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## Upcoming Luncheon Meetings



**Date:** June 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Topic:** The Many Voices of Dissociative Identity Disorder: Diagnosis and Treatment of the Not-So-Rare Disorder  
**Speaker:** Jim Graves, PhD  
**Date:** July 10<sup>th</sup> (*note this is the second Friday of the month*)  
**Topic:** Adolescent Substance Abuse: Keys to Assessment and Treatment Interventions  
**Speaker:** Dan Leon LCSW

**PLEASE RSVP NO LATER THAN THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH TO SGVPA VOICE MAIL (626)583-3215. CEUs available for psychologists, LCSWs and MFTs**

Monthly luncheons are held the first Friday of the month at the University Club, 175 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, from 12:00 to 1:45 p.m. Lunch is \$15 for SGVPA members and \$20 for nonmembers. CEUs are \$15 for SGVPA psychologists, \$25 for non-SGVPA psychologists, \$10 for SGVPA MFTs/LCSWs (\$20 combined with lunch), and \$20 for non-SGVPA MFTs/LCSWs (\$30 combined with lunch).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues,

This spring is turning out to be harrowing in any number of ways, with the economic down turn, swine flu--and the looming threat in Sacramento that the Board of Psychology may be collapsed into an omnibus agency with sets of mental health professionals with all varieties of training and scopes of practice!

As we try to address such difficulties with as much diligence, creativity, optimism, and resourcefulness as we can, I invite you to take a break from the doom and gloom of other periodicals, sit back, take a deep breath, and take time to enjoy one of the *pleasures* in your life--SGVPA, and our newsletter, *Analyze This!*

We will try to make you smile with some *good* news, as well as some intriguing offerings from our contributors, such as:

- **Free Online Directory Listing with Picture!** Dr. Stephanie Law, peerless Membership Maven, provides all the details on mounting your professional listing on the SGVPA website. (See p. 2)
- **Movie News and Views!** Phil Gable offers a "beginner's guide" for sampling SGVPA Movie Nights. Come join in the fun. (See p. 7)
- **Tips on Finding the Right Lawyer:** Our attorney in residence, Mark Baer, offers advice on finding the right counsel--and avoiding the *wrong* one. (See p. 4)
- **Lunch with New (and Old) Friends!** A great way to market your practice with your colleagues, our next Dutch Treat monthly luncheon is on May 11. (See p. 8)

With wishes for your success, good health, and happiness in the months ahead,

Suzanne Lake, PsyD  
President

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# An Unforgettable Journey...

## Reactions to the Annual CPA Leadership and Advocacy Day



by Stephanie Law, PsyD  
CPA Board of Directors Representative

Most people would not think that a quick weekend trip to Sacramento, CA would hold so much inspiration, awe, or ambition. On Sunday, March 22, 2009, I found myself on a Southwest Airlines nonstop flight to our state capitol .. (And this was after running the Pasadena half marathon that morning in the drizzly rain, mind you!) I had never before attended the California Psychological Association (CPA) sponsored Advocacy Day and was unsure of what to expect.

After two days there, I returned, feeling inspired by CPA's efforts to safeguard our profession and grateful to rub shoulders with some of the best psychologists in our state. Throughout my graduate program, I had only heard brief mention of CPA and thought little of the importance of joining. Because of my leadership role for SGVPA, I joined but still hadn't given the organization much thought. Those two days in March were life changing.

CPA is the only....I mean the **only**...organization that advocates for, protects, and promotes the significance of my license and training as a psychologist. Their board of directors, and staff, are dedicated, hardworking, and impressive by any measure. Their headquarters are amazing. I can't say enough to express how much this experience has made me appreciate CPA. If you aren't already a member, I urge you to join CPA NOW!

## ANNOUNCING THE NEW ONLINE, FREE DIRECTORY!!

by Stephanie Law, PsyD  
Membership Chair

It's here at last!

One of the benefits of an SGVPA membership for 2009 is a free listing on our online directory, which will be posted on our website at [www.sgvpa.org](http://www.sgvpa.org).

