up the number of service providers to twenty-five. We think it is necessary to employ more workers to meet the demands for services and expand into other areas of Cape Town which desperately need help. Two graduate community workers will be trained as trainers during the assistant training program. Eventually they will be experienced enough to run the course in Xhosa. Another training course for community workers will be offered in 1997. The essence of the training program is its flexibility



and the ease with which it can be modified to suit the needs of the community which it serves.

In July, 1996, eight respected and committed members of the community joined the Board of Directors of MOSAIC. Two members of the original Board elected to remain on as members. This newly augmented Board will steer MOSAIC confidently into the future.

MOSAIC community workers are instruments of peace and messengers of compassion. MOSAIC knows that together with the Amy Biehl Foundation it has changed lives for the better. It has made a difference.

THE MEANING OF THIS WORK FOR THE BIEHLS AND THE FOUNDATION

The opportunity to help the women of MOSAIC fulfill themselves and help their neighbors in ways which are so critically needed is rewarding to the Biehl family and to everyone associated with the Amy Biehl Foundation. "Discovering potential Foundation grant candidates takes us down roads traveled by Amy in the pursuit of her work and her dreams. This permits us to learn more about Amy and her many interests through encoun-

ters with people who knew her or worked with her. The fact that Amy would have cared strongly about MOSAIC makes it easy for us to care. But it is human to care about a program like MOSAIC and the undaunted women who make it happen."

Likewise, it is human and natural that the women of MOSAIC should care deeply about Amy and her death in their country. Their work expresses Amy's belief that much good can be done if people simply get along and work together. □

Page 26

Amy Biehl (second from right) successfully balanced her many passions, including a special interest in the role of women in southern Africa.

STANFORD

March 1994 Volume 22 / Number 1

'Hell on Wheels'

Amy Biehl raced through life, embracing her commitments with an unbridled energy that gave meaning to her death.

By Phil Taylor



COMMENTARY ON "1+10=50, 000 (IN FOUR MONTHS)"

By Alosi J.M. Moloi

Alosi J.M. Moloi, D. Litt., is Associate Professor, Department of Black Studies, California State University, Long Beach, CA

Peter Biehl, a White American whose daughter Amy Biehl, a young promising Fullbright Scholar who was tragically and senselessly murdered in violent prone apartheid South Africa, and Rolene Miller, a White South African and founder of a non-government organization MOSAIC, serving disadvantaged African and Colored women in South Africa, report that their grassroots enterprise has trained ten community workers who have in four months served fifty thousand individuals who had been brutalized by a vicious system that has bred a horrible cycle of violence especially against Black women. MOSAIC must be commended for offering hope and true liberation to Black women who have suffered and continue to endure intense and immeasurable pain, the legacy of apartheid South Africa. Extensive literature on the status of Black Women in South Africa document the crimes and horrors perpetrated against women by the government, men, family members, and especially White police who have raped, brutalized, and tortured them. Therefore, grassroots effort to eradicate violence or to improve the quality of life for all South Africans is welcome.

Rolene Miller accurately identifies problems and obstacles in the efforts to empower Black women to improve the quality of

their lives although I have reservations about some of her assumptions suggested by some of her pronouncements in her article. True, the apartheid regime didn't see it fit to educate the African masses, especially women. The illiteracy rate is very high. Thus, illiteracy must be tackled from every front along with other developmental projects. Training everyone with little or no education in self-help ventures that bolster human dignity, self-awareness, self-improvement, must take place at grassroots level and should be encouraged. Along with such attempts, South Africa must radically transform its school system and curriculum that continue to further the myth of White supremacy and Black inferiority. Formal education, literacy training, must go hand in hand with all other efforts to rapidly liberate the country and move it away from the horrors of apartheid.

Criticizing university education smacks of the old White liberal views that encouraged the likes of Booker T. Washington who exhorted Blacks to be patient, not to bother about political rights and higher education. Rather than rejecting the value of university training, revise it; make the curriculum more relevant; after all Africans have always trusted their intellectuals. We lived among our own people, suffered with them,

and fought the racist oppressor together. The struggle of our women must not be fragmented and separated from the over all struggle. After all, in spite of apartheid, and long before Ms. Miller entered university, Africans managed university and the English language just fine.

From her background information, Rolene Miller's involvement with Africans is relatively new. Perhaps her MOSAIC can and will draw strength from Black women and social workers such as Allen Khuzwayo, Linda Myeza, Benedict Mosala, Mamphela Ramphele, to name a few, who begun grassroots efforts to train less educated women to fend for themselves, to fight injustice, to uplift their lives, long before it became fashionable to talk about the plight of Black women. The government hindered the work of Black social workers among Black people. Winnie Mandela will attest to that. Like Miller, the above — named persons, rightly asserted that women at grassroots level had to be provided with skills and knowledge to work for their own liberation. Ignorance must be totally eradicated. However, Black women were not viewed as helpless invalids, abused or not, to be redeemed by sympathetic Whites. Black women welcome any help they may receive from whatever source as chief Albert Luthuli of the African National Congress once observed... "had the (Black) women hung back, resistance would still have been faltering and uncertain... Furthermore, women of all races have had far less hesitation than men in making common cause about things basic to them."

I am a South African, a direct victim of apartheid who did not hesitate to challenge the evils of White supremacy myths, intended or unintended. Perhaps I can offer suggestions to avoid the pitfalls that ensnared many well-intended White-led organizations working for the betterment of Black communities. For example, Donald Wood a journalist who befriended Steve Biko, one of the martyrs of our struggle, was suddenly elevated to some savior of Black folks by Western media even when his association with us was at best marginal. He had benefited from discrimination laws of apartheid, bothered nothing about the plight of Blacks until his brief acquaintance with Biko made him visible. He purported to speak for us, and police harassment of his family the following four months, was suddenly painted by Westerners as being far more significant than the dehumanization and exploitation of our people. He was, intentionally or unintentionally, gaining fame and fortune at the expense of the misery of our people. Also, I want to note that, whilst the murder of Amy Biehl in South Africa was a cowardly, senseless, and brutal deed, it was an act committed by thugs who have been denounced by everyone and the Pan-Africanist Congress, the party they claim to be members of. They must be punished to the fullest extent of the law; and they have been sentenced! Amy was at the wrong place, at the wrong time while driving friends home. However, this does not warrant a rather presumptuous assertion that she died for, or in South Africa's democratic struggle. The

causes she believed in were indeed noble, however, her death was caused by criminals who did not understand the intensity of our struggle. Thousands of Africans died in South Africa even though their deaths were not publicized. They are the martyrs of our struggle for national liberation. Violence has always been directed against Blacks, not the other way around as suggested for the cause of Amy Biehl's cruel and untimely death.

May I point out, also, that it is true, African women are respectfully addressed as MAMA or MME a title denoting them as mothers, life-givers, the custodians of our traditions and customs, the mothers of our nation. How ironic that the disintegration of our society since contact situation with our oppressors and apartheid destroyed this noble view of our women, subjecting them to abuse, violence, rape, torture, and dehumanization! However, even apparently innocent statements such as "the mamas of the community—" or "the mature mamas..... while they may sound cute, exotic expressions when used by non-Africans, may actually sound condescending. They are the women of South Africa, just like their Indian, Colored and White counterparts. Lest someone suggest that we are too sensitive, an understanding of our culture for smooth interaction with us is recommended. That seems to be the strength of MOSAIC, that you train people in the community to help advance, define, develop and improve their environment. A slip of the tongue, no matter how innocent, may destroy, a noble effort.

MOSAIC deserves the help and support of all peace and justice loving people. Yet it is also the duty of MOSAIC to work with all other grassroots organizations attempting to improve the lot of our people, especially women, children, and the disabled, not in isolation, but acknowledging the courageous efforts of others even before Ms. Miller completed her studies in 1984. The Black struggle for liberation and human dignity is much longer and deeper than that. Always remember that the people you want to help must be at the center of all decisions made; they must be involved through extensive consultation even though apartheid has encouraged dependency that may be mistaken for begging for hand-outs. Through education that honors our past and present, our human dignity, and our right to self-determination and development, the human condition in South Africa can be improved. The struggle and solution efforts must be multi-dimensional and rigorous.

To conclude, may I explain the following: my comments have used words such as Africans, deliberately to contradict some of the calculated misleading by the media who have often lumped Africans, Indians and Coloreds as Blacks. This was a ploy by corporations and business that did not want to advance Africans to higher positions. They would promote Coloreds (people of mixed parentage and those Africans who were "passing") then to deflect international criticism, they would indicate they have hired Blacks. Other Coloreds too, when it was politically expedient,

called themselves Black. Societies that never made such distinctions as South Africa's racial policies made regarding people of African descent and those of mixed parentage, are often fooled by that ploy of lumping together Africans, Indians, and Coloreds as Blacks. For example, the Western Cape Province is predominantly Colored and White. Africans were deliberately restricted and kept out of that area. Even now this province is controlled by the former oppressors, Mr. de Klerk's National Party, and the Coloreds, who believe their lot is better with Whites, overwhelmingly voted for that party. The University of the Western Cape until most recently, has been a Colored university excluding Africans. Perhaps

MOSAIC will help bridge the wide gulf created by decades of apartheid, a crime against humanity as the U.N. declared. Also, hopefully, the Amy Biehl Foundation, unlike other overseas foundations from societies with histories of ethnic and cultural insensitivity, will not hesitate to deal directly with deserving organizations run by Africans who are as concerned and dedicated as Ms. Miller. Others, in spite of their professed desire to be involved with programs for the betterment of Africans, prefer to act through South African Whites with whom they are comfortable. May this venture of MOSAIC be one of many worthy projects to come to, or evolve in South Africa. □



W.E.B. Du Bois

Commentary

1+10=50,000 (IN FOUR AND A HALF MONTHS)

By Wynetta Devore

Wynetta Devore, MSW, ED.D., is Professor, School of Social Work, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

It is my privilege to comment on the work of Peter Biehl and Rolene Miller. Although I did not have the opportunity to meet Amy Biehl I have been in the townships of Cape Town South African and seen the desolate place where her life was taken. I do have the honor of knowing Rolene Miller having met her on a recent trip to Cape Town. We spoke briefly of her work with the Black women of the townships.

I have had the opportunity to learn more of Rolene's work from Helen Lieberman who is associated with Ikamva Labantu (The Future of Our Nation) the community organization that has given MOSAIC an organizational home. I have read material prepared as proposals for the funding of this important social work training program for Black South African women. I am pleased to add to the knowledge about the work of Rolene Miller and MOSAIC because it needs to be affirmed. But, even more, the work of the Black township women who responded to a radio call to join a training program is to be applauded. Many were apprehensive, unsure of the goals of the program, but joined eager for the opportunity to learn and to find ways to enrich the lives of their families and their community. My new friendships with young Black women and the more mature "mamas" gives me a

greater appreciation for the "10" and "50,000" of the article's title.

"I" is Rolene Miller, a white South African woman, an educator, professional social worker and an activist for the rights of all women. She has been educated under the apartheid system of South Africa. The "10" are Black women of the townships who have had little education under the apartheid system of South Africa. They, their mothers, sisters and women friends have been victims of beatings, rape, and other acts of violence inflicted by family members and police departments. The "50,000" are the number of community members, young and old, male and female, who have had encounters with the ten new women activists, trained to respond to individual and community need.

The MOSAIC "Accumulated Project Work Form" for February 1996 records 9,971 contacts with individuals and groups. Formal presentations were made in Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches, at police stations, and Langa High School. Workshops were held with sewing groups, women's prayer groups, and clinics at Crossroads and Macassar. Church halls, and the workers own homes were sites for meetings of support groups. Abuse in relationships, rape, loss due to death or divorce were identified

as problems addressed in individual counseling. Informal networking and presentations were made during transport, in the homes of friends, on the street, at creches and in hair salons. The 9,971 included women, men, groups of women and men and youth. Other MOSAIC material comments that this data does not include all contacts, so data collection will become more exacting. More than 10,000 contacts in a short month. A mammoth job!

The Biehl and Miller article presents Miller's perspective related to the need for training responsive to the lives and experiences of the learners and the community. Too often we assume that Western practice methods, particularly those useful in the United States, are universal therefore of value in all human interactions. Too often our social work educators and practitioners pay scant attention to the mounting evidence of our own lack of ethnic and cultural sensitivity. Miller's social work experience led her to understand that methods and curriculum used in Britain, Canada or the United States were not entirely useful in the Black townships created by apartheid. A specially prepared program was essential to maximize the potential for success.

Biehl and Miller list the names of program participants along with their township of residence. I would like to add commentary on the quality of life that may be found in the townships whose names we find so difficult to pronounce. Township homes are, for the most part are poorly constructed, without electricity, running water or toilet facilities.

The latter are shared by the entire community, located at somewhat central points. Nor, is there convenient transportation. Amy Biehl was providing transport for women at the time of her beating and death.

Yet, eager women have completed training, are training other workers, and responding to community needs. The are articulate in relation to their lives and the meaning of the training for them.

Hilda Mtshazi explains "this course is very important in the New South Africa because we women are taken as if our place is in the kitchen only. There is no jobs in S.A. the women are uneducated and have no skills by doing this we can help the abused women in our society who are crying for help."

In her younger years Nthasi Motsapi says "I thought that when I am growing up I will be a social worker. But in vain, I never reach that stage, because I am from a very poor family. My mother never had enough money for me to continue with my studies."

Alice Khochlokala writes, "I wanted to fulfill my wishes as a child of becoming a social worker. But for my parent single not married and a domestic worker with 7 children earning R2.20 those years. I couldn't make it."

These are participant responses to the model that Miller has presented for the design and implementation of a program that responds to the needs of Black South African women in abusive relationships. Practice experience has shown us all that greater suc-

cess is achieved if primary service providers are members of the community of need. Persons who are not immediate members of the community serve as secondary resources, this has been the Miller role. Certainly, 9,971 contacts in one month provides some evidence of a successful endeavor.

In the present, however, MOSAIC is at great risk. It is without sufficient funding for continued training. In fact, training of a new groups has been postponed until January 1997. In the meantime there are 11 salaries to be paid to women who have completed training and are at work in the townships. The women of South Africa are beginning to make a difference in the quality of life in the beleaguered townships adjoining Cape Town. But, they need help if they are to continue.

I believe that Lulu Mzomba provides an appropriate ending for this commentary. "I was lucky to be accepted to the course its high time for women to stand up and have a say in South Africa. So now I will be able to help other women in the community especially in our townships the women are abused by men and they don't know where and what to do. The apartheid system made us live in fear all the years. I thank God for this course it opened my mind and gave me confidence." □

(Women's quotations were taken from a funding proposal "MOSAIC Training Service and Healing Centre for Women," September 1995. MOSAIC 512, 4 Church Street, Cape Town 8001)

A Response to "1+10=50,000"

By Wilma Peebles-Wilkins

Wilma Peebles-Wilkins is Dean and Professor, School of Social Work, Boston University, Boston, MA

From the outset, when responding to a narrative such as this one, it is important to acknowledge the value of both domestic and global interracial cooperation for social and institutional development. By the same token, self-help initiatives and internal development are essential within communities of the African diaspora. My response to 1+10=50,000 is influenced by these dual realities.

I had mixed emotions when I read this narrative. Some of my ambivalence stemmed from my stronger leaning toward the belief that community building from within is essential for all Black communities world wide. That is, interracial cooperation while often necessary, is not totally sufficient. Other mixed emotions stemmed from the sense of *de ja vu* I feel whenever I read or hear about violent attacks on a White person by Black people in any part of Africa. My *de ja vu* feelings go back to the days of my Catholic high school education in the early sixties when nuns, Catholic and other missionaries were victims of violent uprisings in parts of Africa. Some individuals were killed because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time and others were deliberately singled out for violent attacks which resulted in death. During this time, I was one of six African American students in a class of

just over thirty students and an entire school of fewer than fifteen African American students out of a student body of about one hundred and twenty-five students. During this time of turmoil in Africa and attacks on the Catholic Church constituency, the Irish nun who taught us Latin used the class each morning to vent her anger and frustrations over the violence in Africa in general and the killing of nuns in particular. The African American students, under other circumstances had pegged this particular nun as a racist and her constant attention to "Black savages killing nuns" served to validated this group perception. Both the public and private schools in (North Carolina) had only been integrated a few years and the White and Black students were just beginning to develop a common understanding about the do's and don'ts of racial etiquette in the South. A lull always came over the room when this nun used the Latin class to verbalize her anger about backwards Africans hurting and killing other individuals who were self-sacrificing and went to Africa to help improve the quality of life and the "morals of the uncivilized"—those killing nuns who were responding to a religious calling by making lifelong sacrifices. While none of the Black students condoned violent attacks and killing,

this nun's open expression of outrage and anger in this manner served to make all the African American students feel rage against the Catholic church,

When I read Biehl's narrative, I had an immediate flashback to my high school days and I could not help but wonder where the missing rage was in this narrative. The shock and grief over the violent death of Amy Biehl in the South African town of Guguletu are evident in the manuscript, but the anger and rage are conspicuously absent and unexpressed. Residents, were stunned and there was a sense of terror, but I can't help but wonder how Amy's family really felt about their loss under these circumstance of terror when Amy was in South Africa to do good?

