I am very pleased to report on several important events and new initiatives that have occurred since my last column in March. This has been a very active past few months for IARR as an organization, and we are moving ahead on numerous fronts in anticipation of our next conference in Toronto in July of 2016.

We held two excellent mini-conferences in June and July this year, each of which highlighted important current themes within relationship science. The first mini-conference, which was organized by Jen Theiss and her colleagues on the topic of Relationship Health and Wellness, took place on June 19-21 near the campus of Rutgers University in New Jersey. The second mini-conference, which was coordinated by Catrin Finkenauer and several colleagues on the topic of Self-Regulation and Relationships, was held July 9-11 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Both conferences were very successful and filled with excellent talks, interesting posters, and very good science. Thanks to everyone associated with these two mini-conferences for all the time and effort you devoted to make them successful, stimulating, and memorable!

Elections were held in June for new officers. Jessica Eckstein was elected as our new secretary (this is a new position that was split away from what used to be the secretary/treasurer position) and Susan Branje was elected as a Board member-at-large. Leah Bryant will continue in the role as treasurer following her re-election to this position. Congratulations to Jessica, Susan, and Leah, and many thanks to the IARR members who stood for election to these positions! The organization could not run without people stepping up to assume these important duties.

The next editor of Relationship Research News (RRN) has been appointed. It is Brian Ogolsky at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. We are delighted to have Brian on board! If you have material for RRN, please send it to Brian at bogolsky@illinois.edu.

Close to the time our elections were held, an updated version of our Bylaws was also voted on and passed by the IARR membership with an overwhelming positive vote. This is the first time the Bylaws have been updated in several years. They now accurately contain all of the important changes that have occurred in recent years within our organization.

In June, the IARR Board held its annual meeting via conference call. Here are a few of the key highlights of that meeting:

- The new Mentoring Program plans, which were developed by Nickola Overall and her committee, were approved by the Board. These new plans started being implemented at the two mini-conferences. They will hopefully facilitate the professional development of our younger members in the coming years.

- The new procedures for the selection of IARR Fellows and International Award recipients were also approved by the Board and are now being implemented. Later this year, the IARR Awards committee (chaired by Garth Fletcher) will send out information outlining the procedures for nominating IARR members to
• The International Committee, chaired by Gery Karantzas, is moving ahead with the proposed webinar series. More information about this exciting new initiative will be distributed later this year as well.

• The membership committee, chaired by Silvia Donato, plans to create a new link on the IARR website so our organization can highlight where our members come from geographically. The goal is to showcase the diversity of countries so we can promote IARR membership across even more geographical regions.

• In June, IARR reached an agreement with Wiley to establish the costs of receiving *Personal Relationships* in either digital form or paper (hardcopy) form. With so many publishers moving toward digital-only subscriptions, IARR needs to set new membership rates for members who prefer digital-only subscriptions to *Personal Relationships* and the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* and those who want to receive paper copies. Information regarding changes in yearly and multi-year membership dues will be announced near the end of 2015.

• In response to major ongoing changes in how research is conducted and reported in the social and behavioral sciences, IARR has organized a task force to make recommendations regarding whether IARR should consider implementing new standards to improve the transparency and replicability of our research practices. Susan Bjarne has agreed to chair this ad hoc committee, which will provide a report containing recommendations to our organization in the coming months.

• In what may be the most exciting news, the site for the 2018 conference has been chosen with the guidance of Sean Horan and the Future Conferences Committee. The location will be beautiful Fort Collins, Colorado, the home of Colorado State University. The local host group will be coordinated by Jennifer Harman. IARR is *delighted* about the selection of Fort Collins, which is located along the front range of the Rocky Mountains just an hour’s drive north of Denver and just over an hour east of Rocky Mountain National Park! We have set up a conference advisory committee, which is being chaired by Sue Sprecher, to help the Fort Collins group as they make plans for the 2018 conference.

• Various IARR committees are implementing important plans/goals for 2015-2016. If you would like to discuss the plans/goals that a specific committee has established and is implementing, please contact the appropriate committee chair (you can find the complete list of committee chairs on the final page of this issue, which also includes their contact information). In addition, if you have any suggestions you would like to make, please contact the proper committee chair.

In closing, I want to thank all of the behind-the-scenes people who continue to make IARR the vibrant, well-run organization that it is. I hope everyone has a pleasant and productive remainder of the year.

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**Submission deadline for the Next issue of RRN**

**April 1, 2016**

Submit all materials to Incoming Editor Brian Ogolsky

bogolsky@illinois.edu
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RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS

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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 editor first (please do not send manuscripts). Submit all materials to Brian Ogolsky via bogolsky@illinois.edu. The deadlines for final copy are October 1 and April 1. Inquiries regarding Feature Articles are welcome at any time.
On behalf of the entire editorial team at Relationship Research News, I am pleased to present the sixth and final issue of our editorial term. How the last three years have flown by!

Thank you to my incredible team of Associate Editors, Jessica Eckstein, Deb Mashek, and Amy Muise. I sincerely appreciate all of the hard work you have put into procuring valuable and interesting content for each issue and ensuring that it meets the highest standards. I couldn’t have done this job without you!

I would also like to thank everyone else who contributed to the current issue, as well as those who contributed to our past issues. We are appreciative of your articles and reviews, your announcements and ideas, and your feedback. I am grateful to have had this opportunity and for all of the support provided by the IARR community.

I am pleased to announce that the incoming editor of RRN is Brian Ogolsky, an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Brian shadowed production of this issue with the goal of ensuring a seamless transition in 2016. I have every confidence that things will go smoothly and that RRN will remain in good hands.

Going forward, RRN will continue in its biannual, electronic-only format. I hope you will offer the same high level of support to Brian and his editorial team that you have extended to us in order to ensure the continuation of a successful publication.

Starting now, please direct all new submissions and announcements for future issues to Brian at bogolsky@illinois.edu.

With that said, please be sure to check out the contents of this issue.

