

RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS

OFFICIAL NEWS JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH

Spring 2008

VOL 6, NO. 2

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Some Necessary Links between Communication Studies and Social Psychology in Research on Close Relationships

by Phil Shaver

This is my first message to IARR members since becoming president. I've been working behind the scenes with Wendy Samter, Lisa Diamond, and the IARR Board to prepare for an exciting conference this summer in Providence, RI, and I've certainly come to appreciate how much work goes into these big events. I'm very much looking forward to an excellent, exciting conference in a beautiful setting. I've also been consulting with hard-working committees on issues such as the happy choice of Lorne Campbell to be the next editor of *PR*. I haven't had a chance until now, however, to say much of intellectual substance about the relationships field itself.

Probably because I'm getting old – 63 going on 64 – I've begun to look back nostalgically, and with considerable amazement, at the history of the relationships field, which got under way for me in 1982 at the nascent field's first conference in Madison, Wisconsin. I drove from Denver to Madison with a merry band of relationship researchers – in two cars connected by CB radios – stopping in my childhood hometown of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to give my compatriots a brief perspective on my Midwestern childhood. That first conference was organized by one scholar with interests in the communications field and one more exclusively embedded in social psychology. As my age mates in IARR will recall, this bi-person, bi-

disciplinary structure subsequently caused a certain amount of tension in the field, resulting for a while in two organizations with overlapping constituencies and leaving us today with two excellent but slightly different journals. (See Steve Duck's "Silver Anniversary Essay" in the February 2008 issue of *JSPR* for an interesting and knowledgeable account of the early days of that journal.)

The field is much more integrated today, and I believe both parent disciplines (as well as the several other disciplines included in IARR) have benefited from their often collaborative and sometimes strained interactions. I am especially aware these days of a domain in which the two approaches to relationship science are coming together and can inform each other. That domain – surprise, coming from me – is attachment theory.

When John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth first devised the theory, one of their core ideas was that parental sensitivity and responsiveness allow a young child to feel safe and well supported, which fosters the child's psychological and social development. Because this process begins in early infancy, when most communications between parent and child are nonverbal (eye contact, holding and caressing, rocking, humming and singing), there wasn't much reason for attachment researchers to think about verbal communication – talking – in relation to attachment. More recently, however, Mary Main and several researchers influenced by her have discovered that a one-hour verbal interview with a young parent or parent-to-be, the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), can predict surprisingly well what the quality of the person's *child's* attachment to him or her will be: secure, anxious, avoidant, or disorganized.

Childhood attachment classifications predict subsequent mental health and social relational outcomes all the way into adulthood, and the predictability doesn't seem to be due primarily to genetic similarity between parent and child. What is most surprising about this predictability is that it's based on the parent's quality of discourse – that is, on *verbal communication*. In fact, a measure of a parent or parent-to-be's discourse coherence predicts

remarkably well how secure that person's child will be as the child grows up, and how effectively the child will be able to regulate his or her emotions. The connection is not due to genes, intelligence, or the general quality of verbal communication about unemotional, nonrelational issues (such as physics for physicists or insurance for insurance agents). Physics professors can talk coherently about physics, but some of them cannot talk coherently about their childhood relationships with their parents.

More specifically, a young parent who is destined to have a secure child is able to talk coherently and considerately to an interviewer about his or her emotional relationships with parents and other attachment figures during childhood. Such a person can 'hear' an interviewer's questions accurately, access relevant memories, and provide answers that are neither too cryptic for the interviewer to understand and use nor too verbose and disorganized for the interviewer to process efficiently. The best guess at present is that a coherent, considerate person is likely to have a securely attached child because the same mental and communicative qualities that show up in the AAI extend to interactions with the child. That is, a person who is considerate and collaborative with an interviewer, who perceives the interviewer's aims and needs accurately, and provides cogent, useful verbal responses to the interviewer's questions about emotional issues and experiences in childhood will also be an accurate perceiver of his or her child's needs and an effective cognitive and social scaffold for the child as the child learns to deal with emotions, other people, and the big, buzzing, sometimes inviting, sometimes frightening world he or she is destined to encounter.

A parent who experiences emotional blocks when trying to remember childhood relationships with attachment figures, who doesn't care enough about an interviewer's needs to answer his or her questions considerately, and who doesn't much like talking about feelings is likely to have a child who is, again not mainly for genetic reasons, uncomfortable with feelings, unable to share intimately with and rely comfortably on others, and determined to become extremely self-reliant. In contrast, a parent who becomes caught up in continuing anger and other negative emotions when discussing childhood relationships with parents and can no longer remember the interviewer's question is destined to be

so self-preoccupied and emotional when dealing with a stressed child that the child will question the reliability of the parent's attention and support. The child will become insecure, highly emotional, inadequately self-regulated, and desperate for reliable affection and support. Finally, a parent who has been abused or has suffered unresolved losses is likely to be incoherent when talking about relationships and emotions and to appear frightened or frightening when a needy child approaches, seeking refuge from distress or fear. This kind of hostile or helpless parental behavior, communicated both verbally and nonverbally to the child, renders the child more vulnerable to later psychological disorders (especially anxiety disorders and dissociative disorders).

The reason I'm mentioning this here is that most of social, developmental, and clinical psychologists who study attachment were caught off guard by the fact that the best predictor of childhood attachment security or insecurity is a parent's coherent or incoherent discourse – that is, the way in which the parent thinks, talks, and relates considerately or inconsiderately to others, especially when emotions are involved. Much more needs to be known about how certain kinds of parental discourse with children alters children's understanding of emotions and relationships, builds emotion-regulation and social skills, and shapes a more or less coherent mind, making it more or less likely that a developing child, adolescent, or adult will respond and adapt well to life's challenges. Are there good ways to measure and understand these differences in communication? Are there effective ways to intervene to help a person become more coherent mentally and verbally when talking about relationships and feelings? These are questions for which communication researchers are likely to have useful ideas, theories, research methods, and empirically validated answers. If so, social psychologists need to hear about them. IARR is a good place to carry on the needed dialog.

**Submission deadline for
Fall issue of RRN**

September 1, 2008

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Relationship Research News is published twice a year. Contributions are very welcome and will be published as space permits. Announcements, letters to the editors, cartoons/humor, teaching tips, and other information relevant to IARR members are all appropriate. If you would like to contribute a feature article or personal commentary, please submit a brief (one paragraph) description to the editors first (please do not send manuscripts). Submit all materials to Lesley Verhofstadt, Department of Experimental-Clinical and Health Psychology, Ghent University, BELGIUM; lesley.verhofstadt@ugent.be. The deadline for final copy is September 1 for the Fall issue and April 1 for the Spring issue. (Inquiries regarding Feature Articles are welcome at any time.)

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

by Lesley Verhofstadt
Ghent University, Belgium

We have a wide collection of columns for your reading pleasure in this issue of RRN. In his first message to IARR members since becoming president, Phil Shaver discusses some interesting links between communication studies and social psychology in research on close relationships.

Wendy Samter (Local Conference Chair) and Lisa Diamond (Program Chair) also bring you updates on the 2008 IARR Conference in Providence, just a few months away now. Be sure to plan to attend!

You will find an extensive Special Feature Section in this issue of the newsletter, as well. The article presents a collection of several papers, edited by João Moreira on the topic of cross-cultural relationships. Thanks to Ruth Sharabany, Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz, Wolfgang Lind, Ana Paula Relvas, Rodrigo Sá-Nogueira Saraiva, and Mahzad Hojjat for sharing their research and personal experiences in the field of cross-cultural relationships with us.

We're happy that David Kenny, veteran Lighter Side contributor, is back -especially now that IARR has Dan Canary on assignment in Tibet-with a column on understudied relationships.

Paul Wright discusses his retiree experiences in his latest contribution to the Retired Professionals Column. Thanks Paul for contributing to RRN on a regular basis during the past years.

Andrea Lambert (New Professionals Representative) has written her first piece for RRN, discussing guidelines for mentoring graduate students.

Don't forget to read our net news, our journals' update, conference and member news, and announcements.

I would like to end this column as usual by thanking my editorial team for their help with the preparation of this issue. Special thanks to the several authors who write for us issue after issue. I'm thinking here especially of David Kenny, Dan Canary, Paul Wright, Ben Le, Rebecca Adams, Paul Mongeau, and members of the board who keep us up to date with developments in IARR. Thanks to each of you.

Hope to see you all in Providence!

