

PRIMAL

Supporting Growth and Healing Through Deep Feeling Process

SUMMER NEWSLETTER • JULY 2011

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39th Annual Summer Convention

Pathways to Transformation

Tuesday, August 9 – Monday, August 15, 2011

Virden Retreat Center, Lewes, Delaware

By Denise Kline, JD, Convention Co-chair

This year's convention and co-conference will highlight pre-eminent therapist Dr. William Emerson and members of the Association for Pre- and Peri-natal Psychology and Health (APPPAH) of which Emerson is President.

Other featured presenters include cranial-sacral therapist, nurse and seminar organizer Dave Paxxon; primal therapist and spiritual psychologist Alice Rose Ph.D.; and Jill Chassen Ph.D., a midwife of Wise Woman University of New York, who will be offering several experiential programs throughout the weekend. Jungian Sandplay and Mat Track will be available all week to enable deeper processing of triggered emotions whether from birth and childhood traumas or from later relationship issues, life stresses, or persistent phobias, addictions or depression.

We are also glad to welcome for the first time from South Africa recent IPA member Marianne Littlejohn. She comes highly recommended by Pat Torngren, our beloved IPA lifetime member, who has been instrumental in the Primal Psychotherapy Page and online support group. Birth Observation and infant/childhood development is part of her presentation theme. Marianne's sensitivity and facilitation skills



Virden Dining Room

have been described as angelic by members of APPPAH and the IPA who have met her.

Another first time presenter with international experience is Robert Johnson, a researcher retired from Gaullaudet University. His topic is "Circumcision, a Crying Shame," which he presented in England in 2008. We look forward to his sharing his wealth of knowledge, insight and experience. We are also delighted that Monroe "Mickey" Judkovics is returning with a workshop which is sure to provide safe, enlightening and deep access to hidden feelings which affect our lives.

Returning from Quebec to the convention this year is Claude Breault, educator and online specialist, who is applying his unique skills to developing the primal community via online learning packages that can introduce people far and wide to our proc-

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Next deadline: October 15, 2011

Spring Retreat 2011 in

Spring Retreat Review

By Anne de Nada

It has been two years since I attended an IPA retreat or convention. I was happy to be back because I found the participants to be caring, sensitive and very respectful towards one another.

The surrounding scenery was expansive and peaceful, reminding us of our true nature while we walked to and fro between the buildings. There is a hard-core group of members who love and cherish each other. They all truly appreciate how beautiful and joyous life can be in a place where feelings, honesty, and openness are encouraged and honoured.

The cabaret evening had a wonderfully peaceful tone to it. A family atmosphere prevailed while a large number of members chose to share themselves in a delightfully entertaining way. The workshops were well-attended and appreciated, but Mat Track took first prize.

A Magical May Weekend

By Bill Gronwald

I'm not totally sure why, but in recent months I've developed some chips on my shoulder about the IPA. My complaints were (are) mostly that the IPA was not as professionally oriented an organization as I would like it to be. For example, events such as the yearly convention and retreat are heavily peer-organized and run. The IPA is not run by a hot shot New York City high-priced therapist with a doctorate! But this is maybe my snobbery (and perhaps I'll write about that in a future newsletter!)

In spite of my "chips," I attended the Spring Retreat at Kirkridge. Although somewhat wary at the beginning of my four days there, it became, quickly, a profound healing experience. Always stingy with my emotions, I had repeated episodes of freely flowing tears. Just about every event or workshop nudged me deeper and deeper into formerly unexpressed childhood horrors. And I became so aware how these childhood horrors

crippled my adult life. And always and everywhere at the retreat was a soothing, encouraging hug from a fellow attendee.

Not once over the four days did I work with a professional, but I realized something big about the IPA. The "professional" was the group. This collective group of mostly "seasoned" primalers provided a wealth of support, direction, insight, structure, and yes, professionalism. Added to this was the realization that so many of us are in the same space of dealing with lots of childhood damage that was hurled at us. My tears at my own dilemma were there also for other people as they shared their horrors.

And thanks to Kirkridge for providing a safe, welcoming and comfortable space for what may be a group of their most unusual guests.

Where do I sign up for the next retreat/convention?