My second reaction is to the repeated use of the word *Mamas* when describing the Black women activists. While this may be an internal community term of endearment, I have mixed emotions about the use of the term by those who are not members of that Black community. Adopting the term *Mama* by others for continuous usage feels like patronization to me and I'm just not comfortable hearing the term from a White person who has adopted it as a continuous pattern of expression. While I am not a believer in cultural relativism and I do not condone the abuse of other women anywhere, I also react negatively to an "outsider" characterizing the "traditions of paternalistic tribalism" among Black South African men. I don't doubt for a moment the good that Amy Biehl did to improve social conditions and the quality of life

during her time in South Africa and her attempts to extricate women who were victims of abuse. I also believe that the Amy Biehl Foundation is an admirable response to Amy's 's violent death. However, the attitudes which I perceive when reading this manuscript come across as paternalistic and patronizing.

The formation of MOSAIC — Training, Service, and Healing Centre for Women is one of those examples of efforts associated with interracial cooperation which lead to community development and improved social conditions. However, one wonders what is happening in the South African education institutions serving the Black population and training them to be social workers. Where are those social workers who are being trained in South African Schools of Social Work and what are they doing?

The human degradation and other atrocities suffered by the Black people of South Africa under the conditions of apartheid have been depicted by such writers as Alan Paton in *Cry the Beloved Country* and the world knows that violent struggle has led to the current Mandela's South Africa. The Black community was involved in its own self and community development to extricate itself from White South Africans who lived lavish lifestyles at the expense of the Black community, where Black women left their own children to care for the children of the White community and Black men worked to extract the natural resources from the land to support the high standard of living of a White minority. In this regard, we

also recall the earlier social change activities for women initiated by Winnie Mandela. While Black communities in South Africa are still developing and the social revolution regrettably has not been benign, there has been dramatic self-directed social change which has transpired over many decades. The South African Black community has demonstrated its own strength and capacity for continued self-development and social change. □

COMMENTARY

"1+10=50,000"

By Kenneth O. Lutterman,

Kenneth O. Lutterman, Ph.D., is Associate Director for Research Training and Research Resources, Division of Epidemiology and Services Research National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health, Rockville, MD

The MOSAIC project is a most impressive effort to deal with one of South Africa most serious problems, it is not only a most fitting continuation of Amy Biehl's work, it is like her work, engaging the problems at the community level where change must take place.

While I have not met Rolene Miller and do not know of MOSAIC first hand, I did spend a month in South Africa this Spring visiting schools and departments of social work, visiting Guguletu where Amy Biehl was killed, visiting health officials and community centers in the Cape Flats, visiting our South African "son" and his family in Mamelodi—a Black township now a part of Pretoria, and visiting universities and the South African Department of Health. I learned first hand about the reality of violence and spouse abuse.

South Africa demonstrates the kind of commitment to building a new community that Amy Biehl lived for. It is shown not only by Nelson Mandela, but also by many so called "ordinary people" who have testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the massive violence they and their families and friends had suffered and that had not given up hope or become vengeful. It was amazing to see, hear, and meet people in South Africa because there is a new day

coming.

But the reality of violence is still all around. Apartheid meant the separation of husbands and wives for 11 months of the year while they worked in the mines and lived in all male "hostels". Rapid urbanization has uprooted the traditional tribal family structure. Unemployment of 40-50% of the population means that poverty is extreme, and crime is very high, Add in alcohol and drugs and it is not surprising that there is a great deal of spouse abuse. We were told that, just as in this country, violence against wives, and women in general, is a very serious problem. We met one person who had been abused in the past and was now working at a community center in the Cape Flats area to address the problem of spouse abuse. She was working with, and trying to train the police to deal with spouse abuse as well as working with abused women. Is there a need for a program like MOSAIC? Absolutely.

The South African Ministry of Health has asked for help in developing community mental health programs, because virtually all mental health services have been limited to hospital care. There was essentially no community mental health program under the prior government. The impressive draft "Health Plan for the Western Cape," which includes

Guguletu, calls for the development of community care. The draft health plan calls for developing and training community workers. The kind of persons being trained by MOSAIC would be most useful as a part of that plan. In the past, over 80% of the mental health funds went to about 20% of the population. Changing the system will not be easy, in part because of the lack of trained social workers and other mental health workers.

In the community health clinics most of the staff are nurses. There are very few physicians and virtually no social workers in the health clinics. The 1974 Health Act actually precluded social workers from providing mental health care. While social work in South Africa played a very important role in opposition to apartheid, it has not developed a strong program in community mental health. At the University of Western Cape, Belleville, — the ANC or Freedom University as it is called—there are programs in Public Health that have been engaged in community development at the local level for over a decade. These efforts involve Whites, Coloreds, and Blacks. We were very impressed by the kinds of interactions that we observed between people of differing ethnic groups. In the schools of social work, the student body has changed over the past 4 years from essentially all white, to being majority (often 70-80%) non-White in almost every department of social work that we visited. However, the faculties in most universities remain predominantly White. It will take time to train non-White faculty

who had previously been excluded.

Clearly there is the need for training community workers to advocate for women, and to provide support that MOSAIC provides. Women have so few resources and yet they play the most critical role in helping children to learn and to grow up to be effective men and women. The linkage of MOSAIC with the University of Western Cape is an important strength of the program. I can only commend their efforts and wish them success. This kind of community development is most important.

However, one must also remember that spouse abuse is also exacerbated by the larger systemic problems of mass unemployment, poverty, ill health, and literacy. While the government is beginning to address these problems, they are also very difficult. When we were in Guguletu we witnessed the shooting of three persons who were riding in a taxi because of what is called the "taxi war" between various taxi "companies" over who gets to serve particular townships. Violence appears to be endemic in this situation of poverty and hopelessness that many people find themselves in.

The new Constitution is a marvelous document. The people are wonderful. The problems they face are enormous. People like Amy Biehl and the Biehl Foundation, and the MOSAIC workers, can make a difference. □

Commentary on 1+10=50,000

By Ruthann L. Rountree

Ruthann L. Rountree, MSW, M.Div., is Lecturer, Department of Social Work, California State University, Long Beach, CA. She is a doctoral student at the University of Southern California.

DREAM DEFERRED

Reading the article about Amy Biehl led me to reflect on a recent experience I had in Kentucky. My plans were to take a side trip into Appalachia, to talk with people and view rural poverty first hand. The trip was canceled following a 30 minute drive into the country, just outside of Louisville. While enjoying the beautiful lush green trees, shrubbery, and rolling hills, I became aware of a tiny alarm. It grew louder with each bend I rounded in the road. The trees lining the two lane road began to meet and grow together; they seemed an omen of impending danger. Finding a way to turn around, I did so pressing the pedal to the floor.

As an African American woman, raised in a western state, I did not grow up with alarms in my head. Over the years I have learned that some environs are off limits, even in America. On various occasions I have accidentally gone into the wrong area. Fortunately local residents advised me to leave for my own good. Heeding these warnings allowed me to escape physical harm. Paying attention to the alarm has guided me through unfamiliar communities and around potentially volatile situations.

PATH OF THE VISIONARY

Amy Biehl's life cannot be judged solely on her age — longevity does not guarantee that a person will make a contribution to society. I would suggest that one's life can best be evaluated by the quality of one's character. The fruits of Amy's labor reveal that she probably achieved an advanced level of socio-emotional and spiritual maturity. Individuals at this level work towards self-actualization and seek to function as world citizens. They develop a special lens that allows them to recognize the borderless nature of evil: racism, sexism, poverty, and violence. Ultimately, if Amy Biehl had lived, we do not know what her contributions to the world might have been.

Entire nations were transformed by visionaries. Unfortunately the legacy left by many of these visionaries is martyrdom. Medgar Evers (1963, civil rights advocate), Jonathan Daniels, 26 year old seminary student (1965, civil rights advocate), Steven Biko (1977, South African Black Consciousness Movement leader) and Ruth First (1982, South African A.N.C. organizer) and others too numerous to name were killed. They were ordinary people who were martyred because of their extra ordinary vision.

Systems of oppression specialize in creating and per-

petuating rigid boundaries based upon class, race and gender roles. They maintain control through subsystems that are ruthless, self-destructive and hostile to outside influence. Individuals and families living in these systems exist at the margins of society. Oppressive systems cannot tolerate the message of a visionary: peace, social justice and the oneness of humanity. Visionaries may fail to perceive or adhere to the realities of these closed systems while attempting to bring about social change. The consequences for ignoring these system boundaries can be fatal.

"Without a vision the people perish" (Pro 29:18). A modern translation of this proverb might read: Without revelation, the people cast off all restraint. When all restraint is cast off the weapons of the colonizer become the tactics of the colonized. Slogans like "one settler, one bullet" are reminiscent of the slogan that rang in the streets of Los Angeles just a few years ago, "no justice no peace." These slogans challenge the social order and call for social action.

"As an organizer I start from where the world is,

As it is, not as I would like it to be." S. Alinski

Starting from where the world is implies that the organizer must be aware of the sociohistorical dynamics and strengths of individuals and organizations in that community. These forces shape the space into that the organizer enters. The women's movement in today's South Africa must be woven into the fabric that already exists. Leaders such as Lillian Ngoyi and Helen

Joseph, and groups such as The Black Sash (1955) the National Federation of Women, the Women's league of ANC and Federation of South Africa represent the residual resources and strengths of older visionaries available to the organizer of women's concerns in South Africa. The new visionaries must be linked to the work of the past

and current grassroots movements.

Social work, at one time, was a profession that attracted and birthed visionaries. The challenge is how to incorporate the visionary into community practice and develop community interventions that identify the survival strategies and residual resources of the community. □



Malcom X

RIDING THE GIRAFFE: A SOCIAL WORKER'S NINE YEAR JOURNEY

This narrative recounts my work with a family of a mother, and her two sons over 9 years. The oldest child had a rare developmental disability known as Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome¹. In this story I explore the different ways I tried to assist the family in supporting their adaptive capabilities in the context of many setbacks and challenges. This personal account describes my own success and failures over this 9 year relationship. At times I questioned my ability to help them as they faced so many obstacles. The family's energy to advocate for their child continually restored my confidence that I could make a difference in their lives. Nine years is a long period of time to be doing social work with a family. It's unlikely that it could occur today.

By Lonnie R. Helton

Lonnie R. Helton, Ed.D., MSW, is Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Cleveland State University, Cleveland OH

BEGINNINGS

As a clinical social worker I worked for eleven years with families whose children had developmental disabilities. Some parents experienced great difficulty in coping with their children's complex physical and mental disabilities; while others tried to deny the severity of their children's problems. However, I am amazed at how most family members, especially the siblings, faced the rearing of such children with boldness and resilience. Although many brothers and sisters of children with special needs at times felt left out, competed for their parents' attention, or took on surrogate parenting roles; others were strengthened by having such a sibling and achieved remarkable personal growth.

I remember this family, in particular, as one of my most challenging cases. I learned from them about the intense and pervasive needs of families with a disabled child, and about myself as a professional helper. This was my longest involvement with a family—over nine years; and the child's disabilities were the most unique of any on my caseload.

When Nell Barton was referred by the attending pediatrician for "intensive counseling" at

the Developmental Center, I did not know what to expect. I worked as a family evaluator and field practicum coordinator and had no openings for counseling. Dr. Goldberg described the Barton family as a divorced mother struggling to care for her two young sons; the mother was especially challenged by Kevin, who had Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome.¹ As Dr. Goldberg described the developmental disorder, I questioned whether I was up for the task, but agreed to counsel the mother. I could see the relief on Dr. Goldberg's face as she walked away. The medical library did not offer much help. I spent as much time looking up specific clinical descriptors of Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome in the medical dictionary as I spent reading about the syndrome itself. Nor was there anything available on how to approach the families of these children, most of whom died at a young age.

Initially I saw the whole family together — Mrs. Barton, age 31, and her sons Kevin, age 6, and Steven, age 3. Kevin, non-ambulatory and legally blind, functioned developmentally at a 10 month level. They appeared to be a close knit family but since the mother's stress level was 'off the scale,' I decided to attend to her

¹ First discovered in 1965, Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome (a.k.a. Wolf's or 4 p- Syndrome), a genetic disorder caused by partial deletion of chromosome number four, is known, to this date, to affect only about a hundred children in the entire world (Katz & Smith, 1991). The characteristics of children with Wolf-Hirschhorn include: severe mental retardation; small head; delayed physical growth; cleft lip and drooling; moon face, low-set ears; severe visual disabilities; seizures; low immunity for respiratory infections; clubfeet and bone deformities, poor coordination, severe heart defects, urological problems, and other anomalies (Wolf, 1965).

immediate needs.

Early on she noted that she tried hard to foster closeness between her sons despite the ever increasing gaps in their developmental functioning. She would tell baby Steven about his brother's disability, always adding, "but we love your big brother more than anything." Years later Steven could recite what his mother had been told by the medical specialists. Although he remembered that there were only a handful of children in the world with problems like Kevin, he demanded to have his fair share of her time.



Later I saw Steven separately for play therapy. Active and mature for his age, he liked to fly his toy helicopter around the room and position his "he-man" toys near my desk or bookcase. He looked forward to these sessions and absorbed all the attention I provided.

When I mentioned Kevin and his mother, he appeared disturbed about his brother's disabilities and did not understand why his brother had to see so many doctors and undergo physical therapy. The "facts" had become jumbled in Steven's head. He understood that his brother had "special problems" and had tried to explain this to the other children. As he grew older he said that his best friends usually understood, but not always. Steven told of an incident wherein an-

other boy had yelled "retard" at Kevin and he ran after the boy yelling insults until his mother tried to calm him down. I thought it might help to have a joint session so that Steven could have a chance to talk about his experience. Mrs. Barton said she did not want Steven to think that fighting resolved such a problem, let alone make it go away. As his mother spoke, Steven played with his "He-Man" toys. This time he positioned the small figures close to the stroller where Kevin had fallen asleep.

As Steven became accustomed to play therapy, he asked specific questions about his brother. "Would he ever be physically larger and able to do chores?" I reached for feelings of resentment toward his mother for expecting him to pick up his clothes, take out the garbage, and watch his brother. He said he wished Kevin were not "such a baby" and could help him with his chores. Realizing that siblings of special children often feel that they lack a distinct role within the family, I encouraged him to teach his brother to do simple things that he could himself do well.

Later in a joint session Mrs. Barton described Steven as her "little man of the house," and Steven responded with, "but I just want to be like the other kids." I encouraged Steven to tell his mother how he felt he was different, and what he had said about the chores. After a moment, he replied, "I have to watch Kevin when you are cooking' and stuff... and I want to take a bath by myself." Mrs. Barton acknowledged that she had not known that he felt that way and made him prom-

ise to tell her when he felt sad or angry about such things. He agreed but was uneasy about having revealed his emotions. I said although it was difficult talking about thoughts and feelings, it could help him feel better.

Mrs. Barton acknowledged she used Steven as a "baby-sitter" but had not intended to burden him. With some uneasiness she added that she would run short errands to the grocery store or to her friend's apartment because she trusted Steven to watch Kevin—elaborating on what a "blessing" Steven was. I felt bad that Stephen was used this way and anger with Mrs. Barton for her poor judgment; I tried to persuade her not to encumber Steven with responsibilities beyond his capabilities. As Steven heard this he climbed on his mother's lap and hugged her. Mrs. Barton listened with tears in her eyes, as we talked about alternatives for child care. Occasionally she used the county's respite program but had reverted to a pattern of trying to make do on her own, that is, with Steven's help. I advised her to use respite services more regularly and to apply for child care through the Medicaid waiver program.

MIDDLE

Subsequently I spent more time talking with Mrs. Barton about her feelings of depression and her internal struggle to be both "mother and father." She blamed herself for the divorce, for never "doing anything right." Wondering why she had such a compelling desire to be perfect, she ex-

panded on her "mistakes." She went on to say that she should have been able to handle the demands of raising a child like Kevin and have maintained the home to suit her husband.

As we discussed these feelings in depth, Mrs. Barton avowed that it was largely her fault that she and her three siblings had been placed in foster care. I felt that we were getting closer to the roots of her discouragement. She had trusted me with major expressions about her ex-husband and was angry that they could not communicate about Kevin's care, yet she held back when questions centered on her own childhood and family of origin.