FEATURE ARTICLES

Cross-cultural relationships: Wonder how it will work out, but it seems interesting anyway

**Edited by
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Introduction

It takes hardly a rigorous study to be aware that cross-cultural relationships are on the increase. They are probably growing in our own personal social networks. Therefore, when I thought about this theme for the next special feature section in RRN, my expectancy was that it would be easy to find experts on this topic, and particularly interesting and innovative studies emerging from a vast sea (well, at least a nice lake) of consolidated knowledge. Little did I anticipate the scarcity I was to find!

In fact, it seems to me that cross-cultural relationships is one of the most under-researched topics in our field. The number of empirical, systematic studies, on a topic of such potential, is truly dismaying. Well, at least that provided the consolation of having struck a lode of gold! I believe the potential of the study of cross-cultural relationships, in addition to being quite obvious, is clearly demonstrated in the pieces by Sharabany and Hertz-Lazarowitz, and by Lind, Relvas and Sá-Nogueira Saraiva, while Mahzad Hojjat, in her final contribution, helps us understand the dearth of studies found when one searches the scholarly literature databases.

In my view, potential in the study of cross-cultural relationships lies not only in their growing numbers and in their increasing social relevance, which all authors point out. They also

appear important in the sense that they can provide us with fertile terrain for theory testing and development. Research carried out following the formulation of Allport's intergroup contact theory has shown how important intimacy and affectionate ties are in furthering positive attitudes toward other groups (Pettigrew, 1998). Knowledge on personal relationships can illuminate ways in which such things remain possible when partners come from widely diverging cultural backgrounds and come into the relationship with disparate, sometimes even chronically conflicting, identities. Such conditions should make the role and consequences of expectancies, attribution styles, values, naïve psychological theories, and other variables cherished by cross-cultural and relationship researchers much more salient than they are under normal conditions (i.e., in isolated individuals and in culturally homogeneous relationships). Barriers to effective communication and a wealth of differences to be dealt with make communication and negotiation processes critical, and their effects certainly even more blatant than usual. Beyond these few examples lies what I believe to be a plentiful lore of interesting ideas to be put to empirical test, in a literature that promises to advance our knowledge of relationship processes considerably, in addition to providing practitioners with valuable tools to intervene upon personal and social problems and needs.

References

Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65-85.

Cross-national friendships: The case of Israeli Arab and Jewish students in a university context*

**by Ruth Sharabany
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&
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Cross-national friendships are at times a byproduct of the context and circumstances that bring people together, not always under favorable conditions. Sometimes, when two national groups are in conflict, the question is whether one can expect or even hope for such friendships. By examining one instance, we will try to formulate hypotheses for future research.

The one case that we have been examining is the context of the University of Haifa in Israel. This is a bi-national multi-religion and multi-ethnic institution (reflecting the national composition), where Jews (including immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union) constitute 80% of the student body, and Arabs (consisting of Muslims, Christians, and Druze) are a minority of 20%. Differences between the two groups lie in language, in culture, in religion, and often in socio-economic level, as well as in identity, considering the conflicting historical narratives of their respective histories. The two national groups meet and interact for the first time in their lives as fellow university students, following a fully segregated school system.

The starting point of their relationship may be suspicion, hostility and even hatred, combined with curiosity and willingness to experience a relationship with the "other". An observer on campus will capture two separate groups in the public spaces, in the library, the cafeteria and the

hallways. But they will be seen mixing and interacting in the classrooms.

Many questions can be asked in this unique context. Among other questions: to what extent is the university environment conducive to cross-national friendship formation? If there are friendships, – what is their rate? How do those who have cross-national friends differ in their view of the climate of the university? Do they see it as egalitarian and democratic, a place of co-existence? Or, do they see it as intensifying political tension, stereotyping and discrimination?

The University of Haifa has several institutions that aim to foster dialogue between Arabs and Jews. The Dean of Students' office has special programs geared to support studies of minorities. There is a Jewish–Arab center for research and promotion of co-existence on campus. The dormitories are for Arabs and Jews alike. As part of Haifa's inner city community social projects, Arabs and Jews share housing.

Beyond all these projects, the core of the academic life revolves around teaching. The question is whether avenues for friendships open up in academic courses. Several seminars at the university are geared to create contact between Arab and Jewish students with the aim of reinforcing positive cross-group relationships. One is in the Psychology department, involving group dialogues between Arabs and Jews on sensitive issues as well as experiencing group processes. Another is a seminar in the department of Sociology that examines processes of political leadership, attempting to empower young leadership of Arabs and Jews.

A seminar in the department of Education is described here. A group of Arab and Jewish researchers, led by Hertz-Lazarowitz, created a model of a participative-action-research (PAR) seminar about psycho-social aspects of campus life. Each year a research seminar that included Arab and Jewish students participants took place. The students chose a topic that was relevant to their current life and planned the study to be carried out in the university community. They were both participants in the

study and researchers. They took part in defining the questions and in gathering the data from students on campus. The study of PAR on friendship included quantitative data, gathered through questionnaires as well as qualitative data. The students-participants reported during the semester on social contacts, including with the other group, three times a week. They described in-depth their interactions, including descriptions of self and other. This multi-method and intense participation made the seminar into an intervention that enabled a focus on the cross-national friendships.

Over the years about 200 students collected data from about 2000 students. Specifically, during 2004 the focal question was whether friendships actually exist between Arabs and Jews; to what extent, and how this relates to the perception of the university as a positive or negative context to be in. From the 700 reports assembled from Jewish and Arab students, it emerged that 33% of the investigated Jews reported having among their 10 nominated friends an Arab, and 56% of the Arabs nominated at least one Jewish friend. Additional analysis of the quantitative data revealed that those who had friends from the other group regarded the university as facilitating multi-culture meetings co-existence; they also regarded the university as conducive to cross-cultural close relationships and to people becoming more democratic and egalitarian. However, findings indicated that having cross-national friends also meant being more critical, viewing the university as intensifying political tension, stereotyping, and encouraging friction.

The seminar was not planned as an intervention, but rather as an experiential teaching and research project, and all data gathered was correlational. However, the qualitative data revealed diverse reactions to the seminar. Some students had an intensive group experience, some intensified their friendships, and for some their contact remained occasional. Other students came out of these experiences seeking the "other". Two examples of the positive, lower-key normative ones are the following:

At the beginning, our relations were superficial but with time,

the relation became stronger and our friendship continued beyond the course. (An Arab woman)

I did not realize that I was so distant from them. Now I am teaching myself to be more interactive and close with the Arab students. (A Jewish woman)

The significance of the PAR model is on several levels. First, it was a research experience; second, it facilitated group processes within the seminar; third, the students were involved in personal narratives; fourth, the cooperative academic work was a context conducive to change in the perception of each other; fifth, the interviews and data collection served to heighten awareness of the issues on campus. Thus it was a model of studying, researching, personal experience, and a potential agent of social change.

A segment of our data that was analyzed so far reveals that the diversity of the campus does create contact and friendships at the University of Haifa. They occur for their natural reasons – proximity, similarity, motivations that begin as academic and are transformed into personal relationships. Presumably, projects initiated by the university contribute to this trend. However, we assume that these friendships are the exceptions, and the more common pattern is mutually ignoring by the two groups, for all the reasons we mentioned. Moreover, while these are examples of efforts to create positive contacts, it is of course not clear that the outcomes are only positive for the relationship. There is the risk that persons who are exposed to intensive psychological processes may come out validating their negative perception of the other.

The university context is special in getting people together at a young age, presumably when they are relatively open to change. Academic exposure to socio-political and cultural aspects is a given, and this resource can be utilized. Adding positive active and experiential conditions has the potential to promote these dialogues.

Promotion of cross-cultural friendship is essentially a grassroots process, another layer of potential reduction of conflict and of fostering understanding of the "other" group. Friendship is personal and does not have to be on a grand political scale.

Many questions should be asked and investigated. Here is one possible line for research. These friendships and the processes they involve should be examined on several levels: How are they affected by their socio-political context? Their immediate social context? What is the nature of the interactions within such dyads? What are the social boundaries of these friendships and how are they dealt with? Do these relationships go through the common stages of developing friendship, or are they different?

A special study may probe how the immediate social context of each participant reacts to this friendship: How does the family react and how do other friends accept this friendship? A follow-up question is whether and how such friendship affects the participants and their immediate context. Is there a snowball effect to these friendships?

In our global village, where cross-national work relationships flourish, is the immediate social-environment more accepting of such friendships than friendships within the same country, where there are minority-majority tensions, and even outright hostility between the groups?

* Collaborating researchers are: Faisal Azaiza, Haggai Kupermintz, Hilla Pertz and Tamar Zelniker. A segment of this research was presented at the IARR conference in Crete, 2006.

