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E-Newsletter Edition

## The INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION

### Buenos Aires Congress Lives Up to Its Theme



**"Gee, did I learn some things!"** exclaimed one veteran clinician at the International Family Therapy Association's XVIIIth World Family Therapy Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina. "I went to an interactive workshop by a colleague from Turkey that demonstrated a highly effective and supportive way of helping people to deal with family related issues in a relatively short time. It was a well thought out new approach by somebody from another part of the world that was certainly worth my time and participation." He went on to point out, "Not everything from the plenary presenters (who were from five different countries) was new, but I found them interesting and thought-provoking."

**"Global Sharing in Challenging Times,"** the congress theme, is a challenging goal for family therapists and other professionals. IFTA lived up to that theme nevertheless in its 2010 World Family Therapy Congress. Participants had their choice of sharing with and learning from a wide variety of colleagues and experts from around the globe.

It was a matter of "take your pick" from among sessions presented by family therapists and professionals from such widely spread and varied countries as Brazil, South Africa, Portugal, Mexico, Argentina, Iran, the USA, Israel, Switzerland, Colombia, Spain, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Australia, Turkey, Lithuania, Paraguay, Norway, Finland, France, Chile, Egypt, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, the

United Kingdom, Japan, New Zealand, Bahrain, Uruguay, and Austria. With participants from those 33 countries (out of slightly more than 35 nations represented at the congress making presentations), it was possible to sample offerings from around the world. Likewise, professionals from across the globe were able to appear on the program and to be involved in speaking, teaching, engaging in dialogue, and learning as they made presentations.

The first two plenary speakers—Kenneth V. Hardy from the USA, and Cecile Rausch Herscovici from Argentina—focused on ourselves and our practice. Hardy talked about psychological homelessness and how clinicians can deal with it in their own lives and in the lives of their clients. He followed up with a powerful demonstration of some of his major points in a sub-plenary session on "Treating the trauma of oppression." Herscovici dealt with one of the most important issues regarding practice today, namely, evidence based practice, pointing out that there is "a robust crop of outcome research that shows family therapy works." She proposed a systemic practitioner model of therapy that "is informed by quantitative and qualitative research and should ultimately result in the wisdom necessary to decide what to do with whom and when."

Major contextual issues and ethical dilemmas were the areas marked out by Marie-Luise Conen, of Germany, and Sergio Bernales, of Chile, in their respective plenary presentations. Conen emphasized how family therapists can connect past and present regarding political and historical change and social upheaval to families today. She also described : Family Therapy: A European Way" in a sub-plenary session. Bernales dealt with ethical issues and pointed to the lack of transparency to us of the negative influence of the dominant systems [in society] on the socially excluded and the difficulty for those who consult with us to "accept themselves just as they are at that moment and according to the need of change with which they are involved." Jaakko Seikkula, of Finland, and Sandra Stith, USA, both spoke on specific approaches to specific problems, Seikkula on psychosis and State on couples violence in other plenary presentations. Both presented succinct and specific illustrations of their topics, based on clinical observations and their own research and depth understanding of the issues.

There were a variety of presentations based on cross-cultural, cross-national programs, several of which have been conducted over a number of years, that were well received by congress participants. Workshop presentations in which participants were exposed to the ways others worked and elucidation of the skills needed for individuals professionals and teams were also popular. An example was provided by Jurgen Cornelis and Annemarie Schaap, a team from the Amsterdam Psychiatric Emergency Service in the Netherlands.

All in all, according to some of the participants and congress planners, a salient feature of the 2010 congress was the comfortable and enjoyable ambience of the gathering. "Very pleasant," "enjoyable" and similar terms were used to describe how the event was experienced.

### KEY DATES FOR HOLLAND CONGRESS

- September 30th –Deadline for Abstract Submission
- December 1 - Early Registration Ends

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# New Administrative Structure for 2011 IFTA World Family Congress



Tulip fields in Holland, site of 2011 World Congress

An updated and streamlined structure for conducting the 19th World Family Therapy Congress by the International Family Therapy Association on March 30-April 2, 2011 has been announced. Under the new arrangement, congress responsibility will be handled by a Congress Administration Committee and a separate Congress Program Committee, each of which will have clearly defined roles.

At the same time, President William Nichols announced most of the appointments for the two committees. The Administration Committee consists of the President, the Secretariat Staff: General Secretary William J. Hiebert and Administrative Assistant Fred Jefferson; IFTA Treasurer and Comptroller Barbara Warner, UK; and a representative from Releve Unlimited, a Professional Conference Organization (PCO).