Up first is a very timely and useful article led by Lucia O’Sullivan on how getting involved in social media can benefit relationship researchers. It provides practical tips for getting started, as well as helpful information on selecting the right channel of communication. I enthusiastically support the sentiments expressed in this article and would encourage IARR members to at least consider the possibility of getting involved in social media in some way.

Following that is a related editorial by yours truly regarding the use of social media to share your publications. Social media is a great way to increase access to and visibility of your work. In this editorial, I discuss the steps you can take to get your work out there in the hands of those who can use it.

Next is an anonymous submission that describes what it’s like to hit the modern dating scene as a close relationships scholar. This is an article that I think will hit home with a lot of readers because it highlights how our intimate knowledge and awareness of the science of relationships doesn’t necessarily mean that we have everything figured out when it comes to our own sex and love lives.

Toward the end of this issue, you’ll find a review of an important new book entitled Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Towards Parents: Approaches and Contexts for Intervention (edited by Amanda Holt). Jessica Eckstein coordinated this review, and Nancy Brule graciously agreed to provide it.

Last but not least, be sure to check out our regular columns from the President and New Professional Representative. Also, check out the announcements section for some important communications from IARR, including the call for papers for the 2016 conference.

Thank you again for all of your contributions to RRN and for your continued readership and support.

-Justin
Relationship Researchers on Social Media: Why Bother?

by Lucia F. O’Sullivan¹, Amy Muise², and Justin J. Lehmiller³

¹University of New Brunswick
²University of Toronto Mississauga
³Ball State University

You are working hard to keep all your research projects in the air, you have students sending a constant stream of email requests, there are many more papers you would write if you just had the time to get to your data, and uh-oh, look at the time, another set of committee meetings to chew up your afternoon.

Can you really benefit from adding a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to the list of tasks you already have to do?

Right now, social media might simply be adding entertainment value to your life or serving as a much-needed distraction from work. You might post funny updates or photos of your kids on Facebook, send messages to old friends during your lunch “break,” or text your partner to remember to pick up milk.

We’re going to argue that social media can be, should be, and possibly will become a very important element to add to your research life.

First we will outline how social media can be valuable to you as a researcher, as well as discuss the main barriers that prevent researchers from using new media. Then we’ll give you some strategies you can use to maximize the potential of social media in your research life and streamline its use so that the cost in time pays off in tangible ways.

The 5 Top Reasons Social Media Can Be Valuable to Your Research Life

1. **Broader dissemination of your research.** If your research is disseminated primarily in journal articles, you are preaching to the choir. The people reading your work are typically others doing the same type of research. Who else can use your findings? More and more, we need to think of ways our research can be used, and our funders are increasingly reminding us of the importance of this. Social media has the potential to spread word of your findings exponentially. A recent study found that the research findings that were “tweeted” (i.e., shared) most often via social media tools were 11 times more likely to be highly cited over a 3-year period than were those shared less often (Eysenbach, 2011).

2. **Staying informed.** Staying active on social media allows you to get “fresh” updates on breakthroughs in the research world before you come across them in journals or other print media. You will likely also find yourself discovering incredibly useful articles that you never would have come across on your own because your friends and colleagues are sharing work that appears in journals you don’t normally read.

3. **Global networks.** A social media presence allows you to connect with colleagues across the globe in ways that were never truly possible before. An article in the Chronicle of Higher Education refers to social media as a “meeting place” for professional communities (Salter, 2014). Social media offers an incredible opportunity to establish new professional connections, and possibly even begin new research collaborations.

4. **Staying connected.** These forms of communication allow you to share in real time the innovative ideas you come across, such as cutting edge findings presented at a conference. Similarly, they allow you to access updates from conferences around the world even if you are not in attendance.
5. **Exchange of ideas.** Just when things might be getting a bit stale, social media allows you to contribute to a (usually) smart, engaging dialogue about research: new ideas, challenges to old ideas, useful feedback, and fresh perspectives. You can engage with others to see what people are saying online about shared areas of interest, as well as see how they engage with your findings.

**Reality Check**

1. **Time.** A social media presence can be time-consuming, but there are ways to make it work for you in very little time each week. You are not obliged to commit to its use in perpetuity! If you read a relevant media article online, you can usually share it with just one click. Or when you update your CV with a new publication, you can also share it to your network within a few seconds. You can set your social media profiles to follow certain keywords or people so the information most relevant to you is easily identified, allowing you to use your time very efficiently.

2. **Privacy.** Some people worry about privacy, but all forms of social media provide ways to control who sees what you write or post. Also, remember that you do not need to share details of your personal life over social media—it can serve exclusively as a research and learning tool, if desired. You can keep your personal and professional profiles separate.

3. **Retracting Content.** You may worry about leaving a digital trail of ideas or reactions that you don’t want to be held to down the road or that others might steal, and (of course) few enjoy drawing the ire of others for things that they have posted. Social media provide options for deleting, retracting or updating past information. Common sense is warranted, of course: We have all learned how to pause before pressing “send” or “reply all” with email. These lessons translate well to social media.

4. **Exposure.** A presence in social media may seem like too much exposure at times. You will need to ask yourself, “What can I add that will be of use or of interest to others?” and weigh that against our common tendency to keep it all to ourselves. We are talking about smart contributions, not shameless self-promotion. What can you add? See Lupton (2015) for more on the costs and benefits of social media for academics.

**How Should You Even Begin? A Few Easy Steps…**

If asked (and we were) to give our best advice on where to begin, we came up with the following tips. This is just a start for now, but don’t worry—we plan to provide more advice over the next few issues of *RRN* on best practices for social media use:

1. Go to Twitter.com and create a twitter account for yourself or your lab, search for the names of a few friends and colleagues in the field, and start to follow them. We suggest following @IARRofficial, too.

2. Practice sending a few “tweets” (i.e., short messages of 140 characters or less), although it’s okay to be just a passive user in the beginning (i.e., following your favorite people or topics without posting your own content). Your tweets (i.e., posts) can act as a personally-curated set of news, articles, reactions and ideas that interest you. Here are two useful guides designed for academics:

   Using Twitter in University Research, Teaching, and Impact Activities

   A Gentle Introduction to Twitter for the Apprehensive Academic

3. At your next conference, find out what the Twitter “hashtag” is for the conference and follow this (remember that you can easily unfollow anyone or anything later). Research shows that Twitter is often used as a conference backchannel (Li & Greenhow, 2015), allowing you to share a post (poignant, witty, or summarizing comment), photo, or link with other attendees as well as those who aren’t there to see it in person, ultimately expanding conference participation.