Biculturalism within the couple: Marital satisfaction in a world of mixed cultures

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*D*uring the last century, scientists, ranging from psychologists to physicists, uncovered a striking feature of our society: whatever our impressions are, the world we live in is getting smaller and smaller. So small, that one often hears even common persons meeting one another and stating it: "what a small world!" Due to an ever larger and broader network of transport and communication facilities, people from everywhere meet people from everywhere else, mixing different cultures, habits and daily rituals. It may also often be the case that two persons of this worldwide mixed community fall in love and decide to marry and live together.

This is exactly what demographic statistics tell us: the probability of meeting, falling in love and marrying someone from a different culture is becoming larger. Couples comprehending two different cultures turn up more frequently every day. For instance, according to the recent census, 15% of all marriages in Germany are binational, and in Switzerland the percentage goes up to 37%. In Portugal, binational marriages tripled in the last ten years, and similar trends are found in other countries all over the world.

However, despite the increasing prevalence of bicultural couples, one finds a dearth of studies on these couples, probably due to their very

recent emergence. To have a more quantitative idea, a quick search at Google returns several hundred thousand pages concerning cross-cultural relationships, but only some few dozen scientific studies can be found in databases such as PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS and Psychology and Behavioral Science Collection. The study of bicultural couples is indeed a hot topic. Everybody wants to know about it, but nobody seems to have gotten down to it, until very recently, at least.

To overcome this lack of knowledge we carried out during the last three years a thorough study of marital satisfaction in bicultural couples, as part of the first author's doctoral research, under the advising of the second and third authors. What makes persons of different cultures stick together in a married couple? What are the resources or protective factors for bicultural couples? What can sustain and improve their marital satisfaction? What distinguishes monocultural couples from bicultural ones? A relationship encompassing two cultures, is without any doubt, a more complex relationship, where many things are less obvious, but simultaneously where a very rich environment may provide enhanced opportunities and alternatives to all individuals within the family. Living with someone of another culture is, as somebody said, living twice. And this is not only the impression we got from the couples we studied, but also the personal opinion of one of the current authors, who has been part of a bicultural couple for more than thirty years.

But let us start from the beginning. What are actually bicultural couples? How can we define them? What are the most important and specific issues in such a marriage?

We found a large variety of terms for cultural exogamy. Couples where spouses belong to different cultures are often named inter-cultural, interethnic, interracial, cross-cultural, bicultural, binational, biracial, multicultural, mixed marriages or simply intermarriages. We prefer the term bicultural couples. One of the reasons for this choice is that it can be easily contrasted with monocultural couples. For research purposes, we defined a bicultural couple as one

in which spouses and their families-of-origin were born in different countries and speak different native languages. In contrast, monocultural couples are couples in which spouses or their families-of-origin were born in the same country and/or speak the same native language.

One may argue that any couple is in a broader sense a bicultural couple, because husband and wife come from social units that differ in one way or another in their family traditions, occupations and ideologies. We believe, however, that bicultural couples have to cope with greater differences between the spouses. There are issues for bicultural couples, which monocultural couples do not need to confront.

First, one has to consider that, in bicultural couples, at least two languages are involved. Generally one partner speaks his or her own language while the other does not, or, alternatively, the couple chooses a third language to use. Language often affects the balance of power in a bicultural couple: the more fluent partner has the upper hand and can direct the conversation and set its style to a greater extent. For any couple, it is difficult to achieve good communication, but two or three different languages make communication even harder. Different languages are always associated with different senses of humor, and with different idiomatic and nonverbal expressions. But being harder does not necessarily mean less adequate communication. It may be the case that bicultural couples continually question, explain and clarify their meaning to each other.

Another important issue is the value system, which can be quite different depending on the culture. Partners in bicultural couples may disagree about what is good and bad, right and wrong, true and false, important and unimportant.

Family and cultural rituals also seem to be an issue of great importance for these couples. Spouses very often have different needs concerning celebrations, commemorations and family routines. What, how, where and on which occasion is eaten and drunk may differ

considerably between cultures. There are a lot of funny episodes in bicultural couples about food and drink!

Many bicultural couples become aware of these differences when the first child is born. It may start already with the question of the chosen name: Pedro or Peter? Anne or Ana? Then, other questions rise. Should the child be raised monolingual or bilingual? How will the couple nurture, discipline and guide their children? Towards more autonomy or more closeness? Raising children is certainly one of the most challenging tasks for bicultural couples.

Other issues concerning bicultural couples can be the practice of different religions, different gender role expectations, different concepts on the meaning of friendship and on relationships with in-laws, and different coping and conflict resolution strategies.

But, despite all these challenges, it can be very enriching, in terms of personal growth, to learn and integrate other values, rituals, attitudes, needs, another language and lifestyle, which mean other ways of being in the world. Many bicultural couples feel that this kind of relationship is one where you have to try harder but also one that never gets boring.

Our first, qualitative study was aimed at identifying protective factors, which might be correlated with marital satisfaction, and risk factors. This study was based on the focus-group method. Twenty-nine spouses recruited from Portuguese/German bicultural couples were arranged into four focus-groups. A semi-structured interview was conducted and videotaped in each group. The results suggested that family rituals, tolerance and the social network were considered as the main protective issues. Lack of language proficiency and communication were most often pointed out as risk factors.

Based on these results, we conducted a quantitative research to find out: a) whether monocultural couples differ from bicultural couples regarding marital satisfaction and family rituals, b) which variables are related to marital

satisfaction (protective and risk factors) and c) how family rituals are transmitted from each family-of-origin. This study compared 278 monocultural couples with 146 bicultural couples. The results suggest that monocultural and bicultural couples do not differ substantially on global marital satisfaction. However, bicultural couples show a higher level of intimacy and a higher level of conflict. In addition, bicultural couples show greater flexibility in family and cultural rituals.

We found a larger difference between spouses in family and cultural rituals for bicultural couples that, however, do not constitute a risk factor for them. The main protective factors for bicultural couples were a greater perceived meaning for family rituals, more agreement on the way to carry out family and cultural rituals, and proficiency on the husband's native language by the wife. Our findings also indicate an important role for the wife's family-of-origin in ritual transmission. Differences found between native and foreign spouses, independent of their gender, suggest native/foreign asymmetric roles that may influence the dynamics of bicultural couples.

Future research could be undertaken to find out if spouses of bicultural couples are more flexible, beyond the specific domain of family rituals, and more tolerant. There are many other research questions of interest, such as: Is there a more intense negotiation activity in bicultural couples? Are particular types of relationship-specific attachment styles more common in native or foreign spouses?

Living in a world that is getting smaller and smaller should lead us to push for greater understanding among all cultures. With our study, we hope to have helped in some extent to the achievement of a new perspective and further knowledge on bicultural relations which, being increasingly ubiquitous, will soon show their impact in a world of mixed cultures.

Intercultural relationships are here to stay!

by Mahzad Hojjat
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Writing this piece about research on interethnic relationships brings back many memories, some personal and some professional. In one particular case however, the line between personal and professional becomes blurry. This specific memory goes back to the end of my first semester of graduate school in the fall of 1992.

I was puzzled and dismayed to read the commentary that one of my instructors had written regarding my performance in her class. Although the overall evaluation was positive, one particular comment stood out: I should NOT discuss the importance of studying culture in relationship to psychology in the future! As a first generation immigrant to the United States, who had traveled widely around the world before starting graduate school, and someone who was in an interethnic marriage, I felt that the comment was short sighted. I was undeterred and continued my efforts to include the role of culture in my own research. In the fourth year of graduate school, I was advised not to focus on interethnic/interracial relationships as my dissertation topic, even though I had already done a significant amount of work on it. So, I decided to continue my pursuit of research on mixed relationships, in addition to a new mainstream psychology topic for my dissertation thesis.

Later, as an assistant professor of psychology, I was fortunate to work in a psychology department in which I had the freedom to pursue the kind of scholarship that I thought was important, even before getting tenure. In the last seven years, I have continued to create and teach seminars on culture and psychology and conduct research on such topics as interethnic

relationships, as well as psychological functioning of immigrant populations. Clearly, the difficulties that I experienced in pursuing this line of work are not specific to my graduate career. I believe all scholars who attempt to study topics that are considered outside of the main stream, at some point in time, have faced similar challenges. In particular, researchers of gay and lesbian relationships come to mind.

Today, in 2008, I would like to think that the question of whether culture is a topic worthy of scientific psychological investigation has been answered affirmatively and even mainstream psychologists are less likely to dismiss culture as a mere "noise" that needs to be statistically controlled for. Certainly, the recent wave of books that emphasize a diverse and inclusive perspective on psychology, and the wide range of introductory psychology textbooks that now include a chapter on culture and psychology indicate the recognition that culture is an important, if not an essential, aspect of psychology. Why are we witnessing this change in attitude?

