

Notice of Intent to Complete Requirements for Certification as a Primal Integration Educator

The chair of the Certification Committee, Barbara Bryan, is pleased to announce that IPA member, Frances Rinaldo, MA, MS, LMFT, has applied for IPA Certification. Between September 1992 and November 1996, Frances trained with Drs. Jonathon Christie and Arthur Janov at Dr. Janov's International Primal Training and Treatment Center in Venice, California. She has extensive experience in psychotherapy, as client and therapist.

As require by the Certification Guidelines, she will be evaluated by a Review Panel consisting of three members of the IPA Certification Committee. Please feel free to contact members of the panel with any comments you may have about the applicant before September 1, 2009. All responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

Review Panel

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IPA ROSES to . . .

- ◆ Those who contributed to the wonderful Spring Retreat:
 - Bob Holmes for his expert inviting (via the flyer), organizing, managing, facilitating, caring, and on and on
 - JJ Jackson and Anna Puleo for great photos galore
 - Harriet Geller for the program and for supporting the workshop scheduling—not to mention all the workshop leaders who stepped up and made it happen
 - Gene Long and Julia Cohen for being born on a day of the Retreat so we could all celebrate with them
 - Sandy Weymouth for enlivening Cabaret, ole!
- ◆ Esta Powell for her warm and bubbly (via hot tub) welcome to the Board in April.
- ◆ This issue's many contributors—Barbara Bryan, Julie Cohen, Ed Durkin, Harriet Geller, 'JJ' Jennifer Jackson, Dianea Kohl, Denise Kline, Linda Marks, Anna Puleo.

IPA Membership Dues

	Single	Joint
Lifetime Membership (payable over five years)	\$1000	\$1500

Annual Membership (based on income)

	Single	Joint
\$100,000 or more	\$110	\$165
\$50,000-99,999	\$75	\$112
\$25,000-49,999	\$60	\$90
Less than \$25,000	\$50	\$75

- Membership fees are tax deductible

- Membership for \$30 per year is available to overseas residents, full-time students, and individuals who support themselves exclusively with public assistance.
- All dues cover the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31.
- To qualify for joint membership, both members must live at the same address and pool resources. Joint members will receive one mailing per household.
- Please make out your check to the IPA in US funds. Canadian checks (in US Funds) are accepted with an additional \$5 service fee.
- International money orders are accepted with additional \$7 service fee.
- Pay by credit card (MC or VISA). Indicate credit card type, number, exp. date, and 3-digit code on back. Mail to the address below, or pay by calling (703) 734-1405.
- Mail your complete name and contact info (including email) to:
IPA, 811 Whann Ave., McLean, VA, USA 22101

I N T E R N A T I O N A L P R I M A L A S S O C I A T I O N

Supporting Growth and Healing Through Deep Feeling Process

SUMMER NEWSLETTER • JULY 2009

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Annual Convention 2009

*Loving to Feel:
The True Connection*

August 24 – August 30
Concord Retreat Center, Yellow Spring, WV

Website: www.concordretreat.com

Contact Co-chairs Barbara Bryan, babryan@twmi.rr.com or (248) 478-5559
Denise Kline, messagearts@aol.com or (301)791-9237

By Barbara Bryan and Denise Kline
Convention Chairs

We have confirmation that our keynoter will be John Lee, whose groups explore ritual, romance and releasing emotions. He is the author of the best-selling *The Flying Boy: Healing the Wounded Man*, as well as sixteen other books, including his latest release, *The Missing Peace*.

For his innovative work as a consultant in anger management and emotional regression in the fields of recovery, relationships, men's issues, spirituality, parenting and creativity, he has been featured by such media giants as Oprah Winfrey and the New York Times.

John has signed on for two presentations at the Convention: a keynote address that will explore "The Best Kept Secret of Psychology: Understanding Regres-

sion and its Impact on Relationships," and an additional workshop entitled "The Half-Lived Life: Becoming Compassionately Assertive, Overcoming Passivity, and Remembering Who You Wanted to Be." Visit John's website at www.johnleebooks.com to learn more.