With many tears she told that her father had sexually molested her when she was a teenager until she reported the abuse to a trusted high school teacher. At that point the family disintegrated. Although Mrs. Barton later discovered that her older sister had also been sexually abused, she blamed herself for the placement of herself and the remaining children in separate foster homes. Her mother had left several years before the abuse report, perhaps having suspected the father's actions. This revelation shed some light on why she had to be the ideal parent. She seemed to want to make amends for the flaws in her own parents and her ex-husband who had also deserted his children.

When Kevin was nine, Mrs. Barton's younger brother, living in Hawaii, invited her to come for a two-week visit, all expenses paid. She was reluctant to leave Kevin and Steven with a re-

spite provider, and anxious about such a long visit with her brother whom she had not seen since the family breakup. I thought the visit might give her an opportunity to renew family ties and explained that the time away from the children might be beneficial and give her time to think about just herself. She disagreed and declared she never saw herself outside of her parenting role. Impatient, I struggled to convince her to take the trip. I could not believe that she would let this opportunity slip by. Finally, she agreed.

something just for herself. This betrayal signaled rejection by a significant person once again.

At her next session, there was a sense of renewal, in both body and spirit. She had lost weight, changed her hair color, and was very cheerful. Mrs. Barton thanked me for having strongly encouraged her to do something for herself.

When Kevin turned ten he surprised his teachers, school therapists, and especially me. He had always been pushed into my office by his mother or Steven in a special reclining stroller. But the



The week before her departure, her boyfriend of several years told her that their relationship was over, and that he had found someone else. Distressed, Mrs. Barton canceled the trip. Again, we discussed the benefits and ultimately she decided to go. I felt that the incentive to distance herself from her ex-boyfriend was at least as great as her plan to do

week of his tenth birthday he "defied all records." The little boy with Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome, who had an original life expectancy of three to six months, walked into the office on his own two feet and threw himself on my lap, laughing out loud. Steven laughed too and hugged his brother. Mrs. Barton, stood with tears streaming down her

face...repeating, "I never stopped believing. I just knew he would do it." While we celebrated Kevin's newfound mobility. Mrs. Barton recalled how an orthopedic surgeon had once told her that correcting Kevin's clubfeet would be futile since he'd never walk. And, that the ophthalmologist had recommend against eye surgery because of the uncertain benefits to Kevin. She had refused to hear the word "no," as she had many times before when Kevin's surgeries were labeled "optional" she had gone ahead with the surgery.

Two weeks later I worked again with Steven in play therapy. At first he wanted to play with his favorite helicopter in front of the window, then agreed to draw three pictures with a red crayon. One picture depicted a little boy sitting on a giraffe. The picture was labeled simply "geraffe." When I asked Steven to explain the picture, he said the boy on the giraffe was Kevin and that he was riding so high. I thought that the drawing of Kevin riding the giraffe symbolized Steven's high hopes for his brother.

In years to come, all of us remembered that moment and Steven's picture of the giraffe. Meanwhile, Kevin continued to progress and by the end of his tenth year, according to his mother, was able to say more words, had fewer seizures, and had improved his feeding and hand coordination skills. Occasionally he signaled his mother that he needed to potty, by walking toward the bathroom. He liked getting the family and neighbors' attention by mimicking the prelude to commercial

breaks on television, "I'll be right back." Steven laughed with glee when his brother's antics brightened his mother's face. For a time it seemed as if Kevin's walking instilled in Steven a false sense of hope that other age-level skills would follow suit. I encouraged him to anticipate smaller, long-term changes in his brother's abilities.

Kevin's resilience ironically resounded through each eye surgery, urological procedure, and bout of pneumonia...and each time he yelled out, "I'll be right back." There were moments, however, when Steven became silent and assumed a sad, pensive look. He was continually reminded that his brother was different from most children. He was especially chagrined by an incident at the local YMCA where the family had been given an athletic club membership by their church. His brother was left in the day care unit with the younger children until one mother complained to staff that this "large, unusual child" might hurt the other children. With my encouragement and support, Mrs. Barton who had always been a strong advocate for her son, took the issue to the YMCA Board, but the controversy was only partially resolved. The YMCA located another mother of a child with disabilities and suggested that the two mothers supervise each other's child in day care and take turns working out. But, after awhile the mothers' schedules conflicted and the Bartons quit attending the YMCA.

Steven talked about how unfairly his brother was treated; he sometimes felt that he too was victimized because of Kevin's

problems. Although Steven played T-ball at school, he seldom stayed after the games to talk with friends because his mother had to get the them back home, to give Kevin his medicine or administer oxygen. His father re-married, had two sons within a two-year period, and made it clear to Mrs. Barton that he did not feel comfortable having both boys visit him. Steven said he enjoyed being alone with his father but wondered if his father was upset with him. He had overheard his father and grandmother say, "Steven does not deserve to live in a handicapped home." I told him I did not think this to be the reason and suggested that perhaps later he would be able to see his father more often. However, the parents continued to fight about visitation and visits stopped abruptly when Mr. Barton told Steven to stop "disturbing" the family with his phone calls.

I continued to see Steven in individual sessions, although these became less frequent during the school year. The tension between Mr. and Mrs. Barton exacerbated over his lack of child support and at least once, Mr. Barton spent a week-end in jail for non-support. Sensing that Steven was holding in many angry feelings about this inter-family conflict, I asked him to draw a picture of his family, a task which he seemed to resist. When he inquired, "which family?" I repeated the instruc-



tions. He drew two figures each in a separate house, arguing on the telephone. He had covered most of the page with dark scribbles to convey much confusion, with the smaller figure uttering "but dad, I can't help it." Steven said that the houses represented his "ex-home and his real home" and added that his dad blamed him for wanting to be a part of his life. I reassured him that the problems between his parents were not his fault and that he might one day have a closer relationship with his father. For the time being, this seemed to allay some of his frustration.

With Steven's consent, we discussed these issues with his mother. I still felt that outside resources might be helpful as an adjunct to counseling. I referred Steven to Children of Divorce support group at his school and to another school program called "Everybody Counts" wherein families of children in special education visited regular classrooms to talk about unconditional acceptance of all children, despite their dissimilarities or different behaviors. When Mrs. Barton asked Steven to join her in this program, he was eager to participate. Consequently, he began to gain more respect and attention from peers at school. At T-ball games he would wave to his brother and mother and listen for Kevin to utter S-T-E-V-E-N. Kevin's teammates soon began to laugh with him.

Time passed and Steven grew much larger than his "big" brother. Steven said that he was proud that Kevin seemed to "look up" to him, and see him as the big brother in the family. One

night when Steven was watching his brother while his mother went shopping, Kevin had a major seizure. Steven raced to phone 911, and called a family friend who lived nearby. When the mother arrived home, Kevin was being loaded into the emergency squad van with Steven by his side. After that, Mrs. Barton always told him how proud she was of his bravery and his self-confidence, yet she experienced some guilt for again leaving the boys home alone, and not arranging for child care.

The divorce group and educational program on handicapped children especially seemed to help Steven's self-esteem and his role within the family. Still, there were setbacks; at age 10 he began to steal from his classmates and take off on his bicycle with his friends without telling his mother. In our joint sessions Steven said that he resented his mother's spending all her time with Kevin. Steven and his mother agreed to take responsibility for sharing feelings, negative or positive, and I helped Mrs. Barton to develop a behavioral approach to discipline.

But after Kevin turned 13, Mrs. Barton's capacity to cope with the complications of her son's Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome diminished. He had multiple colds, more frequent bouts of pneumonia, and cardiac episodes often involving emergency room visits at night. Mrs. Barton reduced her counseling to once a month giving Kevin's medical appointments and a lack of transportation as reasons. Still, she continued to write out her feelings in poetry which seemed to help her

cope. In one poem, she admitted to drinking as a way to survive her depression and hinted at having suicidal feelings at times.

To further complicate things, she had to have a hysterectomy at age 35, thereby relinquishing her dream of someday having another "normal" child. I called Mrs. Barton regularly, often finding it difficult to end the phone call. Sensing that she was falling short of her expectations I became more insistent about her keeping regular counseling visits. I proposed a home visit but she declined this offer. She withdrew socially and stopped taking the children to church where she had several close friends whom she had earlier described as a surrogate family. Mrs. Barton was pulling away from the support systems. One week-end, while I was out of town, Mrs. Barton made a suicide attempt by taking half a bottle of Tylenol; she called 911.

The following Monday I saw Mrs. Barton on an emergency basis and she was extremely embarrassed and disappointed with herself. I was equally disappointed, because she had gone into a shell and had allowed her problems to escalate out of control. I expressed these feelings to her. She admitted that at the time of her suicide attempt she had not thought of what might happen to her children, causing her again to evaluate her parenting role as "a zero." I felt she desperately needed to structure some individual time for herself and she agreed. She began to take private guitar lessons after I arranged for subsidized respite care two evenings per week.

Mrs. Barton learned quickly and began to set some of her poems to music. After a few months she and her friend Sheila presented a Christmas concert for the children in our convalescent hospital and constructed hand-made instruments for everyone. I was proud to cheer her on and the children loved the special attention. Meanwhile, in play therapy Steven became quieter and showed little interest in puppets or other play materials. I sensed that Steven needed to spend more time in recreation away from home and needed a regular adult male role model. I suggested a Big Brother though the waiting list was unending; but, Mrs. Barton persisted and eventually obtained a Big Brother by having Steven go on a "Thursday's Child" television program. Steven spoke excitedly about his Big Brother and was proud when the local paper featured an article about them and a karate class they were taking together.

When Steven was eleven and Kevin was fourteen there were other major hurdles to face. The Bartons had been attending the same church for several years, and Mrs. Barton was grateful for her church "family" whom she saw as a godsend. The year Kevin had walked, the church congregation arranged a special processional recognizing him as the "first" child with disabilities to be part of their congregation. The church had extended other favors to the Bartons, such as lending them money, providing transportation, and putting a down payment on their car. As a way to give something back, Mrs. Barton typed the church newsletter and

helped with other volunteer activities. On Sundays when Steven went to church for preparation for confirmation, Kevin tried to follow him. Mrs. Barton did not think about it any further until Steven had taken his first communion. Kevin had continued to go up to the altar with the little children for the traditional Sunday Blessing. Steven asked her one Sunday why Kevin could not be a "full member of the church, like me?" Almost instantly she agreed, "why can't he?"

This was a difficult challenge, more so than previous advocacy efforts. There were many meetings with members of the congregation who expressed feelings of betrayal, and annoyance at the ingratitude of the Bartons. Some church council members reminded the family that the church had always been there for them, even when they were alone and when the public assistance cupboards had run bare at the end of the month. Even the pastor whom Mrs. Barton had considered a close friend, spiritual guide, and mentor moved toward the opposite end of the theological discussion of whether Kevin could possibly "understand" the meaning of full communion with the church.

Mrs. Barton came to counseling regularly and seemed to need reassurance that she was doing the right thing. I supported her advocacy and did not see what intelligence had to do with one's right to worship. As we explored the issue, Mrs. Barton said that, first and foremost, if she and her children could not be treated as a normal family at church, then what could they expect within

society at large? Visits to the local bishop's office and regional church council meetings consumed much of Mrs. Barton's time. Steven often insisted on waiting outside the conference room at the church. In the joint meetings we discussed the contentment which Kevin's "full" church membership might afford the family and him. As usual, the mother and I explained these actions to Kevin, despite our inability to know his level of comprehension because of his profound mental retardation. Then one day Mrs. Barton and Kevin arrived at counseling with big smiles on their faces. They had won their petition for Kevin to be confirmed. The family could now worship in full communion with the church and each other.

But almost in the midst of this victory, a darker shadow emerged. One morning Mrs. Barton appeared at my office door in tears, with Kevin's hand in hers. They had just returned from the cardiology department and the doctor had announced what she had known might one day be unavoidable. Kevin had to have open heart surgery, which carried less than a 50-50 chance for survival. We talked about available options and she decided that Kevin must be given this chance. As was customary in our sessions, she knelt down to where she could be at eye level with Kevin and get his attention. As she explained her desire for him to have the heart operation, Kevin repeated the words "yeah," and "o.k." several times; at some level, he seemed to comprehend the gravity of the moment and the seriousness in his mother's voice.

We both told him that the surgery might help him to feel better and have a longer lifespan.

The Cardiology department informed Mrs. Barton about "Make A Wish" which grants "last" wishes to children with terminal and life-threatening medical conditions. With the surgery two weeks away, Mrs. Barton arranged for Kevin's "wishes" to be granted. He loved music, especially country music; needed a new bed, and cherished his stuffed animals, many of which were now frayed and coming apart. Steven took a real interest in the plans to surprise his brother with "wishes" and I sensed that the planning and anticipation took their minds off the surgery. Within a few days, "Make A Wish" gave Kevin a new stereo system, stacks of tapes and records, and a new bed covered with stuffed animals of all sizes, including a giraffe.



When I made a home visit the day before Kevin's surgery, the house was buzzing with laughter. Mrs. Barton's friend, and Steven were dancing with his brother to a Dolly Parton song. They were intoxicated with the moment. I noticed that Kevin would go into his room and take a new stuffed toy from the bed and bring it back into the family room. Mrs. Barton stepped into the kitchen and began to cry, not wanting the children or Sheila to

hear. I followed her and we talked about all that Kevin had been through. She even managed a smile when I mentioned his self-proclaimed motto, "I'll be right back." She questioned whether she was making the right decision. I assured her that I would be with her before Kevin's surgery the next day and that we would again discuss with the surgeon the risks and benefits involved.

On Friday morning in the surgical waiting room Mrs. Barton was surrounded by her pastor, Sheila, neighbors, members of the congregation and the hospital chaplain. We sat and talked and the surgeon briefly discussed last minute questions and reviewed the procedure. Later, Mrs. Barton said that she had not wanted Steven to miss school that day, although he had begged to come to the hospital. She thought his being there would be more stressful for him, but allowed him to spend the evening before at Kevin's bedside.

A nurse and an orderly wheeled Kevin toward the main surgical corridor. Mrs. Barton and I walked over and she took his hand. To my amazement, Kevin was clutching the stuffed giraffe tightly in his other hand. Mrs. Barton looked at me and said, "I know, isn't that something, it's from "Make A Wish." Of all the toys on his bed he had picked the giraffe. At that moment, we felt the bond of hope that had begun with his brother Steven's earlier crayon drawing of the giraffe.

Several weeks later, I looked down the hallway to see Mrs. Barton, Steven, and Kevin heading for the Social Work Department. Kevin was still clutch-

ing his stuffed giraffe and his brother was playfully teasing him. Kevin had proven his resilience and defied the odds once again.

ENDINGS

Within a year of Kevin's surgery I left the agency to take a faculty position across the state. As I look back on my work with this family over 9 years, I realize that Mrs. Barton experienced much difficulty in accepting her right to be happy and to lead a full life. This was not surprising considering the number of times she was abandoned or abused, by men in particular. In high school, after saving money for months from baby-sitting to buy a beautiful prom dress, her father sexually abused her on the way to the dance. When she "finally" was able to have a "normal" son, three years after giving birth to Kevin, her husband informed her, even before she left the hospital, that he was having an affair. And, on the eve of her Hawaiian vacation, she had been jilted by her boyfriend. I feel successful in having brought her to an awareness in counseling that she had to sometimes put herself first in order to become the best possible parent for her two sons. Through the referrals to the children's divorce group, the parents' sharing program, respite care, and Big Brothers, I helped the family to live a more balanced life, despite Kevin's excessive care needs.

As I reflect on the strategies and techniques used to assist Mrs. Barton and her sons, I realize that my approach was to help the mother take responsibility for major decisions that would affect

the family. This method seemed conducive to helping her cope with internal struggles and assisted her to engage multiple community resources, which her son would require throughout his life. At first, she blamed herself for her turbulent childhood and failed marriage which in turn led her to lack confidence in trusting men or developing intimate friendships. She often believed that others would judge her immediately as a "welfare mother" or single parent.

As a result of my encouragement to join parent forums and support groups on coping with children with multiple disabilities, Mrs. Barton learned that sharing and discussing mutual concerns with other parents could be a great source of strength. She often reflected on small comments and words of inspiration from other parents despite the fact that their children's disabling conditions were very different from Kevin's Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome. And, through discussions with other parents, she learned of national parent coalitions and advocacy efforts and became interested in contacting other parents of children with Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome. By advertising in a parents' magazine, she located several parents of such children with whom she could respond by writing and occasionally telephoning. Since all these families had younger children, she prided herself in being the "expert" who could inform them of her own parenting challenges and ethical dilemmas regarding life-threatening decisions, school programming, and attempts at mainstreaming.