Poetry Workshop

For a warm-up, we wrote cinquains, five-line poems containing two, four, six, eight, and two syllables per line, respectively.

By David Gorsky

Timing
with a force of
A cat that waits and gawks
At the screen before she yaks her
Last Lunch

Jersey
It's all been said.
And it's all true I tell
Close your ears and run for cover
Oh Christ!

By Bill Gronwald

Hungry!
Mommy, feed me!
But she cannot hear me.
My life on earth is over. Death
arrives.

Prose and Poetry

Age comes!
Don't hurry so.
Give me time to grow up.
Don't let me be so unfinished.
Let peace!

Then we wrote poems using the words fling, couch, beach, care, promise, trick, vein, sky.

By David Gorsky

Fling it on the couch
Go ahead. I promise not to tell.
To be quite honest, it's been bothering me
for the past five minutes.
Although I did admire the way you
scratched your nose.
Man, you really rammed your thumb up
there.
Did you get it all?
Like an embalmer draining from the vein.
If this were a secluded beach and not Dr.
Blitzstein's office,
You would not have a care in the world.
You know the trick.
Just simply raise your hand to the sky and
let the brisk sea air do all the work.
Now go get your boob job.

By Bill Gronwald

Having a fling,
But the wild promise is not reached.
What was wild passion on the beach,
Becomes, in reality, awkward grappling on
a couch.
The trick I see without a care
Has needle marks near his vein.
A sunny sky dims to a blackened thunder-
storm.
The sweet dream of a fantasized love rap-
idly fades.

Lastly, we experimented with "cubist" poems, deconstructing the Spring Retreat Program. I hope you get it even without seeing the program

By Harriet Geller

Unresolved feelings in the mind have little
or no experience of self-expression and self-
presentation,

every evening to the wee hours. Abide by
this policy to be
treated for emergencies not pre-planned.

The schedule can be revised at breakfast.
Working and honoring this convention
with sufficient interest, leaders have the
obligation
to immediately stop what they are doing.

Instrumentals are welcome, and
the most supportive audience
excludes participants on this basis.
Growth and healing closing on Sunday.

By David Gorsky

I meant
Please be aware
Emergencies
Rights and Obligations
Team
Share Information

By Jean Rashkind

Wee hours
And tall tales
All are welcome.
Honor intense feelings.
Mix media, improvise, dance and sing.
Don't stop, I mean it!
The crisis management team will resolve
all your feelings
during free time Thursday afternoon.

By Bill Gronwald

Vaguely Sequiturs

The tall tales and improvisations at the
cabaret shall be treated as confidential.
We do not say, "Stop, I mean it!" No, no,
we applaud the quasi rehearsed skits that
pander to the personal information of the
crisis management team, which may have
little or no experience regarding your per-
sonal information and thusly, are encour-
aged to immediately stop what they are
doing AND provide for uncompleted or
unresolved feelings that bubble out during
the Jam Session and Sing-A-Long. Break-
fast 8 AM-9 AM

IPA Calendar

2011 Summer Convention & Co-conference

Pathways to Transformation

Tuesday, August 4 –
Monday August 15

Viriden Retreat Center Lewes, Delaware

Viriden website:
www.udel.edu/conf/lewes

Visit the IPA web site
primals.org/convention for
further information

Board Of Directors Mtg

Thursday, August 6

Annual Membership Meeting

Thursday, August 6

Announcements

Newsletter Schedule

The newsletter will henceforth be
published twice a year, in Decem-
ber and June.

Public Relations Project

Bill Gronwald is spearheading an
initiative to gather primal success
stories from IPA members and
others who have been involved
with deep-feeling therapies. We
are preparing a questionnaire to
guide telephone interviews that
will help participants to share their
experiences. We plan to publish
your responses anonymously, so
please take the time, and the risk,
to help make this a success.

Member News

Primal Integration Center of Michigan

Led by Barbara Bryan

Farmington Hills, Michigan

Phone; 248-478-5559

Email: babryan@mi.primalcenter.com

Website: www.primalcenter.com

Primal Intensive Weekend Workshop

November 11–13, 2011

Fri., 7:30 pm thru Sun., 5:00 pm

Led by Barbara Bryan,

Bob Holmes and staff.