4. Remember LinkedIn? Many of you probably started an account years ago but then forgot
about it. Well, it’s now bigger than ever. Take some time to open (or refresh) your account, update your information, and be amazed at how many people you can connect with from your past (and future) research life. Many people advise that this be the first stop in your social media forays.

What are the Options?

On pages 9 and 10 of this issue, you can find an overview of five of the most popular social media sites used by researchers: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and ResearchGate. Information is provided on how these sites work, what you can use them for, as well as their own unique pros and cons.

These are not the only options that exist, but this should give you a good idea of how to get started.

Concluding Thoughts

Our research really matters, and not just to other scholars. It also matters to the media and to the hoards of people trying not just to make their relationships work, but to understand how they work and how they can work better.

When we share our work with others, it is typically only in journals or at conferences accessible only to scholars in the field who are studying similar things. It is time we recognize that we are sitting on gold. There is extremely broad interest in the work that we as relationship researchers are doing. We have very good reason and--some would argue--perhaps even an obligation to share our work often and as widely as possible.

References


ResearchGate provides an easy way to upload and store all of your articles online in a place where anyone with an internet connection can find and download them for free. It’s a great tool for making research available to the masses.

Before I go on, I should clarify that I have no vested interest in ResearchGate—it’s simply a website that I like and have found to be useful. There are other social media sites on which you can archive your work (e.g., Academia.edu), and you always have the option of self-archiving on your own personal website. Choose whatever method you feel most comfortable with.

Before I started uploading any of my articles to ResearchGate, I first reviewed the copyright transfer agreements I had previously signed with journal publishers in order to determine which articles could be shared and in what format. My goal was to make my research publicly available without violating any laws.

What I discovered was that there was a lot of variability in the agreements I had signed (but apparently not read so carefully beforehand—especially not in my early years of publishing, when I would sign anything a publisher put in front of me if it meant another line on my CV and better odds of landing an academic job).

Some of my articles could be uploaded and shared in their final format, including those papers I had published in open access journals like *PLOS ONE*. On a side note, this is precisely the reason I have started publishing most of my new research in open access journals. I like being able to post and distribute my work anywhere without worrying about getting in trouble for it. There are other benefits of open access publishing, too, such as having your work more widely read and cited. Indeed, research has found that open access articles are viewed about twice as often and are cited more frequently compared to articles published in traditional journals that live behind so-called “paywalls.”

As some evidence of this, consider a personal example: Last year, I published a paper in *PLOS ONE* looking at whether use of smartphone hookup applications among men who have sex with men was linked to riskier sexual behavior than hooking up in other ways (it was) and, further, what accounted for this. For instance, does this new technology facilitate risk-taking behavior, or do these apps simply select for people who are drawn to greater risk in the first place? The results seemed to support the latter explanation. To date, this paper has been viewed about 5,000 times and, according to Google Scholar, it has already been cited 13 times. That represents far greater reach in 1.5 years than most of my other work has received in a similar amount of time.

To learn more about why I support open access publishing, see here. To learn more about what the process of publishing in an open access journal is like, check out this article.

What about those papers I had published in non-open access journals, which constitute the vast majority of papers I’ve published to date? None of those articles could be shared in their final, publisher-created format; however, most publishers were careful to specify that authors could share the author-created version of the final paper (i.e., the final, post-peer reviewed version submitted to the journal just prior to the copyediting and typesetting stages). Before sharing, authors are usually required to add a short note to their title page linking to the journal’s definitive version of the paper, and sometimes there is a waiting/embargo period of up to 12 months before authors can post this version to an online database. In case you were wondering, this appears to be the policy for both of IARR’s journals, *Personal Relationships* published by Wiley and *The Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* published by Sage.

Before archiving any of your work in an online database, you should review the copyright transfer agreements that you previously signed. If you can’t find them, you can at least look up what the publisher’s current stance is on authors self-archiving their work. I do not want to get anyone in trouble and, as such, will avoid making blanket recommendations about what you can share and under what circumstances because different publishers may have different policies; however, based on my experiences, it seems that most of the major publishers allow authors to share their work on ResearchGate and similar sites, subject to a few restrictions on time and format.

[EDITORIAL CONTINUES ON PAGE 11]
### Social Media for Relationship Researchers: Choose Your Channel

<table>
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<th>Social Media</th>
<th>What is it anyway?</th>
<th>Think of it like a…</th>
<th>What would I use it for?</th>
<th>What do I do?</th>
<th>What’s the point?</th>
<th>Notable Pros and Cons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter</strong></td>
<td>Text-based microblogging and networking site</td>
<td>Bee hive where information and ideas are exchanged rapidly in a network</td>
<td>Comment on and discuss new research; get first insights into new articles; new angles, information and ideas as they evolve; follow others and share with followers</td>
<td>Get a handle (@handle)</td>
<td>Communicate and exchange</td>
<td>Pros: Bites of information; low commitment</td>
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<td>Post in 140 characters (or less)</td>
<td>Contribute original content and share good stuff with followers</td>
<td>Enter conversations</td>
<td>Cons: The character limit allows little opportunity for context and nuance when tweeting about research</td>
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<td>Follow a group, team, researcher, celebrity, lab, professional organization…</td>
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<td>Knowledge mobilization and exchange</td>
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<td><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
<td>Social sharing site</td>
<td>High school reunion; family grapevine (everyone’s hanging out there); lab meeting</td>
<td>See photos, videos and updates of those you know; share information and news</td>
<td>Check in a few times a week</td>
<td>Connect and communicate with friends, family and colleagues</td>
<td>Pros: Can easily set up a lab or department page for sharing research news</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Congratulate friends, “like” their good news posts, and add positive comments</td>
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<td>See and post engaging content and share it with others</td>
<td>Cons: Requires someone to really make the effort to check in and update</td>
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<td>Share your news and research</td>
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<td>Social &gt; Professional</td>
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<td><strong>LinkedIn</strong></td>
<td>Business-oriented social networking site</td>
<td>Cocktail hour at a professional meeting</td>
<td>Growing channel, especially for job postings, new hires, industry news, product testimonials; can join groups and get noticed by people with funds</td>
<td>Spend some time posting your CV and papers</td>
<td>Check in once every week or two</td>
<td>Share your research updates</td>
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<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
<td>Social-sharing network</td>
<td>Shared photo album</td>
<td>Creative outlet through visual means, mostly photos and now 15-second videos of life’s interesting moments and spaces</td>
<td>Chance to be creative, fun, moving, engaging, or funny</td>
<td>Action research</td>
<td>Crowd-sourcing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ResearchGate</strong></td>
<td>Social-networking site especially for researchers</td>
<td>Conference symposium discussion session</td>
<td>Share information, updates, get information, and make connections with people in your field and related areas</td>
<td>Develop profile</td>
<td>Enter conversation strings</td>
<td>Follow researchers or research topics</td>
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Assuming you’re following all applicable copyright policies, I see no risks or downsides to self-archiving your work on social media sites or in online research repositories.

