

President's Perspective

By Antoine Guedeny



WAIMH is on the Move!

WAIMH really is on the move, and on all extend. We have implemented major by-laws changes, as well as the transfer of the WAIMH office from East Lansing, Michigan USA to Tampere, Finland. This is by now fully realised and efficient. We have also revised and updated the WAIMH website.

The Signal is on the move. Revitalized by Editor and President-Elect, Miri Keren (Israel) and with assistance from Deborah Weatherston (USA), The Signal is becoming an important member benefit. Members are invited to submit articles for the readership at large. We invite all affiliates to use The Signal to disseminate information about the history of their associations, as well as special trainings, conferences or advocacy events. The Signal is also a place where WAIMH can celebrate the life and work of colleagues who have made important contributions to the field, but who are no longer living, such as Salvador Celia from Brazil, arguably the first WAIMH member to be statued in the city where he organized la 'Semana do Bebe', the week of the infant or Michel Soulé, a great figure of infant mental health in France (see his obituary in this issue). It is the place where members can publish original clinical work, specific experiences or book reviews.

WAIMH members recently held an important board election. As President, I want to thank the candidates who were nominated and congratulate the selection of Karlen Lyons-Ruth. Because this is a member-based organization, we hope that each WAIMH member will participate with enthusiasm in upcoming elections. The next important vote will take place in Capetown. Miri Keren will step up to her role as President of WAIMH. At that time, the board will select a new Present-Elect. We have sent a tentative inquiry to all WAIMH members so that candidates be known and give their programs and presentation so the members of the board will be able to vote select the new President-Elect at the April 2012 board meeting.

The position of President-Elect is an important one. The WAIMH Presidency is an honour as well as an exciting and demanding responsibility. Generally, candidates have been on the board for some time and are very familiar with the organisation. Quite often, they have successfully organised a world congress or a regional conference in connection with WAIMH. They have had leadership experience as head of an academic department or research team and have international experience and respect. The President-Elect sits on the board for 4 years before becoming President, allowing for a great deal of collaboration with the current president and insuring continuity for the leadership of the association.

Of additional interest and showing that

WAIMH is "on the move," we have used video conferencing for our board meetings, allowing us to have meetings when needed at low cost to the association.

The Infant Mental Health Journal (IMHJ) is also on the move. Hiram Fitzgerald, Editor-in-Chief, has moved the IMHJ into one of the more important publications in the field with a large panel of Associate Editors from around the world and streamlining submissions electronically. The new format and cover are really attractive and, of real importance, the IMHJ can accommodate more papers in each issue and can plan for special issues. WAIMH members are invited to submit ideas for special issues and, if accepted, will undergo the same peer review process as the regular issues. Hope is high that the IMHJ will soon get into Medline; the mean rejection rate now is 69%, which is about the same as Child Development. The IMHJ is the official publication of WAIMH and is owned by the Michigan Infant Mental Health Association (MI-AIMH). MI-AIMH, with assistance from a selection committee, will choose the next Editor-in-Chief by 2014 when Hiram Fitzgerald steps down from that position.

Development of training within WAIMH is also "on the move," with several new initiatives. One is the first WAIMH Training Village to be carried out in Capetown, just before the Pre-Congress day. It will be one-day training, offered by Kaija Puura, Palvi Kaukonen, Deborah Weatherston and myself, at the Children War memorial paediatric hospital. Astrid Berg and the South African Affiliate organized a test meeting last year during the WAIMH Conference committee's site visit and it was quite successful. The idea was to use the WAIMH Congress as a way to attract and support infant mental health workers who may not be able to attend the WAIMH Congress in Cape Town, but would be able to attend a Training Village. It is one way that WAIMH can give back to the growing infant mental health community. In the future, we could look for sustained sponsorships for such events.

A second training development was the invitation extended to Miri Keren and myself to participate in the perinatal section of the World Psychiatric Association WPA. Together, we used our attendance at this conference in Buenos Aires to respond to the invitation of the Argentinian affiliate association (SAPI), to participate in a 2-day meeting at no cost to the affiliate. In the past, WAIMH board members have largely done this work as missi dominici, offering their expertise and training abilities to groups who requested it. WAIMH leaders will take every opportunity to participate in other societies meetings (Marcé, IACAPAP, etc), increasing our training opportunities within our world or regional congresses. Our next goal is clearly to continue to expand training in India

and China as they develop affiliates groups or societies committed to infant mental health.

This is my last presidential address and offers me the opportunity to tell you how pleased and privileged I have been to work with such an incredible group of people who are now long time friends. I have had constant help from Miri Keren, President-Elect (my almost sib as we were born same day in the same city!) and I will continue to work with her and with the board with great pleasure as Past President. I had the constant support and help from Past President, Tuula Tamminen, from Honorary President, Bob Emde and previous Executive Director, Hiram Fitzgerald, benefiting from their experience and wisdom. Palvi Kaukonen, WAIMH Executive Director, is a great asset for WAIMH, assisted by Kaija Puura, Associate Director, with both of them carrying high level responsibilities as they carry out the work of WAIMH. The WAIMH office in Tampere is fantastic, with Minna Sorsa, Administrative Assistant, always ready to assist even in "off" hours. The board has been extremely hard working, during congress meetings and in between. I do thank all of them for their work. It was with particular pleasure that we greeted Martin Saint André and Maree Foley as representative of the affiliates to the board and we have appreciated their responsiveness and initiatives to strengthen the bonds between WAIMH and affiliates societies. Thanks to Kai von Klitzing for organizing a very successful congress in Leipzig, which puts us in a good financial condition and to Neil Boris and the whole program committee who made it so scientifically and clinically pertinent and so attractive.

Finally, I must say how much I learned in being a WAIPAD then a WAIMH member for 23 years now. I started as executive at large for Serge Lebovici, my mentor and the first French president of WAIPAD. I barely could speak fluent English then and I had to follow and transcript the conversation between impressive people like Bob Emde, Joy Osofsky, Hiram Fitzgerald, Peter de Chateau, and many others all of whom were quite helpful and became close friends. Being in the board of WAIMH has helped me a lot in my personal career and lead me to high responsibilities in research and university as well as allowing me to visit extraordinary people and places around the world, and I am very grateful to the organization for all this.

Now, get ready for the next WAIMH grand rendezvous! See you all in Cape Town or, if not, in Edinburg, 2014.