\$390 includes food, lodging, and pick-up at the airport.

Long-term Primal Intensives

A unique opportunity to be in a safe, supportive environment, away from everyday concerns and able to focus completely on your own emotional issues.

Includes airport pick-up, food and lodging, 24-hour supervision, and 3 hours of one-on-ones in the therapy room each day. Intensives can vary from 5 to 17 days.

Weekly Primal Group

Thursdays, 7:00 - 9:30 pm

Some primal experience is required.



Missed: Sandy Weymouth and Michael Gottlieb

Spring Retreat 2011 in Pictures



The Women's Group



Leonard: Anyone want some?



Alex and Harriet gliding in paradise



Don and Bill W in the sunlight



Smile Everyone! First Row (from left): Gene Long, Alex Tadeskung, Walter Gambin
Second Row: Joyful Yes, Jean Rashkind, Kelly Hopkins, Don Eschbach, Anna Puleo, Anne de Nada
Third Row: Leonard Rosenbaum, David Gorsky, Bill Gronwald, Warren Davis, Harriet Geller, Bill Whitesell

The Thayer White Group: Not For the Timid

By Gary Bradley

I have been attending Thayer White's new monthly group formed to develop modalities for emotional and spiritual growth. The group meets on the first or second weekend of the month at Thayer's home near Newark, Delaware, for about four hours each on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Saturday dinner and socializing are usually available at Sandy Weymouth's Woods Place between the sessions.

Thayer is attempting to create a multiple input approach to human development. His techniques for emotional growth concentrate on sandplay and mat-track style primal sessions. In addition he has recommendations for other areas of growth outside of the feeling sessions. These include an intellectual project of the participant's choice, an exercise program geared to the participant's particular needs, and a spiritual study program based on the somewhat eclectic works that Thayer has found valuable in his own life, including the channeled Michael teachings, the Enneagram, and selected Native American teachings.

His multifaceted approach is intended to facilitate growth by the synergy

of combining emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual exercises. Thayer's book *Finding Your Soul* (available from Amazon.com) gives a fuller picture of his evolving ideas as formulated a few years ago.

Additionally the group dynamic brings a strong element of healing into some of the sessions. Thayer also is familiar with a variety of other practices such as shamanic drumming and Maori symbol painting that he sometimes incorporates into the social interval between sessions. Several times a year Thayer expects to make available short intensive sessions (Friday evening to Sunday evening) for selected members of the group.

Thayer's group is geared toward people who are at a place in their lives where they feel the need to make big changes. If you are on a maintenance program of "pressure relief" primals to deal with life's daily problems while no longer pursuing any inner demons, this is probably not the group for you. However, if your internal landscape is desperately in need of change or your external landscape is undergoing changes you don't especially like, this may work for you. Contact Thayer or Sandy to confirm future meetings and receive detailed directions.



Cabaret highlight: Anne carrying her "needs," and then liberated



The audience enraptured!

Welcome New Members!

Richard C. Donovan,
Londonderry NH
Stacy Danielle Jones,
Stamford NY
Gregory Watt, Atlanta GA

Primal Groups

Bill Whitesell
McLean, Virginia

No charge to participate
wmwhitesell@gmail.com
703-734-1405

NY Primal Group

Primal group in Manhattan, every Monday, 7-10 pm. Peer-facilitated, non-profit, nominal charge for space.

The New York Core Center
115 E. 23rd St., 12th fl, Rm 6/8
(bet. Park and Lexington Aves.)

For more info, and to let them know you are coming, contact:

Art Brown
Art@ArtBrownArt.biz

Sandy Weymouth
302-530-1535
sandyweymouth@me.com

Expressive Meditation Group

For beginning meditators who find it difficult to still the mind or body.

