

# LETTER FROM THE (NEW) EDITOR

Eileen Mayers Pasztor, DSW

## Background

*Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* was created over 15 years ago to offer, in journal format, articles that provide a first-person perspective about the practice of change. This Fall 2010 issue has change as an integral theme in two ways: (a) what our authors share, and (b) the organization of the journal.

*Reflections* was initially the inspiration of Sonia Leib Abels, a dedicated social work practitioner who envisioned a journal that would describe, in first-person narrative, the process of helping others and shaping aspects of social change over time. Joining with her husband Dr. Paul Abels, himself a California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) social work faculty member, they proposed the *Reflections* concept to Dr. James Kelly, who was then the director of the CSULB Department of Social Work. Thus, *Reflections* was created. The focus was to describe and explain events, results, conflicts, complicating actions, achievements, and how and why events took place . . . from the perspective of the individual writers.

CSULB Department of Social Work colleague Prof. Jillian Jimenez was named by the then- director, Dr. John Oliver, to follow Sonia Leib Abels as the second editor of *Reflections*. Many of you may remember collaborating with Dr. Jimenez on the publication of your articles and guest-editing experiences. Our last special issue, Summer 2010, on social justice, was guest- edited by Sonia Leib Abels and Paul Abels. It was dedicated to Dr. Jimenez who, sadly, passed away in October 2009. We also said good-bye to our art director, Professor Dan Jimenez, who retired after providing a decade of

inspiring artwork for so many of our issues. Many of the covers he designed were so outstanding, they were framed and now hang with pride and distinction in the halls of our School of Social Work.

## *Reflections* is Changing

Change also came in April 2010 as CSULB promoted the Department to the status of School of Social Work. Change was felt throughout social work education in California and beyond when our distinguished director, Dr. John Oliver, retired in August 2010. As we said farewell and best wishes to Dr. Oliver, we welcomed Dr. Kenneth I. Millar, a new Dean for the CSULB College of Health & Human Services. Dr. Millar is the first social worker to hold this esteemed position. Because of his commitment to social work education and the social work experience, we invited Dr. Millar to write a message, which follows this letter.

Before Dr. Oliver transitioned from his Director role, he appointed me as the new Director of *Reflections*. It is an honor to continue the traditions of previous editors, while hopefully facilitating some changes, as well. I appreciate the leadership of Dr. Rebecca López, our Interim Director, whose history with *Reflections* dates back over a decade. Her previous role as Associate Editor has enabled a seamless transition. Professor Marilyn Potts, whom you may remember for her outstanding guest-editing work on the Winter 2009 double issue "Animal-Human Relationships: Comforting, Healing, Transforming," is changing roles to be our Associate Editor.

All the members of our School's faculty-based executive board are staying on to help

maintain traditions as we welcome new members. Dr. Maria Gurrola specializes in migration and transnational families, as well as asset-building and social capital related to women's voices. Dr. Lisa Jennings represents our Older Adults and Families (OAF) concentration, with a specialty in gerontological health care, prison issues, and mental health. Dr. Philip Tan also works in the OAF area, with expertise in spirituality and inter-faith dialogues.

For our editorial board, we have several changes and additions. Dr. William Meezan, a child welfare scholar and educator, has moved to New York City to become the Director of Policy and Research at Children's Rights. We welcome Dr. E. Michael Gorman from San Jose State University School of Social Work in California. Prof. Gorman's expertise is with HIV/Aids, alcohol and drug abuse, and international social work. We welcome Dr. Donna D. Petras, professor emeritus from Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois, Chicago. Dr. Petras has been working in Ethiopia to set up a school of social work there, and recently joined the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) to direct its foster care and kinship care initiatives.

Another change reflected in our last issue (on social justice) and in this current issue, displays the talents of Professor Robin Richesson from CSULB's Art Department. As our Illustrator, Professor Richesson provides a visual framework for our stories with the journal's cover. We welcome Georgette Bradley, administrative assistant in our School of Social Work, as our Copy Editor (fondly referred to as the "empress of editing").