The benefits to you include greater access to your work around the world, thereby increasing the chances that people will find it, read it, cite it, build upon it through further study, and maybe—just maybe—use it to improve people’s lives. These are the ultimate goals of publishing research anyway, aren’t they? So why not give them this extra little nudge?

Another benefit is that people will stop emailing you and asking for your papers if their library does not have access to them. Thus, you may also find that this saves you time in the long run.

On top of all of that, this is a way of taking scientific dissemination efforts to another level by playing an active role in producing greater academic and public engagement with research.

Up until a year ago, I had never really dated. Although I was married to a man for 14 years, I didn’t even date him; he came with the house. I had moved cross-country into a place I had rented site unseen. He was one of the existing housemates; also site unseen.

When I left my marriage in January 2014, I knew I would eventually try dating. I took the plunge that summer in the form of a double-date with my best friend, her cop husband, and his cop partner. At the end of the date I found myself alone with this fairly attractive, fairly engaging gent. He asked for my number. I froze—it hadn’t occurred to me to think through how the end of the date would play out. In a moment of flustered improvisation, I gave him my business card and told him to e-mail me. He didn’t.

I had a lot to learn about dating—this despite the fact that I am a research psychologist who studies close relationships. I can quote chapter and verse from the research literature on attraction, the biology of love, what it takes to maintain a healthy relationship, what makes for a satisfying sexual relationship, and why break-ups are so darn painful. What my PhD and my subsequent 12 years of researching and teaching about close relationships didn’t teach me about dating, I would have to learn out in the field.

I created an online dating profile and promised myself I would go on 10 first dates to get a little experience under my belt and to figure out what all the fuss—both positive and negative—was about. It’s been a year since that first date—52 weeks to be exact. In that time, I have logged 52 first dates.
Without a doubt, these dating experiences have exposed me to a great deal of novelty in the form of novel people, novel places, and novel experiences. Research shows that exposure to novelty boosts life satisfaction. Self-Expansion Theory (e.g., Aron, Lewandowski, Mashek, & Aron, 2013) asserts that individuals are motivated to increase their efficacy in the world by taking on new resources, perspectives, and identities, and that one way we achieve these ends is by entering into close relationships in which we come to see the other person as part of the self. At this point in my dating “career,” I assert that dating itself—even if that person doesn’t become a partner—is an opportunity to expand the self. Dates will often say that they are happy to come to my neck of the woods for our meet-up; I reply that I’d prefer to experience something new. Even if there’s not a love connection, at least I will know something about my city that I didn’t know before.

Then there’s the issue of physical intimacy. When I started this venture, I didn’t imagine I would be a first-date kisser. Somehow the idea seemed crass. Later, I recalled a study that showed kissing is a good way to get an early read on sexual chemistry (Wlodarski & Dunbar, 2013). So, beginning with Date #15, I started kissing. I didn’t kiss everyone—just those people who had, over the course of our hour or two together, moved into the promising range. All told, I kissed on 15 first dates (yes, I kept a database of such information), though one of these doesn’t really count because the kiss was insanely lame (that guy didn’t get a second date despite being a great conversationalist and a successful surgeon). Conversely, one of these feels like it should count for a heck of a lot more than “just a kiss” given it lasted two hours in the front seat of a window-fogged hatchback.

And what about first date sex? I really, really didn’t think I would be comfortable with first-date sex. But, come to find out, I was wrong. I explored that possibility beginning with Date #19. I came across this guy’s profile as I sifted through the swirl of place-based matches OKCupid revealed the moment my plane’s wheels touched the Denver tarmac. We texted for a couple days, then met up for good ol’ no-strings-attached sex.

Regrettably, one experience with first-date sex was a case of questionable consent. I wanted to have sex with him; he wanted to have sex with me. I handed him a condom from my clutch and we proceeded. Shortly thereafter I found the unopened condom on the floor. When I questioned him, he told me he didn’t use it because he didn’t “plan” on having an orgasm (and I don’t think he did, but there are, of course, still risks). At that moment I was myopically aware that consenting to have sex isn’t the same thing as consenting to have unsafe sex. I felt violated. And thus, with Date #22, I added regular STD testing to my dating protocol.

I left the year with a handful of new sexual partners and a couple “firsts.” For example, despite identifying as bi for nearly 20 years, it wasn’t until this year that I first had sex with a woman. When I shared this piece of identity news with one male partner, he asked if my bisexuality means that I require simultaneous romantic relationships with both men and women. This is one of the biggest misunderstandings out there about bisexuality (in fact, most bi and sexually fluid women end up in monogamous, long term relationships; see Diamond, 2008). Sexual orientation is much more complex than just sexual behavior; otherwise, none of us—straight, gay, bi, or otherwise identified—would have a sexual orientation prior to our first sexual encounter. Our attractions and fantasies are just as important as our behaviors. I was in a monogamous relationship with a man for 16 years and never as much as kissed a woman (or another man) during that time. I did experience some puppy attractions, which I shared with my spouse. And women made regular appearances in my sexual fantasies. But, no, bisexuality doesn’t require—at least not for this woman—a paddock of peeps. That said, it was wonderful to finally get to experience sex with a woman, especially one as sensual, intuitive, and open as Date #41.