**1<sup>st</sup> Deadline for Applications is May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009**

### **Information that will be included:**

Your professional contact information, specialties, treatment modalities, and a digital picture!

### **Please adhere to the following instructions:**

1. Go to [www.sgvpa.org](http://www.sgvpa.org) and look for the "Online Directory Application" link.
2. Email the application in electronic form to: [law\\_stephanie@yahoo.com](mailto:law_stephanie@yahoo.com)
3. You will receive a confirmation email. (If you don't, please contact me at 626-354-5559!)
4. Include a digital picture (in jpeg form) if you would like this included in your profile.
5. Your SGVPA membership dues must be paid and current.  
(See [www.sgvpa.org](http://www.sgvpa.org) for membership application).
6. Changes to the Online Directory will be made periodically. Any changes must be submitted to the Membership Chair in writing through email. Listed members may make one change at no cost each year. Additional changes will cost \$10 per change.
7. Enjoy the benefits of having your contact information easily accessible to colleagues and potential referrals!

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## **ETHICS BRIEF: Moving from the Actuarial to the Personal: Making the Use of Personality Inventories More Ethical**

By Ethics Committee Alan Karbelnig, PhD, Chair  
Linda Bortell, PsyD, Isabel Green, PhD, Don Hoagland, PhD, Toni Cavanagh Johnson, PhD,  
Stephanie Law, PsyD, Phillip Pannell, PhD, Colleen Warnesky, PsyD

*This is part of a series of bi-monthly articles written by the SGVPA Ethics Committee. The articles reflect research from a variety of sources, including Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct from the American Psychological Association and other sources. These articles are intended to provide education, not actual legal advice.*

Most of us in private practice have to obtain health insurance through an individual, rather than a group policy. When we celebrate a birthday ending in a 0 or 5, our insurer sends a thoughtful gift of a substantial increase in our premium. Since the premium was already a bank-breaker, it is hard to avoid a sense of outrage. We may think, *I'm no less healthy than the day before my birthday! I've never had a significant health problem! I'm in great health, and I do all the things that are supposed to keep me healthy!* None of these matter, because health insurance premiums are set on an actuarial basis. With increasing age, adults as a whole have more health problems, so nothing about us as individuals matters.

As unfair as this actuarial approach seems, it is the one we use for interpreting personality inventories. The scores earned by an individual are compared to those of persons in the normative group, and s/he is then described as having similar personality characteristics. An ethical evaluator includes a statement in the report about the limitations of actuarial interpretation and never makes a judgment based on a single test, but the statements are still made about the individual. This makes for an inexact science that is vulnerable to error. In forensic work, this can have massive implications for an individual, such as custody or visitation rights or a criminal sentence.

Therefore, it seems that ethical testing requires moving from the actuarial to the personal. One way to do this is to work through the items of a personality inventory with an individual. The MMPI-2 manual discourages this, but it allows for a more accurate, and seemingly more ethical, understanding of an individual.

First, there are a number of items that few persons understand, such as *I have never seen a vision, I have been inspired to a program of life based on duty which I have since carefully followed, and I brood a great deal.*

Secondly, many times key words such as *sometimes, usually, or often* are overlooked or misinterpreted. There are also a few items that are worded in a counter-intuitive manner. If you do the behavior, the correct response is *False*.

Thirdly, and most importantly, knowing what the person was thinking when responding can be important in interpreting scores. Criminal defendants often respond *True* to *I believe I am being plotted against* and *I believe I am being followed*. When asked to explain, they often refer to the police and the district attorney, which is realistic. Therefore, their elevation on the Paranoia Scale would be considered situational rather than characterological. A person who responds *True* to *I cannot keep my mind on one thing*, or to *I find it hard to keep my mind on a task or a job*, may be thinking of their ADHD, rather than the loss of mental control characteristic of schizophrenia that the items are intended to measure. Persons who respond *True* to items such as *At times I have very much wanted to leave home* or *There is very little love and companionship in my family as compared to other homes* may be thinking of severe abuse they received as a child, rather than just the conflicted and deprived backgrounds of persons who receive an elevated score on the Psychopathic Deviancy Subscale.

