

ISH
Newsletter

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the International Society of Hypnosis:

My first Newsletter message to the membership of ISH is indeed a humbling experience. I feel a little like the human pyramid circus act, when the last tumbler catapults onto the shoulders of the giants beneath (or "before") him, Past Presidents Hilgard, Orne, Lavoie, Frankel and Collison. When I feel a little shaky at the top, I know I can relax not with some hypnotic patter, but with the support of the whole ISH membership as we work together to advance the goals and collegiality of our organization.

I thank you all for the past and anticipated support, and urge you to write to me to share your concerns, and, yes, also your good experiences, about ISH and our chosen specialty field. I would like to be able to visit every Constituent Society during my tenure, but of course this will not be feasible. Already my visits to The Netherlands, Australia and Israel have helped broaden my perspective and helped me better appreciate similarities and differences between the Constituent Societies.

I am delighted that the Central Office transition from Philadelphia, USA, to Melbourne, Australia has been completed so smoothly. Our sincere thanks have to be extended to Martin and Emily Orne for their years of dedicated service to ISH, and now to Graham Burrows and Robb Stanley in Melbourne. I am in regular contact with Robb, our Administrative Officer, and Peter Bloom, our equally dedicated Secretary-Treasurer, on a regular and speedy basis, thanks to the wonders of the new FAX machines.

I feel a little sad for all of those members who were unable to attend the outstanding 11th International Congress of Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine in den Haag, The Netherlands, August 13-19, 1988. You missed an outstanding social, training and academic event. I am writing this hours before leaving for Tel Aviv, Israel to meet with our Israeli colleagues and the organizers of the 12th Congress to be held in Jerusalem, August 11-17, 1991. Mark your calendar. The 13th Congress will be in Melbourne, Australia in August 1994.

ISH is a healthy, thriving organization, thanks to the efforts of so many colleagues. However, we must all make extra efforts to guarantee the financial viability of ISH. You can help immediately by encouraging even one more colleague to become an ISH member. One of my first actions was to appoint a Presidential Committee (Dr George Matheson, Chair) to study ways to make membership more attractive to all our colleagues using hypnosis throughout the World. Your own ideas on this, and any other issue, are always welcome.

Best wishes,

FREDERICK J. EVANS, PhD
President, ISH

THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

This is my last *Newsletter*, as of now, the editorship is in the firm and capable hands of Walter Bongartz of West Germany. My congratulations to Walter in his new appointment, as well as my many thanks to colleagues throughout the world who supplied me with news about developments in their respective countries. I especially wish to thank M. Anthony Basker, MRCGP, whose foresight led to the establishment of the *Newsletter* in 1978. This is not, however, the last that you will hear from me. I will continue to write the United States and Canadian news for future issues.

There has been a recent development in the United States, and a similar one in my own Department, which may have relevance to ISH. For some years now, experimentalists in the American Psychological Association have been discontented with their standing in the Association, relative to their clinical counterparts. They feel, among other things, that the agendas of annual business meetings have become bogged down with items concerning professional affairs at the expense of issues dear to researchers such as research ethics, graduate training programmes, and experiments with animals.

Earlier this year, a set of complex motions, designed to redress this perceived imbalance was voted down by a 2/1 majority. The result: experimentalists have formed their own society. The fact that 10 former Presidents of APA have joined this new society indicates that severity of the matter.

Further, I am seeing the same trend in my own Department. Some of my experimental colleagues are muttering darkly about splitting the Department along Experimental/Applied lines. They feel that our clinical colleagues are not stressing sufficiently, to the graduate students, the need to understand research in order to function optimally as clinical professionals.

I view such trends with alarm. For myself, I have always found that there was great benefit to be derived by discussing issues with clinical colleagues. Indeed, I regularly plunder their ideas – with acknowledgement, of course. This is known as scholarship. (Not to provide such acknowledgement is known as plagiarism).

I have seen similar signs around the hypnosis societies – and not merely in ISH. On occasions, I encounter the view among clinicians that an understanding of what research says about hypnosis is not necessary. In my view, this line of thinking returns us to the days of Mesmer, who, as we all know, obtained ameliorations, and cures, with his false theory of Animal Magnetism. This is not to say though, that successful treatments based upon spurious theorizing, are of no interest. They tell us something interesting about hypnotherapy. They undermine, however, our scientific base.

Hopefully, the "separatist" mentality will not take hold in Psychology and will not spread to hypnosis. The field is best enriched by a mutual agreement between all colleagues, regardless of orientation, that having differences of orientation and outlook