All told, this past year has been a fun one for me on the sexual front. I’ve enjoyed exploring my sexuality and feel eager to continue doing so, preferably with a single partner who ascribes to sex columnist Dan Savage’s notion of GGG: good in bed, giving, and game for anything. That said, a couple of regrettable incidents remind me that I still need to be my own best advocate. I need to say what I want and insist on what I need, like sex that is physically and emotionally safe.
Consistent with predictions from evolutionary theory, I also learned that I find indicators of financial stability wildly appealing. It’s a turn on, for example, to hear someone answer one of my silly getting-to-know-you questions—the one about what you would do with the money if you won $10,000 on a lotto ticket—with an answer about saving or paying off debt. And I definitely notice when I drive to someone’s home and realize I’m in a neighborhood where the home prices dwarf the salary I’ll bring home in the coming decade. Does this make me shallow, or perhaps unable to override the ancient programs wired in my brain? I don’t think so. Rather, I think that 16 years of being the sole provider in a relationship where my partner made a multitude of poor financial decisions that I had to clean up sensitized me to the value of a financial partnership. I want that with my next partner. Another lesson learned.

Related to this idea of wanting to find what was absent in my previous relationship, I’ve come to realize that I like not having to be the sole planner. In my marriage, I planned our weekly to-dos, I scheduled our social outings, and I planned our vacations. But, out in the dating world, I have encountered other planners. It was nothing short of disorienting the first time a date made plans for us. We had decided to attend a show that required dinner reservations. When I called to make the reservation, the receptionist told me there was already a reservation under my date’s name. I assured her there must be an error. A couple minutes later, I received a text from the gent letting me know he had taken care of the reservation. It hadn’t occurred to me before that moment that I didn’t always have to be the doer or the manager. Another lesson learned.

Of my 52 first dates, I had high hopes for 4 of these individuals. They seemed like promising prospects right out of the gate. Date #5 failed to mention over the course of our nine dates that he had no interest in “doing the relationship thing.” He was the first person I had any interest in post-marriage; in my novice state I didn’t recognize the now familiar indicators of “not looking for a relationship.” These include multiple cancellations and setting up dates that were oddly convenient for him, but inconvenient for me (“Why, sure, I’d love to come to your house at 9PM after your child goes to bed.”). Two of them (Date #13 & Date #24) pivoted from me to other women who had been in their lives for a while prior, but who hadn’t, until my arrival, been available for a relationship. I may have a latent super power to conjure newfound availability among previously unavailable women; more testing is needed.

And then there was Date #47. He won my heart and mind after a single date and three weeks of refreshingly authentic and emotionally open getting-to-know-you text (not sext) exchanges. We were a 99% match according to the over 1,000 questions we had answered in common on OKCupid, an online dating site that invites users to submit and answer self-report questions. We share similar midwest backgrounds and working class values; our positions on social issues line up beautifully; and we approach our work and play with similar cadences, itself a function of striking overlap in our personalities. According to the research literature, all these points of similarity are a plus in the attraction and compatibility columns (Montoya & Horton, 2013). Time evaporated when I was around him, a function of his engaging intellect, wit, and intensity. And, on top of all of that, he is gorgeous, professionally successful, and giving.

When we met, he was splitting his time between my little corner of the world and a town in another state where his teenage kids reside. Due to a crisis in the family, he needed to move full time to the other state. The distance and familial demands put a this-clearly-isn’t-feasible damper on an emerging relationship that felt so, so right. All told, we were in each other’s lives for a mere two months. Two months post-breakup, what the researchers call relationship dissolution, I still feel longing.

Although I’m no longer experiencing the intrusive thoughts that previously disrupted my ability to focus on anything else (this is one of the telltale signs of infatuation and involves the same neurochemicals associated with addicts’ cravings and obsessive compulsive disorder; Burkett & Young, 2012), I’d be lying if I claimed I don’t think about him every day. He remains in my head in some unexpected ways. A couple weeks after our goodbye, I was positive I saw him running on the beach. Intellectually, I know the chances that it was him is infinitesimally small given thousands of people visit the beach every day, this beach was far away from my home, and—perhaps the most
important detail of all—he had relocated to another state. Yet, when a fellow close relationship researcher asked recently about my experiences with romantic regret, this one came to mind instantly: I regret that I didn’t run after that jogger to see if it was indeed #47. And, although I deleted all of his photos from my phone in hopes of short-circuiting triggers of my longing, I still bump into them every now and again in the auto-backup gallery; I can’t figure out how to delete the damn things. When I see these photos, I audibly gasp. My heart rate quickens. My body clenches. In a nutshell, I fell fast and hard.

I once told him, “You I adore.” That was an understatement of my true feelings. I worry my falling so fast may have pushed him away, or at least may have figured into his calculus that the long-distance thing wasn’t a viable arrangement for someone like me who craves connection and affection. Attachment theory, originally devised to explain parent-child bonding, also explains much about adult romantic relationships. For example, some of us demonstrate a good deal of attachment-related anxiety (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). We’re not sure others will love us as much as we love them. We monitor our romantic relationships for signs that the partner is about to leave us. And, we engage in behaviors that can actually push others away, painfully confirming our own beliefs about our lovability. I worry my anxious behaviors may have pushed him away.