REFLECTION

As a counselor, I at first used a client-centered approach with Mrs. Barton but this proved to be ineffective as she tended to become increasingly disenchanted as she discussed problems, such as her fights with her ex-husband, feelings of guilt about wanting a "life of her own," and her struggles to be an adequate parent. I remember sharing these early frustrations with a colleague in a team conference and he said that Mrs. Barton might have saved herself and Steven from a life of tragedy if she had just placed Kevin in an institution. But I did not give up. In counseling, the mother failed to gain much insight from lengthy discussions which I felt were beginning to foster dependency and manipulation of the therapeutic process. For instance, at times I had difficulty introducing new ideas or even making suggestions. There were times when I doubted that my intervention was having any effect on this family. When we began to focus on Mrs. Barton's and the boys' successes and strengths each week, it became much easier for the family to address present and future challenges and also take more responsibility for their decisions and actions.

As Steven moved into the middle childhood years, he gained a better understanding of the importance of owning his feelings and behaviors as opposed to hiding or denying them. These realizations enhanced family communication and trust between Steven and his mother. A



reality therapy approach amplified the mother's ability to view herself in a more multi-dimensional sense as a whole person. As described earlier in this narrative, she began to enjoy writing out her feelings, often in poetic or musical lyrics, which in turn inspired her to take guitar lessons. She copyrighted several of her country songs and at the encouragement of her guitar teacher sent a few songs to Nashville to be considered for the music industry. Slowly she was able to discover and celebrate her personal talents and thus move beyond seeing herself as "just a parent."

From writing this narrative, I realize now that I sometimes used my work with the Bartons as a frame of reference for counseling other families of children with disabilities. I know that I sometimes consciously and perhaps unconsciously had the Bartons in mind when I encouraged other parents to celebrate even the small successes and gains in their children's development and to always think of expecting more. I even quoted to a struggling mother what Mrs. Barton once said, "A bumblebee would never fly if someone told it that in reality it wasn't supposed to be able to do so." And I am also very much aware that my work with this family helped me to cope with problems in my own life and practice as a social worker

and teacher. When I face a rule that seems unfair or perhaps warrants a challenge, I am more likely to model Steven's question to his mother concerning Kevin's church membership and say, "Why not"? And every time I see a stuffed giraffe in a toy store window I smile and think of the fortitude of a parent and the inspiration of a little brother whose hopes and love helped to raise his big brother aloft to face incredible challenges.

CODA

I occasionally hear from Mrs. Barton via a call or letter. Steven decided to live with his father out-of-state for awhile, but this arrangement failed and he soon moved back home with his mother and Kevin. He and Kevin are said to be as close as they ever were. Steven works as a lifeguard at the YMCA and helps to look after his "big" brother while his mother works out. Meanwhile, Mrs. Barton continues to be a strong advocate for herself and her children. She attends the local community college where she is completing a degree in travel and tourism. In 1991, the Bartons attended the first annual conference for children with Wolf—Hirschhorn Syndrome and their families, called "Dancing with Wolves" in Des Moines, Iowa. At the conference, the family learned that Kevin is perhaps the oldest child still living with Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome. Steven now loves to quote this statistic to his friends.

In addition, the mother has taken a leadership role in expanding local parent groups and

has managed to lease a three bedroom house for her family through a special entitlement program available to parents who are willing to provide ongoing in-home care for their disabled child. She states that in "in his own way" Kevin has been an inspiration for both Steven and her; through his perseverance and will-power, he has motivated them to be more tenacious and goal-oriented themselves. She says when she observes Kevin's great struggles to accomplish even the smallest of tasks, her challenges by comparison seem minor.

Mrs. Barton stated with confidence that she has never regretted her decision not to place Kevin in an institution. Kevin now functions developmentally at around 15 months and attends a multi-handicapped class at the local high school. In one breath, Mrs. Barton talks about Steven's successes with the drama club and school paper, and just as quickly beams over Kevin's ability to wipe off tables in the school cafeteria and repeat several new greetings. And, she really looks forward to next Spring when both Steven and Kevin will graduate from the same school-together. Kevin continues to ride high on the back of his giraffe, with his "little" brother Steven sitting right behind him. □

REFERENCES

- Katz, D.S. & Smith, T.H. (1991). Wolf syndrome. *Pediatric Radiology*, 21(5), 369-372.
- Wolf, U. (1965). Deletion on short arms of a B-chromosome without "cri du chat" syndrome. *Lancet* 1, 769.

SWORDS TO PLOUGHSHARES

This narrative is about my personal and professional journey in peacemaking. It is about the work of a task force engaged in persuading government officials that "economic conversion" can combine economic, social and human development. My experience in the democratic planning process (sanctioned and at the same time undermined by public officials) in response to the shutdown of a naval base, taught me more than I have ever known about the context of politics and power. Working to build a world beyond war, and engaging in the local planning process of base closure framed my world view of a peaceful society.

By Nancy L. Mary

Nancy L. Mary, D.S.W., is Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino, CA

INTRODUCTION

Raised as a Friend, my ancestors were Quakers. I was nurtured as a peacemaker by my Grandmother Flossie, whose legacy to me was her black velvet jacket and two lessons: "Treat others the way you want to be treated," and "fighting never accomplishes anything." I had opposed the Vietnam War, but as a social worker I didn't become active in anti-war activities until I had a child. It was at the height of the nuclear build-up that I read Jonathan Schells' (1982) description of the horrible effects of a nuclear holocaust and made the connection between my hope for our child and the world she inherits, and the potential demise of the planet. I made a commitment to do something. My first activities, primarily educational, in Beyond War, now the Foundation for Global Community, gave me a new identity. I began to see myself as a citizen, not just of my city or nation, but of the planet. I now wanted to do something that was more tangible and local.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 I had hopes for a "peace dividend;" that a shift in the Federal budget from military endeavors to domestic needs might become a reality. So, as a

social worker and a university educator I attended my first meeting of a citywide Peace Network. Thus began my "conversion."

This paper explores my personal journey, and what I learned as a social worker experienced in agency planning, but a neophyte in municipal politics. I have learned lessons in community, power, and economic development in working with local government and making change. I share some of these reflections.

THE PEACE NETWORK

It was a warm spring night in a room above the First Presbyterian Church that Sam R., a 70-year-old, long time peace activist and local artist convened the meeting of the Peace Network. Representatives of churches, and neighborhood peace organizations were brainstorming the theme of an upcoming August (1991) annual event. Should we do another Hiroshima walk or candlelight vigil? The possibilities of a peace dividend were put forth along with the idea of "economic conversion." Sam asked us if we knew about the local Naval Base and its landing on the Federal Base Closure Commission's hit list. No one appeared to know how to proceed, and Sam said,



"I've got a folder of great stuff I've been collecting from all over, like Jobs with Peace and the National Commission on Economic Conversion... Would someone read it and make a report?" I said "I can do that."



PEACEMAKING IN THE NINETIES

The material shouted "Peace conversion was alive." Economic conversion, a term introduced by Senator George McGovern in his 1972 campaign speech for the US Presidency (Geiser, 1984), had become common in a public debate. It meant the "orderly redirection of resources now employed in military activities to socially useful economic endeavors" (Melman, 1974, p. 190). It was happening! I immersed myself in newsletters from the Minnesota Jobs for Peace to the National Commission on Economic Conversion. I read studies on what this kind of shift could mean to cities like Austin, Texas or Chicago, Illinois, if a national priority was placed on investing in domestic programs. I found legislation that had been introduced at state and federal levels over the past twenty years, to reward military industries for planning for the production of civilian goods. I learned that this was not just a dream. Many groups across the country, from labor unions and stockholders to peace activists had been pursuing peace in the form of

"economic conversion" for decades. I felt empowered.

When the Peace Network planned a community event I offered to talk about the communities and business struggling to convert from military products to civilian ones. After our panel at the event, I met with about 15 people interested in economic conversion; some of whom were recently laid off aerospace workers, and at-risk shipyard workers (the next facility targeted) and community activists.

"DOING' OUR HOMEWORK" OR "PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION"

At the end of the hour, with lots of questions and few answers the group decided to meet over the next few months to find out from city and navy officials, and community leaders about what was being done about the forthcoming closure. We came to two conclusions: city decision makers (council members, commissioners and paid planners) did not perceive the closing of the Naval property as a priority, and there was no advanced planning being done. Though the city had done some preliminary plans regarding land re-use, community representatives on appropriate advisory groups were not up to date on the situation. Other things were on their minds, the city had just lost the contract for an amusement park. On the other hand civilian shipbuilders were organizing Save Our Shipping (SOS). Even though only the base itself was targeted, many believed that the adjacent shipyard (to the

Naval Base) was vulnerable to the next round of closings.

We toured the naval base which for some of us was a first. We found that the short-term loss in revenue for the city was a billion dollars. Other places faced with similar situations were organizing constituencies to turn the crisis into an opportunity for broad redevelopment. Our interest was two-fold: The effect of the closing on the city; and the opportunity to shift from swords to ploughshares.

A TASK FORCE ON ECONOMIC CONVERSION

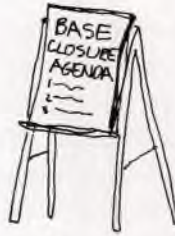
This was now a critical point for our group. Jane and I were two middle aged female college level educators, Lorrie a 30ish energetic high school teacher, Dan a Methodist minister and Jean, his wife a community activist, Jenny was a young woman in her twenties, soon to be Masters level student in the local social work program. Sam was an experienced peace activist, artist, and active member in the Jewish community. Mary, a female in her seventies with a work history in aerospace manufacturing, was an activist in the ecumenical council, the UN, and the housing/homeless community. Robert was a CPA interested in the expenditure of public moneys in worthwhile "efficient" civilian endeavors. Robert was an oddity. Neither Lorrie nor Jenny had been involved in "piecemeal" prior to our group; however, they were attuned to progressive causes and the group's articulated agenda. Robert in many ways fit the stereotype of the CPA. In the midst

of a marital separation, he was doing lots of pro bono tax work for low income people at a community center, and had come to understand the need for better jobs with better wages. I was an oddity for Robert. He tried to rile me with labels such as soft headed bleeding heart, and I teased him about the CPA's bottom line, and his doing pro bono work. I learned an important lesson from working together we find out how complex we are, and how our interests often are not far apart. Robert and I found common ground.

Varied in our religious upbringing, our common thread was to determine if a former military facility could be converted to civilian enterprises to meet some of the civilian needs—both economic and human—of the citizens of the city. After meeting over a period of 6 months the group had come to understand that we needed to raise public consciousness. In an effort to exploit the possibilities for change and seek broader common ground, we invited diverse sectors of the city to a "town meeting on economic conversion."

THE TOWN MEETING

The town meeting on economic conversion was my public debut. A group of 8 task force members, and 2 political science volunteer students had encouraged officials of the city, the navy, and the legislators, and business and community leaders to attend the Saturday Town Meeting. We called ourselves a "task force," although no official body had asked us to do anything. We



thought we would be more likely to get phone calls returned if we said we were members of a task force. We explained that we had simply tasked ourselves as long time residents of the city, to bring this issue to the fore.

After months of letters, phone calls, and appearances at meetings to extend invitations to our event, the day finally arrived. I panicked when at 15 minutes to countdown the Commander of the Naval Base was not there. My heart started beating again when she arrived. I opened with introductions and special welcomes to the politicians and those seeking office (elections were coming up) and we began with the morning's speakers.

The day was a whopping success. From 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, 70 people from city council members, to shipyard workers, to environmentalists heard: an inspirational speaker from the Northern California Center for Economic conversion describe what other cities faced with military closures had done; an update from the navy and the city on the closure process and the costs; and the key players charged with planning. Then small groups of like-minded people talked about what each sector could do to chart a new direction for the city.

People were energized! Both formal and informal evaluations indicated that they were mobilized and interested in con-

tinuing the dialogue. The priorities they came up with were amazingly similar, despite the various constituencies. Summarized into a report by the Task Force it was presented to the City Council.

The lesson I learned from this Town Meeting validated a power-sharing consensus approach to problem solving. Our group could have taken an adversarial position: such as, present a resolution on economic conversion to the City Council, but this would have precluded linking with important community sectors affected by this military downsizing, many of whom were in the dark about this issue. And, without intention, we could have easily posed ourselves as enemy to the SOS, the navy and city officials. The public dialogue could have quickly polarized into the positions of the shipyard workers vs. peace activists. But by bringing together diverse groups to brainstorm the issue, we were able to provide a report with agreed upon recommendations from a broad community base.

LESSONS IN POLITICS AND — "THE BOTTOM LINE"

Over the next 10 months, our task force participated in the city's land re-use planning process. Because of the success of the Town Meeting, we were invited to the meetings of the Property Re-use committee of the Economic Advisory commission, and the citizen group advising the City's Economic Development Department. Though not a formal vot-

ing member, we received advance notices of all the committee meetings and public hearings to consider re-use options. Attendees of the Town Meeting were sent notices of each hearing, courtesy of the city. It was during this process that I learned 2 important lessons about municipal planning (an oxymoron, you say?!)

First, about power. I was invited to a meeting of a coalition of homeless advocates and service providers to talk about the Task Force ideas on re-use. The meeting was attended by leaders in the homeless community: former homeless people (as consumers), and about 15 representatives of shelters, transitional housing and emergency services. The majority were women. As representative of one of the invited groups I arrived early and pulled a chair up to the table around where everyone was sitting. I then noticed that several men had chosen to sit in chairs surrounding the perimeter of the table.

As first outside speaker on the agenda, I updated the group on my view of the city's planning process. I shared that a "stand-off" over the land containing former naval housing was developing between the local school district, the university, a job corp site (the latter two supported by the city), and a social service agency for the homeless. I presented our group's position that the site was large enough to accommodate the three facilities, that they were compatible, and would complement each other. I said that from the beginning, we tried to get the city's Re-use Subcommittee to sit down the all three groups to discuss a collaborative

venture, rather than a competitive one.

As I spoke I saw many heads — women's heads — nodding in agreement. Then a fascinating phenomenon occurred. Each time a woman commented in agreement with this collaborative process, it was followed by a man that rejected the idea. "It's really not practical to try and combine these re-use plans" or "Multiple use should not be considered." The men did not all represent homeless groups, but it was the men that rejected collaboration... (perhaps there is something to the idea that this power sharing is easier for women than for men? ...)

Finally the City's Economic Development staff person got up to speak. It would have been easy for this man to pull up to the table and join the rest of us. His voice carried. No need to stand. But he stood above us and from a different level. He was one up, the rest of us one down. He then shared his "expert" world view on development. The most important measure of a successful re-use option, the man said, was "the bottom line in terms of raising the tax base of the city. If the homeless moved on to this property, they would be 'like a vacuum, sucking up the city's resources' in terms of increased need for fire and police protection. They would not be an economic benefit to the city, but rather a constant drain on the taxpayer."

I was shocked at his insensitivity to people without housing, some of whom were sitting next to him. I was also beginning to learn that this narrow vision of community development, as eco-

nomie development, is a common one in our municipalities. The notion that a recovery strategy could combine economic and social development in the form of transitional housing and job training as an investment in human capital was a foreign concept to this official. It did not fit. As others began to argue for the broader view of development, it became clear that a program to invest in homeless people was not the kind of "product venture the City had in mind."

Since this time I have done some studying of community development. This traditional view of development operates on national and international levels. I believe that it perpetuates the myth "that investments in a community's or a nation's social, educational, and/or health and human needs can be separated from the economic development of a society."

What this interchange showed me was that in this society power is synonymous with hierarchy, competition, and oneness. I view this as "blade" thinking (Eisler, 1989), not necessarily male thinking, but more prevalent among males because males more often head the hierarchies this competitive model creates. In her book *The Chalice and the Blade*, Riane Eisler poses an alternative "chalice" approach to decision-making structures. It is not a hierarchy of women over men, it is the "linking" of power relationships in "win-win" strategies presently absent from most of our institutions. Nevertheless, it has the potential for human and societal growth and development.

I share the final "scene" in this conversion play. It illustrates how much we have come to rely on the blade approach in our public domain, despite evidence that a collaborative strategy can be fruitful and efficient.

DOES POLITICS HAVE TO BE DIRTY? DOES BUSINESS AS USUAL MAKE GOOD BUSINESS?

Nearing the end of the city's planning process, our group had come to support the multiple use option. Both the Re-use committee and the full Commission were going to recommend to the City Council they consider all of the proposals in ranked order; and the homeless proposal was not a valid option despite the fact that Federal legislation gave priority consideration of surplus Federal property to combating homelessness (McKinney, 1987).

