Message From the President

As I reported in the last Circular Letter, the Committee on Planning, Marketing and Communications (CPMC), chaired by Paul Fink, has been working on increasing GAP’s profile to reach a wider audience. Also as previously mentioned, there are important reasons for moving in this direction. Media interest in GAP publications means increased visibility for the organization. Increased visibility within psychiatry means increased resident interest in the GAP Fellowship. Increased notice outside the profession may assist GAP in getting foundation grants, commercial funding, or other financial support for individual Committee work, the GAP Fellowship and other future projects.

The Committee on Planning, Marketing and Communications interviewed several publicists who might assist with this project. However the cost of engaging those services are prohibitive at the present time. Instead, GAP reached out to Catchafire, a visionary new organization whose mission is connecting business professionals interested in volunteering their skills to provide pro bono assistance to nonprofit and social enterprises.

This past August, I attended a Catchafire planning event in downtown Manhattan with Committee members Aaron Krasner and Josh Gibson (with kudos to Josh for flying in from San Francisco for a day!). The meeting’s purpose was to help refine our collaboration with Catchafire. Following consultation with the rest of the Planning Committee, we contracted with Catchafire to assist with five projects to enhance GAP’s public profile as the world’s premier psychiatric think tank: branding, public relations, communications planning, web development, and social media expansion. The goal is to create an expanding media presence and an entree into the social media domain while preserving GAP’s core identity as a group of independent thinkers and advocates for humanistic psychiatric practice.

This is already going on in GAP’s LGBT Committee, which has been actively engaged in bringing modern psychiatric knowledge and expertise to a wider audience through media training and by writing opinion pieces for lay publications. Speaking from personal experience, the media has shown ever increasing interest in my scholarly work and its translation into advocacy. This summer I appeared on ABC World News Tonight to offer a professional psychiatric opinion about the questionable counseling practices of a mental health clinic run by a Republican presidential candidate’s husband. Time Magazine called my comments about “conversion therapy” a quote of the day. Even conservative FoxNews.com recently asked to publish my opinion pieces on the issues of increased visibility of transgender celebrities and the recent demise of the military’s Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy.

In my continuing efforts to explain why psychiatry needs to have a more public voice on a wide range of issues, I will talk about “When Politics Distorts Science: A Psychiatrist Reports from the Trenches of the Culture Wars” at the GAP fall plenary. I will explain how special interest groups often try to distort scientific findings to achieve single-minded political or economic objectives. These activities, which also include...
the publicizing of pseudo-research created solely to support political agendas, raise the troubling question of whether science as we know it can survive politicization. I will also review the techniques used to distort science in the media and offer some practical suggestions about the role psychiatrists can play in correcting distortions in their personal and professional communities. I look forward to your feedback and responses.

An old joke begins with, “How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? The answer: “Just one; but it takes a very long time and the light bulb has to want to change.” How many psychiatrists will it take to change GAP into a 21st century, media-oriented think tank? It will take all of our expertise and we will also have to want to change. But hopefully it will not take too long!

Before closing, I would like to repeat the Publications Committee’s request for new members. If you are interested, which primarily involves peer review of manuscripts submitted by your fellow GAP members, please let David Adler know. I’m looking forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming GAP meeting this fall in White Plains.

Jack Drescher, M.D., President
Thursday Committee Meetings:

Administration & Management 7:00 p.m. Restaurant (6 people) Dr. Merlino
Child Psychiatry 7:30 p.m. Library Room
College Student 7:00 p.m. Restaurant (6 people) Dr. Miner
Family 8:00 p.m. Restaurant (6 people) Dr. Berman
Psychopathology 3:30 p.m. Gallery Room
Research 7:00 p.m. Restaurant (6 people) Dr. Kramer
Work and Organizations 7:30 p.m. Restaurant (6 people) Dr. Gibson

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2011

7:30 a.m. Breakfast Cooper-Greeley Rooms
8:30 a.m. General Membership Meeting Cooper-Greeley Rooms
9:30 a.m. Committee Meetings
10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
12:00 noon Luncheon Cooper-Greeley Rooms
Steering Committee Meeting Irving A Room
1:00 p.m. Fellows Meeting Irving B Room
2:00 p.m. Committee Meetings
3:00 p.m. Coffee Break
5:00 p.m. Plenary Session:
“When Politics Distorts Science: A Psychiatrist Reports from the Trenches of the Culture Wars”
Jack Drescher, M.D. Cooper-Greeley Rooms

6:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception Red Oak Terrace
7:30 p.m. Dinner Cooper-Greeley Rooms
9:00 p.m. Hospitality Foyer - Cooper-Greeley Rooms
Hosted by: Psychopharmacology
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2011

8:00 a.m.  Breakfast  Cooper-Greeley Rooms
         Steering Committee Meeting  Irving B Room
         Fellows Breakfast Meeting  Irving A Room

9:00 a.m.  Committee Meetings

11:30 a.m.  Lunch  Cooper Room

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

ADOLESCENCE                         ROOM 405
AGING                                MASEFIELD B ROOM
ADDICTIONS                           ROOM 223
ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT          ZENGER ROOM
CHILD PSYCHIATRY                     LIBRARY ROOM
COLLEGE STUDENT                      VERANDA ROOM
CULTURAL PSYCHIATRY                  PORTICO ROOM
DISABILITIES/Committee on Professionalism  ROOM 221
DISASTERS AND TERRORISM              ROOM 217
FAMILY                               HUTCHINSON B ROOM
GENDER ISSUES AND MENTAL HEALTH      HUTCHINSON A ROOM
HISTORY AND PSYCHIATRY               JOHN JAY SUITE/ROOM 102
HUMAN SEXUALITY                      ROOM 207
IMG/Global Psychiatry                KYKUIT SUITE/ROOM 103
LGBT                                 ROOM 688
MEDICAL EDUCATION                    PARLOR ROOM
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES               HUDSON ROOM
PLANNING, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS  ROOM 305
PREVENTIVE PSYCHIATRY                ROOM 215
PSYCHIATRY AND THE COMMUNITY         JOHN CARRERE/ROOM 101
PSYCHIATRY AND THE LAW               SLEEPY HOLLOW/ROOM 105
PSYCHIATRY AND NEUROSCIENCE          ROOM 225
PSYCHIATRY AND RELIGION              ROOM 209
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY                      GALLERY ROOM
PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY                   ROOM 634
PSYCHOTHERAPY                        ROOM 201
RESEARCH                             ROOM 219
TERRORISM and POLITICAL VIOLENCE     ROOM 205
WORK AND ORGANIZATIONS               VAN CORTLANDT/ROOM 106
DATES OF FUTURE GAP MEETINGS

2011
November 10-12, 2011

2012
March 29-31
November 15-17

2013
April 4-6
November 14-16

2014
April 10-12
November 13-15

2015
April 16-18
November 12-14

2016
April 14-16
November 10-12

2017
April 6-8
November 9-11

2018
April 12-14
November 8-10

2019
April 11-13
November 7-9

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