As a social psychologist, I would first look to our social environment as one of the sources of this shift. Clearly, our world today is increasingly interconnected, in ways and to an extent that have never been observed before. Technological advances such as the internet have made connections amongst individuals all over the world much easier and quicker. On the other hand, the devastating after effects of the recent housing market crash in the U.S. has been felt all over the world, a testimony to the globalization of the economy. Sociopolitical changes such as the unification of Europe and the increased wave of immigration around the world have made it impossible to ignore the ethnic/racial mixing of individuals. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2007), almost one out of every three U.S. residents today is a minority (about 100.7 million). Also, foreign-born residents of U.S. (over 34 million) comprise 12% of the population. Another 12% of the population are natives who are second-generation immigrants, i.e., one or both parents were born in a foreign country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Moreover, statistics also indicate

that interracial marriages have increased ten times compared to 1960, currently about 1.5 million, and the rise is likely to continue as it has in the last few decades (Levin, Taylor, & Caudle, 2007). As a matter of fact, as I write these lines, there is a good chance that the future president of the United States could be the son of a mixed marriage.

The popularity of Senator Obama to people of all backgrounds and races indicates, in my opinion, a shift in the way in which mixed marriages are regarded by the American popular culture. Interestingly, Senator Obama's mixed background is viewed by his supporters, not as a handicap, but as a plus in his potential role as the future president of the USA. He is seen as a unifier who would be able to bring together individuals who come from many different races and ethnicities. Yet, it is hard to believe that almost forty years ago interracial marriages were illegal in many states within the US. Although it would be simplistic to assume that prejudice and discrimination against mixed unions have disappeared, it can be said that such relationships are certainly more acceptable today than ever before.

Part of the current awareness regarding issues of diversity is due to the impact of professional organizations such as our own IARR and the efforts of involved scholars in creating a truly international and interdisciplinary association, even when it was not fashionable to do so. One important step has been editing and publishing special issues of JSPR and Personal Relationships, which have made it possible for the scholars of interethnic and cross-cultural relationships to publish their work in such prestigious journals. In spite of these efforts, published empirical research on the psychological functioning of individuals of diverse ethnicity and race, as well as the interpersonal relationships amongst such individuals, still lag behind main stream research. There are many reasons for this, but for the sake of brevity I will only mention a few. First, this type of research is generally more difficult and time consuming to conduct. The complexities are inherent at all levels of the research process, and include such areas as the

recruitment of the target population, accuracy in translation and meaning, and especially the construct validity of the measures. Given such difficulties, it is essential that there should be more support available to scholars of cross-cultural relationships to carry on this kind of research. Hopefully, we will witness an increased focus on the subject of culture, and ethnicity in the context of interpersonal relationships in both special and regular issues of JSPR and Personal Relationships in the future.

Another significant step has been organizing international conferences that have facilitated collaboration amongst scholars of diverse backgrounds from within and outside of the United States. This statement is based on my first hand experience. I joined the IARR (former INPR & ISSPR) in 1993, as a second year graduate student, and found the experience of meeting relationship scholars from around the world invaluable. Throughout the years, I have always been able to count on the support and knowledge of such collaborators and friends as Steve Duck, João Moreira, Duncan Cramer, and many others.

Through participation in international IARR conferences, scholars of cross-cultural relationships have also been able to present papers, posters, and workshops that have helped bring the topics of culture and diversity to the forefront. Given the fact that the great majority of psychological research is conducted by American and European psychologists, it is essential to continue to invite relationship scholars from the other parts of the world to present their work. Organizing mini or pre-conferences centered around the topics of ethnicity, gender, and relationships would also provide a much needed boost to future research in this area.

Issues of culture, ethnicity, and race characterize our world in the 21st century. These topics will continue to loom large in our social and interpersonal environments. It is in our best interest, as social scientists, to make sure they are accurately reflected in our scientific research of interpersonal relationships.

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THE LIGHTER SIDE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Understudied Relationships

by David A. Kenny
University of Connecticut

Most of the early studies in the emerging field of close relationships examined dating couples. What comes to mind are the pioneering studies of Berscheid and Walster. As our field began to develop, researchers began to study other types of relationships and researchers soon realized that they could establish a reputation by studying new types of relationships. For instance, Carol Masheter studied divorced couples, Gregory Guldner studied long-distance relationships, Glenn Adams studied enemies, Karen Allen studied relationships with pets, Rebecca Adams studied friendships between people who wore tied-dyed shirts, Miles Patterson examined gynecologist and patient relationships, and Tracy Gleason studied relationships with imaginary friends. Researchers also learned that you could study romantic relationships in strange places like

standing on a bridge (Art Aron) or saying goodbye at an airport (Chris Fraley), obviously a pre September 11th study.

The young investigator might despair that all possible relationships and situations have been taken. However, this is just not the case. There is a gold mine of possible relationships that could be studied. As an assist to the young investigator seeking to create a new niche or to the senior (i.e., over-the-hill and picking up speed) researcher seeking a new topic, I present here is a list of some relationships and possible research questions.

Humans and extra-terrestrials: In these relationships we could extend our understanding of physical attractiveness. Would extra-terrestrials find humans attractive who had a low waste-to-hip ratio and high facial symmetry? Of course, we might have some difficulty finding enough extra-terrestrials to have a sufficient sample size. We should be comforted by the fact that one survey has shown that 5 million Americans, including erstwhile presidential US candidate Dennis Kucinich, have seen extra-terrestrials. At a very small cost we could send questionnaires with stimulus materials to people with instructions "To be opened only when you meet an extraterrestrial." Alternatively, just post the study on the web and limit it only to extra-terrestrials.

Pregnant woman and fetus: While it might be difficult to have a fetus fill out a questionnaire, I think we could easily investigate synchrony and motor mimicry. We could ask the woman to kick and see if the fetus kicks. We could also, of course with proper safeguards, ask the pregnant woman to stand on her head and see if the baby also turns upside down. The results of such research might well end up in a United States Supreme Court decision but I do not want to wade into that issue.

Executioner and victim: One difficulty in the study of forgiveness is finding dyads in which one member has clearly committed a transgression against another person. With executioner and victim we have a nearly ideal situation. There is the difficulty that most

civilized countries have banned capital punishment. We can take comfort that the United States, The People's Republic of China, and Iran seem eager to provide us with data of this type. An alternative would be use archival data and examine the executions of Thomas More, Marie Antoinette, and Joan of Arc.

Within-person person perception: We could find seek out people with dissociative identity disorder (what lay people commonly call people with "split personalities") and have them make ratings of their other personalities. As a fictional example, we could ask Jekyll to rate Hyde and Hyde to rate Jekyll. In such a way, we can examine complementarity in perceptions of disassociative individuals. This study would be the ultimate in "using the person as their own control."

Editor and author: I would think this might be a productive area of study, especially if we are interested in studying negative perceptions. We could ask authors to rate editors on laziness, imperceptivity, pettiness, procrastination, haughtiness, anal attention to detail, and insensitivity. We could ask editors to rate authors on persistence, sloppiness, failure to follow procedures, self-absorption, and impatience.

Customer and lap dancer: I promise the reader that I am primarily relying on accounts here from movies, but it would seem to fertile ground to test theories hypotheses about exchange relationships. Likely a critical outcome in the analysis would be "bills stuffed per minute." I wish to note that the technical name for the research design is the "one with many" design.

Hospital patient and staff worker: This is a wonderful opportunity where it is typically the case that the person who normally has more power and status is placed in a situation where they wear a robe that exposes most of their posterior, is bathed by total strangers, and other things that even I dare not mention.

Talk-show host and sidekick: With the plethora of talk shows on television, we can content analyze the interactions between these two. One possible area of study is the ingratiating comments made by the sidekick. The other might be a discourse analysis on how so much talk has so little content. Another idea is to look for Duchenne smiles and laughs in these interactions.

I look forward to reading research on these relationship in *Personal Relations* and *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. Make sure you thank me in the acknowledgements. Upon further reflection, maybe it would be better if you did not thank me.

Data-collection in Tibet

by Dan Canary

Dan Canary is not contributing his lighter side column this issue because IARR has him on assignment in Tibet. He is collecting data to test his latest theory, *Relational Triadlectics*. Dan will discuss triadlectical theory in the next issue, including why triadlectical theory is superior to dialectical approaches, strategies for responding to triadlectical tensions, and implications for the study of personal relationships and time/space movement. To obtain an advanced copy of this exciting new theory, please address your request to

Dr. Daniel Canary
IARR Freelance Reporter,
Chinese Liberation Prison
Lahsa, Tibet.