We will have exclusive use of Concord Retreat Center with its own pool, abundant meeting spaces, comfortable accommodations, including plentiful private and semi-private rooms, and an interesting variety of meals. In addition there are a campfire, sporting facilities, and game rooms. For a supplemental charge, we can use their facilitated ropes course and paint ball equipment. We will offer these activities if enough people sign on when they register.

The center, in Yellow spring, WV, west of Winchester, VA, has easy access and

Continued on p. 2

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Next deadline: October 1, 2009

Annual Convention 2009 (Cont'd)

is a bit more convenient for many of our members. Check it out at www.concordretreat.com.

We will find ourselves in lovely surroundings to do our primal work and enhance our knowledge of deep-feeling emotional-release techniques. We love to feel joy, excitement, and passion, but we need to feel the darker emotions also. We will deepen the true connection to our innate real loving selves through exploring anger, fear, sexuality, grief and sadness—mixed with humor—in vulnerable, safe ways.

Our favorite forums for personal work will be available in Mat Track, Peer Groups, Men's and Women's Groups, and a variety of presentations, lectures and workshops. Barbara Bryan is looking for-

ward to taking advantage of the pool after several years without one and leading her "Mays Landing Pool Party" workshop once again.

Mind-body work will include new offerings in yoga for all ages, physical therapy, cranial-sacral, healing touch, and spiritual chiropractic, as well familiar practitioners such as Walter Loeb, who is able to be with us throughout the week this year. We also anticipate offering an expanded holotropic breath work program.

We look forward to truly connecting with you and enjoying a fun-filled week in an idyllic environment as we move through our internal struggles, learn fresh ways to process, explore new ideas, and share experiences in a loving, supportive atmosphere.

Concord Activities



Ropes Course

The Low Ropes Course runs through a forested section of the property. The course is comprised of eight separate team-building elements. The design of the course allows our facilitators to foster individual and group development on well-known elements such as "Wild Woosey" and "Spider's Web."

Outdoor Maze

Another level of challenge to our Low Ropes Course—an outdoor maze that covers a half acre in the middle of the Concord forest. There is only one way to navigate through the web of colored ropes to find the center. The maze can be incorporated into your Ropes Course experience, or can be used as another activity during free time.



tients was not frightening or unacceptable to him. However, Braid was in England at a rather more tranquil time and violent behavior was frowned upon, so patients inclined to "hysterical crises" would be calmed instead of encouraged to go with it.

In 1875 in Paris, Jean Martin Charcot, accepting hypnosis as a genuine phenomenon and began an intense clinical study. He found a close connection between people diagnosed as hysterics and their ability to go into deep phases of hypnosis. Moreover, he saw their symptoms relieved in the process. He found three main progressive stages in hypnosis: lethargy (drowsiness), catalepsy (rigidity and possible amnesia), and somnambulism (ability to obey instructions with no memory afterward). Despite his contributions, Charcot was somewhat limited in that he believed only a person with an hysterical make-up could be hypnotized.

Meanwhile in Nancy, France, Ambroise-Auguste Liebeault and Hyppolyte Bernheim founded a clinic and did more work in hypnosis. They believed hypnosis was a passive-receptive state and could be induced in its mild form in nearly everyone. While the patient was in this state, they used suggestion and instilled beliefs which were accepted uncritically. They challenged Charcot linking hypnosis with hysteria and said his stages were the result of suggestions. They have been proven right in that respect.

Near the end of Charcot's reign in Paris, Pierre Janet came to work with him. He favored the Nancy school of thought pertaining to suggestion but his main concern was the splitting of the personality or lack of normal integration. He was the first to realize the effects of what Freud would later call "repression." He found that when a patient was hypnotized, he could recall forgotten traumas and with appropriate suggestion, the related symptoms would disappear. This work of Janet's was the beginning of the belief in two states of consciousness.

In the 1880's Josef Breuer, a Viennese medical practitioner, had a patient named "Anna O." who seemed to be suffering from a nervous disease or "hysteria." Breuer tried hypnosis with her, since that was the popular treatment for hysteria at the time. He noticed that Anna's symptoms seemed to disappear if she could experience painful feelings under hypnosis that she could not allow herself to feel when awake. He enlisted Sigmund Freud's help in researching and trying to understand this phenomenon.