The importance of personalized administration and interpretation can be illustrated by a criminal case. A corrupt adoption agency allowed 10 children to be adopted by a deranged couple, who severely abused them (e.g. scaldings and broken bones) and constantly forced them to assist in abusive "punishments." One was called "going down." It required that one child sit on the back of another who was hunched over in a chair. A 16-year-old girl was forced to do this to a six year old during a hundred-mile drive. She attempted to limit the pressure on the girl by trying to hold herself up by her fingertips and by frequently claiming that she had to go to the bathroom. However, the young girl died of compression asphyxiation.

The district attorney charged the 16-year-old with murder and was attempting to have her tried as an adult and sent to prison for years. During my testimony, the prosecutor tried to use the girl's elevated score on the MMPI-A Psychopathic Deviancy Scale as proof that she was sociopathic and dangerous. My being able to demonstrate that her score on this scale fell within the normal range, when the items pertaining to her abuse were factored out, helped convince the judge to order that she was fit to be rehabilitated, which kept her in juvenile court and resulted in a sentence of probation.

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# Psychology and Family Law

By Mark Baer, Esq.



My last article described the unfortunate results that occurred when an otherwise well-qualified family law attorney handled a case for a close family member of mine, with disastrous results owing to the attorney's concealed bias *against* her client. That article raised the following questions among readers: (1) What can consumers do to help avoid such a fiasco in their own choice of an attorney, and (2) How might psychologists help their patients to do so? In this article, I will attempt to address these questions with some specific recommendations.

Although nothing in life is certain, we can all exercise due diligence in an effort to make reliable intelligent choices when it comes to selecting a lawyer. Here are my suggestions.

- *Interview intelligently before hiring.*

Very often, people focus on a prospective attorney's hourly rate and requested retainer as the most important factors. However, a low rate may not be a good criterion, since it may signal a lawyer whose experience and/or credentials don't justify a higher rate. A high hourly rate which is consistent with the lawyer's experience and credentials should not necessarily be a deciding factor either, since a more able attorney may resolve the case with fewer hours billed, and a more successful outcome. Furthermore, it can be cost prohibitive to correct an unsuccessful outcome, if it is even possible.

Similarly, as long as the retainer is refundable, it should not be a significant factor in the decision. The size of the retainer does not impact the total attorney fees that will ultimately be incurred because those fees are merely a factor of the number of billable hours charged and the attorney's hourly rate. Experienced attorneys know that a client who cannot afford to pay the requested retainer before the fees have been incurred will almost certainly not be able to pay the fees after the work has been performed. If the total attorney's fees and costs incurred turns out to be less than the amount of the refundable retainer paid, the attorney must return those excess funds to the client at the conclusion of the representation. However, if the retainer paid to the attorney is non-refundable, the client will not be refunded those excess fees.

- *Ask how long the attorney has been in practice.*

Consumers rarely ask how long the attorney has been practicing law. I would like to point out the difference between the length of time since the attorney was admitted to practice law and the length of time that the attorney has been practicing law could be significant. An attorney becomes admitted to practice law after graduating from law school, passing the bar examination and being sworn in as an attorney at law. It is possible that the attorney was admitted to practice law, but has not done so consistently since their admission date because the attorney took time off, went into a different line of work for a period of time, or was suspended or disbarred from the practice of law for a period of time. This is not uncommon. In fact, there was a situation several years ago in which a woman who had been admitted to practice law ten years earlier but who never actually practiced law ran for an elected position as a judge. She had absolutely no experience practicing law, but qualified as a judge because she had been a member of the bar for at least ten years. Furthermore, consumers often make certain assumptions based upon the attorney's appearance. However, an attorney's age or perceived age could be misleading because it is not necessarily their first career.