The Program Committee includes the President, who is also the Congress Chairperson; President-Elect Fatma Torun Reid, Turkey; Past President Judith Landau, USA; Recording Secretary David McGill, USA; and several other members to be announced.

The Congress Program Committee shall oversee the development of the overall program for the congress, the selection of plenary presenters, the schedule, the abstract selection process, and the final program. The Administration Committee shall manage the operation of the congress, including negotiation with the congress meeting place (hotel) and the tourism board of the host country, and shall oversee the practical management of the congress, including functions formerly assigned to a hosting committee.

A major feature of the new structure is the assignment of increased responsibility of the IFTA Secretariat staff

in the administration of the congress. Specifically, the IFTA Secretariat shall be responsible for liaison with the congress hotel and the hotel site managers, and with the PCO, and shall have operational control over the publicity process, and in cooperation with the Congress Chair, shall have operational control of the abstract process. The Secretariat will be a co-agent with the PCO in banking functions associated with the congress.

This arrangement will combine and clarify processes formerly shared among other entities. The older arrangement was a carryover from times when different groups from local organizations hosting the congress were responsible for

"This will enable IFTA to do several important things," said Nichols. "First, it will mean that we can accomplish some tasks much faster and more efficiently since the Secretariat staff will have clear responsibility for the administration and practical details of the congress from the outset. Second, instead of essentially starting over each year with new persons from a different country each year being responsible for handling some practical details and instead of relying heavily on PCOs, it will be possible for IFTA to build on the accumulating knowledge and expertise of its staff and IFTA Executive Committee members and to engage in better long range planning and to have more control of its congresses. Third, since the Executive Committee is responsible for overseeing and implementing the policies of the IFTA Board of Directors and arranging for the proper administration of its affairs, involving the EC members directly in the Administration and Program committees on a significant and ongoing basis is expected to simplify and improve communication among the Executive Committee, the larger Board of Directors, and the Secretariat, as well as to produce congresses for the membership another constituencies."

## **IFTA BOARD ELECTION RESULTS**

Elected to the Class of 2013 were: Charlotte Engelbrecht, M. Cur., South Africa; John Lawless, Ph.D., USA; Martine Nisse, M.S., France; and Maire Steadman, M.S.C., United Kingdom . Engelbrecht and Steedman are returning for their first full 3-year term after serving a one year appointment to complete the unexpired terms of two previous board members. Lawless and Nisse were elected to their first three-year terms.

Elections for Members at Large for the Board of Directors is held each spring for a 3-year term beginning July 1 of each year and ending three years later on June 30.

## **IFTA & Social Networking**

Are you using social networking to stay in touch with your colleagues from around the world? Well so is IFTA and we would like to be in touch with you. IFTA has a presence on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. If you are using these networking sites think about connecting with IFTA. Updates about the congress, association news, and the latest on family therapy from around the world will be at your finger tips.

To join the IFTA group on Facebook or LinkedIn just search "International Family Therapy Association" and for Twitter, search "IFTA\_Family". Join any or all of them and post something about yourself.

If you have any questions about the site or the program contact William Northey (northey@comcast.net) and he will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

## **Infidelity, Parental Stress and Father Involvement Themes of the Contemporary Family Conference**

The Council on Contemporary Families (CCF) held its 13th Annual Conference at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois on April 16-17, 2010. Entitled Families as they really are: How do we use what we know?, the conference offered an opening plenary by Stephanie Coontz, six panels of three or four presenters each, and a Friday lunch with topic roundtables. All panels were structured for formal presentation followed by less formal presenter-audience conversation. A focused and intimate atmosphere with less than 150 attendees, the conference presented an excellent venue to learn about and share work, casually network, and personally engage with presenters.

Excellent clinical research was presented that supported the use of systemic interventions. Phil and Carolyn Cowan offered findings on father involvement using preventive 16-week treatment groups attended by both parents or fathers-only, and a 1-session workshop control group. Outcomes on father involvement and children's problematic behavior improved for both treatment groups, whereas the control group remained stable or declined. Parental stress and relationship satisfaction were most positive for the couples treatment group. (More on the Cowan's research can be found in their chapter in the book entitled, Families As They Really Are, edited by B. J. Risman, 2010).