This was the beginning of Freud's research into and development of his theory of psychoanalysis. Most of his insights came between 1885 and 1900 and are generally still accepted as basic and sound. He was the first psychologist to realize the importance of unconscious motivation and the role it plays in directing behavior. This belief in "psychic determinism" led to his work with dreams and free association techniques."

Freud originally believed in the cathartic method of bringing up repressed feelings and experiencing them through hypnosis. He eventually abandoned that approach for several reasons. He found that some patients resisted hypnosis and others seemed successfully treated but their symptoms were only temporarily relieved. He decided the long term results were more dependent on the personal relationship between therapist and patient. Perhaps the most important reason was that he found it impossible to accept the conclusion that the more frequently and intensely a person re-experiences early traumatic anxiety the closer he will approach mental health. Then, through his research Freud became intrigued with the processes of the unconscious and developed the use of free association and dream interpretation. He also became convinced there was a sexual basis to neurosis and risked his reputation in pursuit of this concept. Thus Fred veered away from the path toward Primal therapy and concentrated more on cognitive techniques.

Most of Freud's colleagues followed his lead with some individual differences. Carl Gustav Jung rejected Freud's emphasis on sex and went off in the direction of mysticism and archetypal symbols. Alfred Adler worked on ego theories, inferiorities and compensations. However, there were several who pursued courses that helped build the foundation for the Primal concept.

Sandor Ferenczi believed that infantile trauma and parental unkindness produced neurosis. He felt the therapist should try to neutralize the early unhappiness by becoming the loving parent and promoting a tender

relationship with the patient. This was in direct contrast to most analysts who tried to be dispassionate, reflecting mirrors. He used an active technique with greater participation, physical closeness, and psychological interaction by the therapist. Ferenczi believed in granting more direct gratification to patients than most professionals thought advisable. He fell out of favor because Freud was afraid of the dangers of indiscreet behavior in his approach.

Otto Rank put his emphasis on the birth trauma, believing it to be "the ultimate biological basis of the psychical." Birth is the rude interruption of intrauterine bliss, being ejected out into a hostile environment, leaving the security of the womb—the original "separation anxiety" situation. Later separations from loved ones can trigger the original trauma. Rank built his theory on the conflict starting at birth between fear of life (separation and individuation) and fear of death (union, fusion, dependency). He believed the individual spends the rest of his life trying to achieve a balance between the two fears.

This is very basic in our Primal work. To read a continuation of this history, please check my website for the complete paper on the "Roots of Primal Therapy."

To read a continuation of this history, please check Barbara's website for the complete paper on the "Roots of Primal Therapy".

The Roots of Primal Therapy

By Barbara Bryan (Written in 1974)



The breathing is deep and fast, the back tense and arched, the hands clenched and straining, the jaws tight and rigid, the whole body fighting to contain "an eerie scream welling up from the depths." With this Primal scream, the nature of psychotherapy, as it is now known, may change. Arthur Janov has developed a new organized approach known as Primal Therapy to effect a relief or "cure" of neurosis.

It is based on a natural phenomenon that has been recognized and used sporadically in the past. Briefly, it is an hysterical "letting go" of conscious controls of the body and emotions which opens up the unconscious to awareness. This allows insights to emerge which have a curative value. Various aspects of this revolutionary abreactive concept include its interesting origins and early development, its methodology, its physiological basis, and its emphasis on traumatic birth.

In primitive societies, in order to cure a disturbed individual, the witch doctor exorcised the evil spirits by casting a spell or coercing the ailing one into an hysterical crisis. A strong belief in the magical powers of the medicine man and the faith necessary to put themselves under his control encouraged a primal-type reaction and often affected a cure. Up until the eighteenth century, these cures were thought to be the results of the very special and mystical powers of certain men of medicine.

In 1779, Franz Anton Mesmer began attracting considerable attention with his theory of animal magnetism. He believed there was a fluid force emanating between himself and iron filings. This force he claimed to transmit to the patients, who were mostly women suffering from hysteria—a disease attributed to a wandering womb that today would be considered a functional nervous disorder bordering on the psychotic.