- *Research on-line.*

By accessing the website for the State Bar of California at [calbar.ca.gov](http://calbar.ca.gov) and researching a particular attorney under the attorney resources field of that site, a consumer can find the following information: (1) where and when the attorney received their undergraduate degree; (2) where and when the attorney received their law degree; and (3) whether there have been any actions taken against the attorney which affect their eligibility to practice law. It is important to note that if the attorney has consistently paid their bar dues, the website will not show whether an attorney voluntarily stopped practicing law for certain periods of time. The website will also not show how long an attorney has been practicing in

*(continued on next page)*

a particular field of law. Unfortunately for the consumer, such information is only available from the actual attorney and there are no records available anywhere to verify the attorney's answer.

- *Find out the attorney's specific experience in handling similar cases.*

The fact that someone may be a seasoned attorney does not make them well qualified to handle any type of case. Furthermore, each case has its own unique set of facts and issues. It is important to know that the attorney is familiar with handling cases similar to yours. Even if the attorney says that they have handled such a case in the past does not mean that they are being truthful or that they handled such a matter skillful manner. Unless the consumer was referred to the attorney by someone who was represented by that same attorney in a very similar situation, the consumer would be wise to request such references and/or testimonial letters from such clients.

- *Be skeptical of those who are too eager to promise you'll get everything you want.*

Another common mistake made by a consumer when selecting an attorney is hiring the attorney who tells them what they want to hear. It can be no surprise that consumers often have unrealistic expectations. However, consumers frequently retain the attorney who feeds into those expectations rather than the one who encourages the consumer to be more realistic. Such attorneys are short-sighted because they know that the client will not obtain their desired result, but they tell the client something different in order to be retained. Such a relationship will not end well.

- *Find out how many of the attorney's cases actually go to trial.*

Consumers should certainly hire an attorney who is comfortable and skillful in a courtroom. However, only approximately 3% of all cases go to trial. This means that 97% of all cases are settled before trial. If a consumer retains an attorney who statistically tries more than 3% of their cases, it should cause the consumer to wonder whether that is because the attorney lacks the skills needed to effectively settle a case or is otherwise completely unreasonable in the positions that they take. Either way, the client will spend far more money with such an attorney and will most likely be less satisfied with the ultimate result. Again, these statistics are not maintained anywhere and therefore the client must rely on the answers given by the attorney and by information provided by that attorney's current and former clients and reputation among other attorneys in his/her field of practice.

- *Trust your instincts.*

Your initial interview with any attorney you are considering hiring should ideally take place face to face. This will give you the most reliable sense of him or her, through body language and other non-verbal cues, as well as by observing the setting in which he or she practices. If you have thoroughly interviewed the attorney and are otherwise satisfied with their credentials, you should follow your instincts. For example, the family member I had written about in my last column had told me that he felt as though the attorney did not believe his side of the story from the time of their initial meeting. I was referring to just that issue when I expressed my belief that the psychological aspect of the attorney-client relationship may significantly impact the ultimate outcome of a case.

*Mark Baer, Esq. can be reached at (626) 683-8869 or by email at [mbaer@rrjlaw.com](mailto:mbaer@rrjlaw.com)*



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



### **Student:**

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Tim Arentsen, MA  
Dan Cunningham, MA  
Angel Duncan

### **Student:**

Migum Gweon  
Teresa Hooker, MA  
Rodney Wilson

### **Associate:**

Sona DeLurgio, PsyD, MFC





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# Obsessive Ruminations

## Confusions of Freedom

By Alan Karbelnig, PhD



*Bolstered by Soren Kirkegaard's lament that "ours is a paltry age because it lacks passion," Dr. Alan Karbelnig writes this regular column to provoke thoughtful reaction from his SGVPA colleagues. He has been a member of SGVPA since 1988, and served as its president in the early 1990s; he has chaired the SGVPA Ethics Committee for 14 years. Alan is a Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the New Center for Psychoanalysis and the Newport Psychoanalytic Institute. He practices psychoanalytic psychotherapy and forensic psychology in South Pasadena.*

Although it may sound idealistic or even grandiose, the heart of our work as psychotherapists lies in enhancing freedom. More specifically, it lies in expanding freedom of choice. We help liberate persons from self-deception, from tyrannical internal dramas, or even from painful academic, occupational, or interpersonal situations.