I also worry my ongoing relationship with Date #41, the first woman I had sex with, may have been a factor. She and I dated for a couple months, but I never thought of her as a real prospect. Why? Because she was married. And she had a boyfriend. In fact, her boyfriend’s wife was her husband’s girlfriend (I agree—a diagram of this perfectly stable, secure, open, and functional polyamorous quatro would probably be useful here). I realized that cultivating something with her would ultimately complicate the sort of relationship I want for myself, so I broke off contact with her. She couldn’t be my one and only because that’s not what she was after and it wasn’t the life she had created. I told #47 about her because it didn’t feel fair to her to pretend she didn’t exist and it didn’t feel fair to him to pretend there weren’t other attachments to navigate. I hated having that conversation. It wasn’t me. I don’t want two lovers. I was having the conversation because I felt I had to. Had my relationship with her not existed, I wouldn’t have had to potentially threaten what I had with him. Indeed, he called things off shortly after that chat; I can’t help but think my disclosure figured into his stay/leave decision.

I remain grateful for the experience of having met #47 even as I continue to question and protest the outcome of that connection. There’s a piece of me that fantasizes he will someday reach out to express his enduring affections and we’ll find a way to stay in each other’s orbits despite the distance and the challenges of him raising a kiddo with a severe mental health disorder. Of course, holding onto that fantasy, and engaging in the counterfactual thinking it engenders, undermines any chance I have of building something real and lasting with someone else. I’m working hard to squash the “imagine ifs”; I succeed some days more than others.

Believing something could possibly come of my longing for love from afar highlights what has been the most salient lesson learned—or, rather, reaffirmed—this year: I am an optimist. I engage the world with the expectation that good will come to those with open arms. I’ve heard a lot of people—men and women alike—talk about the horrors of online dating. They pitch it as a necessary evil; something you must endure if you want to remove yourself from an ironically dehumanizing marketplace in which you try to find the person that complements the “you” that you are. That hasn’t been my experience. My dating experiences have validated my belief that people are generally good and well intentioned. I’ve enjoyed this adventure; it hasn’t been the least bit chore-like. When talking about this contrast between how others talk about dating and my own experiences, a clinician friend suggested that perhaps I have low expectations—not in the sense that I will settle, but in the sense that neutral will do just fine. This is probably true, at least when it comes to a single date.

But, I want way, way more than neutral when it comes to my future partner, my future relationship, my future partnership—the one my relentless optimism assures me I will find. There’s another theoretical idea in the close relationship literature that says true intimacy is the state of being cared for,
validated, and understood (Reis & Shaver, 1988). That’s what I want. I want a partner who knows me—the authentic me. I want a partner who accepts this iteration of me—including my perfectionism, my short temper, my insecurities, and, yes, my now-dense dating history. And I want a partner who is eager to see how I might transform in a relationship with someone who shares my belief that the self can be amplified by others.

This past year has been a slow-motion collision between the professional and the personal. My personal experiences have prompted me to think more carefully, more holistically about what the research “knows” and doesn’t “know” about close relationships. As researchers, we don’t have all the answers; our data fail to reveal many things, especially about those moments when behaviors, thoughts, and feelings muddle together within one person and between the self and others (and we know even less about how these features unfold over time). And, while my academic lens as a close relationships researcher helped me to think and to talk about my personal experiences, it failed to prepare me to navigate with any ease or grace the hopes, disappointments, and longings that I encountered along the way. These experiences are independent teachers; I continue to learn their lessons.

References


Ashley K. Randall
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As academics, we face a number of reviews throughout our careers (e.g., annual review, appointment review, third-year review, promotion and tenure). This column is designed to help us think critically about building portfolios for these reviews, with special attention to early career professionals. In particular, this column will focus on developing a Personal Statement.

From applying for jobs to applying for tenure, we have all been encouraged to think about our Personal Statement—the narrative that tells the story of us as academics and projects our story into the future. This statement allows us to think critically about what we have accomplished, and what we will do, in three important areas: research, teaching/mentorship, and service.

Research

We are often reminded that our careers are working toward answering the “big question” that can, in no way, be answered by publishing one or two manuscripts. As such, it can be daunting to think
about our publishing requirements (e.g., 2-3 publications per year at R1 institutions), and the “publish or perish” mindset, without having the bigger picture in mind. At past IARR Mini-Conferences, Sue Sprecher and others have given some great tips regarding research and publishing. Specifically, it has been suggested that we be mindful of maintaining multiple ongoing projects at varying stages (e.g., development, data collection, data processing, and write-up). Doing so will allow us to avoid getting burnt out on any one project, and it will also afford us the opportunity to think critically about the questions we wish we would have asked (i.e., those unanswerable in the current manuscript), which we can now address in our new data collection efforts. This is, of course, in addition to having good and reliable collaborators to keep us motivated!

Denise Solomon also offers the following advice: “Realize that your priorities shift as you approach and move past certain check points. For example, when tenure is in the more distant future, you might be thinking of several projects that together define your program of research; in the final run up to tenure, your attention turns to the immediate priorities that round out your dossier in strategic ways; after tenure and promotion, your horizon might expand again as you think about the program of scholarship that will propel you to your next promotion.”

Teaching and Mentoring
Above and beyond being an effective classroom instructor, there are many areas of teaching and mentoring that are good indicators of excellence in teaching. According to Arreola (2007), effective teaching and mentoring integrates three roles: (1) providing the opportunity to learn, (2) enabling learning, and (3) causing learning. Keeping these in mind, there are a number of ways in which we can demonstrate teaching/mentoring excellence, which I note below*:

- Supervising undergraduate independent study projects and honors theses;
- Chairing or co-chairing graduate student theses and dissertations;
- Co-authoring posters and publications with students; and
- Documenting evidence that our students moved on to graduate study or employment due to skills we helped develop.

In addition, as noted above, it is also important that we demonstrate that we are effective classroom instructors. Seek out informal and formal evaluations from peers and senior colleagues who can write letters on your behalf that either indicate strong performance or show improvement in instruction over time. These are great additions to review packets.

Service
It is easy to get overwhelmed with the number of service opportunities that are presented to us. These include, but are not limited to, serving on various committees at the level of the program/department (e.g., admissions), college (e.g., curriculum), and university (e.g., diversity and inclusion), in addition to serving our professional organizations (e.g., ad-hoc reviewing, committee or board membership). Some advice that I have received is that, early in one’s career, it is important to attend to service requirements in our immediate program/department, because there will be plenty of opportunities to become involved in the future, especially at the college and university level.