He would attempt to excite the patient by any means that worked, including touching and body contact. His aim was to bring about a convulsive state called a "crisis." The convulsions

and violent behavior often resulted in a cure of their symptoms.

Also, Mesmer magnetized groups of up to thirty people at a time. They would sit in a circle around a large table with a trough around the outside containing iron filing. The people held hands and were also connected with a cord around their waists. Then, in silence and darkness with their expectations high, Mesmer would direct their attention and awareness to their pains or specific traumas. These conditions are likely to induce hysterical attacks in susceptible people. The pressure of the group encourages participation and there is also a contagious effect. The same factors are present in Primal therapy groups today.

Authorities discredited Mesmer and his theory of animal magnetism and attributed his patients' cures to some unknown physiological cause. The scientists were forced to admit the "hysterical crises" were genuine and not a sham because of the high degree of organismic involvement. Mesmer retreated in the face of the bad publicity and, though denounced as quackery, mesmerism continued to be practiced by a few who really did not understand it.

In England in 1841, James Braid became interested in the phenomenon and named it "hypnotism." He cautiously explored it in a different direction from Mesmer and ingratiated himself with authorities by publicly attacking the mesmerists. He did not see it as a cure-all and believed that the power was in the patient. Also his practice was not limited as Mesmer's had been to mostly female hysterics. Braid discovered that hypnotism could be induced by focusing the eyes on an object. He believed a change took place in the nervous system as a

"In primitive societies, in order to cure a disturbed individual, the witch doctor exorcised the evil spirits by casting a spell or coercing the ailing one into an hysterical crisis."

result of psychological prodding. He did not aim for the "hysterical crisis" that Mesmer sought to achieve for his patients. So the beginnings of Primal therapy were discarded for a time.

There is a reasonable explanation for this difference in their attitudes. Mesmer was working in France during a period of great unrest and violence and the violent behavior of pa-

Convention Key Note Speaker: John Lee



Born in Detroit, Michigan, and raised in Florence, Alabama, John Lee is a graduate of the University of North Alabama (B.S., Sociology & English); the University of Alabama (M.A., American Studies & Religious Studies); and the University of Texas (Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies). John served as an instructor at the University of Texas, Austin Community College and University of Alabama before becoming a writer, best-selling author, and public speaker.

He has been featured on Oprah Winfrey (three times), 20/20, Barbara Walter's The View, CNN, PBS, and NPR, and

has been interviewed by Newsweek, Glamour, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and dozens of other national magazines and radio talk shows. His highly creative innovations in anger management workshops, PEER (Primary Emotional Energy Recovery) Counseling seminars, mini-sessions and the all-new Detour Method (lecture and workshop series on facing regression), are taught worldwide. His Mentone, Alabama Men's Conference, in its thirteenth year, draws participants from around the world.

Over the past twenty years, John has consulted and trained prestigious institutions in the clinical environment. He has worked with The Betty Ford Clinic, Guy's Hospital (London, England), The New York Open Center, South Pacific Treatment Center (Sydney, Australia), Mountain Area Health and Education Center (North Carolina), and many others.

Lee is the best-selling author of *Facing The Fire: Experiencing and Expressing Anger Appropriately* and *The Flying Boy: Healing the Wounded Man*. He has written fifteen other books including *Growing Yourself Back Up: Understanding Emotional Regression* (Three River Press, 2001) and his latest book, *The Missing Peace* (Health Communications, 2006).

Diane Kohl speaks about John Lee

A few years ago, I attended John Lee's PEER trainings, all three levels. They are about bringing the body and feelings more fully into the healing process. I found John to be a sensitive and humorous healer of our past wounds. I can't recommend him enough. I hope many will be able to not only hear him as our keynoter and workshop presenter, but as a man capable of upending tears and anger to bring us to true laughter.