Every Friday, 6 pm
520 Emory Circle, Atlanta GA

For more info, contact:
Alice Rose, 678-886-8680

Mary H. Thompson Remembered

Nov. 23, 1930 –Dec. 24, 2010

Mary was a fascinating and free-spirited individual, who filled her life with interesting work and unique individuals. Born November 23, 1930, the eldest daughter of Harry G. Hoehler and Dorothy Heyden Hoehler, of Wayne, Pennsylvania, Mary graduated from Tredyffrin-Easttown High School in 1949, and attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she studied music and education. She graduated from IUP in 1953 and later received a Master's degree in Counseling from the University of Pennsylvania.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, Mary was head of the music department at The Springside School, in Philadelphia. At this time she was also involved with the Singing City Choir of Philadelphia. Mary left music education to start her own counseling practice and, throughout the 1970's and 1980's, was very involved with several local organizations as well as serving on the board of directors of Women Organized Against Rape and the International Primal Therapy Association [sic]. When her children were grown, Mary spent time travelling with friends, most memorably to Greece, and eventually returned to the University of Pennsylvania, where she began academic work toward a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology.

Mary relocated to West Reading, Pennsylvania, where she continued her private counseling practice, and served on the faculty of Reading Area Community College. After retirement from RACC, she sold her home and spent time travelling in New England, eventually settling in Waltham, Mass. Toward the end of her life, Mary was a resident of Sunrise Assisted Living and EPOCH Assisted Living in Weston, Massachusetts.

Memorial donations in Mary's memory may be made to the American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, or to the Alzheimer's Association, P.O. Box 96011, Washington, DC 20090-6011.

—Joyce Funeral Home Obituary



Mary had been in an assisted living place for the last two years and was slowly declining with Alzheimer's. It is no surprise to us to learn that she found joy in life up to the end. She was musical all of her life and continued to respond to and appreciate music. She participated in the sing-a-longs at the home, and the staff called her their "songbird". Her delightful sense of humor and laughter stayed with her throughout.

Mary was a leader in the first Noah's Ark Training Program in 1977. I was there as a trainee. Later, starting in 1986, the Ark's were held every two years until 2000. Mary and I were the only two people who attended all nine Ark's. We were very different, but we worked together really well. Mary was so spontaneous and creative and I am organized, the "timekeeper". We became close friends and took several trips together.

After the first Ark, Mary joined and became active in the IPA. She was on the board and was also president one year. Mary did workshops about play therapy, relationships, and especially Jungian concepts. She was always ready to lead the sing-a-longs before the community meetings at our conventions. She was compassionate, generous and a wise therapist and friend.

Denise Kline and I were able to go to her memorial service on April 16th

at the Quaker Meeting House in Radnor, PA. It was a very simple service with many people sharing their memories and thoughts of Mary. She was greatly loved by so many people. Denise and I were the only ones from her primal world. We were so glad we could attend and share some of that part of her life. She will be missed, but always remembered with love and happiness to have known her.

—Barbara Ann Bryan

Mary was a big deal to me. She and Barbara were the first living examples of the ageless emotional state that reappears if we work at resolving our issues.

The first time I met Mary was at the 1999 IPA convention. It used to amaze me how funny and mischievous she was for an apparently "old" gal. I remember sitting beside her at the Annual General Meeting. We were sitting on a table at the back, and, because we were both short, we were swinging our legs back and forth like little kids. The meeting was "very serious," and she knew and respected that, but she couldn't help herself from whispering funny remarks to me, and we were on the verge of cracking up. She would say, "You're so cute!", and I'd said, "No, you're cuter!", and, well, she was a lot of fun!

Mary was the first one to really open me up to the concept of subpersonalities. She led the seminar at the 2000 Ark, and I was fascinated. She took us through an exercise to map our own, and to my surprise I had eight of the buggers!

Mary's warmth, insight, and humor were a major influence on my development as a therapist, and her legacy continues through my work. She was proof positive that the creative child inside us never has to leave us, and because of that, she seemed to transcend the confines of age.

—Sam Turton

IPA Blog: The Lost Essay

The IPA Primal Therapy Blog on mental-help.net was discontinued after two entries were posted on April 18 and April 22. This is the third blog, which was never posted.

Do We Need Our Defenses? What Happens When We Let Them Go?

By Harriet Geller

Thank you, Elaine, for commenting on an earlier blog about what happens when we let go of our defenses. It is a common fear among people who are beginning to move into deeper feelings that they will be left with “nothing” if they let go of their defensive behaviors. This fear is a natural consequence of our identifying the “self” with our behavior. We have lived with our defenses most of our lives, and it is not easy to understand that a good deal of that self is, in fact, being repressed. It is not the defense that we need to embrace—it has already strangled us enough—but the feelings that the defense wants to shield us from, the feelings that were too overwhelming for our infantile selves to experience. As we begin to express and accept these feelings as adults, we claim more and more of our true selves.

