



BY THE RED CEDAR

By
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Reflections

For nearly a generation significant portions of my professional and personal life have involved leadership positions for organizations devoted to enhancing the quality of life for very young children and their families. Executive positions with the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, the International Association for Infant Mental Health, and the World Association for Infant Mental Health lifted me from a relatively sedentary academic life, to a robust, challenging, tension filled and enormously rewarding world featuring diverse cultures, passionate colleagues, and the challenge of mission. In August, 2008, this 28 year cruise finally arrives at the shore and I disembark.

Transformations

In my work with communities throughout Michigan, we talk extensively about transformational change as the gold standard for changes in the community and the university as a result of university-in-community partnerships. Transformation means change, not just in the resolution of a community problem, or a parent-infant relationship, but in the individuals who are attempting to effect change as well. If interactions with others do not lead to transformations in self, other, and self-other relationships, then the players have only been passive observers, automatons, who

were disengaged from the joy-despair continuum that defines the life course.

My inaugural meeting of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health Board of Directors in 1979, was a transformational event. It awakened a dormant interest in social justice, community change, and policy that I had put aside in graduate school, especially when I transferred from a doctoral program in child clinical psychology to one focused on experimental studies of early human development. That board meeting enabled me to define my niche within the world of 12 Selma Fraiberg trained infant mental health specialists who had established the first professional association exclusively focused on infancy and very early childhood, more as an effort to conduct a statewide training program than to actually organize a professional society (Fitzgerald, 1985). That niche led to executive positions with Mi-AIMH, the International Association for Infant Mental Health, and for the past 16 years, with WAIMH.

Memories

Since the formation of WAIMH in 1992, WAIMH has had three major ways to communicate with its members about the world of infant mental health: face-to-face via World and Regional Congresses, electronically via web pages and emails, and by print via the *Infant Mental Health Journal (IMHJ)* and *The Signal*. Previously, I published analyses of the content of the IMHJ focusing on the topical content of the articles, the authors, and the subject

populations being studied or involved in treatment programs (Fitzgerald & Barton, 2000). Publication of these content analyses was followed by a surge of submissions to the IMHJ that vastly expanded the diversity of authorship, cultures, and subject populations represented in the articles (Fitzgerald, 2006).

Attempting to write history always places one on a slippery slope, because so much of history is the writer's social construction rather than hard fact. As I prepared to write this article it occurred to me that *The Signal* is the repository of many memories of my 16 exciting years as WAIMH's executive director. I worked with three editors (Charles Zeanah, 1993-1999; Paul Barrows, 2000-2006; Miri Keren, 2007-) from three cultures, and with four presidents (Joy Osofsky, 1992-1996; Yvon Gauthier, 1996-2000; Peter de Chateau, 2000-2004; Tuula Tamminen, 2004-2008) from four cultures. Each of these individuals had their own style and each left their footprint on WAIMH. Joy focused on organizational issues associated with the merger of the World Association of Infant Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines and the International Association for Infant Mental Health, building on the strengths of each organization to assure the merger's success. My recollection, probably exaggerated with time, is that Joy and I were almost in daily contact about WAIMH business issues during her four-year term as president. Yvon and Peter focused on issues related to the social context of infants throughout the world and WAIMH's responsibilities for advocacy and

attention to public policy. Tuula has focused on deepening WAIMH's attention to cultural diversity and to broadening the democratic structure and function of the association. Each has played a key role in guiding WAIMH from its organizational infancy to its adolescence.

Responsibility for moving WAIMH to its early adulthood falls on the shoulders' of President Elect Antoine Guedeney, and Executive Director Elect, Pälvi Kaukonen.

The Signal authors reflect WAIMH's diversity; authors of published

Table 1: Selected authors: Published in *The Signal*, 1993-2008.

Stephan Bennett
 Sonya Bemporad
 Wendy Burnston
 Salvadore Celia
 Marguerite Dunitz-Scheer
 Laurie van Egeren
 Ilgi Ozturk Ertem
 Ruth Feldman
 Tiffany Field
 Nicholas Favez
 Elisabeth Fivaz-Depeursinge
 France Frasarolo
 Bernard Golse
 Peter Gorski
 Antoine Guedeney
 Nicole Guedeney
 Robin Balbernie
 Marinus H. Ilzendoorn
 Brigid Jordan
 Jon Korfmacher
 Penelope Leach
 Barry M. Lester
 Alicia Lieberman
 David Lonie
 Lisa Miller
 Marie Rose Moro
 Rifkat Muhamedrahimov
 Joy D. Osofsky
 Fernando Petrina
 Linda Richter
 Frances Thompson Salo
 Ronny Scheer
 Stephen Seligman
 Marian Sigman
 Daniel Stern
 Frances Stott
 Graziella Fava Vizziello
 Deborah Weatherston
 Dieter Wolke
 Barry Wright
 Bonnie Young
 Charles Zeanah

articles reside in 18 countries (Austria, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Italy, Israel, Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, United States, United Kingdom) and represent all five of the Olympics-defined inhabited continents of the world.