It was at this point that democracy went to hell-in-a-handbag. Before the recommendations were ever made to the Council for review, several councilmen, aware of the strong public backing for the homeless project, decided to go to Washington and make their interests known. In a non-public venue they signed a letter opposing the homeless option (for which they were later censured by a court of law for violating the Brown Act). They then flew to Washington to lobby the navy.

Now, some more experienced than I in municipal policy making, saw this as business as usual. "Yes, this is what we elect our officials to do. They can lobby



whomever they want in our best interests." I was new to this process. I was outraged. I felt betrayed by those representatives, who had sanctioned this year long democratic process of public scrutiny, and now were undermining it. So much for "rational planning" ... it was "social action time!" (Thank you Jack Rothman!)

Our Task Force, in the meantime, had merged with a larger like-minded citizen advocacy group, with a 20 year history of involvement in city affairs and an 800+ membership. This non-profit organization had community credibility and resources with which to play hardball. So much for my win-win strategy.... The chair of this organization flew to Washington the day after the Council members, and convinced the Navy officials that there were at least two-sides to the story. (I'm sure it didn't hurt that our regional navy representative, with whom we were negotiating, happened to have been one of her former high school students! One always at least listens to one's teachers!) In the end, the Navy told City officials to go home and try to arrive at a consensus position to accommodate all of the interest groups, "or we will make the decision for you." How's that for power sharing? (Lesson: When pushed to the wall people will do a "win-win" thing.)

The final outcome was a

victory for all. Ground has already been broken for a job corp site, and plans are underway for a program for the homeless, programming, a high school, and a university research park with a business incubator for small business development.

REFLECTIONS

I look back on that time and am amazed at our ambition and accomplishments! Since then, I have continued to work with the city in my current capacity as Chair of an advisory commission for community services (Federal) block grant money. The Task Force continues to provide input to the city on re-use of other parcels of military land.

My venture into municipal planning (an oxymoron you still say?) and development has influenced my evolution as a peacemaker. I no longer immediately frame community problems within a conflict perspective. I do not deny conflicts among interest groups. But I have seen the costs of citizen disenfranchisement when unnecessary power struggles are accepted as "business as usual." I have seen new rifts develop, and long-standing ones maintained among community groups as a result of one posing the other as the enemy or "drain" on the city. And I have faith in the potential for partnership and power building when various constituencies decide to hear each other out, and discuss each other's points-of-view.

My travels into economic conversion and economic development, and my reading and teaching in community work

have lead me to rethink what it means to build communities. If the primary measure of a healthy economy/community simply gets translated to a short-term rise in the tax base at the local level; or a rise in the GNP at the national level, then they become misleading indicators of the overall health and well-being of a society.

These experiences have helped me to make connections, on a local and global level: between violence toward people and the environment; the lack of attention to strengthening human beings and conserving natural resources, and the increasing gap in wealth and power between 5% at the top and the other 95% of my community or the nation as a whole. My vision of a healthy economy (and society) has come to rest on four elements: a healthy sustained physical environment; meaningful work and leisure for the citizenry; healthy and well-educated children; and the equitable distribution of goods and service between genders and among ethnic and cultural groups. The way to this vision, I am convinced, is one of power-sharing and non-violence. "There is no way to peace; peace is the way."

This journey has been a personal one, resulting in an expansion of my circle of loved ones. Recently, my husband gave me a surprise 50th birthday dinner. As I looked around the table at my closest friends, there sat Sam, his wife Sarah, and Jane, all of whom have become dear friends, in large part, because of our work together. Sam, a member of a new "community of interest" for me in 1991, is now like a father. Com-

munity has become family.

The direction these reflections point me to is a simple one: acting peacefully in my social work practice at every level — in my teaching, community service, and personal life. In some ways I seemed to have traveled a long road, from my Quaker anti-war upbringing to a pro-sustainable development world view. In other ways I feel I've simply come full circle. As my Grandma Flossie said, "Treat others the way you want to be treated... and fighting never accomplishes anything in the long run." □

REFERENCES

Eisler, Riane. (1989) *The chalice and the blade..* San Francisco: Harper. Geiser, K. (1984)

Converting economic conversion: an argument for building broader coalitions in S. Gordon, and D. McFadden, *Economic conversion: Revitalizing America's economy* (p. 175-190). Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company.

McKinney, Stewart B. (1987) B. Homeless Assistance Act, Title V Section 501, 42 U.S.C. (1987) (Public Law 100-77).

Melman, S., New York Congressman (1974). *The Permanent War Economy: American Capitalism in Decline*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rothman, J. (1995) Approaches to community Intervention," in J. Rothman, J. Erlich, and J. Tropman (eds.) *Strategies of community intervention*, 5th edition. Itasca, Illinois: Peacock Publishers Inc.

Schell, J. (1982) *The Fate of the Earth*. New York: Avon Books.

LIFESTORIES: PAST AND PRESENT STORIES CONSTRUCT THE FUTURE

This narrative describes my work with an older adult group called Lifestories. Through the use of a "talk it, teach it, do it" approach, group members uncovered the dominant stories of their past and present. Talking about death as a life event aided both the worker and the group members to construct future lifestories.

by
Jennifer Davis-Berman

Jennifer Davis-Berman
University of Dayton, Dayton OH
Lifespan Counseling Associates

Since high school I've had a personal and professional interest in older adults that's become more serious as I grow older. As I approach mid-life, my work with older adults appears like self defense, that is, "If you can't beat them, join them." Most older people I've worked with genuinely seem to like me. I'm energetic and optimistic, and try to treat them with respect and regard. I found that taking on the therapist role made it easier for me to work with them: I can be in charge, and keep a professional distance. However, when I dropped that role, I learned more about the meaning of life and death.

This narrative is about a group I developed, called Lifestories. Eight men and women, ranging in age from 77 to 86, volunteered to meet as a group each week (8 weeks) to explore their own and each others' dominant life narratives: to discern how their primary stories influenced the character of their lives and impinged upon the present, and how they might be used to construct a future life story.

I knew that I wanted to try to combine traditional talk, storytelling, and some experiential games. Although there is a good deal of published work on group work with older adults,

there is not much on the use of experiential education approaches with this population. The idea of using the dominant story came from my interest in experiential education. These approaches appear to help facilitate change by assisting persons in examining and altering their dominant stories. My plan was to use experiential exercises each week to facilitate the group's dialogue. Discussing death and dying, I believed, would facilitate the work on the stories — as death plays a critical role in life's story. Our final product was an experiential group where older adults reconstructed their stories by talking, doing, and teaching.

Ask What If?



TALK IT: FORMING THE GROUP

Recruiting group members was a fairly easy task. The activities director of a retirement

community simply let residents know that I was looking for people interested in actively participating in a storytelling group. Prospective members were told that sensitive topics such as death and dying would be discussed.

After my initial meeting with the activities director, we began the group. We played games to remember names, and exercises geared toward getting to know each other and to examine values and beliefs. The games were fun and initiated trust and mutual aid in non-threatening ways. I must admit that the formative stage threatened me. I was afraid that the group members would view the games as childish and insulting. I found quite the contrary: group members seemed to have a great time. There was always lots of laughter and open sharing. In fact the group was so open that the exercises and games soon became unnecessary.



STORYTELLING

Before each member told of his/her dominant past and present story, I took the initiative to begin. Although my usual style is non-disclosure, I felt that this group experience warranted experimentation. I told them that the central theme in my life story was that by being a student and academic achiever, I captured my parents' approval and affection

and, that these traits structured my identity.

Through the members' narratives, we discovered themes of helpers, tenacious workers, and spiritual souls. Through each story we distilled that which described each person, and how the descriptive themes were used in his/her present story. Since they all knew each other through their shared living, they were able to provide examples of how major themes of each person's story were played out. For example one member's history, identified as a helper, was designed around assisting others:

Ruth's Story

Ruth was raised in a wealthy family in the East, surrounded by material goods, and had been protected from the world. At one time bodyguards had become a part of her daily life because of threats to her family. Her story was like that of a fairy tale princess growing up in a castle. She reported that in spite of a privileged upbringing, she was unhappy and lacked satisfaction. To satisfy her longing for meaning, she sought to serve others in any volunteer capacity she could find.

Ruth initially apologized to the group for having nothing of interest to say. Repeatedly, she said that she hadn't worked or done anything worthwhile on her own, and had led a sheltered, protected life that wasn't worth much. Immediately, I focused on her volunteer service, and the meaning it had in her life, and the lives of others.

Group members rein-

forced these attributes as they spoke about her current helping efforts at the retirement center. She had some difficulty acknowledging that she actively gave and served others in her current life, and found it difficult to acknowledge her own contributions and deem them worthy.

There was nothing magical or even complex about this part of the group process. As the worker, I played an active role in facilitating the discussion. I took the lead in making the connections and drawing out the discussion. For example, with Ruth I explored the meaning of volunteerism by asking her what would it say about me, if I did what she did. Finally, I spoke more directly. The same attributes she assigned me described her as well. For the most part, the group members were open, generous, and supportive.

John's Story

Although John had volunteered for the group, he was not an active participant. Shy and reticent, careful with words, he rarely commented or voiced support. Although he said that the group was important to him, he did not go beyond the statement. John and his wife, the only married couple in the group, always sat together on a love seat while the others frequently moved around. At some point, John and his wife began to sit apart. I think it might have been in response to the group members' subtle messages.

A common topic during the formal meetings and before the group began, was about being

a widow, being alone, and adjusting to loss. At times, I thought there were expressions of animosity toward John: the other members' husbands had died, and he remained. There was no direct comment by any group member, but John's physical presentation may have made him appear to the others as incapable of empathy.

When John was asked to tell his dominant life story he wove a tale of early poverty, struggle and fierce family loyalty. From his earliest days, he worked long and hard on the farm to support his family. He told of his family's financial ruin during the Depression. He spoke of his feelings and those he cared for. Previously, it had been about work or business. His self disclosure was powerful and allowed us to experience his other dimensions.

One of John's life challenges had its roots in his physical appearance: a scarred complexion and a large bulbous nose. I had wondered what his story was, as I'm sure the others had. John told his history of terrible acne and the ridicule he endured as a young man. As he talked we saw and felt his pain. I think for the first time, at least in the group, John cried. The members reacted with concern, support, and understanding — and a few reached out to touch his arm. John continued his exploration, describing the severe infection in his nose that he had contracted as a youth. At that time, few antibiotics were available and money was sparse. The infection cannibalized the tissue of his nose, leaving him seriously disfigured. John presented it as if — he went through high school

without a nose. Later he saved enough of money for plastic surgery. It still left him disfigured.

His self disclosure propelled John into the group, out of the marginal position that he occupied. Members told him of the strength, tenacity, and loyalty they observed in him at the retirement facility. We also talked about the way that John tended to be outside of the group and that trust did not come easily. Undoubtedly, this was rooted in the cruel treatment and words of others he experienced growing up. Learning about his struggles helped us understand his perseverance, sensitivity, loyalty, and work ethic. Following John's story, he became more talkative, extended himself to others more than he had in the past, and at times reached out to physically comfort others in pain. Throughout the course of the group experience, John trusted others more and, eventually, became the participant leader, organizing activities and calling members to remind them of group events.

TRANSITIONS

Before we moved into the next group phase, I asked the members to share personal mementos that symbolized their stories. Once again, this was an attempt to solidify the dominant stories. For example, one member told a story of her love of the outdoors and adventurous spirit as she passed around old camping equipment, lanterns, and memorabilia from her early experiences in the Girl Scouts. With others we saw pictures, held jewelry, and saw many beloved

items. These objects were used to give further detail about their life-stories. I think seeing and touching these concrete objects reinforced the stories as they made the themes appear more solid.



TALKING ABOUT DEATH

To complete the "Talk It" phase of the group, we decided to construct future stories, and to determine how the strengths and weaknesses of past stories contributed to the present and the future. It has sometimes struck me that older adults frequently lack a future story and function without a defined future direction. I also know that there is some consistency in the life story over the years, and that the strengths of the past and present can be used to construct a future. One of the ways we began was to explore the topic of death. I knew that loss and death were events of great significance in their lives. I also knew that even though society is more open to discussing and witnessing death than it has been in the past, there are many taboos. I have seen this in my class on death and dying. Students seem able to discuss death in fairly abstract ways with each other. When older adults in the classroom, the discussion seemed more sub-

duced. The bottom line is that it is not easy to discuss death with people who are waiting outside its door.

In the group, we began by sharing our ideas about life, death, and the afterlife. I was an

active participant in this process. This was the point in the group that frightened me the most. What would I do if members refused to talk? What would I do if someone lost control? Who am I to try to facilitate a discussion on death with people who are closer to the event than I? Most importantly, what would I do if I lost control? I had lost my father four years ago, and still had grieving to do. What would I do if I couldn't handle this kind of discussion? I felt apprehensive, self conscious, yet excited that I would be breaking new ground for myself. I had spent a professional career being in charge and safe, and I was now ready to take personal and professional risks. On the other hand, I felt safe. I cared about these people. Their faces lit up when I came in for group. I knew I had a lot to learn, that they accepted me, and were open to teaching me.

I began by talking about my dad, and how I watched him go downhill physically before he died. I also shared what I found to be positive aspects of this experience. I grew closer to my father as he died, and I wished that we could have achieved this kind of intimacy when he was alive. Despite the fact that he was headstrong and rarely showed that he was vulnerable, he let us take care of him in the end. He rarely complained, and I am able to say that we had some of our best times together as he was dying.

I believe he knew when he was about to die since he withdrew. My brother and I didn't realize that he was in the process of dying. Looking back, I now know that dying is a process one goes through. It was late at night that

I witnessed his passing. He was just sixty, strong, and had given to others. He was my role model. On the other hand, there was something peaceful about his death. When it finally happened, he seemed to just let go. I told the group that I felt that by being with my father when he died, I had learned a lot about the process of living and dying.

After I shared this story, some members told of their grief over the loss of spouses and children, with the more outgoing members taking the lead. Everyone had experienced widowhood, sometimes twice. There was talk about the emptiness they felt and the sense that their best friend was gone. Tears were shed and support poured out among the group members. Others had witnessed the deaths of their loved ones, and recalled many images and feelings. They felt that it had been a privilege to be with their loved one at the end, and that lessons about life were learned through the process of death.

It was deeply moving to see older adults recalling their spouses, feeling the pain of the loss, and having others know exactly what they had experienced. This sharing seemed to solidify the group, and it became a safe place to share and grieve. This was demonstrated by the affirming statements and physical touching between group members.

In a way, I felt like an outsider during this phase of the group as I had not experienced widowhood. Even though some had been widowed for many years, they said that the pain was still intense. The thought of go-



ing through this myself is frightening — the sense of loss and emptiness seemed so deep. A few of the group members had also lost children to death. The members added that this pain was the most unspeakable.

Other discussions focused around the fear of dying. When I ask the students in my death and dying class what they fear about dying, they typically reply — fear of being buried alive or that there is no afterlife. They also were fearful of a violent, painful death. On the other hand, the group members anxiety was about becoming a burden, especially to their children. They wanted to die with some dignity, in their homes surrounded by the ones they loved. But like the students, they too feared pain. They seemed at peace with the idea that death was coming, and only wanted it to come in peace. These sessions were difficult, yet profoundly meaningful.

As the facilitator, I took a fairly non-directive, supportive role during this segment of the group process. Being a mother, it was devastating to hear another mother talk about losing her baby at birth. After all, it wasn't that unusual in their time for birth trauma to result in a stillborn baby.

We ended by talking how talking about death is really about life, and that understanding and forming beliefs about death helps shape the future story. This segment of the group was critical. As the facilitator and group conveyer, I felt responsible for the group's emotional safety. I had tried to help create a trusting and caring environment, as had the group

members. Yet, as we all know, talk about death and grief uncovers hidden feelings and issues that intensify emotional reactions.

FUTURE STORIES

With this in mind, we proceeded toward the future within a framework of past and present, and beliefs about death. This might seem like an unusual approach, but I believe that you cannot help older persons develop a vision of the future without incorporating their feelings about their last task on Earth. To begin to address present accomplishments and satisfactions, we identified the three things that could be said about us if we died today.

Most responses fell into the categories of family, work, and personal characteristics. Members said that they had been good parents, hard workers, and good honest people, obviously supporting positive self-feelings. Others identified areas where they had fallen short particularly in not spending enough time with their families. For example, one member said he had focused solely on work in his life. Another said that she had been introverted and a loner.

Following this assessment, group members modified their list and included three things that they would like to have said about them if they were not facing imminent death. Changing the exercise was geared toward assisting clients to reexamine who they are, and who they want to become. When not facing death, we have more time to make changes. This illuminates what we would like to do if given the chance.