It is important to remember that the defenses that Primal Therapy works with are not protecting us from anything

real in the adult world; they are protecting us from infantile feelings. For example, when a “shy” person retreats to the outer fringe of a group and rarely contributes to the interaction, it is not that contemporary group which is dangerous to him. He is securing himself, albeit unconsciously, from a threat of criticism or ostracism or worse from his childhood. His guardians’ failure to meet his need for inclusion was what generated the terror and pain that his immature self could not tolerate, but that his mature self is still avoiding.

As he gradually experiences and accepts these difficult feelings, he will also experience the need to be seen and accepted that was not fulfilled in his childhood. In time he will come to understand that his defensive behavior was not just an avoidance of feelings, but was also an attempt to get the need met in the present, as we so often do. We are prone to set up our lives so that we can “fix” the past; that is, we create the same situation that we suffered in the past while expecting that “this time it will be different.”

Our shy man may have the secret hope, secret even to himself, that his seclusion will end when someone in the group finally reaches out to him in a way that he can accept. He probably didn’t notice how often someone tried and failed to do just that. Once he begins to understand, in a really deep way, how he is the one creating his isolation, he will

not be so quick to reject an invitation out of fear of being hurt. He will take a risk to interact with the group knowing that his fear is from the past.

When you read this, I will soon be with about 20 other people at the IPA Spring Retreat (May 11 - 15). I am looking forward to this opportunity to be with others in a feeling community and get assistance for having my feelings. It is definitely a good idea to move into primal feelings with a facilitator or “buddy” present. Although, even in a regressed state, our adult faculties are available, the child or infant that we become deserves and needs to have a “good” parent there for support and encouragement. As children, we too often cried alone or with ridicule, which caused us ultimately to repress the feelings. We do not want to repeat that scenario as adults.

Again I encourage you to ask questions or comment in any way that you need to, so that we can develop a meaningful dialog.



New IPA Icon

The board decided to adopt a modification of the “Freedom to Feel” image from the 2010 Summer Convention and Retreat for our permanent icon, replacing “Feel Different.” Few people recall that “Feel Different” was a play on Apple’s long abandoned “Think Different.” It was time for a change.

See it in all its glorious colors at www.primals.org.

Prenatal Primalling

When Post-Natal Primalling Relieves Symptoms but Does Not Cure the Underlying Disorder

By Alice Rose, Ph.D.

In 1974 I trained with Arthur Janov, and, after getting my Ph.D. in 1979, I opened a primal clinic in Atlanta. For ten years I did only birth and post-natal work, chiefly because we did not know people could have memories going back to the womb. Then a client regressed back to being a foetus who had lost her twin. When I gave a paper on twin loss and degenerative disease, I met William Emerson, a preeminent expert in prenatal trauma. After that, I trained with him for 15 years.

Primal-ling post-natal trauma may sometimes alleviate some symptoms without eliminating the underlying disorder whereas prenatal primalling can do both. Three case histories follow where post-natal primalling gave relief of symptoms but did not heal the disorder.

Bulimia: An Application of Emerson's Teachings

Bulimia is a serious eating disorder where the sufferers consume huge quantities of food, then force themselves to throw up. The following are typical characteristic of bulimics: 1) They do not rest and do not know when they need to rest. 2) They often eat when they are tired. 3) They starve themselves. 4) Just before a bulimic attack the feeling of hunger, whether emotional or physical, is so extreme that bulimics fear they are going to die if they do not eat immediately. 5) There is no pleasure in this kind of eating. It is painful and compulsive. 6) There is such a feeling of being out of control that the food feels forced down one's throat, against one's will, even though the bulimic is conducting the action.

Standard treatment today consists of drugs, frequent hospitalizations, and lengthy training in self-control. It fre-

quently does not work. These people stay in a lot of emotional pain.

