



Happy Birthday, IPA!

by David Christiansen - 2009

This special issue and the one to follow will celebrate where we have been in the last 60 years in the words of those who lived it. It's been a lot of fun to put this material together, read some of it again and some for the first time, and remember. This issue starts at the beginning and takes us up to sometime around 1990 or perhaps a little later. The following issue will cover the rest of our history.

It's been difficult and time consuming putting this issue together so I hope it was worth it and worth the delay. Except for our official documents and minutes of meetings, we have not been very good at archiving our past. Photographs and documents from the earlier years are sparse. (Thanks to Linda Skeers at the Child Guidance Center for her help with photos.) There should be less of a problem for the later years of our history. Sometimes it's difficult to identify the photos and sometimes people might rather not be identified. We've done what we can with that. And some people have been so constantly present and constantly working for the organization through nearly its entire history that we can watch them aging in the photos. And some, of course, are no longer with us. For the earlier period, Carmella's directive, "Include women!" was not so easy to fulfill. Thanks to Jane Bibber for her contribution to balance the heavy male input of those years. We should have no problem with balancing that with contributions from women in the next issue.

Reading this material has taught me two things. First, how hard we have fought to get recognition for and regulation of psychologists in the state and in the country and second, the rather unhappy thought of all that remains to be done. In some ways, the battles we are fighting are the same as they were in the beginning. I wonder though, if we and the younger generations have the stamina to fight as hard for a place in the sun as those that fought so persistently years ago.

Although I'm not young in years, I am relatively young to the organization; I didn't become a member until about 1981, the year I was licensed. Since then, I have served as president twice with about a ten year interval between my terms. I can tell you that neither term was easy, and I feel sure that anyone who has served in the capacity of president or in any other leadership positions would agree with me. The problems are unanticipated, difficult, and sometimes quite personally hurtful. Many times it would have been easy to toss in the towel. But please look around you, and notice how many ex-presidents are still with the organization. This loyalty and tenacity is surely one of the hallmarks of what IPA is all about, not only on the part of presidents, but of the membership in general.

I think you will see several other undercurrents reflected in the historical material presented in these two volumes. We have our internal conflicts and divisions: by speciality, by geography, by theoretical orientation, and by gender, to name only a few. Speaking of sex, you will undoubtedly observe that with some notable exceptions, the early history of the organization' governance was very much a story of an "Old Boys' Network" until sometime after 1990. Somewhere along the line, in the mid 1990's maybe, it became very much of – what shall I say? – a "A Middle-aged Girl's Network." This polarity and some others as well, have not always been easy to live with and have not always been good for the organization either. I am very glad to say that I observe no such cabals now. The credit for that change and for the openness of the organization in general goes to the excellent leadership of our current executive director.

So here we are. Like a well-seasoned marriage, we have achieved much together despite our many differences and the harshness of the environment in which we have operated. It's time to congratulate ourselves! Happy 60th Anniversary IPA!