Authors of the 100 articles appearing in *The Signal* include some of the world's leading scholars in the interdisciplinary field of infant mental health (see Table 1). An admittedly arbitrary categorization of the contents indicate that most articles address issues related to parenting and infant care (see Table 2). In Memorium articles call to mind five colleagues who helped to craft the field through their national and international leadership, scholarly work, and clinical insights (Myriam David, Sonja Bemporad, Serge Lebovici, Jack Stack, Norma Ringler). At the other end of the emotional continuum, *The Signal* also publically celebrated the lifetime contributions of Robert N. Emde, the only individual to be awarded the title of Honorary President, WAIMH's highest honor.

The history of a movement can be captured in many ways, through personal recollections and reflections, and by monitoring the printed works of professional publications such as the *Infant Mental Health Journal*,

or by societal newsletters, such as *The Signal*. My 16 years with WAIMH have been extraordinary, not only because I've met nearly all of the individuals mentioned in this article, but because I have had the opportunity to work with people throughout the world who are deeply committed to humankind's youngest children and their caregivers; who play as hard as they work; and who always find the way to bridge culture, discipline, and personal ambition for the good of infants, toddlers, and their families. One can only hope that one day politicians will also discover the importance of relationship-building for crafting peaceful solutions through compromise!

Farewells

So, 16 years draws to a close. These articles started as "From the Executive Office", transformed to "From the Red Cedar" (the river that flows past my office in East Lansing, Michigan), then somehow became "By the Red Cedar", and soon they will be written by Pälvi Kaukonen, perhaps while she sits "By the Tammerkoski" in Tampere. For me the river still runs through my campus and I will continue to ride its waves seeking ever more challenging destinations to engage in scholarly research for the public good. I hope to see many of you in Yokohama!!!

Hi

Table 2: Major Topical Categories of Articles Published in the *Signal*, 1993-2008.

General Topic Area	Frequency
Parenting and Child Care	26
IMH Issues, Definitions, Training	16
Attachment/Attachment Behaviors	16
Psychotherapeutic Issues	11
Preventive-Intervention Programs	7
Psychopathology	7
Cultural Context	7
Neurobiological Disorders	6
Prenatal/Perinatal Experiences	4

References

Fitzgerald, H. E. (1985). The Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health: historical context and contemporary status. *Prevention in Human Services*, 3, 35-44.

Fitzgerald, H. E. (2006). Cross cultural research during infancy: Methodological considerations. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 27, 612-617.

Fitzgerald, H. E., & Barton, L. R. (2000). Infant mental health: origins and emergence of an interdisciplinary field. In J. D. Osofsky & H. E. Fitzgerald (eds). *WAIMH Handbook of infant*



The Tammerkoski

Photo by courtesy of Hiram Fitzgerald, 2004.



The 11th World Congress of World Association for Infant Mental Health

Date : Friday 1st - Tuesday 5th August, 2008 Venue : Congress Center, Pacifico Yokohama, Yokohama, Japan

Welcome to Yokohama!

Dear Colleagues:

It is a great pleasure for me to invite you to the 11th World Congress of the World Association for Infant Mental Health, to be held in my home city of Yokohama, Japan, August 1-5, 2008.

This is the first world congress of WAIMH to be held in Asia, and colleagues from all over the world, especially from neighboring Asian countries where people are in dire need of infant mental health services, are welcome.

The Local Organizing Committee of Yokohama is working hard to create an ambience for rich verbal and nonverbal communications

during the congress. Inside Pacifico, the conference center, words are crucial in plenary sessions, symposia, workshops, poster sessions, and master class lectures, so we will make sure that translation in English and Japanese is of good quality. In the immediate surroundings of Pacifico, where words matter less, there will be a wide choice of entertainment jointly arranged by the City of Yokohama and grassroot groups. Just relax and forget about your tough reality at home. Enjoy concerts, art exhibitions, and funfair, or a portside spa with healing hot mineral waters brought in from nearby mountains. You will immediately find yourself basking in Japanese “amae”, a mutually gratifying companionship reminiscent of the sweet intimacy of infancy.

On August 1, a fireworks display will adorn the sky of Pacifico and Port Future (Minato Mirai) to celebrate the historical eve of the 150th Anniversary of the Opening of the Yokohama Port.

With your participation from the East and the West, this Yokohama Congress will set the stage for a new dawn of worldwide infant mental health.

I look forward to welcoming you all in Yokohama.

*Hisako Watanabe, M.D.
Chair, Local Organizing
Committee*