The highlight of this year's conference may well have speakers Andrew Christensen and Pepper Schwartz, who engaged the audience with new research on couple relationships and sexuality and exciting conversation after. Christensen reported optimistic findings for couples' treatment of infidelity,

stating that those couples that experienced a revealed infidelity showed greater improvements in relationship satisfaction post-treatment than chronically distressed couples in which there had been no infidelity.

CCF was founded in 1996 and is a non-profit, non-partisan organization based at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The mission of CCF is "to enhance the national understanding of how and why contemporary families are changing, what needs and challenges they face, and how these needs can best be met." [www.contemporaryfamilies.org](http://www.contemporaryfamilies.org)

Review written by Shelley R. Clymer, Ph.D.





A Masters MFT Class to  
Buenos Aires

## Organizing a study abroad trip: Going to IFTA's World Family Therapy Congress

Edita Ruzgyte, Ph.D

My students recently came back from the trip of a lifetime.  
Let me tell you how we created it.

I started to plan a study abroad trip for students from the Graduate Counseling Department of Texas Wesleyan University by investigating upcoming international psychology conferences. After discussing several options with various faculty members and professionals in the field, I decided that the IFTA conference in Buenos Aires ([www.iftafamilytherapy.org](http://www.iftafamilytherapy.org)) was a great fit.

To make this trip feasible, I needed to provide each student with enough face-to-face hours of instruction to meet the requirements for six credit hours. To receive credit for a three-hour course, students need 42 hours of lecture time. I planned to give two lectures to the students before we left on the trip and two more after we returned. Together with the two lectures on campus, conference provided enough lecture hours for one three-hour graduate level course, so students needed another learning opportunity to earn credit for their second course.

I was unsuccessful finding an appropriate English-speaking presenter in Buenos Aires, so I started looking in the United States. After speaking with several professionals in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy I decided I needed a speaker in a subject other than Family Therapy in order for students to get credit for two different courses. I eventually contacted Dr. Marty Klein, an internationally respected Sex Therapist. He agreed to come to Buenos Aires and give a four-day seminar.

After putting the academic part of the trip together, I started to organize the logistical details of flights, hotels, tours, and transportation. I contacted a number of tour agencies (both general and those specializing in trips for students), asking for proposals and price estimates. Each agency was eager to send me a quote and was willing to coordinate all the details of the trip, but the prices they offered were far from what I believed I could spend.

So I contacted American Airlines directly, along with various hotels, classroom facilities, and tour guides in Buenos Aires. Though I knew that some faculty members favored using travel agents to book study-abroad trips, the time I spent researching and contacting different vendors eventually saved us a lot of money. All the prices that I was able to negotiate were significantly lower than the ones offered by tour companies.

When I had arranged the air travel and accommodations, I was able to prepare a budget by entering my figures into the University's budget template for proposed study-abroad programs. This included my expenses as Program Director, the group expenses (fee for Dr. Klein, classroom rental, excursions), and the individual students' expenses. Then I entered the tuition that students were paying for the two classes, subtracted a fixed percentage of their tuition that would be applied for the study abroad expenses, and calculated the additional study abroad program fee that each student had to pay in addition to the tuition for two courses. After the calculations were complete, the bottom line for each student covered roundtrip airfare, 12 nights in a hotel, daily breakfast, seminar fees, conference fees, and two excursions. Some students chose to waive the credit hours, so they did not pay tuition, which brought their payment for the trip to about \$3,000.

Once my proposal and budget were approved I was able to announce the trip, and soon had 27 students who expressed interest in going on a study trip to Argentina. I had begun planning this trip in September 2009; by December I was ready to work with the students.

In January we started our coursework based on the syllabus that I created for each of their graduate classes abroad. The traveling students were required to read the same texts as their peers in equivalent classes. They also received additional materials to help them prepare for both the seminar with Dr. Klein and the IFTA conference.

One of the assignments for the students was to

look through the conference program, pick at least three presenters whose work interested them, read some of their work, and then contact them. I gave students very little direction, as I wanted them to build this communication on their own. In their post-conference feedback, students said this was one of the most anxiety-provoking assignments--and yet the most beneficial. It was very rewarding to hear students' excitement when they received responses from different presenters. Several of them still keep in touch with these professionals.

In March 2010—after a half-year of preparation, reading and assignments—the students and I were ready to board the plane South and fly toward this new adventure. Over the next two weeks students would be showered with new perspectives, different contacts, conversations, and discoveries. From the journals the students were assigned to keep during the trip, the following entries speak for themselves.