The unfortunate name for our endeavor, "psychotherapy," implies a discrete entity, the "psyche," for which a specific intervention, the "therapy," is provided. This grossly distorts the truth of the matter. The psyche, unlike any other entity to which "treatment" is applied, arises only partially from the biological substrate; it also emerges from such non-material factors as early social relations, culture, language, and socio-economic status. Therefore, ethics and politics, and therefore ideas like freedom, lie at the core of the psyche. Comparing "therapy" for the psyche to "therapy" for muscle pain is patently absurd. The variables affecting the psyche approach the infinite; biological systems clearly predominate in the case of a strained muscle.

Whether patients are highly regressed or extremely mature, we psychologists strive to increase their autonomy. In cases of acutely distressed psychotic persons, for example, we tend to be more active, focusing on reducing distress and improving coping capacity. We might even work on basic activities of living and medication compliance. But we are still striving to increase their autonomy. With highly functional persons, the "problems" for which they seek assistance, whether depression, anxiety, substance abuse, or whatever, also cause restrictions in freedom. While we are of course working to reduce their pain, we are also helping them to freely be themselves, to get out of their own way, and to take actions like improving friendships, obtaining exercise, seeking spiritual solace – all intended to improve the quality and meaning of their lives. We build autonomy and thus greater freedom of choice.

This focus on freedom creates paradoxical problems for psychotherapists as licensed professionals. Due to the

laws governing the practice of psychology, and to our society's litigation-proneness, excessive responsibility falls on psychologists. For example, in accordance with the Tarasoff precedent, we psychologists must protect potential victims of violence. Since the Goldstein v. Ewing case, we must also now consider not only information from patients, but what we learn from patients' friends or families. We risk being sued or imprisoned if we fail to do so. We have become agents of the state.

Or consider, more benignly, psychologists whose outgoing voice mail messages instruct callers to phone 911 in case of medical emergency. These messages insult the callers, and treat them as if they have no autonomy. They incessantly remind them of what an average two-year old knows: Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are acutely ill!

These conflicts between the autonomy-enhancing role of psychologists, and the protection of society as a whole, require ongoing and serious consideration. Psychologists have been mandated reporters of child abuse since the 1970s – another way they serve as agents of the state. But this is not without other societal consequences. Many child abusers, pedophiles, and others who prey on vulnerable children now avoid seeking help from psychotherapists. They view us, correctly, as informants. State legislators now contemplate making domestic violence a mandated reportable event. Where will it stop? Will we be required to summon the police the next time adolescents advise us they are smoking marijuana?

This dilemma was brilliantly addressed centuries ago by the motto of the French revolution: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Be all that you can be (liberty), be considerate of others as you do so (equality), and remember that we are all in this together (fraternity). In applying our method of enhancing personal freedom, we psychotherapists will always be emphasizing liberty for individuals, within their particular social context. Certainly we do our work in a broader societal context but, in the final analysis, our loyalty lies to the agency of the person, not of the state.

# A Beginner's Guide to Movie Night

By Phil Gable, MA  
Student Representative to CPA



Monthly meetings are a little intimidating if you're a student. (Come to think of it, maybe they're a little intimidating for seasoned professionals well!) Everyone is very much in their professional demeanor, and the air is heavy with scholarly and professional concerns. Plus, to me, the thing about the monthly lunch meetings is that--while it's an easy way to score CEU's and broaden your professional horizons with the lecture offerings--there are drawbacks when it comes to getting to know SGVPA members personally. Since most of us are in the middle of a work day, we usually have to hurry back to our business and academic commitments. Socializing with the professional folks who come to the meetings has to take a back seat, which means we don't really get to talk to anyone for very long, or in any depth.

Not so with Movie Nights. I remember the first time I attended one of these shindigs two years ago. Within the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the SGVPA president's home, I got the benefit of discovering a more relaxed side to the professionals I'd seen only at a distance at the monthly meetings. It was actually the first time I felt like I belonged to the chapter. There's something life-giving about "being with" members of your guild at times when they are using their therapeutic insights and skills to play, rather than to work. The community that I discovered there was ultimately what came to mind for me recently, when the question of resurrecting the Movie Nights came up at an SGVPA board meeting. I decided to take it on myself, organizing a schedule of monthly screenings at hospitable members' homes.