RETIRED PROFESSIONALS COLUMN

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, adieu¹

by Paul Wright

Yep. You guessed it. This is my swan song. I decided about a month ago that this would be my final retiree column. I am aware, as are any number of *Relationship Research News* readers, that I've been vacillating on this matter for some time, but now it's for real. I had considered simply submitting an announcement to this effect for the current issue, but the RRN staff and at least a few newsletter readers have been so accommodating and gracious that I could not bring myself to leave without saying goodbye. And offering some sort of explanation.

Some readers will recall that in past columns I identified three kinds of IARR retirees. These were: 1) those who make a clean break, seemingly disappear from the scene and get involved in other things; 2) those who stay active and involved and continue being productive at the cutting edge of relationship research; and 3) those who become mugwumps,² mugwumps being those who try to stay connected, keep in touch and attempt to stay generally familiar with what's going on in the field –and perhaps even make a published contribution now and then.

Some readers will also recall that I had decided on category #3. Well, I tried. And it worked for a while. But the natural course of events conspired against me. I found myself drifting inexorably toward category #1. I don't think I'm completely in that category yet, but I'm

close –or perhaps better said, mostly. I think I can identify pretty well two sets of factors that contributed to this shift. One set had to do with my activities (or lack thereof) within the PR field and the other set had to do with other things I've been increasingly involved in since retiring.

For the first set of factors, 2005 seems to have been the pivotal year. First, that was the year following the close of my participation as an official member of the review board of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. Up to that time, I had typically reviewed somewhere between three and six submitted manuscripts per year, both as a member of the board and as an occasional ad hoc reviewer. The review process was, for me, a fairly potent point of contact with “what was going on in the field.” So, of course, when the reviews stopped, so did that point of contact.

Second, 2005 was the year I put the finishing touches on a book chapter that eventually hit the newsstands in 2006. This chapter turned out to be my last formal publication, and when it was ready for the presses my contact with others involved with the book dropped off rather precipitously. And, I guess I should note, I have not picked up any further projects of that sort.

The second set of factors, my increasing involvement in non-PR related activities, is perhaps self-explanatory. With retirement and my release (so to speak) from academic activities, I had more time to devote to other interesting and/or worthwhile (in my estimation) pursuits. I don't know if this is a general principle, but for me the more time and effort I devote to interesting and worthwhile things, the higher the priority they claim. And, inevitably, the lower the priority given to less involving things –like PR-related activities. Actually, I have been fairly busy in my retirement. Doing what? One never knows how interested others may be in this regard, but for those who might be, I'll list some of the main ones.

One thing I do quite a bit of is hospital visitation both as a more or less official representative of my church and as a volunteer working through

¹ Thanks and apologies to Oscar Hammerstein II.

² A mugwump is defined technically as a bird that sits on a fence with its mug on one side and its tail on the other.

the hospital's chaplaincy office. Somewhat more exciting (or at least exciting *sounding*), I have been on one trip to the Philippines and two trips to different parts of Mexico to help locals in more or less obscure villages build churches. And finally, for some really fun stuff, I spend quite a bit of time on my embarrassingly captivating retirement hobby of digital photography and computer graphics.

Now, having said all this, let me also say that I think a Retired Professional's Column for RRN is a valuable thing. And I honestly believe it can be more valuable than I have made it. Let me explain.

First, I honestly believe that I have never been anything more than a journeyman³ relationship scholar. Second, the PR field has been around long enough now that there are quite a few recent or soon-to-be retirees who have clearly achieved what I would call master's⁴ status. These, I believe, are the kinds who ought to be writing retiree columns for the newsletter. They are the kinds who are most likely to be "Category #2 retirees" and who, by virtue of their well-deserved reputations, are in the best position to offer the best kinds of guidance and encouragement, not only to others who will soon follow them into retirement, but also to younger scholars still trying to sort things out.

In this regard, I have a suggestion for the editors of RRN. Perhaps it would not be easy to persuade one of these "Category #2" retirees to contribute a column on a regular basis. It may be more workable, and possibly more valuable, to invite submissions from such retirees on an issue-by-issue basis. It might not work, but I suppose it wouldn't hurt to try.

Now, in case anyone is wondering, have I given up on writing altogether? Maybe. But I've also been tinkering with the idea of writing something autobiographical on the order of something like, *Wright up front: Memoirs of a*

blue collar academic. But then again, probably not. Who'd give a rip? Except maybe my five grown-up kids, who've been after me to do something like this anyway –for "posterity."

Finally, thanks to everyone who encouraged me to do this column, and especially to Kathryn Dindia whose idea it was in the first place. Not only has it been fun, it has helped me immeasurably in making the transition from a grudging and somewhat conflicted retiree to one who is now pretty happy with the way things turned out.

Please submit to Relationship Research News. We are putting together the next issue and would like to receive any member news or updates:

Have you received an award or other professional honor? (specify)

Have you found a new job, received tenure or been promoted? (specify)

Do you have any other announcements to share with IARR members? For example, do you know of an upcoming conference, funding opportunity, special issue of a journal, or new world wide web source? Or, perhaps you have some personal news.

Please submit your news via email to Lesley Verhofstadt Lesley.Verhofstadt@ugent.be

³ **Journeyman**, *n.* a competent but routine worker or performer.

⁴ **Master**, *n.* a person preeminent in a discipline, as an art or science.

NET NEWS

by Ben Le

With the 2008 IARR Conference just around the corner, check out the information about the conference and Providence that is posted on the web site (<http://www.iarr.org/conferences.html>). Preliminary information about registration, the schedule of events, and travel is currently posted on the web site, and by the time you read this, you'll be able to register for the conference online. As you'll see from the materials provided by the conference organizers, we're in for a great time in July!

As you know, the web site includes a list of member's home pages. Currently nearly 150 IARR members have their pages linked to the web site. If you see that your home page is not listed, or the link is out of date, please send me a link to your webpage. The listing of home pages is a great way for us to see what each other are doing and keep in touch with each other.

As always, if you have any announcements you'd like posted on the website, edits to specific pages, or other suggestions or comments regarding the website, please direct them to me at (ble@haverford.edu).

See you in Providence!

RRN is looking for an individual interested in joining the EDITORIAL TEAM of our newsletter. It is a great opportunity to be involved in the organization and to work with colleagues from around the world.

Please contact lesley.verhofstadt@ugent.be, if you are interested in joining our team.

NEW PROFESSIONALS COLUMN

The "E's" of Mentoring: A New Professional's Guide to Mentoring Graduate Students

by Andrea N. Lambert
IARR New Professional Representative

As a second-year tenure-track professor one of the most difficult transitions has been going from graduate student mentee to graduate student mentor. It seems like it should have been a natural transition because as a new professional I am close to the graduate student experience. However, the transition has not been quite as simple as expected. While preparing for my new role as a faculty member I solicited advice from numerous faculty members about annual reviews, committee work, negotiating salary, and balancing teaching and research. Yet, I assumed that one of the most important roles, mentoring, would come naturally. In fact, until recently, I thought that I was managing the role just fine until a barrage of proposal drafts, cancelled appointments, and student emotional breakdowns hit me all at once. One night at two in the morning, instead of working on my own looming paper deadline, I found myself making copies and printing mailing labels for a graduate student applying to PhD programs. It was not until this moment that I realized that I needed to rethink my mentoring style. Thus, my quest for mentoring best practices began. During my search I consulted the expertise of my mentors, colleagues, and Dr. Dawn Braithwaite, IARR member and 2nd Vice-President for the National Communication Association. Hopefully the following *Six E's of Mentoring* will help to alleviate your mentoring woes.

Eschew Obfuscation. Clarity seems to be the key when mentoring graduate students. Scheduling regular meetings and setting concrete timelines and deadlines helps the mentor and the mentee know what is expected of them. One way to standardize expectations is to create a manifesto for prospective graduate student advisees. Braithwaite developed her own document, “Working Together,” to guide her graduate students through the advising process. The document includes expectations of students, Braithwaite’s preferences and mentoring style, and suggestions for drafts, re-writes, and critiques. As a result of Braithwaite’s sage advice I have begun my own document and would suggest others develop their own. I’m thinking of calling mine “Please don’t ask me to make you copies, because I probably will.”

Other prudent advice includes talking about issues right away. It seems to be a universal proclamation that issues pertaining to the quality of graduate student work fester over time. Since the relationship between graduate students and their advisee can last from 2 to 20 years it would be wise to deal with issues early. If issues are not vented early frustration and resentment may build and as relational scholars we know this can have a deleterious effect on the relationship.