When I first started to treat bulimics about 20 years ago, a pattern began to emerge in postnatal primals indicating that many had been raped in the mouth when very young. When they began reliving wanting to throw up the sperm, some of the bulimic attacks stopped. I thought we had found the answer. However, for others, while there was substantial relief from the compulsion, the disorder continued. I believe

this is because traumas are laid down in the unconscious mind in patterns. Oral rape represents only a fragment of the entire trauma

pattern. To relieve it and rid oneself of the charge of the emotions connected to that trauma may bring relief, but it is not a complete resolution. The full cure lies farther back in womb experiences.

William Emerson teaches about *umbilical affect*, which occurs when the mother does not want her baby in the womb and unconsciously sends toxic material down the cord. Foetuses have to fight for their lives because it could be fatally toxic. Here is a narrative from a client who could not get well with only postnatal primalling.

Sobbing and screaming: "She hates me. She really wants me dead. I'm so terrified of the stuff coming through the cord. It's black like tar or oil." Emerson teaches therapists to tell the patient to pinch the cord, using a sheet that they can twist up. "Here, pinch it off, Keep it away from you."

"I'm going to die. I have to stay alert. I'm afraid to relax or sleep. She'll get me". (Bulimics often are unconsciously afraid to rest and start eating only when they are worn out.) The en-

tire time she is coughing and gagging, twisting the sheet, rolling back and forth on the mattress, primalling the experience for almost an hour. And then the connection comes: "Oh, my God. I'm starving. If I keep this cord kinked I'll starve to death. I let go and it all flooded in at once. And then I feel poisoned by a big belly of "food" that I keep throwing up everyday!" (Bulimics also starve. It is then that they binge. In addition, the eating is painful. There is no pleasure in it. This is because they feel like they are "eating poison". Furthermore, the compulsion seems non-volitional because the "food" comes into the cord from outside the foetus.)

Oral rape, accounts for only a few of these symptoms: forced ingestion, a toxic disgusting substance in the mouth that needs to be expelled, gagging. It is just a fragment of the original trauma. Only prenatal umbilical trauma seems to account for such a bizarre cluster of symptoms and compulsions. The final proof is that this patient was cured. Bulimia is so severe and pervasive for most people that it takes a lot of prenatal primalling to cure it permanently to the point that there is no desire to repeat the behavior.

Intractable Grief

Case history: "Twice in my life I broke up with a boyfriend and could not get over it. Once in high school, I mourned for that boy for seven years and would not date anyone else. I didn't

have Primal at the time. The second time, in my 30's, I did have primal. I lost a lover and for another five years I kept griev-

ing and primalling his loss. This time because of primalling I was able to have another boyfriend and love him even though I was grieving almost twice weekly. It was crazy, wild grief like someone had died. I kept wondering why I

...traumas are laid down in the unconscious mind in patterns.

...umbilical affect...when the mother...sends toxic material down the cord.

Prenatal Primalling continued from previous page

would get immense relief but the grief would not go away. Then one day in a primal I called out his name in a long drawn out wail and *turned into a fetus*. I felt myself shrink into a little ball on the mattress."

This was the first time in my experience that anyone had regressed back that far. Over months of work we found that her beloved twin had died in the womb, leaving her abandoned to abusive parents who did not want her.

Incapacitating Phobia

One person had a phobia that ran her life and made married life uncomfortable. She could not sleep alone. If her husband left on a business trip she experienced catastrophic fear. She would crawl under the bed so no one could find her. She crouched in the corner shaking. She felt insane. There was no

possibility of sleep. Basically she could never be alone.

Even though she was primalling the fear and it would leave for a short time, she still could not be alone. Finally, she began a long journey of prenatal primalling, where eventually we discovered twin loss, and of the worst possible kind. Her identical twin (two sacks) was aborted in a gruesome violent act, with a needle poking out her eye when it was stabbed into the body.

And the connection was "Oh. Being alone triggers the whole scene that happened before I was alone in the womb. Previous to that someone was always with me from the earliest moment of life. When [a man] leaves I'm afraid I will die. I'll be murdered. (This was never conscious before. There was nothing but nameless terror). "And that's why I am hiding under the bed, so I won't be found by the abortionist, be-

cause I am next to be killed."