Convention Help Wanted

- ◆ Paid lifeguard comfortable with nudity. We'd love it if you or a friend interested in primal would apply for this post.
- ◆ Mat Track leaders. New facilitators welcome.
- ◆ Workshops. Contact Barbara Bryan at babryan@twmi.rr.com or call her at 248-478-5559
- ◆ Volunteers. Any other ways you'd like to help at the Convention or otherwise, please contact Denise Kline, (301)791-9237, messagearts@aol.com.

Primal Groups

Barbara Bryan
Farmington Hills, Michigan
Thursdays from 7:00 - 9:30 pm
Some primal experience required
babryan@twmi.rr.com
248-478-5559

Bill Whitesell
McLean, Virginia
No charge to participate
wmwhitesell@yahoo.com
703-734-1405

Esko and Marja Rintala
Helsinki, Finland
Weekend groups Friday evening through Saturday.
esko.rintala@pp.inet.fi
358-9-611184

Welcome New Members!

Julie Cohen
Port Washington, NY

David Gorsky
Stanhope, NJ

William Gronwald
Rock Hill, NY

Karen Kendall
Gurnee, IL

Francis Rinaldo
Scotts Valley, CA

Member News

Primal Intensives at the Primal Integration Center of Michigan

July 11, 2009 (\$95)

October 3, 2009 (\$95)

Led by Barbara Bryan and staff. Food, lodging, and possible pick-up at the airport are included in the fees.

Phone: 248-478-5559

Email: babryan@twmi.rr.com

Website: www.primalcenter.com

Primal Psychodrama Weekend in Columbus, OH Led by Esta Powell

October 2 - 4, 2009

Cost \$175, breakfast and dorm style accommodations included. Group size limited to eight participants.

For more information visit: www.primalmatters.com or call 614-893-3527.

Carlaw Therapy Center Intensive, Toronto, CA

Dates -TBA
(CAD \$400.00)

Fri. 7:30 p.m – Sun. 4:00 p.m.

851 Coxwell Avenue,
Toronto, Canada

Led by Michael Hoyland-Young, Marilyn Kleiman and Bob Holmes. Food and dorm-style accommodations are included. Previous primal experience is required.

Please contact Michael for more information.

Phone: 647-341-3090

Email: michaelhy@rogers.com

Scars of Child Abuse Reach Down to Genetic Level

Excerpted from a CBC News release of February 23, 2009

Child abuse early in life appears to permanently change how people respond to stress, say researchers in Montreal who studied the brains of suicide victims. The team of scientists at McGill University

“Child abuse early in life appears to permanently change how people respond to stress...”

examined the brain tissue of 36 males in Quebec. Among the 36, 12 suffered severe childhood abuse, altering a gene that affects a person's response to trauma, the researchers reported in this week's issue of the journal Nature Neuroscience. In a way, the researchers said, the men were programmed to be more vulnerable to overwhelming feelings of despair.

Those 12 were compared with the brains of 12 accident victims who had not been abused and 12 controls. The gene was not altered in either of these groups.

The study is the latest in the growing field of epigenetics: how our environment, including social trauma or chemical substances, affects how our genes do their job and ultimately how they affect behavior.

"The implications at this stage are you want to identify these people and then probably offer them some sort of intervention," said study co-author Moshe Szyf, of McGill's department of pharmacology and therapeutics. The goal, Szyf said, would be to find drugs that could reverse the changes, but researchers don't yet know how to do so.

"Maybe we can create different interventions, say in adolescents, that will negate these negative impacts that have happened earlier," said Dr. Stan Kutcher, a psychiatrist specializing in adolescent mental health at Dalhousie University in Halifax, who was not involved in the research. "We don't know yet."

Child abuse experts said the findings reinforce the importance of interventions to prevent abuse. If children are abused early, they are flooded with stress-related hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, said Louise Newman, a professor of perinatal and infant psychiatry at the University of Newcastle in Australia. "This impacts directly on how the brain develops and the stress regulation mechanism. If it becomes highly stressed, it's like setting the thermostat on high, setting up a system which regulates stress less efficiently," Newman said.

"Also it impacts on the area which controls feelings, so they're more likely to have difficulties with anger and emotions and be prone to self-harm, anxiety, suicide and depression."

“If children are abused early, they are flooded with stress-related hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline....”