Some of the statements that emerged were: She was a great grandmother, He was well educated, She was a very loving person, She was outgoing and sociable. These were additional things that the group members wanted to be said about themselves if they had more time. These statements formed the basis for setting goals, and were used to illustrate ways future stories could be enriched and past weaknesses corrected. Due to time constraints, we did not set goals for all group members. However, we began to move toward goal setting in the construction of the future story. For example, the member who stated that she was a great grandmother was encouraged to connect with her family. The member who wanted to be well educated was encouraged to explore local college options. What this illustrated is that talking about death is really and most fundamentally about life, and the life-affirming power of continuing the life story. This exercise also emphasized that change and growth are always on the horizon, and may alter our life story.

TALK IT, THE WORKER REFLECTS

Looking back, I think that many of the group members had a rough time discussing death, as I certainly did. Although I have described the emotional nature of our discussions, in the early phase most conversations were about the deaths of relatives and details that need to be covered at the time of a death. Participants wanted to talk about funeral arrangements

and the cost of death rather than the feelings associated with it. Surely, it's easier to place the discussion at this level.

The superficial narrative was more comfortable for me as well. I was uncomfortable with sharing the intimacies of death. I also felt that I had no right to push them in directions that they did not want to go, as this brought out many of my own fears and insecurities. If I've learned anything from working with older adults, it is that you must and will confront your own mortality in your interactions. Despite my many years of work with older adults, the journey down this road is still scary. Facing death is unpredictable and it carries with it a sense of illegitimacy. These feelings made me feel like an impostor—someone who "hadn't been there" and couldn't understand.

In the midst of my soul searching, it was a twist of fate that helped me and changed the entire tone of the group. My brown Labrador retriever was found dead by the road by animal control the day before a group meeting. My family loved this dog dearly for nearly 9 years, and we were devastated. When I came to group the day after Casey's death, I wanted to share this experience. I was distraught and tearful about the loss. I was aching and felt safe that I could share this pain. I was hoping to get support, love, and care. I hoped that after I shared my grief

I could continue with group. I certainly wasn't prepared for the effect my story would have.

Almost immediately, the members shared stories about the loss of their pets, some of which had been dead for ten years. The superficial nature of the sharing was gone, and we were down to raw emotion. They had moved to a deeper level of sharing and trust. It was almost like the floodgates opened and the river began to flow. From that point on, the group members were able to talk about their fears and issues in more meaningful ways.

TEACH IT

To solidify and reinforce the dominant stories, we asked group members to teach us something that represented their dominant stories. Again, this technique came from my interest in action oriented methods of working with people. As such, I was hoping that by asking the group members to teach their dominant stories would be yet another way of reinforcing their themes for themselves and each other. This request produced a great deal of anxiety. Here were wonderfully accomplished people telling us that they had nothing to offer, and that there wasn't anything that they could teach. It was also difficult at first for the group members to see the relationship between their stories and the teaching.

It struck me that those of us in the helping professions often act as teachers and tell older people how to act, what to try, and what to talk about. Rarely do we put them in the role of teacher. This role was hard for me to give

up, since I was used to being in control. I was nervous that this part of the group would flop, and that the participants would not cooperate or that it just would not be meaningful. I was anxious about giving up control. Again, this related to my training as a therapist which taught me to be in charge, and to take responsibility for individual and group sessions. Some members were enthused about teaching, while others reluctantly agreed to participate. The topic, format, and presentation were the responsibility of the member in charge of the particular meeting. We had wonderful sessions on the intricacies of the postal service in the 1940s, the birth of a career in girl scouting which led to national recognition, and on the mysteries of reincarnation. John presented an hour-long slide show depicting his experience in World War II.

Once this segment of the group got underway, interest increased. People dressed up, prepared notes, and obviously put a great deal of time and effort into their presentations. Some members were quite nervous, and had shaky hands and voices. Despite their style, it was clear that this challenge was taken seriously and was a powerful learning experience for the group members and myself.

We learned about the Depression and other events that I have never experienced. They had all lived through essentially the same period of time. They laughed about the good times and became teary about the bad. It almost seemed that these discussions helped buffer the sense of loss that many of these people



had, as they were talking about common life events. A sense of enthusiasm also seemed to grow in the group. Members began to arrive early for group and the atmosphere was positive. I enjoyed this phase of the group, and admired the breadth and depth of experience that group members had to offer.

PROCESSING THE TEACHING

Following the teaching, our task as a group was to determine how the participants' dominant story was revealed through their teaching. This was done at my direction with a great deal of processing. We saw the tenacity and strength of our member who was a postal service worker and had learned to overcome physical disability. We learned about reincarnation and alternate realities from our spiritually oriented member.

To solidify the dominant stories in the teaching experience we helped identify major themes. This was sometimes difficult, and some of the group members were uncomfortable with having their stories analyzed.

The final part of our group asked participants to put their dominant stories into action. Its purpose was to give people ideas about how to continue their stories into the future. Once again, learning through experience expanded definitions of self. With each member as an excursion leader, we've been behind the scenes at the post office, had a tour of a historic cemetery, and visited a local hospital to compare modern facilities with those of the De-

pression era. We also have a visit to an art museum to look forward to! Each group member choose an activity consistent with or representative of his/her dominant story. This was yet another way to promote growth, and to help develop a sense of the future.

We're still in the process of completing this phase of the group. I envision tying the "talk it, teach it, do it" theme together with some intense processing and work on constructing future stories. This last phase of the group will be a challenge and will require more active participation on my part. Perhaps we will write short essays detailing how "talk it, teach it, do it" has revealed and illuminated the stories. We must then use these insights to create a future story. I am committed to helping the group conceive of a future. If aging is about continuity, then a future story must certainly be there.

Lifestories has been a process, not only for the participants, but for me as well. I have learned that carefully directed storytelling can lead to a more focused present and a potentially richer future. In the course of hearing the intimate thoughts and fears of others, I have had to delve deeper into my own self to examine the demons and fears. As I have asked the group members to move out of their comfort zones, so have I.

At this point, I am unsure what direction the Lifestories Group will take. I do know that I've learned about the value of the story—the narrative of a life. I've also learned about listening to and being open to the value of the story in defining and shaping a life. Finally, I've realized that

many older adults have not constructed a future story. For many, life goes from day to day. Through capitalizing on the past and its impact on the present, I believe that this group assisted its participants in beginning to construct and alter their future stories. It has been an honor for me to be part of this process. □

Correspondence regarding this manuscript should be sent to Jennifer Davis-Berman, 1698 Forestdale Ave. Dayton, Ohio 45432, (513)426-1306, (513)426-0211(fax).

HOW IT WAS: A NARRATIVE ESSAY

Howard Goldstein's narrative essay describes the affirmation of hope and optimism that characterized social work thought in its mid-century; and his sense of the profession as it shifted perspectives from diagnostic and functional systems of practice and education to "consensus" and "the need to speak in one voice." Goldstein's narrative is more than autobiographical. It recaptures a time, at least in narrative, when social work was nominally a profession but more vitally, a way of life, a perspective on the world, perhaps an ideology, certainly a source of hope and vision. The clarity of the portrait of those middle years is filtered by the narrower, more utilitarian outlook of the present, the failures that followed noble social experiments, and the flood of current social miseries. Whether things were better or worse in that era is not the point; then, we were inspired by beliefs that we could make a difference, that the world would be somewhat better if we learned right and did right.

By Howard Goldstein

Howard Goldstein is Professor Emeritus, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Cleveland Ohio. He now lives in Maine.

1.

It was the early 1950s, a few years after we won the war—World War II, that is—when I first discovered social work. The discovery was pure chance: the hitchhiker, a fellow veteran, I picked up one afternoon was on his way to something he called "field instruction." Asking him to explain, I got a quick but inspired account of the making of a social worker. It was timely information. Married, a parent, and at the sad ending of a failed business venture, the idea of starting college and finding a career seemed to be a good idea. I was twenty-seven.

I was a child of the Great Depression. Why then wasn't I already aware of the good works of social workers? And since I had witnessed and experienced the hardships and deprivation of that grim decade, why hadn't I already been drawn — at least in my thinking — to some kind of altruistic career? The answer to the first question was that our tightly bound and self-reliant immigrant community took care of our own. As to the second question, hardship and deprivation are terms used in the present to describe the past. Then we thought that's the way life was; everyone was poor.

As it turned out, when I finally decided what I wanted to do with the rest of my working life, becoming a veterinarian was my most appealing choice. Was it a mistake (who can know?) that I sought expert advice? The Veterans Administration offered vocational guidance, and after completing a battery of aptitude and other psychological tests, my psychologist expert persuaded me otherwise: "Try history," he advised. No wonder that I became cynical about something called "measures of reliability and validity."

I did as I was told and went on to "try history" which I must admit excited ways of thinking that drew me to biography, the nature of memory, the many ways it is possible to reconstruct other times. The now popular theories of the narrative mode completed a circle that began over forty years ago: my history professor, a true humanist, taught then what now is respectably called the field of "narrative history," that understands yester-years as a composite of lives and stories. I plunged into the social and behavioral sciences, and tried most everything except the natural sciences that my vocational psychologist predicted would be





my ruin.

With BA in hand, social work — or for that matter, advanced education of any kind — never was a considered option; getting my degree in three years was enough already. Perhaps because I couldn't do much about saving stricken dogs, cats, and other creatures, I was captured by the romantic idea of saving kids. The possibility of some day working for the acclaimed, newly founded Model California Youth Authority was my shining goal. Ironically, it was my inquiry about what I needed to do to fulfill that hope — perhaps some experience as a rural probation officer — that created the detour that, inadvertently, led me into social work. "Get your MSW first," I was advised. I did.

I cannot say for sure how my now elderly colleagues, also Depression survivors, stumbled into social work. It seemed to me, however, that we comprised a cultural cohort — a shared identity as poor, first generation immigrant children — who, as social workers, were forever — almost instinctively — trying to safeguard and often defend the humanistic principles of our profession. I recall an instance when one of my faculty colleagues who

could be counted on to protest any inequity was charged by his Dean with being "too moral." Individually and collectively, we "knew" something about what really counted as far as having a decent place in the world was concerned. It made no difference whether our first neighborhoods were in Newark, Cleveland, or Chicago; the values of our immigrant communities were strikingly similar. I, like others I know, grew up imbued with the integrity, the intellect, of pure Socialism — not so much its politics as its humanity and ideology. My father, again like others, always voted for Norman Thomas — always in principle, knowing that the possibility of his Presidency was nonexistent.

The absence of material pleasures — if they were indeed noted — was outweighed by our neighborhoods and communities that abounded with activities and programs. "Grassroots" was an unknown concept but a real-life process. Community centers, clubs, Young Men and Women Associations, summer camps, Boy Scouts, were initiated by an informal council, a men's or women's religious committee, or other groups without need of studies or funding proposals. It occurs to me that if our collective early lives

prepared us for anything, it was old-fashioned, democratic group work and community organization rooted in the settlement movement and in the philosophies of Grace Coyle and Wilber Newstetter. We knew in our hearts what "community" — now such a vapid term — meant as far as pride, identity, character, and self-worth were concerned. My recent book, a study of elders and their recollections of their early years in the harsh, regimented, austere orphanage life, persuasively shows how community — created among themselves and within the enveloping Jewish neighborhood — made for much more than mere survival (Goldstein, 1996).

I am bemused by the facile ways the current buzzword, "diversity," is now employed. Then, among the mosaic of immigrant nationalities, rich community life was shaped not only by respective identities, customs, idioms, and integrity. Now, we use the abstraction, "ethnic," to refer to certain groups; then, you knew the origins of the neighborhood people by the marvelous aromas arising out of their markets and kitchens, by their accents, dialects, and the energies of paisans, lanzleit, and other countrymen

and women.

2.

My story of how I stumbled into social work is more than autobiographical. It intends to recapture a time, at least in narrative, when social work was nominally a profession but more vitally, a way of life, a perspective on the world, perhaps an ideology, certainly a source of hope and vision. All stories are held together by the glue of illusion, by what we want the story to convey. This is not a disclaimer: The eighteenth century English novelist, George Eliot, herself no friend of convention, said, "for what we call illusions are often, in truth, a wider vision of past and present realities — a willing movement of a man's soul with a larger sweep of the world's forces..." The times are different now, perhaps in greater need of a few more hopeful illusions to soften the kinds of "objectivity" and materialism that paper over the ironies, the wisdom, the tragic and comedic sense of life.

Nostalgia does not engulf me: "hope and vision" would be incidental if those weren't times when discrimination and segregation were rampant; when good lives and careers were destroyed by our democratic, constitutionally based, officially sanctioned House Un-American Activities Committee; when one had to sign loyalty oaths to get or hold a job; when children had to practice atom bomb drills. It wasn't the best of times; but one could be part of the spirit that wouldn't settle for being the worst of times. As well, through song and story

and history, the Fifties are recalled as a caricature or collage of Hula Hoops, Leave It To Beaver, Ozzie and Harriet, and the passive generation.

These inanities aside, there were few other periods in the history of social work than the 1950s that marked so many changes in the profession's structure and, to some extent, substance. Now that we are approaching the end of the century when, at its outset, social work first began to take on the trappings of a profession, the decade of the 1950s, chronologically, intellectually, and ideologically, marks the midpoint of the profession. A few examples of the innovations of that period: In 1952, the Council on Social Work Education was formed out of the American Association of Schools of Social Work and the National Association of Schools of Social Administration. In 1955, a single professional organization was formed out of seven "specialized" membership bodies. In 1958, the document, "A Working Definition of Social Work Practice," was produced by the National Association of Social Workers.

I have roughed out the route of how I got there and where social work was at this special turning point in time and thought. Now, in accord with Roberta Imre's (1996: 63-65) advice that we "plumb the depths of wisdom that is available through narratives..." I want to recall the character, culture, and quality of theory and practice, of learning and doing. The culture and ideologies of our early years became part of the weave of the text and texture of our professional lives.

My story will entwine two additional threads to the historical fiber of our chosen profession: one, the substance of those times; two, its spirit.

3.

It has been said that the ability or comfort to live with ambiguity is the talent required to be an able social worker. Such ambiguity — more so, paradox — marked the profession in that era. As is still the case, it was committed to a singular mission and purpose, yet easily entertained at least two discrete and contradictory philosophies about human nature, and change. Diagnostic and Functional systems had been flourishing as the exclusive schools of practice before clumsy attempts at integration were attempted. One's identity as a social worker that sometimes carried over as self-identity was pure and simple: you were either one or the other almost as, "Hi, I'm Mary Jones and I'm a Functional-ist."

I have considered that perhaps the reason why I have never settled into one mold of thought and practice, why I have explored the many possible perspectives on the human state — social systems, cognitive, humanistic, narrative and more — is my brief experience in an awkward, Catch-22 plight. My casework professor, was a pure, unalloyed member of the Diagnostic School; my field instructor was a devout Functionalist. The Diagnostic School, a precursor of models of practice that require the social worker to be an expert, a diagnostician, and a methodologist was based on

rigid Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The Functional School, in contrast (and in opposition) to Freudian psychology was the forerunner of a client-centered, existential, collegial model of practice. It stressed the importance of relationship, the here-and-now, and challenged the notion that the fluidity of human nature could be bottled and labeled. Caught between the two magnetic poles, the dynamic persuasions of my mentors, I learned, adaptively, what it was like being a dual personality, and developmentally, self-confidence and ease with ambiguity.

As social work restructured and, to some extent, redefined itself, the common wall separating the two Schools crumbled: the allure and promises of the flowering social and behavioral sciences, were just one of a few influences. As I see it — and in more symbolic than substantive terms — a certain passion and spirit were lost as the distinctions between the two schools faded and were compromised.

Other than the sporadic and fitful exchanges between empiricist and humanist researchers, the kinds of debate and position-taking that was spurred by the two disparate philosophies of human nature, behavior, and change is scarcely in evidence. "Consensus" and "the need to speak in one voice" are watchwords of the profession and the aim of committees on everything; announcements of forthcoming annual meetings sound like invitations to celebrations of unity and togetherness; letters to editors that contend or take a stand are rare; the position statements of

candidates for national offices are virtually isomorphic; consequently, a small minority of members takes the moment to check and return their ballots.

I remember tiny but fiery Rose Green, one of my professors and a devout Functionalist. She unhesitatingly refused an invitation to be part of a panel discussion on private practice unless the organizers changed the name of the event to "Social Workers without Agencies." You see, "Function" was not, as one would think, a sociological term; it referred to an agency's function and the client's attitude toward it, a critical factor of the helping process. Thus, the question: were private practitioners unhitched from an agency really "complete" social workers? — at least according to Functionalist tenets.