Escape Perfection. Novice advisors often commit the fallacy of perfection in one of two ways. First, advisors/mentors may forget the learning curve of graduate students. I would like to think that I read every assigned article and laboriously slaved over all of my drafts, but alas, that probably is not the case. Specifically, with dealing with Master’s students, advisors may expect theses to be perfect, yet the department may view the thesis as a (well-presented) first attempt at empirical research. Second, novice graduate advisors may feel that they are being judged for the quality of their student’s work. Thus, some novice advisors may inadvertently find themselves writing major parts of the manuscript or providing a bit too much help in an attempt to look better to colleagues.

Evade Offense. Another universal tidbit of advice is to not personalize the choices that graduate students make. Sometimes their choices

(and the rationalization for those choices) will baffle you. Don’t expect them to want to follow your path and don’t expect them to tell you when they don’t want to follow your path anymore. Don’t take it personally when they fall off the end of the universe.

Establish a Style. Just as new scholars are encouraged to develop a philosophy for their teaching portfolio, it is also helpful to simultaneously uncover your personal mentoring style/mantra. Are you the laissez-faire advisor, the parenting type, or perhaps the newly-minted PhD who hasn’t a clue (I often find myself in the latter category)? All styles can be endearing and can work with a variety of student personalities; it is just important that you and your mentee have similar/complementary styles. As I develop as a mentor I hope that my mentoring style becomes as pointed as Braithwaite’s style. She notes, “As a dialectical theorist this theory helps guide my approach, recognizing advising as a dialectical dance of autonomy and connection, openness and closedness, and freedom and constraint.”

Encourage Candor. Last, let the students know what your schedule looks like. One of the biggest shocks I had when starting the tenure-track was understanding just how busy my advisors were. Shamefully, I did not realize that I was not the center of the universe until I began my tenure-track career. It is unanimous among my panel of experts that transparency about faculty life should be encouraged. When I am mentoring my graduate students for a career in academia I am sure to highlight my other obligations and time demands. It also helps that when I make an appointment with an advisee my Outlook calendar is in full view.

Embrace the Experience. Do enjoy the experience – you are in a sense creating your legacy (or as my mentor puts it you are creating your family). Throughout the interviews for this article I found one overwhelming sentiment: all of the negatives of mentoring are shadowed by the potential for the process to be one of the most rewarding experiences in academia. Overall, my advice to fellow new professionals navigating the waves of mentoring: set clear

expectations, seek advice and guidance from your colleagues, and call your old advisors and thank them...profusely. Oh, and be sure to apologize for any faux pas that you have now realized you committed as a graduate student.

Special thanks to my mentors Dr. Fran Dickson and Dr. Patrick Hughes for their insight for this article and their encouragement throughout my academic career. Also thanks to Dr. Dawn Braithwaite for her wisdom and willingness to share detailed comments about the graduate mentoring process.

JOURNALS UPDATE

Editor's Report on the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*

by Paul A. Mongeau,
Arizona State University, USA

2007 was another banner year for JSPR (don't I say that every year?). We received just short of 300 total manuscripts during the year. This is, by far, a record number of submissions and represents a nearly one-third increase over last year (which, unless I'm mistaken, was the previous record). Submissions so far in 2008 are keeping pace. Just over one-quarter of the 2007 submissions came from outside North America (consistent with trends from previous years). We received proportionally more manuscripts from Asia than we had in previous years. Our acceptance rate is probably right around 15% or just a bit higher.

The editorial team continues to evolve. Laura Stafford has stepped down as an Associate Editor (i.e., AE) to take over as editor of the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*. I

appreciate all the assistance that Laura provided during her tenure as an AE. To help deal with the increasing number of manuscripts, we have added several new AEs. Specifically, John Caughlin (University of Illinois, USA), Kelly Bost (also from the University of Illinois, USA), Sandra Metts (Illinois State University, USA), and Tammy Afifi (University of California-Santa Barbara, USA) have all come on board in the past six months or so. There will likely be some change in the AEs later in the year (fall in the Northern Hemisphere) that I will discuss in my next report.

We are preparing several ways of marking the journal's silver anniversary (which, technically, is volume 26 coming in 2009). Steve Duck kicked this occasion with an informative and entertaining personal history of the journal in the February 2008 issue. I strongly recommend it. In Volume 26, we will mark the occasion by discussing several of the most influential theories and constructs that have stood the test of a quarter-century and look forward to the future.

Report from the Masthead Editor of *Personal Relationships*

by Rebecca G. Adams,
University of North Carolina
at Greensboro, USA

As you know, Lorne Campbell will be succeeding me as Editor of *Personal Relationships*. I am delighted he has agreed to serve IARR in this important way. We have already begun to plan the transition, and I look forward to working with him over the next couple of years during our overlapping terms.

I want to take this opportunity to describe how the transition from my editorship of *PR* to Lorne Campbell's editorship will be handled and how it will affect my team's authors, members of the Editorial Board, ad hoc reviewers, and new scholar reviewers. Lorne and his team will

begin receiving submissions on June 1, 2008, but my team and I will continue to handle the manuscripts that were originally submitted to us until final decisions have been made. We will fill issues and serve as the masthead editorial team through the end of 2009.

We will continue to rely on the members of our editorial board, our ad hoc reviewers, and our new scholar reviewers to review revised and resubmitted papers that they have reviewed previously and, in some cases where an additional evaluation is needed, invite them to complete an occasional review of a revised and resubmitted manuscript they have not previously reviewed. The number of requests my team sends to reviewers will therefore decrease gradually after June 1, but Lorne's team will begin sending out requests at that time and Paul Mongeau, Editor of *JSPR*, and his team will continue to draw reviewers from an overlapping pool as well. Note that Lorne has arranged to move to web-based submissions, but my team will continue to handle our submissions by email. The submission guidelines inside the back of the journal will be updated in the June issue to reflect this change.

I want to call your attention to two sessions included on the July IARR program. One is a roundtable organized by IARR President Phil Shaver on International Cooperation in Relationship Research. The second is a roundtable on Writing and Reviewing for an Interdisciplinary journal organized by my editorial team. These two sessions will both address issues crucial to the development of our field and the future of *PR*.

At my request, beginning in 2008, Wiley-Blackwell increased the number of press releases they prepare for articles published in *PR* from two to three per year. Articles with well-developed discussions of the practical implications of findings are most likely to be selected. In 2007, they did press releases on Amy K. Kiefer and Diana T. Sanchez's article on Scripting Sexual Passivity: A Gender Role Perspective (*PR*, Vol. 14, Number 2, pp. 269-290) and Gary Lewandowski, Jr., Arthur Aron, and Julie Gee's piece on Personality Goes a

Long Way: The Malleability of Opposite Sex Physical Attractiveness (*PR*, Vol. 14, Number 4, pp. 571-586). Thus far in 2008, they have prepared a release for Jaye L. Derrick and Shira Gabriel's upcoming article on Parasocial Relationships and Self-Discrepancies: Faux Relationships Have Benefits for Low Self-Esteem Individuals (*PR*, Vol. 15, Number 2).

Acceptance rates change as manuscripts submitted during a given period are accepted or rejected, so we will not know the acceptance rate for my editorial team's term until we are entirely finished. The acceptance rate will be between 18 and 22% for the first year of our term (June 1, 2005-May 31, 2006) and between 9 and 23% for the second year of our term. It is too early to predict the range of the possible acceptance rate for the submissions we received between June 1, 2007, and May 31, 2008. We received fewer submissions the second year (137) than the first year (176), but have already received 149 submissions in 2007-2008 and still have a month to go. It takes us about 4 months on the average from the time of submission to reach an initial decision. It takes the authors who receive invitations to revise and resubmit about 4 months on the average to do so. Note that it is important that authors who have received invitations to revise and resubmit do so in a timely way, because this team's last issue will be submitted to Blackwell in August of 2009. There is a wide variation in the time from submission to acceptance, but on average it takes between 13 and 16 months from submission to acceptance and between 4 and 5 months more until publication. It is possible that Lorne's statistics will be substantially different, but the acceptance rates during my editorship are similar to what Sue Sprecher reported to me when I replaced her as Editor for new submissions.

I have enjoyed working this year with President Phil Shaver, the IARR Board, Treasurer Michael Cunningham, Publications Chair Dan Perlman, the Editorial Board, the reviewers, and the authors. I would also like to give special thanks to my patient and diligent Associate Editors and to Sarah Hosman, who has served as *PR*'s Editorial Assistant since August. She is doing a terrific job. Brandi McCullough, *PR*'s previous

editorial assistant just defended her master's thesis, so join me in congratulating her. I know from talking to other editors how very fortunate I am to have such a responsible, committed, and skilled team and such a supportive intellectual community to serve.