It's not clear why some people overcome their past while others succumb to it. At the Distress Centres of Toronto, childhood abuse is a common narrative among callers. "I don't want people to feel that genetics is their destiny, that there is some hope available if we can understand why some people are able to manage," said Karen Letofsky of the centre.

Physical Symptoms and Primal Pain

Reprinted from Robert Augustus Masters' website, <http://robertmasters.com/home>

Beware of facile explanations of physical symptoms.

A throat constriction doesn't always mean that you're holding back from saying something; a limp doesn't always mean that you're having trouble standing your ground; a painful lower back doesn't always mean that you're anxious about financial issues; and so on.

“... our bodies have to similarly store or contain—and keep as far away as possible from our everyday consciousness—whatever traumatic imprints they have not been able to release. ..”

At the same time, though, many physical symptoms do have a psycho-emotional component. If your back is hurting, let it speak, ask it questions, dialogue with it. Who or what is on your back? What is weighing you down? Is there anyone you want to tell to back off? Sometimes back pain is simply that, a purely physical pain. And other times it is more than just physical—issues in the tissues.

Whether or not we listen to our body's messages—as articulated through its tensions, aches, leanings, cries, asymmetries, oddities of gesture, and so on—it is always revealing not just where we have been, but also who we are busy being moment-to-moment. The damage (and not just physical damage) we have done and have had done to ourselves is eloquently present in our bodies, regardless of the compensatory twists and turns we have taken.

The memory of what crippled—and still cripples—us waits in our cells, our tissues, our organs and fascia as skeletal-muscular tensions, fresh as at the time they were first imprinted in us. The trouble is, such memory is not primarily lodged in our everyday “awareness,” where its presence is usually only spectral or mostly informational, having been stripped of most of its emotional valence in its “translation” from the depths to the surface. Rather, the full memory resides in “older,” seemingly less accessible, zones of our neural makeup.

Just as we, as a collective social body, have to now store or contain enormous amounts of radioactive waste in firmly sealed, densely walled receptacles, so too do our bodies have to similarly store or contain—and keep as far away as possible from our everyday consciousness—whatever traumatic imprints

they have not been able to release. (Secondary releases—sexual and otherwise—may make us feel a bit better, but only briefly and superficially relieve us of the “outer” stress resulting from the pressure and rising presence of underlying trauma.)

Storing pain that cannot be handled at the time is not just something that we do. It's a survival strategy that goes way back. Consider the amoeba. Put it in water that's been polluted with India Ink granules, and it'll actually absorb them and store them in vacuoles (tiny self-contained cavities in the protoplasm of a cell). Then put the amoeba in water that's clean, a healthy environment, and its vacuoles will move to the edge of the cell membrane—like surfacing trauma in a healthy therapeutic setting—and discharge the ink granules.

Our capacity to isolate and encapsulate trauma—so that the rest of our system can adequately function—until we are in a truly safe environment continues to amaze me. It isn't so much that the trauma isn't markedly influential up until it surfaces as itself, but that its very containment, however neurotically managed and compensated for, has permitted organismic and personal survival. We may have to “eat” it, we may have to swallow it, we may have to act as if it's not tearing at our insides, but we do not have to digest it.

Our “vacuoles” aren't literal containers—though they may appear to have specific bodily locations—but rather inner psychophysiological mechanisms that make possible the repression of pain, especially unbearable pain.

“Trauma is not literally “stored” in the muscles and viscera, but when its imprint is amplified through particular circumstances, the effects are often most clearly displayed through somatic signs.”

The longer we wait, or have to wait, to open the cell doors of such pain, the more compensatory layers of “gatekeeping” we will likely have to penetrate, including any identification we might have formed with one or more of our survival strategies. That is, if we are sufficiently invested in being the “I” that is playing jailer, then any serious intent to release—or even to contact—what's in the dungeon is probably going to be threatening to us.

Trauma is not literally “stored” in the muscles and viscera, but when its imprint is amplified through particular circumstances, the effects are often most clearly displayed through somatic signs.

Spring Retreat Poetry

These are a sampling of the poems written on a balmy afternoon on the lawn at Kirkridge, overlooking the broad Hudson Valley.