It is daunting to take over the editorship of a journal as unique as *Reflections*. My writing experience, like so many of you, is for research-based journals, or for book chapters. In 2009, I was challenged to write for *Reflections* on the special issue of "Intersections of Personal and Professional Life." My colleague Monica McCurdy and I co-authored "When Work Comes Home and Home Goes to Work," in which we described the changes that occur when the roles of child

welfare social worker and foster/adoptive parent are combined.

To clarify for those of you who may be new to *Reflections*, a "special" issue has a specific theme, with a guest editor or editors. You can propose any theme, such as those previously mentioned: the intersection of personal and professional lives, or animal-human relationships, or social justice. This summer, Dr. James Kelly, who is the current president of the National Association of Social Workers, will guest edit a special issue on "The Heart of Justice: Social Work Innovations in Africa." A "general" issue (such as this one) features manuscripts on multiple topics that have been peer-reviewed, accepted, and published in the next available issue.

#### About This Issue

A multitude of changes—geographical, professional, social, and emotional—have occurred in the lives of our colleagues who wrote for this Fall 2010 issue. We travel to the Philippines with Dr. Susanne Bennett from The Catholic University, National Catholic School of Social Service, who teaches us what her students taught her while she was teaching a course on human behavior to master's-level social workers in the conflict-affected Island of Mindanao. We change venues as Dr. Margaret Oakes from The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, describes her research interest in war trauma and her work in revolutionary Nicaragua.

Our locale changes once more as Dr. Nada Eltaiba of Qatar University describes the gender and cultural experiences of being a female social worker in a mental health setting in Jordan. East meets West when Dr. Intae Yoon from East Carolina University in North Carolina explains being an immigrant social worker and the experience of "Working in a Fishbowl."

Changing locations again to Wyoming and the intersections of research, policy, practice, and culture, Dr. Timothy Conley from the University of Montana describes "Quantified Disparity," his terminology for what happens when a white male social work researcher encounters racial disparity in his research. Still in the States, but seeming like a world away

at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Dr. Jane Gilgun describes in her article "Violence—Actual and Imagined" the impact on her life of 20 years of research related to perpetrators of violence.

Returning to the relationship between faculty and students, but remaining in the U.S., we learn from Dr. Sherry Lovan in the Western Kentucky University School of Nursing about empathy, as taught to her and to us by her students. We close with a reflection by Staci Jensen-Hart, LCSW, on why, in the midst of professional and personal stress, we choose to be professional helpers. She explains how Jess, a seven-year-old client, teaches us about hope in the midst of despair, with "There's a Rainbow Underneath."

The changes that will occur as a result of the elections in the U.S. this Fall are, of course, yet to be known, but are certainly compelling. Please write about your experiences as practitioners, researchers, educators and, most certainly, as advocates, for our clients and for our profession.

I look forward to working with you.

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Letter from the Dean:

Kenneth I. Millar, MSW, PhD  
College of Health and Human Services  
California State University, Long Beach

Welcome to this latest edition of *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*. With this edition, we welcome Dr. Eileen Mayers Pasztor as the new Editor. Dr. Pasztor brings many years of practice and academic experience to her role of Editor and she surely will approach this task with the same passion and commitment she does to the field of child welfare, her primary area of practice and research expertise. As many readers know, Dr. Pasztor follows Dr. Jillian Jimenez, whose untimely passing just over one year ago continues to be felt among the social work community. Her spirit lives on in these pages and I am confident Dr. Pasztor and her colleagues, especially the *Reflections* Executive and Editorial Boards, will take our journal to new levels of excellence.

It is not the norm for Schools of Social Work to sponsor journals. It requires considerable investment on the part of the home university, college, and school. There must be a commitment on the part of faculty and field-based researchers, practitioners, administrators, policymakers, and more. *Reflections* provides a unique opportunity to tell the social work story with voices that remind us what our NASW Code of Ethics requires of us: to be competent, to have dignity, to have integrity, to emphasize the importance of human relationships, to provide service, and to advocate for social justice. Thank you for participating in *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*.

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