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**IARRC 2008
UPDATE**

**International Association for
Relationship Research
Conference
Providence, Rhode Island,
17-20 July 2008**

**Get ready for a fabulous
conference!**

by Wendy Samter and Lisa Diamond

*T*he biennial meeting of IARR will be held July 17-20 in beautiful Providence, Rhode Island. We had a record number of submissions this year and the program is brimming with cutting-edge relationship research from scholars around the globe. The program also features invited addresses from a diverse group of leading researchers: **Sandra Petronio, Beverly Fehr, Stephen Marks, Ruthellen Josselson, Andrew Collins, Denise Solomon, and Rand Conger.** The schedule also includes opportunities for graduate students to socialize with one another, a chance to meet and greet with JSPR and PR editors, special sessions

geared toward international scholars, and several practical workshops.

The conference will be held at the **Westin Hotel**, an elegant hotel located in the heart of downtown Providence, within walking distance of many gourmet restaurants and historic attractions. You can make your hotel reservations now by calling (401) 598-8000 or by clicking on the hotel reservation link on the IARR (www.iarr.org) website. Make sure to mention IARR to get the special conference rate of \$179.00 per night (this rate is only available until June 16th – so please make your reservations early). Rollaway beds, dog beds, and cribs are available, and babysitting services can be arranged. The Westin also features a fitness center and a heated indoor pool.

Pre-registration for the conference will take place through the IARR website (www.iarr.org). Registration will be \$285.00 for members, \$260.00 for student members, and \$380.00 for nonmembers (the nonmember rate includes an automatic one-year membership in IARR). The registration fee includes continental breakfast and coffee breaks Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, lunch on Friday and Sunday, and sit-down dinners on Thursday and Friday. If you have any special dietary requests, please contact local host, Wendy Samter, as soon as possible (wsamter@bryant.edu).

The conference begins with two keynote addresses in the early evening of July 17th, followed by the opening dinner. After dinner, you can take advantage of **Gallery Night**, a free, fun-filled introduction to Providence's exciting art scene. On the third Thursday of the month, from March through November, nineteen of the city's hot "art spots" open their doors inviting you to a visual arts party. Stroll from gallery to gallery, enjoying the Providence skyline and the historic city streets.

Following a full day of programming (and dinner) on Friday, you'll have the chance to relax with Cape Cod's favorite party band, **The BaHa Brothers**. To celebrate Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline coastline, we're turning the traditional sock hop into a beach party. The

BaHas will bring their sun-worshipping, beach-partying attitude to downtown Providence – and you'll get a chance to experience what summer in New England is all about. So pack your flip flops and Hawaiian shirt and get ready to party. Leave lots of room for dessert – because we'll be having a "chocaholic reception" at the dance too.

Programming on Saturday, July 19th, will end at 3:30 so you can take advantage of the first of the optional excursions we'll be offering both during and after the conference. You have your choice of two different trips (with different departure times) to **Newport, Rhode Island**. Newport is famous for its natural seaside beauty and for the magnificent mansions and gardens built by the industrial barons of America's Gilded Age. Newport was the playground of the wealthy (think Vanderbilts and Astors) from the 1880s to the early 20th century. The first (and longer) trip will depart from the Westin at 1:00 pm, and includes a driving tour of Newport featuring historic sites, panoramic views, stunning historic homes along Ocean Drive and the spectacular mansions of Bellevue Avenue. The tour also includes a guided visit to The Breakers, an opulent 70-room estate built for Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1895, modeled after a northern Italian Renaissance palace. After touring the mansion, you will be dropped off in the heart of downtown Newport where you'll have several hours of free time to explore the city, eat dinner at one of the many restaurants, or even take a cruise on a former America's Cup boat. If you don't want to miss afternoon programming, you can opt for a shorter, less structured visit to Newport, which will depart the Westin at 4:00 pm. This trip will include a driving tour of the city, followed by ample time to walk around the tightly packed, Colonial-period houses of Newport's downtown, sample the offerings of its many charming shops and restaurants, or perhaps make your way to the Cliff Walk, a three-mile path with rocky beaches on one side and stately mansions on the other. As the conference gets closer, we'll post (on the IARR conference website) a list of activities you may want to do while in Newport, as well as a list of the city's restaurants. Summer's a busy time in the City-by-the-Sea, so we encourage you to make reservations in advance.

Sunday, July 20th is the last day of the conference. At the end of the day, you will have the option of taking a **Dinner Cruise on the Vista Jubilee**. Buses for this three-hour cruise will depart the Westin at 6:30 p.m., leaving plenty of time to catch the picturesque sunset views on board the ship, to indulge in a lavish buffet dinner, and to toss off your shoes and dance under the stars.

Think about staying an extra day or two because on Monday, July 21st, you'll have the option of taking a **Post-Conference Trip to Martha's Vineyard**. Located just seven miles off the Massachusetts coastline, Martha's Vineyard is a picturesque New England island with captains' houses and lighthouses, white picket fences and ice-cream shops, an authentic fishing village, a Native American community, miles of pristine beaches, and rolling farmland. Visitors often rent bikes to meander down the shaded paths hugging the coastline and admire the regal sea captains' houses in Edgartown. You can also stroll down Circuit Avenue in Oak Bluffs and ride the Flying Horses Carousel, said to be the oldest working carousel in the country. You can visit quaint "gingerbread" cottages, marvel at the red-clay cliffs of Gay Head, a National Historic Landmark, travel the country roads of West Tisbury and Chilmark, shop at Allen Farm for sweaters made from local flocks of sheep, and snack on artisan bread and the famous New England specialty: the lobster roll! This tour will depart at the Westin at 7:00 a.m. Monday morning and travel to Woods Hole on Cape Cod. Here, visitors will board the 9:30 a.m. ferry for the 45-minute trip to Oak Bluffs. Your trip to the Vineyard will include a three-and-a-half hour narrated island tour, after which you will have plenty of free time before catching the 6:15 p.m. ferry back to Woods Hole. Buses will return to the Westin by 9:00 p.m.

When you register for the conference, you will have the chance to select any or all of these optional excursions, and to reserve extra slots for any family members who would like to join you. We hope you find the 2008 IARRC intellectually stimulating as well as just plain fun. We look forward to seeing you there!

MORE CONFERENCE NEWS

REPORT ON THE COMBINED 7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S PSYCHOLOGY OF RELATIONSHIPS INTEREST GROUP AND INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH MINI-CONFERENCE.

by Ross Wilkinson

It is with pleasure that I can report on the great success of the first IARR Mini-Conference to be held in Melbourne, Australia. In November last year the Psychology of Relationships Interest Group (PORIG), a unit of the Australian Psychological Society, combined its annual conference with an IARR Mini-Conference. Over 100 participants attended the two days of keynote presentations, forums, papers, and posters. Planning for the conference began over 2 years ago and we were very pleased when the IARR agreed to co-badge our event as a mini-conference. This assisted us in advertising the event internationally and attract presenters and participants from around the world.

The three keynote presentations were a particular highlight of the conference. Phil Shaver spoke on his work with Mario Mikulincer and others in advancing our understanding of attachment at the levels of the individual mind, dyadic relationships, and relationships in group and organisations. Marita McCabe gave a fascinating presentation on work examining sexual functioning in men and women as they age. Jeff Simpson's keynote on his experimental work examining working models and care-giving in romantic partners demonstrated the major contribution he is making to the field.

Forty research papers and 11 posters were presented over the two days of the conference with a truly impressive range of topics that covered the lifespan. Electronic versions of the

2007 Program (including abstracts) and the Conference Proceedings will be available via our website www.groups.psychology.org.au/porig/). Importantly for our conference, empirical, theoretical, and practice issues were covered. The three forums were also a very popular way to encourage interaction, engagement and energise participants.

An important highlight of the conference was the presentation ceremony for the Psychology of Relationship Interest Group awards. This year the Research Award was awarded to Associate Professor Julie Fitness for her outstanding contribution to research on relationships and her major contributions to the community of relationships researchers. Two Thesis Awards were awarded this year. Doctor Alexandra West was presented an award for her dissertation titled '*Relational Standards – Rules and Expectations in Romantic Relationships*'. Doctor Lauren Breen was presented an award for her dissertation titled '*Silenced Voices: Experiences of Grief Following Road Traffic Crashes in Western Australia*'.