Naturally

By Ed Durkin

A Kirkridge caterpillar
dining on a mat of moss
is busy readying herself, soon
to morph and to fly as a moth.
She crawls toward transformation

I'm waiting too to be completed,
whining on a mat, of loss
eager for the day, soon
to snap out of it and to say
please meet the man I am



Wise Tree

By Anna Puleo

A tree
Could you imagine me
Being a tree?
Maybe in another life
This I could see.
The resonating humm
Of a cold dark winter's night wind
Swirling 'round as if it hadn't sinned
Hot summer sun beating my branches
Near urban houses or rural ranches
I bend I bow I even metamorphasize
I grow in directions without sin or lies
My lower bark, like skin of man
Is aged, yet wise.
And unlike man, I can't see into your eyes.
But I have a soul,
Perfect and clear
So don't go away, come near come here.
Know my wisdom is full of life
Hold me, know me when you feel strife.



Bounty of Spring

By Harriet Geller

The nascent lawn comes up in miniature:
grass like fine, green sewing needles,
tiny irises with petal patterns
only a newborn bee could read,

delicate buttercups glowing
from within, other weeds just
two inches high, their pale leaves'
spiky perfection still unsullied,

and a reminder of the seasons' turning
(and our own returning to this haven)—
acorn caps pressed to the moist soil.

Have their seeds burrowed down to raise
the next oak trees, as we are stretching
into ourselves to sprout new growth?



Snail-Wail: On Forgiving Parents

By Linda Marks

When I was in college in the '60s, it was decidedly "uncool" to revere one's parents. There was a big "generation gap." Their generation was seen as passionless leftovers from the '30s, '40s and '50s. We didn't care about their more "repressed" feelings. We were preoccupied with our own more provocative ones. We saw them as hopelessly mired in convention, and although many of them may have been, some of us enjoyed the security of getting a college education at their expense.

In the '70s, I turned to primal therapy to process the pain left over from my lonely childhood and released the anger of an often-ignored child of a critical, pre-feminist, discontented housewife and a self-righteous workaholic.

However, at some point I realized that I was significantly older than my parents had been when I was a small child. I figured out that I was taking poor care of myself out of spite—as if my parents would come back and do it better if I refused to do it myself! I had fancied myself more enlightened than my parents after so many years of therapy, but I had to see the absurdity of being angry at them for not taking better care of me in the past and then refusing to take better care of myself in the present. Also, I was judging them for being judgmental. Since I know how toxic judgments can be, wouldn't I want to be more tolerant than they?

Over 30, with lots of therapy under my belt, I still had not learned to sustain a good relationship. I was afraid of taking responsibility for a pet even, let alone a child. The thought of my clueless parents attempting to nurture a helpless and demanding younger me seemed not only pathetic but perhaps also brave and generous from my new perspective. How could I continue blaming them for my misery if I wasn't even trying to do a better job with myself than they had done? Wasn't I now as much of an adult as they had been when

I was a child? I didn't have anyone other than myself to take care of. Why didn't I give it a try and get off my parents' backs? So what if they were flawed parents? I had my more mature self now. Maybe I could do better. Maybe I didn't need them to do it over. Maybe I could just use what I had learned about myself in therapy and be nicer to myself. Maybe I could give myself what I needed and then stop being angry that I didn't get it sooner.

Yes, my parents *had* formed me in some ways. Yes, my parents *had* harmed in some ways. Yes, they had made mistakes, but blaming them and waiting for justice had only prolonged my misery. I needed to acknowledge my childhood pain and anger and then reassure my inner child that this time around she'd get what she missed the first time. In order to give to her, I had to find my own maturity and compassion. That's when I began to really have compassion for my parents as well.

At first, I didn't trust my new feelings for them. I thought I shouldn't let them off the hook, but I realized that I could know that they weren't blameless and still let go of my anger and move on. Once I found myself, I could afford to forgive. I would be able to defend myself and finally be happy. I didn't need to dwell in the past in despair. My anger dissipated. My deep pain began to stay in the past. It didn't have to follow me into my present or my future in the same way.