In the same period, Marion Sanders (1957) wrote a lovely satire, a critical commentary called "Social Work: A Profession Chasing Its Tail." Among other observations that chided social workers' eagerness for dignity and status, she described the "Great Ideological Schism" by telling about the dilemma of Hester, an experienced social worker. Hester sought a particular position that would enhance her professional development; it turned out that the director of the agency "had studied at the University of Pennsylvania and was Rankian (following Dr. Otto Rank) and Functional. Hester, being Freudian and Diagnostic could not risk the continuing peril of contamination by a deviationist." Someone said that academics are always ready and eager to join in ferocious, hair-splitting

controversy since usually there is nothing at stake. Much was at stake in the "Schism" referred to by Sanders.



There was yet another loss in the conjugation of the two schools: the opportunity for students to depart their education with a fairly thorough and working knowledge of a foundational theory — whether Functional or Diagnostic. Paradoxically, it was not that one or the other protocol was especially relevant to everyday practice; there has never been much evidence that there is any meaningful connection between theory and practice. Important was the idea that the graduating social worker practitioner "owned" a theoretical frame of reference, a conceptual sounding board against which other theories still over the horizon could be measured.

Aside from my mongrel Diagnostic-Functional semester, my graduate education was purebred, orthodox Freudianism. The scholasticism of psychoanalytic thought could not be trusted in those days to such laity as social work academics; an ordained psychoanalyst — preferably one who had studied in Vienna — was employed to teach the course: this he did with great carnal gusto. A fascinating scene was played out in-

volving the good doctor and the few nuns and the priest who were members of the class: as his lectures became more erotic in content, the members of the faith would study their missals with even more unflinching concentration. This, of course, did not escape notice of the lecturer who, with an almost perceptible grin, would venture a few more lascivious Freudian gems.



Like my innocent fellow learners, I enlisted in professional education with the anticipation of arming myself with psychological truths, if not THE truth about behavior and change. Freudianism promised to fit the bill. Although on one level, I felt well-armed with notions of "transference," "defense mechanisms" and other articles of faith, this glibness did not seem to be particularly pertinent to my work with clients; for one thing, I was always violating Sigmund's law of scientific objective detachment by, when it seemed to feel right, sharing with my clients a story about my life experiences.

Relevant or otherwise, that I "knew" or, better, "owned," this ideological perspective from inside out equipped me with the critical thinking needed to compare its principles with those of burgeoning post — and even anti-Freudian theories. It was another matter, however, when I tried to make the conversion to or try out

these fresh ideas: like many other "isms," Freudianism is a closed system that dictates that any attempt at deviation or disagreement is itself proof of the validity of the system. Thus, my Freudian mentors tried to convince me that my interest in other theories showed that I was guilty of such unconscious mechanisms as "resistance," "defensiveness," and "denial."

These absurdities notwithstanding, the extinction of the two contrary perspectives on the human condition was as woeful as the cheapening of the rigors of scholarship and learning when the study of the Classics ceased to be a requirement for advanced liberal education. Is the jumble of "eclecticism" that has amassed over the years, the expedient stew of this and that theory, an improvement over what might be considered "elitist" theories?

This leads me to the point that is at the heart of this disquisition: there is no evidence — or for that matter, any way of measuring — whether one curriculum, theory, or method is "more effective" (whatever that means) than any other. What, then, does count? Then and certainly now, I believe that the probative test of an educational program is whether it provides the opportunity and encouragement for the development of the learner's ability to reason, reflect, create, and imagine. Such talents are essential since every moment in one's work with problems of living is novel and usually involved with enigmatic questions of moral choice.

A "what if" question comes to mind. What if early social work had taken the path set

by the alliance of Jane Addams, John Dewey, and the settlement movement instead of casework's pursuit (identified with Mary Richmond) of a scientific foundation? Would the commitment of the settlement movement ideology to the "here-and-now" needs and incentives of clients have promoted a more humanistic approach to practice?

Almost sixty years ago, Dewey (1938: 48-49), who learned from and contributed to the settlement movement — Hull House specifically — wrote about the "pedagogical fallacy," the erroneous assumption that previously acquired knowledge and theory (classroom content) will prepare the learner for eventual practice in the field, in the real world. In recent years, Donald Schon's (1983) well-known book, *The Reflective Practitioner*, indirectly expressed Dewey's ideas. Schon recommended that professionals need to develop "reflection-in-action" in practice with human problems rather than what he calls Technical Rationality, the formal act of applying theory or scientific knowledge to a problem. As the settlement movement diminished, so did Dewey's influence on learning and problem solving. And although Schon's book stirred considerable interest, education for professional practice continues its conventional march, the didactic classroom leading the way with the real life experiential practicum trying to follow in step.

Nonetheless, the argument won't go away: the rational and systematic organization of knowledge taught in the classroom cannot prepare the learner

for the unforeseen contingencies and irrational demands of actual practice. It is the immediate narrative experience that calls for reflective and critical thinking, the ability to "be with," to understand more than the client's story tells, to break the constricting bonds of conventional theory and knowledge. Perhaps an example, the gist of a more complex case, will help make this point. Admittedly, Bob is not your every day client; that fact alone, however, argues for the talent to meet the unexpected.

Bob, middle-aged, was desperate: his wife had incurable cancer; they had two young daughters dependent on his care; he had returned to college to find a new career since his previous activities as a labor organizer made him unemployable. Early on, he very hesitantly trusted me with his revelation: he was taking a course on Herman Melville and he, Bob, believed he had stumbled on, made a discovery about, a certain code in Melville's novels that carried a hidden message. For him, a bright fellow indeed, the finding was momentous. My classroom and my reading had prepared me for any of a number of "treatment plans": all I had to do was decide whether he was "delusional," "dysfunctional" because of "poor reality-testing," or simply "in denial."

Any one of such "assessments" would have been professionally appropriate but, as I was coming to understand Bob and his life circumstances, I considered them self-serving

and wrongheaded. First, I could not know whether his discovery was valid. Second, it would be hubristic for me, one human being, to judge another's state of being. Last, such terms, if they are approximate, only atomize that which is complex. Besides, I was most intrigued by his theory that certainly had its own legs and romance.

Over the months, the anguished demands of life and death did not go unregarded; but he and I also eagerly looked forward to our time together to talk about his latest discoveries about "the code." When he finished the complete list of Melville's work, he frequented old book stores for other novels that he was sure Melville had written under a pen name.

When the time came, he helped put his wife to rest, with loving care helped his daughters cope with their loss, and lined up a part-time position as an English teacher. As always, I was in wait for the latest results of his literary adventure but, in one of our last interviews, Bob said he hated to disappoint me but "I've kinda given it up. Got other things to do."

The extent to which I gained the ability to be a "reflective practitioner" was a happy but coincidental result of the paradoxes in my professional education. Inductive or experiential learning, the ability to reason from the particular reality to the general that encourages reflective practice, had ample space in our graduate classroom and curricu-

lum — but by default rather than by plan. Deductive or didactic learning was of course the unquestioned model of education: lectures and readings provided by the "information" classes (e.g., human behavior and the social environment, medical information, social welfare) comprised — as in the present — what educators believed social workers needed to know to become professionalized. But our practice classes — casework, in my instance — didn't have much theoretical or methodological information to offer. Gordon Hamilton's Diagnostic textbook (1951) had just been published and Helen Harris Perlman's work (1957) that was to become the standard was not yet available. It was also well before the time that commercial publishers created an industry of practice textbooks.

How we learned our skills, knowledge, and values to become practicing social workers was through the case method or case study. We had available a rich and extensive collection of "canned cases," each supposedly typifying one kind or another of circumstances and questions that a social worker was likely to encounter. The classroom welcomed the real-life cases we brought from field instruction. Starting with the elemental question, "What's going on here?" and drawing on inference, speculation, assumption, and often heated controversy, we would, with the keen guidance of our mentor, try to ferret out the meaning buried in the case. We sought to gain some vicarious awareness of how things came to be, how they were, and what we inferred might lay ahead in rela-

tion to what we might do or how we would "intervene." To be sure, we used the sometimes unwieldy language of theory and method to discuss the case; I recall how enlightened I felt when I asked my good professor, John Milner, why my client kept trying to be so friendly and he said, quite simply, "transference." The theoretical jargon allowed us some conceptual pegs on which we could hang our experiences. But the theoretical stuff was very secondary to our learning "how to be" and "how to think" with our clients, not as replaceable experts but as distinct and vital human beings.

Altogether, I do not believe that, with or without "definitive" practice texts, there was anything second rate or less effective about this mode of teaching and learning. The case has always been the core of the profession's interest and inquiry. Despite the ever increasing sophistication of practice theory, the good teacher knows that, without the existential case, you are left with only an assortment of abstractions that are of more help to the intellect than to the helping relationship. And, of course, the case offers exactly the kind of inductive learning that Dewey and Schon considered the pathway to sensitive, reflective practice.

4.

I am not sure — nor does it really matter — how the humanistic content of learning and maturing central to becoming a social worker blended with the humanistic spirit of the times, at least as far as how some of us experienced it. The structural

changes that were being worked out within the profession in that mid-century decade represented a profession in the process of re-inventing itself. At the same time, the temperament and substance of professional education mirrored the inspiring mood of that period, a time when the society we were preparing ourselves to serve certainly was less complex than now, and perhaps more receptive to change.

The optimistic confidence that I would soon become, as my degree would attest, a master social worker who would make a real difference in people's lives compensated for the hardship of having to drive a weekend taxi to support my family. Besides, driving the night shift on the streets of Los Angeles in some ways provided learning experiences that my field practicum could not. I think I made some points with my professors when a local columnist reported on how I had talked a youngster out of running away from home. Of course, a teenager who can afford a taxi is not your average runaway.

My optimism was inspired by a number of factors. I was, let me remind you, a member of a generation that lived through and survived the calamities of the Great Depression and then parlayed this feat into the fortitude (fortified by the summons of Selective Service) needed

to serve and again survive — this time the Second World War. Then, the nation as a whole was still savoring the pride, patriotism, and success of winning that great war. Now, the remains of that curious, vintage notion of American heroism and valor are the themes of old movie channels on cable television, portrayed by the wartime exploits of such worthies as John Wayne and Ronald Reagan.

Then was the time of sweet liberal idealism. Those of us who were so inspired about social change could find a place among comrades who also believed that social injustice could be solved without having to change the nation's basic values and institutions (Brinkley, 1994: 44-46). Although short-lived, this prerogative induced many of my friends and fellows, mostly veterans, to try the radical path. Some danced around the skirts of the American Communist Party; others were marching picket lines, protesting against the bigots of the time, Father Coughlin and Gerald L. K. Smith, for example, or the corporate union busters. We were aware of the evils of discrimination and segregation and, in fact, created a veterans' organization (American Veterans' Committee) that invited minorities otherwise excluded from the established veterans' associations.

Likewise, we were clear-eyed about our objectives. We felt not at all naive about the desire, if not the plan, to wipe out segregation and other social ills, expressions of the renewed idea that person and society were inseparable. In general, we were more cheerful about helping our clients grow and achieve more reward-



ing lives. David Riesman's popular book, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), celebrated the emergence of the "autonomous self," the expressive individualist style of post-war America that contrasted with the "other-directed," conformist character.

The idea of "self" that guided understanding in practice was based on the assumption that one is capable of making choices and acting responsibly: "self-determination" is a precept that seemed to carry more weight then than now. Again, Freud's trinity of id, ego, and superego had some presence during the prominent years of the Diagnostic school of practice. But as I mentioned, it seemed to me that jargon was incidental to function. We were cautioned never to probe beyond (or below) wherever the ego was located and to stick with the positive and avoid the negative when transference surfaced; in other words, we could play with notions of unconscious, defenses, and the rest in our minds but in practice, we should stick with the "ego," the realities of the client's life.

It took time — and a more confident appraisal of our practice — to overcome the belief that, because we weren't engrossed in doing "deep therapy," our helping efforts within the critical borders of relationship and immediate life circumstances were second rate.

It bears saying at this point that such retrospection takes on a nostalgic, utopian patina layered by the passing of time. The clarity of the portrait of those middle years is also filtered by the narrower, more utilitarian outlook

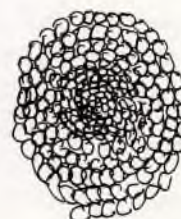
of the present, the failures that followed noble social experiments, and the flood of current social miseries. Whether things were better or worse in that era is not the point; then, we were inspired by beliefs that we could make a difference, that the world would be somewhat better if we learned right and did right. Becoming a social worker was not just a full-time commitment — overtime was also common. As students, clear restrictions limited our extracurricular employment; even the suggestion of accelerated programs, intensive programs, classes held only on occasional weekends that are becoming common would have violated expressed standards for proper professional education.

A footnote to those times deserves mention since it, too, reflects the optimism that inspired our work with clients. Eduard Lindeman in referring to the ideal of "democratic discipline" captured in more elegant phrases what implicitly guided our active philosophy of practice. The recent defeat of totalitarianism was fresh in our minds, naturally engraving the sharp image of the doctrine of democratic thought (Konopka, 1958). Democratic discipline was the goal of practice: a client's mental health, according to democratic discipline, was the acceptance of personal responsibility, a willingness to experiment with new ideas and make personal choices, and a capability for ethical dissent without harm to or resentment of the other person. Sadly, Lindeman's philosophy has dimmed: over the next half century, democratic individualism was displaced by rights —

based individualism, rights to specific entitlement without shared obligation (Elshtain, 1994).

It bears mentioning that such principles were not based solely on the wish for an ideal world. If liberal ideologies and activism of the time did not assure us that our rose-colored glasses were firmly perched on our professional noses, our optimism was also certified by the guardians of knowledge — the academic theorists, the researchers and scholars. These pioneers of truth in the budding post-war social sciences gave reason to believe that out there on society's bright horizons were signals of hope for solutions to the problems of social strife and disorder — with the obligatory caveat, of course, that there was still a lot to be worked out and more research was needed.

Such warnings did little to (nor did they intend to) discourage confidence. In 1949, for example, Gordon Hamilton, an esteemed educator and scholar, hailed and welcomed these promises in a manner that in the cynical present would be judged as ingenuous or naive. Seemingly convinced, she promised that problems even as severe as juvenile delinquency would soon be controlled if not entirely prevented (Hamilton, 1949a: 3-19).



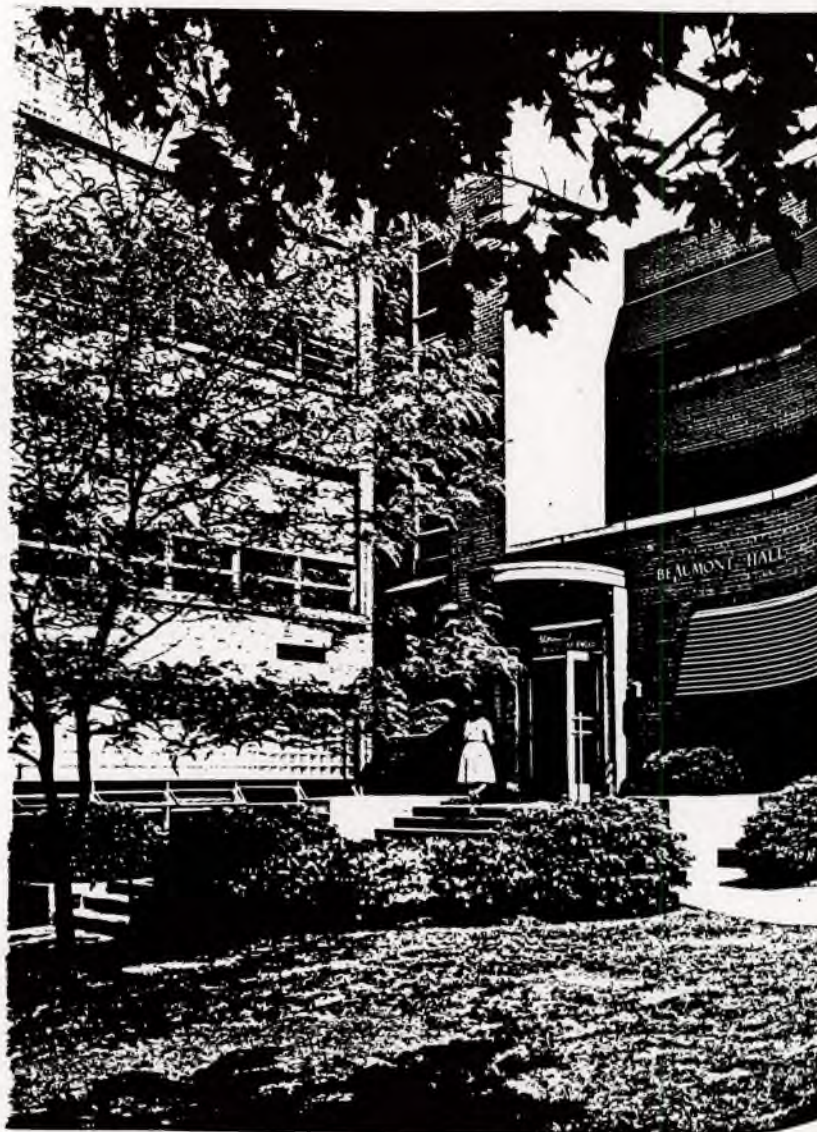
5.