*"I feel different...I don't know why, but I do. A little more aware, a little more cultured, more tolerant, and more educated. I let my guard down a bit and that's unusual for me!"*

*"Today, the last day of the conference, was the most powerful and memorable. Being the only American among a group of doctors, psychologists, survivors and researchers, all discussing the therapeutic process or lack thereof, when cancer patients are receiving treatment, was incredibly powerful. The session was Cancer Patients and the Listening Group Technique led by Chris Venter and Mariska Venter from South Africa."*

*"I had an awesome, life-changing experience in Argentina and I wouldn't change anything about it. It was a beautiful country of many contrasts and I learned so much about the Argentine culture and people."*

*"I really enjoyed the seminar with Dr. Marty Klein. During his lecture I had one of those moments in life when I felt inspired, like a burst of energy has been jolted into your body. Those are priceless moments. And I am forever grateful for it."*

*"I have felt truly blessed to hear from Dr. Klein who is an expert on sexual dissatisfaction. He has challenged some beliefs that I have held very dear and I am glad to see another perspective. Until hearing Dr. Klein, I felt I was somewhat of an expert on sex topics, especially HIV and STI, but I have realized I have so much to learn. This seminar has relit my passion for working with couples and individuals dealing with HIV and other STI."*

*"I got to meet all the presenters I contacted, and they all were very warm and welcoming. In between the local people I met and developed a bond with, and the people I met from other countries, I wouldn't have changed a single part of the trip. I would go back and do it all over again! Argentina and Buenos Aires have a special place in my heart now."*

*"From these experiences my entire world-view has changed. I have taken risks, stepped outside of my comfort zone to understand*

*others, I have been frightened and exhilarated in the same moment! It is almost as if I look at my values, habits and expectations from a whole new vantage point; a once-in-a-lifetime event that I am so grateful to have been a part of. I know I will be a better therapist because of this opportunity."*

Yes, it was the experience of a lifetime for everyone involved. My advice for faculty members who are putting together study-abroad trips for students is: "Organize, prepare, and be flexible when necessary."

Even when traveling alone, it helps to be organized: packing list, passport, hotel information, and phone numbers. But in dealing with a group of 27 students, organization was essential. Ultimately, I never regretted spending time on an extra phone call, or bringing extra paperwork in case it might be needed. I carried a few folders with all my information and was able to refer to it at any given moment.

Would I do another study abroad trip? Definitely. I am already planning a trip this fall, and have ideas for another trip in June, 2011. Would the students ever go on another trip? Apparently: twelve of the original 27 participants have already paid their deposit for the trip in October. That's the sincerest form of appreciation there is.

Edita Ruzgyte, Pd.D., Texas Wesleyan University, 1201 Wesleyan Street, Fort Worth, Texas, USA. E-mail: eruzgyte@txwes.edu



## International Family Therapy Association's XIX World Family Therapy Congress

March 30 - April 2, 2011  
Nordwijkerhout, The Netherlands  
Abstract Deadline September 30, 2010  
[www.ifta-familytherapy.org](http://www.ifta-familytherapy.org)

# Report of the Office of the Secretariat

General Secretary: William Hiebert, DMin



## Online Renewal of Memberships Tips

When renewing online, some members have had their credit card declined because of mistakes in entering the information.

### Here are some tips:

- Be sure that the name on credit card that you place on the bottom of the application is exactly the same as the name that is actually on the credit card.
- Be sure that the Billing Address is exactly the same as the address where the bill arrives from the postal service.
- If you are using someone else's credit card, be sure you have the above information accurate, i.e., their complete name and billing address.
- Click the Submit button ONLY once. If your card is declined, wait 24 hours and try again.
- If you have difficulty with the application not moving correctly and being able to view it correctly, your browser probably needs to be upgraded.

If you wish to renew both your IFTA membership and your Training Division membership online (the fastest and easiest way to do it), simply go to [www.iftafamilytherapy.org](http://www.iftafamilytherapy.org) and click on Application/Renewal and follow the instructions.

## Online Renewal of Training Division Membership

Training Division members may renew their Training Division memberships online at the same time as their IFTA membership is renewed.

## 2010 World Congress Website Is Operational

The World Congress website is now operational. You can find the Congress website at: <http://www.paragonconventions.net/IFTA2010/>. The website contains all of the information necessary for registration, abstract submission, and other details for Congress planning.