These changes have taken years. They didn't happen in a moment. But they did begin to happen and continue to happen. Slowly I began to feel less needy. I began to accept my parents' limitations. I began to realize I have enough love in my life from other sources, so I don't mind their limitations so much anymore. They don't affect my survival anymore. I have stopped expecting so much from them and I find I can accept that, although they may never really understand me, I may have an easier time understanding them as I have begun to need less from them.

IPA Calendar

Summer Convention 2009

August 24 – August 30
Concord Retreat Center,
Yellow Spring, WV

To register contact:

Bill Whitesell, IPA Treasurer
703-734-1405
treasurer@primals.org
811 Whann Ave
McLean, VA 22101, USA

Annual Meeting Elections August 27, 2009

Three Officers will be elected at the annual meeting at the Summer Convention. The Board of Directors, as nominating committee, presents the following slate for the Officers. Additional nominations for these positions can be made at the meeting.

President—Harriet Geller
Vice President—Larry Schumer
Treasurer—Bill Whitesell
(Secretary Warren Davis is completing the second year of his initial term.)

Three Directors will be nominated and elected at the meeting. The following four Directors will be continuing for the second year of their two-year terms: Diane Kohl, Jean Rashkind, Leonard Rosenbaum, and Sandy Weymouth. Bob Holmes, as outgoing President, is awarded a one-year term as a Director. Outgoing VP Denise Kline and outgoing Directors Barbara Bryan and Esta Powell are up for re-election as Directors.

Spring Retreat Revisited

My First Time

By Julie Cohen



I turned 50 years young on Friday, May 8th, and celebrated in a most special and wondrous manner—I attended the International Primal Association's Spring Retreat. My experience was one of great love and depth, much mat work, a dance party, a daily women's group for processing, an evening cabaret for anyone wanting to perform in any which way, a mini-surprise party for my birthday, and SO MUCH HEART. It was the most perfect gift to myself, and I feel blessed that I followed my intuition all the way to Kirkridge.

How good it is to spend time with people who are doing their inner homework, who value authenticity, connection and love. How healing for me to be surrounded by like-minded people who value deep feelings work, as I do. I turned 50 and received a little slice of heaven. I thank all of you who were also journeying at Kirkridge. I felt taken in and welcomed—and even got to wear a tiara for the first time in my life. My (inner) little one was having a ball in her finery, for sure! Give her something shiny and colorful and she will ride on sunbeams for days!

How did it come to be that I was at the IPA retreat at this time? Well, my dearest friend and soul-sister, Joyce, offered me this wonderful time as my special birthday gift. I struggled quite a bit as I tried to decide what would feel right for me as I celebrated this big occasion. Having been in the throes of some very extreme life challenges for the past number of years, attending the retreat seemed like the perfect vehicle to usher in the next part of my life, to actively and consciously release the old and affirm the new. And this I did in spades.

So what do I feel? Enormous gratitude mixed with some more recent feelings about the loss of connection that I feel in my daily life. I am so thankful to have now joined a community of folks who, for the most part, are kind, intentional and thoughtful—to themselves and those around them. I am no longer alone in my tiny universe wondering where my people are. I feel like I have come home. This is no small gift. It is a beautiful treasure that I look forward to opening again and again. See you all in August. I'll bring my tiara.

Retreat Photos

By Jennifer 'JJ' Jackson and Anna Puleo



Enjoying the misty view and a chat before dinner.



Silent walkers show their faces: Harriet, Julia, JJ, Joyce and Kelly (clockwise from l.)



Kim and JJ feelin' good!



The party kids form a tight-knit circle on the final night. (JJ is the one on the floor with the camera!)



Anna in her glory!



From the left. First row: JJ Jackson, Anna Puleo. Second row: Harriet Geller, Kim Mellor, Bob Holmes, Gene Long, Walter Gambin. Clumped behind: Bill Gronwald, Mickey Judkovics, Sandy Weymouth, Alex Tadeskung, David Gorsky, Warren Davis, Julie Cohen, Joyce Myers, Jean Rashkind, Kelly Hopkins, Joyful Yes, Leonard Rosenbaum.