This affirmation of hope and optimism that characterized social work thought in its mid-century is as good as any to bring this essay to rest. Narratives are by definition always unfinished; they are personal expressions of life's work still in progress. The short story, the novel, the play, the research report, or the scholarly article are designed to produce a specific ending — a denouement, information, facts, instruction and so on. The closing of a narrative, like ending a conversation, is arbitrary; based on the discussion thus far. I could continue on in any of a number of directions: How this optimism led to activism, the War on Poverty of the Sixties; how emerging positivistic ideologies led to the developing shift toward reverence for research and a scientific base for practice; how the flood of fads and cults of practice involving primal screams, the turning of Freudianism on its head in transactional and reality therapies, or benign behaviorism characterized the Seventies. Or I might draw a comparison between the hope and optimism of those earlier days and the present sense of haplessness resulting from the profession's loss of autonomy in managed care, with public and political apathy toward the disfranchised, or with what Specht and Courtney (1994) call social work's abandonment of its mission. But I could also refer to the continuity of the grand ideals of that earlier decade, the recent humanistic rediscovery of spirituality, values, moral philosophy, and narrative mode in our work with

problems of living. I could, of course, explain how my professional origins in the 1950s carried over into and affected the next forty years of my career. This, however, is already documented in my publications.

Even without conclusion, the narrative can be persuasive. The narrator's story, after all, is personally and intentionally selective, containing messages that are both explicit (what I wish to

convey) and implicit (what you may wish to take from them). With even greater poignancy, it is medium of thought and recollection that, for myself, imaginatively links a sequence of singular episodes and creates a story, a pattern of existence, that says, "there was meaning." Edmund Sherman ends his keenly wise and perceptive book, *Reminiscence*, with the suggestion that there is creative pleasure and fascination



Beaumont Hall

SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES, CLEVELAND, OHIO

in recreating the story of one's destiny and one's self through reminiscence (1991:245). The narrative is, in its final analysis, an invitation to discourse and dialogue: I hope this account invites your reminiscences, your narrative, of how it was, what it meant, to add more varied textures to the always vital nature of social work. □

REFERENCES

- Brinkley, A. "The Rise and fall of an idealist" Review of W. C. Chafe's *Never stop running: Allard Lowenstein and the struggle to save American Liberalism in New York* *Review of Books*, 3 November 1994.
- Elshtain, J. B. 1994. *Democracy on trial*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goldstein, H. 1996. *The Home on Gorham Street and the voices of its children*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Hamilton, G. 1949. *Theory and practice of social casework*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hamilton G. 1949a. "Helping People – The growth of a profession." In *Social work as human relations: Anniversary Papers of the New York School of Social Work*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Imre, R. W. Winter, 1996. "Personal narratives do not come easily to the professionally trained self. *Reflections: Narratives of Personal Helping*.
- Konopka, G. 1958. *Eduard C. Lindeman and social work philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Perlman, H. H. 1957, *Social casework: A problem-solving process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Riesman, D. 1950. *The Lonely Crowd: A study of changing American character*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sanders, M. K. March 1957. "Social Work: A Profession Chasing its Tail." *Harpers Magazine*.
- Schon, D. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Sherman, E. 1991. *Reminiscence and the self in old age*. New York: Springer.
- Specht, H. & Courtney, M. 1994. *Unfaithful angels*. New York: The Free Press.



Film Review "LONE STAR "

In "Lone Star" writer-director John Sayles has made the most powerful statement about ethnic relationships to appear in American cinema since "The Defiant Ones" in the 1960's. Whereas movies about African Americans or Latino/a usually focus on a slice of life in those communities (consider "La Familia," "Malcolm X" and "Do the Right Thing"); "Lone Star" looks at a small town on the Texas-Mexico border where Anglos, Latino/as, and African Americans live together in an uneasy alliance. The narrative takes place in two time frames: the present and 30 years ago when a crime was committed that the present characters are only slowly coming to understand as the film unfolds. In giving the audience the ending (we know who was killed early in the film; we have a pretty good idea why, but we don't know by whom) Sayles stands the narrative form on its head. The victim is a thoroughly racist White sheriff, Charley Wade (played expertly by Kris Kristoferson in an unlikely role). His arch enemy was the apparently heroic White sheriff, Buddy Deeds, whose son Sam Deeds is the current sheriff. Sam is reluctantly caught up in the town's hagiography of his father, whom he suspects of being the murderer he is charged with uncovering.

This struggle between father and son is echoed in a paral-

lel story of an African American family, where the son, Delmore, is similarly cast as the righteous one (an uptight Army colonel) and the father, Otis, as the easy speaking owner of a local nightclub frequented by African Americans. The final generational tension is between a Latina mother who is running away from her own immigrant past and her schoolteacher daughter, Pilar, who is repelled by her mother's harshness. The story is told in both time zones, in a seamless web spun by the director that is sometimes temporarily dislocating, but ultimately far more powerful than the traditional flashbacks.

The past and the present are united by two romances: between Buddy Deeds and Pilar's mother, and Sam Deeds and Pilar. While Latino/as make up 90 per cent of the town's population, whites dominate the town political and economic structures. Scenes of discrimination are woven through the histories of the three families: Latino/a, African American and Anglo. Latino/as and African Americans are portrayed without stereotypes: as opposed to the all-embracing *la familia* which resolves all tensions, the painful distance between the three generations of Pilar's family is never overcome. Delmore's own family fiercely upholds holds the most middle class values in the town; he is

By Mary Ann Jimenez,
Arts and Media Editor

theoretically the most powerful person there, by virtue of his command of the local Army base. Anglos come in many shapes: racist thugs, passive witnesses and uncomfortable heroes. In the end the two fathers, Buddy and Otis, are found to embody all the integrity and courage the younger generation is seeking.

The movie is about arbitrary demarcations: lines deeply drawn but frequently crossed between ethnic groups, between the U.S. border and Mexico (shown here as a clearly failed social construction), between army and civilian life, between parent and child, and in the relationship of kinship to sexual passion. The generational demarcation seem greater at the beginning of the movie than at the end, when the plot twists to reveal heroism in the past and xenophobia in the present. Until the end of the movie it is impossible to know who are the moral people, who the amoral and who the immoral. Sayles seems to be warning us against a Whiggish version of history, away from the assumption that the present always signifies moral progress over the past.

While the movie speaks to the weight of history and its realizing power over the present, it ends with a ringing declaration to forget the bitterness and unfinished stories of the past and make one's own coda to the generational and historical narrative. "Forget the Alamo" cries Pilar, as she embraces her sweetheart, restored to her out of a painful history they both share. The stunning shock of the ending, and ultimately of the film as a whole, is that Sayles makes us believe that

such beginnings are possible.

The director tells us that people can overcome everything – their past, the ethnic hatreds that have formed grooves of habitual distrust in the social landscape of the town, and crimes committed in the past. This movie is a subtle braid of paradoxes; as a narrative it is one of the most complex to come out of Hollywood in years; as a love story is one of the truest, as a commentary on ethnic divisions and hatred it is one of the most hopeful and empowering. □



BOOK REVIEW

Jill Freedman and Gene Combs

Narrative Therapy
W.W. Norton. N.Y. 1996

It is very possible that we are on the brink of a "Brave New World of helping." We clearly are on the brink. The social welfare system "as we knew it" is being dismantled, and powerful corporations are prowling the corridors of power, chafing at the bit, eager to channel their bids for the most lucrative portions of the phased out programs. We no longer have to worry about people falling through the systems safety net, they have been flung off the safety nets. And while we pray they will somehow survive, we anticipate that there will be increased stress, personal catastrophes as well as social, class, and ethnic divisiveness and, an increased need for help. Should we leave helping to the "Privateers?" What have we to offer? Not much, helping is tough, success rates for some problems have barely inched into the two digit figures, and our results are nothing to brag about. It's time for something new and maybe Freedman and Combs have an answer, at least on what has come to be called (forgive me) the micro level.

In a sense the use of personal stories as a means of helping is not new. Freud used the stories told him from dreams to unravel the roots of patient problems. Future oriented therapists have long asked the clients to present a story of themselves in the future, and three generation

geneograms has been a way of using generational stories to help clients understand some of their present situation. In community organization the sharing of childhood games, or common foods are often used to bring diverse groups together as a beginning helping dialogue. Numerous other approaches such as fables, parables, folk tales, paper bag dramatics, and client drawings, are only a few of the ways stories have been used to help. Only recently, however, has there been an integration of the diverse material into a theoretically based, concentrated approach to use narratives as a therapeutic approach, standing on its own.

The work of Epston and White, the major contributors to what has become known as Narrative Therapy, is at the forefront of a paradigm shift in the reformation of clinical practice. While their work is still relatively unknown in the counseling field, *Narrative Therapy* should bring their work to the attention of a much broader audience. Although their popularity has increased through workshops they have done in the United States, and their book *Narrative Approaches to Therapeutic Helping* (1990), most of their recent work has been published in South Australia, and has not been readily available.

While this book's opening

By Paul Abels,
Book Editor

chapter pays tribute to some of the early roots of narrative therapy, particularly the work of Erickson and the family therapists who have been at the forefront of change in Family Therapy, such as Lynn Hoffman, it is soon clear who the heroes of the narrative therapy story are. Evolutionary trends in family therapy lead to concerns of power, which leads to Foucault, which leads to social constructionism, and ultimately to White's belief that we must accept that the helping situation is a "political" situation enmeshed in the use of power (often misused).

The authors pursue the work of Epston and White, augmenting the ideas with ample case material and examples from their own practice. They discuss the various techniques they use to amplify the stories that clients tell, and approaches to helping clients "reauthor" their stories. Their work following closely the work of Epston and White. They give their own versions of letters to clients, declarations and certificates of participation; techniques written about in *Narrative Approaches*. Certain of these techniques such as "externalizing the problem" are based on White's dictum, that "The Person is not the problem, the problem is the problem," White is heavily committed to free the client of blame. This is done at times by naming an external enemy, such as "Sneaky Poo" in the case of a child who soils frequently. He works with the clients to help them find ways to trick and overcome these enemies, asking why they want to hurt the client or have their way. He might ask how "Anorexia" became such

an expert on what a client should eat." When faced with an enemy external to themselves, they are more able to energize a plan to combat that enemy with the support of the worker, the family, the community and even imaginary institutions. They are ready to "reauthor" their lives.

Some of White's work reflects the idea that helpers must accept the political situation that may have led to clients being in need of help. For many female clients, the male dominated society frequently is enmeshed in the problem. The clients are helped to recognize this, similarly with racist and class factors. This has led White into a more community oriented approach with the use of other clients who are used to contact the client through letters or imagined groups. He has started to work with, and help train aboriginal groups in Australia in some of the narrative approaches, utilizing their own history and stories. Including the recognition of the story of their abuse and devaluing. Epston has used letters to clients extensively after conferences. They often serve as the only conference records. He suggests that research indicates letters are equal to two or three sessions in their value to the client. Could we initiate such a technique in some of our bureaucratic agencies which require many formal records, or forbid putting such things in writing to clients?

White alerts the worker to the political nature of the helping process in our society. How can the helping contact not reflect the society of which it is a part? Epston and White use therapy in its broadest sense of not only in-

dividual, but community healing, social healing, societal healing. That is what might make the "Brave New World," a world in which we are not craving for "soma," but for social justice, a world in which helpers need to recognize that the part they play can either further erode, or promote efforts to evolve effective helping approaches.

Freedman and Combs offer an amplification and pulling together of narrative approaches and discuss the emerging developments of other leaders in the field. While the paradigm is not developed further, a lack those familiar with the earlier works of Epston and White will lament, the book's down to earth style and case material will prove a worthy source for those willing to explore the narrative approach. This is a new approach, perhaps a new paradigm, not a bandwagon, but it is well worth listening to the notes. □

LOSS OF A HOMELAND: Insights of 'Strangers' for Teaching and Helping

"...displacement provides unique opportunities for new vision"

Janet Wolff. In: Resident Alien (1995)

Golie Jansen and Marian Aguilar

Being born and having lived outside the United States offers a certain experience of being a stranger. The manner of loss of one's homeland colors one's outsider status and reflections depending on reasons for being in the U.S.: as an exile, a refugee, a permanent alien, an immigrant. In addition, being White (mainly of European descent) or being a person of color (Asian, African, Latin/Central descent) impacts how one finds one self responding to the contested historical and contemporary politics of accommodation, integration, resistance and transformation within the United States. In particular, involvement in the helping professions and social change activities in one's country of origin also colors one's perceptions and perspectives on human services in the United States. As the helping professions increasing commit to a focus on cultural diversity and diversity of color, the voices and perspectives of those we serve are getting more prominence. What is lacking in the genre are the voices and insight of faculty and practitioners in terms of what being an outsider means to them in the context of teaching or working in the helping professions.

In this special issue we invite academics and practitioners to share narrative personal accounts of their lived experience as "outsider/stranger" and how this identity affects their teaching and practice. Suggestions for specific topics include:

The personal meaning of cultural (linguistic and geographical), economic or political marginality for teaching and practice

Identity politics:

- Displacement and self recovery;
- Revisions of home and a new homeland;
- "Home is (not) where the heart is;"
- Private and public issues of being Ethno-American.

Color politics:

- Stories of "passing" but not belonging;
- Stories of resistance and conditions of Americanness;
- The meaning of being a stranger and a person of color;

Politics of solidarity:

- Contributions of strangers to a transformative political agenda;
- Beyond color for social justice

Send manuscripts to:

Golie Jansen, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
Eastern Washington
University,
MS-19
Cheney, WA 99004

or

Marian Aguilar, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
University of Texas
2609 University Avenue
Austin, TX, 78712-1703

Submissions are due:
January 1, 1997

CALL FOR NARRATIVES

Stories of Transformative Teaching and Learning

"Faculty learn early on how to institutionalize their story, to get it right, in their reappointment and tenure files and in their cases for merit. But most faculty recognize at some deeper level that their vita is not their story and that the organizational structure against which they teach hears no stories - not about their teaching, not about their research, and not about their professional lives."

Diane Gillespie. In Change (1989):
"Claiming Ourselves as Teachers"

Susan G. Nummedal and
Diane Gillespie, Co-Editors

This special issue invites faculty to tell their stories of transformative teaching and learning as a way of both deepening the understanding of their own lives as teachers, researchers, and practioners and sharing that understanding with a wider audience. It is in the telling that the "raw footage" of our lives as teachers begins to develop into powerful understandings, surfacing layers of meaning and revealing tensions that connect who we are with our practice. And it is from a wisdom of practice, captured in the particulars of teaching narratives, that we discover what we have been and anticipate what we might become.

We encourage stories that capture a time in teaching when you were awakened to new meanings that transformed your way of thinking about - and doing - your practice. We are looking for stories located in the web of connections among what you teach, your sense of self, and your values that creates the context for your teaching. We encourage authors to weave practices embodied in their stories with theory. Suggestions for specific topics include:

- stories that evoke multiple readings of problematic teaching situations
- stories that focus on gender-identity issues in teaching
- stories that focus on social class issues in teaching
- stories that focus on cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives in teaching
- stories that move the teaching/learning process beyond the classroom walls
- stories that transform the connections among teaching, research, and practice.

Send manuscripts to:

Susan G. Nummedal, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
California State University
Long Beach, CA. 90840-0902
Phone: 310-985-5021
FAX: 310-985-8004
Email: snummeda@csulb.edu

or

Diane Gillespie, Ph.D.
Goodrich Scholarship Program
University of Nebraska, Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0208
Phone: 402-554-3466
FAX: 402-554-3776
Email:
gillespi@facpacs.unomaha.edu

Submissions due April 1, 1997

CSULB, in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI and Title VII), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, handicap or age in any of its policies, procedures or practices; nor does CSULB discriminate on the basis of marital status or sexual orientation. This nondiscrimination policy covers all CSULB programs and activities, including employment.

In addition to meeting fully its obligations of nondiscrimination under federal and state law, CSULB is committed to creating a community in which a diverse population can live and work in an atmosphere of tolerance, civility and respect for the rights and sensibilities of each individual, without regard to economic status, ethnic background, political views, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics or beliefs.

REFLECTIONS

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

Department of Social Work - 111194

1250 Bellflower Boulevard

Long Beach, California 90840-0902

ADDRESS-CORRECTION REQUESTED

Periodicals postage pending at Long Beach, CA

Copyright of Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping is the property of Cleveland State University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.