## Journal of Family Psychotherapy Available Online to IFTA Members

Here is a great member benefit! The Journal of Family Psychotherapy is available online to IFTA members. That means you not only will receive a hard-copy issue of the

Journal each quarter, but you can also get the Journal online!

Login information from Taylor and Francis is sent out at the beginning of each year. New members who join during the year will receive their notice within two months of joining IFTA. Since we do not always have accurate email information from all of our members, or we may have an error in the database, you may not have received that information.

If you have not received an email with instructions on how to log in to the Journal's online access, please contact Julie Ehlers at Taylor and Francis. Her email is: [julie.ehlers@taylorandfrancis.com](mailto:julie.ehlers@taylorandfrancis.com). Just give her your name and address, and tell her that you are an IFTA member who would like information on how to log in to the Journal of Family Psychotherapy.





## TRAINING MATTERS

*Phoebe Prosky, Coordinator/Secretariat*

The Training Division held its first substantive workshop at the Congress in Buenos Aires. There were presentations on aspects of training by Gladis Brun - Brazil, Rick Whiteside - New Zealand (by CD presentation) and Shlomo Ariel - Israel (by CD presentation). Two discussants, Hugo Hirsch and Pedro Herscovici, both from Buenos Aires, enriched the presentation with their observations. Although attendance was small at this, our first Division workshop, everyone involved enjoyed and benefited from the experience. We are now thinking about presenters for a second annual workshop in the Netherlands. We are searching for presentations that demonstrate aspects of training rather than simply describing programs. If you are interested in making such a presentation, please contact Phoebe Prosky, Division Secretariat, at [pprosky@suscom-maine.net](mailto:pprosky@suscom-maine.net).

The Traveling Trainers Program, in which Training Division Members volunteer their time to train in countries in need of support in developing family therapy programs and the Division provides travel stipends, has been hard at work. Traveling Trainer Shlomo Ariel traveled to Romania and Kosova this past winter to work with new programs in those countries, helping to develop curricula and delivering workshops. Both countries have developed plans for on-going training programs and have requested more trainers from our program in future months. Developing programs that wish to take advantage of the Traveling Trainers Program will find instructions for how to apply on the Training Division page of the IFTA website. Qualifications and instructions for becoming a member of the Traveling Trainers Faculty are also available there.

Our materials clearinghouse has a substantial number of gently used family therapy books to distribute. We are exploring ways to get these to the Congress in the Netherlands. If you have family therapy training materials - books, tapes or CD's - that you are not using and wish to donate, please contact either Brigitta Beghella in Austria, [brigitta.beghella@systemischepraxis.at](mailto:brigitta.beghella@systemischepraxis.at) or the Division Secretariat in the United States, [pprosky@suscom-maine.net](mailto:pprosky@suscom-maine.net). If you plan to come to the Congress next year, please look through your materials to see if there is anything you can part with to redistribute to family therapy programs in need of them.

Phoebe Prosky, Secretariat for the Training Division, can be contacted at 143 Flying Point Road, Freeport, Maine 04032, USA. [pprosky@suscom-maine.net](mailto:pprosky@suscom-maine.net)

## USED TRAINING MATERIALS NEEDED

Please bring any gently used training materials that you want to donate to the division to the Holland congress. They will be made available to division members at our table at the congress. Recycle and disseminate systemic thinking at the same time!

You may also send materials to me at the address at left.

## SEE YOURSELVES AND YOUR FRIENDS IN ACTION AND AT PLAY AT IFTA CONFERENCES!

Photographs of IFTA International Congresses are available for viewing. There are two ways to access the photographs on the web.

Either go to the IFTA website at: [www.ifta-familytherapy.org](http://www.ifta-familytherapy.org) and then click on the link "**Photo Gallery**" on the left side of the page, or go directly to the conference photo site at: [ifta.smugmug.com](http://ifta.smugmug.com)

Enjoy seeing images from the past conferences in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2010), Slovenia (2009) Porto (2008), Iceland (2006), Washington, D.C. (2005), Istanbul, Turkey (2004); Bled, Slovenia (2003); and Porto Alegre, Brazil (2001). Copies of many of the images are available through our IFTA photographer, Pamela R. L. Lessing.





Photographs from the 18th World Family Therapy Congress by Pamela Lessing Friedman. (See more on smugmug; follow directions on page 7.)