Professional service responsibilities may end up taking the most time, however, they can also be the most rewarding. First, it is a good idea to review for journals that will be our “home” outlets—the journals where we may want to sit on the Editorial Board in the future. While we can get inundated with requests for review, we should be mindful of our time and try not to review more than one manuscript per month as an ad-hoc reviewer. Second, it is important that we begin to show an active presence at conferences for our “home” organizations. While there are many benefits to this, an important one to keep in mind is that we are networking with other senior scholars who may eventually be writing our tenure/review letters.

Concluding Comments
As we begin to prepare our materials for review, we should be mindful that it is always a good idea to
seek mentorship and guidance about what is required. Each program/department may have different benchmarks, so while we can seek advice from colleagues and mentors outside our college/university, we should ensure that we are aware of our specific review requirements. For more information on any of the topics above, check out the list of New Scholar Resources on the IARR website: http://www.iarr.org/new-scholar-resources/

*These areas came from guidelines given to faculty at Arizona State University, which may or may not reflect those of other institutions.

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**BOOK REVIEW**

**Review of Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Towards Parents: Approaches and Contexts for Intervention**

by Nancy J. Brule
Bethel University

*Working with Adolescent Violence and Abuse Towards Parents: Approaches and Contexts for Intervention*, edited by Amanda Holt, presents treatment approaches from practitioners and institutional entities across the world who have spent years searching for ways to treat adolescent violence and abuse towards parents (AVATP). As a little-researched phenomenon with increasing numbers of incidents each year, AVATP is a worldwide problem requiring specialized and unique ways of understanding and dealing with the issue—an argument lent strong credence by Holt’s approach to choosing chapter-authors from diverse countries. Anyone dealing with this type of abuse (personally or through work with families) will agree such a text—especially one that provides explanations of specifically tailored therapy approaches and initiatives for helping to resolve AVATP—is necessary. The primary purpose of this book is to provide varying perspectives and answers to the key question often asked by abused parents, practitioners, and law and policy makers who are forced to deal with this problem: What do we do about the problem of adolescent violence and abuse towards parents?

Holt’s book is an important interdisciplinary contribution. It has taken researchers from many areas over 20 years to begin to agree and recognize the main assumptions regarding AVATP; Holt’s bringing together of key personnel who have worked with this phenomenon from the beginning is a strong salute to grounded theory’s ability to provide results in applicable measures that can impact and help a struggling population. The result is a book that provides chapters with brief reviews of what we know about AVATP from differing perspectives, as well as how that knowledge informs treatment choices for practitioners and intervention strategies for institutions such as court systems and policy makers. This book is useful for abused parents, family and individual therapists, family researchers, law enforcement officials, family court systems, and centers focused on creating support for AVATP victims.

In each of the five chapters that make up Part One of Holt’s book, authors provide a summary of the empirical research they have concluded has merit for understanding AVATP, and then use that information to clearly explain and justify their theoretical choice for specific treatment therapies and program development options. Chapters’ highlights include the cognitive-behavioral skill and restorative practice model (Routt & Anderson; Ch 1), the solution-focused approach (Gallagher; Ch 2), the non-violent resistance approach (Omer; Ch 3), the trauma-based approach (Evans; Ch 4), and the systemic-relational model (Pereira; Ch 5). Each author presents an engaging explanation with case examples that demonstrate the authors’ expertise and passion for their particular AVATP therapy. Part Two of the book consists of five chapters that specifically address three different potential AVATP contexts: organizational (e.g., justice systems, mental health; Murphy-Edwards, Ch 6; Bolton, Lehmann, & Jordan, Ch 8), regional and national contexts (e.g., cultural norms, values, policies; McGeeney, Barakat, Langeland, & Williams, Ch 7; Daly & Wade, Ch 9), and personal and family life aspects (e.g., gender, race, family demographics; Howard & Holt, Ch 10). In the same manner as Part One, professionals from
a variety of fields describe the work they are doing and the challenges they encounter engaging AVATP in these particular contexts.

As an AVATP researcher, I found this book to be very helpful and a necessary addition to the literature. Some of the currently-existing AVATP assumptions shared by these authors clearly show how far we have come in examining this issue. But they also show how far we have to go in understanding this form of abuse. I found some of the assumptions on which AVATP intervention strategies were based to be troubling (e.g., searching for “reasons” or “causes”). Including a chapter on what “causes” this form of abuse is interesting, but results in what I consider to be stepping back 20 years to when information on this form of abuse was first presented and parents were blamed for not being able to prevent their own victimization. I realize scholars’ foci on causality is controversial and depends on disciplinary emphases, but I am curious if we would perpetuate this direction of inquiry when scrutinizing some other form of domestic violence (e.g., child or spousal abuse). Relatedly, I also found it problematic (albeit, showing my own research vs. practice bias) that some chapters included AVATP data that the research community has long considered misleading. I admit I also found it intriguing to be able to see the rationalizations for making decisions on sentencing and intervention choices in the family court systems. Although these concerns stem mainly from Part 2 of the book (i.e., focused AVATP contexts), this use of dated or oversimplified information remains troubling because those claims are presented as agreed-upon facts, even when those arguments clearly contradict many of the previous chapter-author’s conclusions. On one hand, this allows readers familiar with AVATP to discern which claims still need to be refuted in professional institutional settings; conversely, this aspect could present a danger if laypersons or parents use the text to search for “answers” to resolve their own AVATP experiences. Although AVATP research is still in its early years, care should be taken to not perpetuate some of the stereotypes still associated with this form of abuse.

In addition, although Holt acknowledges that a lack of an agreed upon term in defining this abuse exists and is problematic in both researching and presenting research on this topic, it seems an opportunity was missed to correct this situation because no attempt was made to have key voices in the field of AVATP begin to use some agreed upon term prior to writing these chapters. I agree with Holt that the authors of these excellent chapters are pioneers in the field of AVATP, which would have provided an excellent starting point for researchers and practitioners to introduce a term that could bring clarity and unity to future research, as well as help provide quick reference-gathering for treatment and intervention programs. I would have liked to have seen Holt, as editor, make an argument for a term that these chapter authors could have embraced and implemented in their writing, which would have brought added cohesion throughout the book as well as added understanding for laypersons not familiar with the practice of differing terms actually representing one form of domestic violence.