Since the Movie Nights have returned, I've been happily surprised every month. One month I learned that certain grown therapists—seasoned veterans, mind you—were still into comic books! (For some one who has spilled too much ink in grad school discussing comic books and therapy, this was a revolutionary discovery.) Another evening, one baffled "elder" member psychologist, upon hearing a student's meditations on various cinematic themes, observed that he was glad that other people had showed up to explain what had been previously inscrutable to him. Beautiful! I thought, *How cool!* Rather than coming to tell people what he knew about movies, he seemed to revel in the quirky, clever, and often surprising insights of the other movie buffs. Even students! That's one of the things that makes these nights so special to me.

Of course I don't want to give the impression that we're all experts here. The whole point of Movie Night is that we psychological "experts" can forgo being experts, all in the name of fun and community. And that's about how it's gone. In the last three months I've seen mostly new faces each time. After the film, during the pregnant pause that ensues as the credits roll, there is an excitement that the coming conversation could go anywhere. One night Dostoevsky made a surprise appearance. On another, mindfulness and anxiety became more relevant. On still another, the Klein's depressive position was the theme of the night. There's really no telling what will come up when you're not forcing it.

So, if you're debating a visit to the next Movie Night, in May, please come! Our next one will be held at 6:30 PM on May 8<sup>th</sup> at Manny Burgess house. You can contact me at [phillip\\_gable@yahoo.com](mailto:phillip_gable@yahoo.com). Trust me, you won't be disappointed.



Let the good times roll

# MONTHLY PROGRAM SCHEDULE 2009

**Date:** August NO MEETING

**Date:** September 4<sup>th</sup>

**Topic:** Keep on Talkin: Therapeutic Action in the Talking Cure

**Speaker:** John Wayne, PhD

**Date:** October 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Topic:** Identifying and Treating the Bi-Polar Spectrum Patient

**Speaker:** Mariel Tourani, MD

**Date:** November 6<sup>th</sup>

**Topic:** Title to be announced

**Speaker:** Peter Radestock, PhD



## A Dutch Treat Networking Lunch Meeting!



How many times have you asked yourself  
“who does what” among our colleagues?

How confident are you that other SGVPA members  
really know what you do?

This new program is designed to provide additional opportunities  
for SGVPA members to get to know one another, to feel comfortable  
sharing cases and to discover resources among their professional colleagues.

**Our next meeting will be**

**Tuesday, May 11th**

**from 12:15 to 2:00 p.m.**

at

**El Portal Mexican Restaurant**

**695 E. Green Street**

**Pasadena**

*Bring plenty of business cards!*

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## You are invited to the networking event of the year! Rose City Center's Second Annual Fundraiser

Thursday, May 14, 2009, 6 p.m.

Café Santorini's Rococo Room  
70 W. Union St.  
Old Pasadena

*Guest Speaker Ed Bacon of All Saints Church  
Elegant Mediterranean Cuisine & Silent Auction*

\$100 tax deductible donation per person

**RSVP by May 6**  
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# SGVPA

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Whole page - \$100.00  
Insert - \$120.00

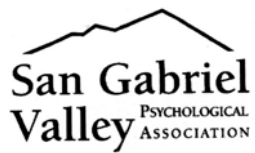
Be sure to include your license number. Ads should be emailed to Mary Hannon at [maryhannon@ymail.com](mailto:maryhannon@ymail.com). Payment must be made before publication and mailed to:

Mary Hannon, 1122 Avon Pl., South Pasadena, CA 91030,  
phone (626) 354-0786.

### Website

Homepage link: \$25 per month  
(\$15.00 when newsletter advertising is purchased concurrently).

Other link: \$20 per month  
(\$10.00 when newsletter advertising is purchased concurrently).



c/o Suzanne Lake, Psy.D., President  
2810 E. Del Mar Blvd., Suite 10A  
Pasadena CA 91107









