

The APPPAH Newsletter

News From the First Frontier: Conception To Birth

Official Bulletin of the Association for Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology & Health, Summer 2009

Impressions of APPPAH's 2009 Congress



Talking to friends and colleagues in Germany about the experience I had at APPPAH's 2009 conference, my enthusiasm is still breathtaking, even two month later. It was really stunning to me, as I never before experienced such a genuine fabric of important new information, a respectful and heartfelt dealing with this knowledge. and the encouragement to spread the news into the world. The congress topic melted perfectly into the nature of Asilomar Conference Grounds. Gary Malkin created a lively and touching ambiance opening heart and mind for the important presentations of so many pioneers and visionaries like Thomas Verny, Valerie Hunt, David Chamberlain, Barbara Findeisen, Gladys McCarey, William Emerson, Marshall Klaus and many others. The congress felt very authentic and convincing, like the beaming aura of a pregnant woman. I'm very sure that I can keep my promise to bring at least 3 new members from our European Community to APPPAH! *Gerhard Schroth, psychoanalyst, Speyer, Germany*

My confidence was boosted hugely by the Congress and it was wonderful to meet people I have been following for years like Michel Odent, Dr Verny, Marshall Klaus. I watched slides on their work 27yrs ago when pregnant with my first son. It changed my life and attitudes about birth and parenting and informed my decision to become a midwife. I am determined to stay in touch with the international community and at the same time make a difference here at home. I am once again teaching the 3rd year University of Cape Town med students, introducing them to obstetrics, and am able to use what I learnt at the congress to inform them and keep them interested. I enjoyed the rustic atmosphere of Asilomar, the space. The lunchtime discussions added interest to the gastronomic spread. Most of all I was inspired greatly and felt as if I had come home to my community: the large group of APPPAH members all working together towards creating a better future for our families and our children. Thank you for this amazing gift. I will treasure the memories and new friendships. *Marianne Littlejohn, midwife, South Africa*

I had a wonderful time at the conference! I enjoyed the setting by the sea. Other conferences are a great wealth of information, but APPPAH nourishes my heart and feeds my soul in a way that other conferences do not. I also appreciate the diversity of the people that attend. It is so wonderful to meet so many brilliant people from all over the world. Thank you for putting it together every 2 years. I wish it was annually! *Kaye Kanne, midwife, AK; www.junreaubirthcenter.org*

What a Congress! Americans, you are marvelous; you are so warm and enthusiastic. You cotton on so quickly and receptively. And with organizers like yours there is plenty to enthuse about. My hopes rose that APPPAH and ISPPM (our international PPN society based in lovely Heidelberg, Germany) can unite for extra power in bringing children into the world healthy and happy.

Spotlight on a Particularly Popular Congress Session

This was, for this loyal member, one of the best APPPAH congresses ever, from both a content and a venue perspective. But one concurrent session stood out for me: Gerhard Schroth's presentation on Saturday morning, "Trans-Generational Impacts of Prenatal Violence: A Case Study in Bonding Analysis." My reserved Scot heritage—and, perhaps, my own analytic training in the rich heydays of that world at the University of Michigan—probably played a part in my appreciating so much this German psychoanalyst's reserve, his clarity, and the modesty of his claims. But not for a second did his passion fail to reveal itself as he taught us about the work of Jenő Raffai in Hungary, and his own in Speyer, Germany. In Dr. Schroth's elegant case presentation, we learned how a mother becomes able to negotiate the incredibly complex path to profound intimacy with the child inside her, while preparing for a differentiated relationship with the child who will soon be outside of her. Perhaps most compelling of all is the *awareness* of each other that grows between mother and baby, and the *respect* implied as they each learn about the other. Simply grand. In the 20- to 30-session procedure of Bonding Analysis, an expectant mother comes to honor her uterus, contact her unborn baby, experience her baby's responses, clear away the nearly-inevitable unconscious conflicts, and accomplish a preparatory separation from baby. The core concepts of the approach can be found in the 2006 book by Raffai and Hidas (*Nabelschnur der Seele*—translated, *The Soul's Umbilical Cord*), which also acknowledges the profound reach of intergenerational legacy: "In our experience... the life of a human being begins *at least* two generations earlier: in the house of the maternal and paternal grandparents. We inherit not only our genetic predisposition and our chromosomes but also the epigenetic, social and cultural framework, our psychosocial legacy" (p. 17). Plans are afoot to bring Schroth's training in Bonding Analysis to the USA. Stay tuned. *Michael Trout*, www.infant-parent.com



Gerhard Schroth

Conferences of Interest

HUMANIZATION OF BIRTH – Keynote speakers: Michel Odent, Barbara Katz Rothman, David Chamberlain, Barbara Katz Rothman, Barbara Harper, Jennifer Block | Monterrey, Mexico | October 9-11, 2009 [THIS IS A RE-SCHEDULING OF THE ORIGINAL MAY DATES, DUE TO SWINE FLU CRISIS] | Simultaneous translation | www.amayal.com/congreso2009

9TH WORLD CONGRESS OF PERINATAL MEDICINE – "Assume Responsibility for Our Future" | October 24-28, 2009, Berlin, Germany | www.wcpm9.org

THE MID-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE ON BIRTH & PRIMAL HEALTH RESEARCH February 26-28, 2010, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Michel Odent, organizer. Dedicated to phrasing new questions at a time when rapid technological and scientific advances have brought us to a crossroads in the history of childbirth and the future of civilization. www.wombecology.com.

WORLD SUMMIT ON CHILDBIRTH – May 5-9, 2010, Damanhur, Italy | Interested presenters, exhibitors, contributors of ideas/themes/activities, contact organizer Farfalla Vitalba | summitperladonna@yahoo.it | www.perladonna.org