For the first time we held both pre- and post-conference workshops. On the Friday morning Dr Helen Stallman, from the University of Queensland, presented a clinically focussed workshop on 'Triple P' interventions to promote positive outcomes for children following divorce. In the afternoon Dr Mike Smithson, from The Australian National University, presented a research focussed workshop looking at coping with the problem of dependent data by using multi-level modelling. Highly successful post-conference workshops were also held in Brisbane (with Phil Shaver) and Adelaide (with Jeff Simpson).

After a brief pause to catch our breathe planning for the 2008 PORIG conference is already under way. Look out for more information about it on our website (see above).

2009 IARR MINI-CONFERENCE by Omri Gillath and Glenn Adams

Save the date for the 2009 IARR mini-conference: *New Directions in Close Relationships: Research and Applications*.
University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
November 5-7, 2009 (starting Thursday evening)

The conference will focus on innovative research and applications related to the study of close relationships. We will have special sessions devoted to neuroscience, evolutionary and cultural approaches to close relationships, advancements in relevant methods/ statistics, and the application of this research in health psychology and therapy. There will be a wide range of opportunities for presentation by faculty and students from a variety of disciplines. Come join us at the beautiful Lawrence campus of the University of Kansas and expand your horizons! We will have more information and a detailed program soon. In the meantime, save the date!

THANK YOU by Leanne Knobloch

IARR extends its thanks to the members of the Future Conferences Committee for their help evaluating proposals for 2009 mini-conferences and the 2010 main conference. Members of the Future Conference Committee for 2007-09 are as follows:

Anita Barbee, University of Louisville, USA
 Debora Barbosa, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
 Jonathan Bowman, University of San Diego, USA
 Kelly Campbell, University of Georgia, USA
 Wayne Denton, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, USA
 Omri Gillath, University of Kansas, USA
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 Todd Shackelford, Florida Atlantic University, USA
 Jennifer Theiss, Rutgers University, USA
 Leanne Knobloch, University of Illinois, USA (*chair*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR PAPERS Special Issue Journal of Applied Communication Research

by **Laura Stafford**

JACR will publish a special issue focused on questions related to **communication and distance**. Studies may address the communication of any relational type (e.g., dating, marriage, family, work, friendship, or community). Manuscripts could consider populations separated for any variety of reasons such as, but not limited to, educational choices, military deployment, incarceration, or employment preferences or demands. Authors may focus on the issues a particular group faces, community support (or lack thereof), social and cultural norms of a particular population. Studies may also examine policies, practices, or other factors that impact dynamics or outcomes of communicating at a distance. A wide range of theories, contexts, and methodologies is sought. Most importantly, manuscripts must have communication as core. Manuscripts must include a specific section titled "Practical applications" wherein the importance of the research findings in relationship to future practices and policies is articulated.

This special issue will be edited by Erin Sahlstein, University of Nevada-Las Vegas with my assistance as co-editor.

Deadline for submission is March 1, 2009 with an expected publication date of November 2009.

Though JACR's policy is generally a 30 page maximum, I am requesting that the body of the manuscript not exceed 25 pages (excluding references and tables) for this special issue.

Papers should be submitted by visiting <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/RJAC>. At the

site you will need to create an account (if you have not already done so). Select "create new account" in the upper right hand corner of your screen. If you need help, follow the "help" links on the website or email question to the JACR staff at JACR@UKY.EDU. If you have questions concerning this special issue please either email the JACR staff or Erin Sahlstein at erin.sahlstein@unlv.edu. Papers should be clearly marked JACR Special Issue on Communication and Distance.

LORNE CAMPBELL SELECTED AS NEXT EDITOR OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

by **Dan Perlman**

The International Association for Relationship Research (IARR) is pleased to announce that Lorne Campbell, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, will be the next editor of *Personal Relationships*. He will begin processing new submissions effective June 1, 2008. He will be the editor for articles published during the years 2010 through 2013.

Lorne's research focuses on a variety of topics relating to the different stages of romantic relationships. For example, he is investigating the qualities and characteristics that men and women seek in potential partners in different contexts, the types of information that can be gleaned about potential partners from minimal exposure to them, how people evaluate the quality of their relationships once begun, how they perceive their romantic partners, how they want to be perceived, how they interact with their partners, and factors that promote or hinder relationship stability. Lorne has also published on quantitative methods suitable for use with couples and families.

He is the recipient of the Early Career Award from the Society of Personality and Social Psychology's Relationship Researchers Interest Group and has served as Associate Editor of Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.

During 2008-09, Lorne will be a Donald D. Harrington Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin.

In communications with the IARR Publication Committee, Lorne noted that PR specializes in publishing research on close relationships and believes the journal can capitalize on this focus to further enhance its stature. He values multi-method approaches and work concerned with the interdependent nature of close relationships.

With respect to journal management, Lorne hopes the initial review of manuscripts can be accomplished efficiently. He supports IARR's international, multidisciplinary tradition, including the involvement of new professionals, and he is in favor of moving to an online, web-based manuscript processing system.

Lorne looks forward to working with personal relationships scholars as authors, reviewers, and members of the journal's editorial team (Editorial Board members and Associate Editors). Lorne welcomes the assistance and views of IARR members. His contact information is as follows:

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In announcing Lorne's selection, IARR wishes to express its deep and continuing thanks to Rebecca Adams, PR's fourth editor following Pat Noller, Jeff Simpson, and Sue Sprecher. Rebecca will continue accepting submissions until the end of May, 2008 and will finish processing manuscripts initially submitted to her. IARR congratulates Rebecca on her excellent shepherding of PR and looks forward to the articles published during the remainder of her term.

COUPLECARE

Australian Academic Press has recently published a program that we feel will be of interest to our readers entitled, *CoupleCARE*, couple commitment and relationship enhancement for the 21st Century, from Dr Kim Halford, Dr Keithia Wilson, Ms Elizabeth Moore, Ms Carmel Dyer, Mr Charles Farrugia and Mr Kevin Judge.

CoupleCARE is an evidence-based, flexible delivery relationship education program that has been thoroughly evaluated and developed from a 20 year research base on marriage and couple relationship education involving more than 5000 couples.

It is designed to be completed by the couple at home in their own time, supported by regular telephone calls from a professional relationship educator at mutually convenient times. The *CoupleCARE* program consists of an Educators Kit and Manual (for the practitioner), two Couple Guidebooks (one for each partner) and a DVD covering key subjects: relationship goals and self-change, communication, fun and mutual support, managing differences, intimacy and sexuality, and managing change. For more information on the program and to read research abstracts, visit <http://www.couplecare.info>.

MEMBER NEWS & UPDATES

On January 28, 2008, *Time Magazine* issued a special issue devoted to recent research on "Passion." The research of **ELAINE HATFIELD** (Department of Psychology, University of Hawaii) on passionate love and sexual desire was described in two articles: "Why we love" and "Young love." For all the research reviewed see:
<http://www.time.com/time/?pkw=PSTMGLTX041707SNND1066>.

LUGARD WESTCOTT OSAYANDE was recently awarded a Literary Award of Excellence 2007 in Madrid, organised by Black Berry S.L. This was in recognition of a new book entitled “God’s Deputy”. The second edition is undergoing publication by Diadem publisher in the USA to be available for sale on Amazon.com.

JAMES GILES (University of Guam and University of Cambridge) is pleased to announce the *paperback* publication of his book “The Nature of Sexual Desire” (University Press of America). This book takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the psychology, philosophy, and anthropology of this most pressing of human desires. Examining both ancient writings and modern research, taking the reader through both Eastern and Western thought, the author argues that sexual desire is an existential need that must be understood in terms of how it is experienced. The experience of sexual desire is explored and its relation to sexual interaction, the experience of gender, and romantic love, is skilfully unravelled. In these pages sexual desire is presented in a new light: a structure of awareness that is continually sweeping through us, pulling us on to one of life’s highest fulfilments. For more information, visit www.thenatureofsexualdesire.com.

Member **JAN YAGER** shares these recent foreign sales for several of her nonfiction titles: “125 Ways to Meet the Love of Your Life”, to India for English reprint rights (translated and published in Italy, Romania, China, and Korea, with translations in preparation in Thailand and Norway). “Who’s That Sitting at My Desk? Workshop, Friendship, or Foe?” for Russian translation (translated and published in Dutch, Croatian, simplified and complex Chinese). “Road Signs on Life’s Journey: Sayings and Insights to Help You Find Your Way” for Indonesian translation (Spanish edition in Latin America). For more information about these or any of Jan’s other titles, visit her websites: <http://www.drjanyager.com> and <http://www.janyager.com/writing>

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