Nonetheless, Holt’s book is edited well and the chapters are well written and engaging, making this book a very strong contribution to AVATP research across disciplines. I strongly recommend this book for anyone trying to understand AVATP. I commend Holt for providing a book that informs, empowers, and will help families experiencing AVATP to find resolution to a very difficult situation.


202 pages, Paperback, $49.95 USD (Amazon)
Is She the One?: Personality Judgments from Online Personal Advertisements
AARON C. WEIDMAN, JOEY T. CHENG, CHANDRA CHISHOLM, and JESSICA L. TRACY

The Individual and Relational Risks of Providing Support to an Inconsolable Partner
GELAREH KARIMIHA, UZMA REHMAN, and TARA MACDONALD

Acculturation, Gender, and Views on Interracial Relationships among Chinese Canadians
EVELINA LOU, RICHARD N. LALOND, and JANE Y. T. WONG

Self-Esteem Trajectories Across 25 Years and Midlife Intimate Relations
MATTHEW D. JOHNSON, NANCY L. GALAMBOS, and HARVEY J. KRAHN

Sexual Similarity, Complementarity, Accuracy and Overperception in Same-Sex Couples
DAVID C. de JONG and HARRY T. REIS

Finding your Soulmate: Homosexual and Heterosexual Age Preferences in Online Dating
JANE R. CONWAY, NYALA NOË, GERT STULP, and THOMAS V. POLLET

Assessment of Positive and Negative Relationship Adjustment in Marriage
MARK A. WHISMAN and ANGELA LI

Cherish the Good Times: Relational Savoring in Parents of Infants and Toddlers
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Papers: 2016 IARR Conference

The next IARR meeting will be held in Toronto, Ontario from July 20-24, 2016. The submission portal for abstracts for (a) individual oral presentations, (b) symposia on particular topics (comprising 3-4 individual presenters), and (c) poster presentations is now open.

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words, and you will be asked to answer some additional questions about the methods and results of the research to be presented. Submissions will be received until January 15, 2016, and acceptance notifications will be emailed by March 2016.

To submit your abstract, you first must register by clicking here: IARR 2016 Submission System Registration
After registering you will receive an email with a link to the abstract submission page, which you can also access by clicking here: IARR 2016 Abstract Submission

Instructions for Individual oral and/or poster submissions

1. Click on the link to make a new submission. The “Not for a symposium – this is an individual abstract” option is selected by default. Click next.

2. On the first page, you will be asked to provide a title, abstract of up to 250 words, and also provide specific details on the methods used for data collection (up to 250 words). Press next.

3. On the next page you will be asked to add contact information of the lead author and all co-authors. Press next.

4. On the final page you will be asked to indicate if you prefer an oral presentation, poster presentation, or either. Press submit.

Instructions for Symposium Submissions

1. The convenor/chair of the symposium needs to click the link for setting up a new symposium. The convenor/chair will be asked to provide a title for the proposed symposium, enter her or his name and contact information (under the convenor/chair heading), and add the name of a discussant if applicable. The convenor/chair will be then be asked to enter an overview (or abstract) of the symposium of up to 400 words. Press submit at the bottom of the page, and the symposium will be created within the system.

2. The convenor/chair will then receive an email with instructions for how to have participants of the symposium complete their own abstract submissions. The email will look like the following:

“Thank you for submitting your symposium proposal entitled "Title of Symposium". Your reference number for this submission is XXXX.

You should now ask the authors of the papers that are to be presented as part of the symposium to submit their abstracts. When they click to submit a new abstract they will see a screen that lists all current symposium proposals and they should select yours in order to link their abstract to your proposal.

The proposals will be reviewed shortly and you will be informed by March 18, 2016 whether or not your proposal has been accepted. Please remember to quote the conference name and the reference number in any communication with us.”

Bylaw Changes Approved

From: Election Committee
Re: Outcome of the Bylaw Election

Dear IARR Members:

This is to indicate that five proposed Bylaw changes have now each been approved by over 90 percent of IARR members who voted. The five proposed changes were as follows:

1. Our vice president, president, and past president now each serve 2-year terms (rather than 1-year terms). This change, which appears in Section 3.6 of the revised bylaws, was approved as a change in principle by IARR’s membership during the 2009-2010 election process (see Fall 2010 Relationship Research News, p. 29) and reaffirmed by the Board. It took effect with the election of Dan Perlman as President in 2012. The current voted was to bring the Bylaws into accord with what the IARR membership had previously approved but which had never been articulated in the Bylaws. (98% endorsement)

2. The treasurer and secretary positions will be separate ones starting with the next (2015) elections, and both of these elected positions will have full voting privileges on the Board. This change, which appears in section 3.2 of the revised bylaws, was approved by the Board this year because the job of being both secretary and treasurer became too large and time-consuming for one person to manage. (99% endorsement)

3. Our Conference Program Chair will no longer be elected. Instead, the Program Chair will be appointed by the Board in consultation with the local conference organizing committee, and he/she will
serve as a non-voting (rather than a voting) Board member (effective with the selection of the Program Chair for the 2018 conference). This change, which appears in section 3.2 of the revised bylaws, was approved by the Board this year because the local conference organizing committee needs to play a more direct role in choosing the conference Program Chair, with whom they will work very closely. (92% endorsement)

4. We need to revise the language regarding the selection of editors for our newsletter (RNN) and journals (JSPR and PR) so it conforms to how IARR actually operates (see the revised material in section 5.1 and 5.2). This change was approved by the Board this year because we cannot always ensure that people representing different disciplinary affiliations can fill our editor positions as specified in the current bylaws. (94% endorsement)

5. Various copy-editing changes needed to be made to the Bylaws for grammatical and content consistency. (100% endorsement)

In terms of “turnout,” 36 percent of members voted. The Bylaws are available via the IARR web site, http://www.iarr.org/about/ (see bottom of this page).

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