The final resolution of this took years because her fear was at the cellular level and there were many facets to this event that formed her personality and her character, too lengthy to go into here. Finally she can be alone and sleep alone.

Conclusion

When symptoms do not go away despite your best efforts at healing them through post-natal primalling, there may be experiences in the womb that are causing them. In fact, oddly enough, all the things that happen in the womb are precursors to anything happening after you were born. William Emerson calls it the Law of Recapitulation.

We primallers want to get to the root of things, to the real cause of why we are behaving the way we do. There's nothing more formative than the first moments and months of life itself. That's much of what makes us who we are, for better or for worse.

...all the things that happen in the womb are precursors...

Summer Convention continued from page 1

esses. He has done some work on this with Barbara Bryan of the Primal Integration Center of Michigan who will again share her extensive experience in feeling and therapeutic technique workshops at the convention. Tapping (EFT), to provide quick relief, will be taught by author-therapist-nurse Diane Kohl, and workshops in peer facilitation, primal theatre, and art and movement therapies, will be presented by cranial-sacral therapist Jean Rashkind and many others.

Contact information and Call to Presenters details are available on IPA's web site primals.org. Also look for convention updates announcing new presentations and workshops. Some regular events such as the Cabaret, Dance Party and the Annual General Meeting will take place on different days than usual

to accommodate the new schedule. We begin with dinner on Tuesday and end with lunch on Monday, facilitating a great IPA wrap-up and easing your return drives from the popular beach town of Lewes, DE.

Contact Alice Rose for air travel details to Salisbury, MD by US Airways and Piedmont, or Rick Benson for bus connections from New York City and Atlantic City to Cape May, NJ and the Lewes Ferry. Some folks will be flying into Philadelphia or BWI and staying at Sandy Weymouth's, The Woods Place (where emotional work may always be done!). Leonard Rosenbaum and others in the DC metropolitan area may also offer rides. Advance travel help is available from Anna Puleo, who is proficient with computers.

We are pleased to be returning to

the luxurious Virden Retreat Center of the University of Delaware, complete with maid service and gourmet meals. Make reservations early for a limited number of single and "family" rooms at special rates by calling Denise Kline at (301)791-9237. She can help you with other special requests, including dietary requirements, which must be reserved ahead.

All you need to do is pack a towel for the nearby beaches, and bring family and friends with whom to enjoy the freedom and transformation that comes with emotional release. It is your presence that makes the IPA Convention a success, creating variety and a fabulous experience for all. We will be so glad to see you there!

Guidelines for a Primal Peer Group (in Your Town)

By Art Brown

For the last year and a half, a small group of us have been running a Primal Peer Group in New York City. Our intention was to create a safe and inexpensive place where folks could drop into feelings and introduce others to this work. We believe we've been successful.

We started out monthly, then bi-monthly, and now meet every week. We have a core group that comes regularly, and we've begun to feel like a community. Our average attendance is eight to ten people. We've had a number of newcomers over the course of our existence; some of them haven't been ready for this, but a few have stayed. We find that it's been an excellent way to spread this work.

At the planning stage, we heard a number of cautions along the lines of "our not being able to handle people with serious issues." We considered those cautions carefully and concluded, firstly, that most newcomers self-select. Either they're not ready to start experiencing their feelings and hence don't return, or they are ready and start getting into it. Secondly, we meet people where they are. No one pretends to be a therapist. We make it very clear that there are no experts here, and you go as deep as you like (or not). If you want to go much, much deeper, then you might consider an intensive or working with a professional. Thirdly, we decided to err on the side of courage—providing a space even though a risk may exist. It seemed to us, the risk of not providing the space, and the healing it might allow someone who needs it, was worth it.

A few months in, we realized the need for some guidelines (with the newcomer in mind). This is what we developed.

The NY Primal Group is a group of people that gathers weekly in Manhattan to connect with feelings, particularly the ones that seem to keep us from doing and getting all we want from life.

We are peer-run and peer-financed, seeking neither a profit nor an

expert, but a safe place to support each other in growing saner. We usually divide the cost of the room at the end of the evening by the number of participants.

We generally follow the IPA "Mat Track" format, meaning we connect, and then work individually or with a buddy. What we do is process our feelings physically and verbally—in a context of safety and trust. During our group, participants find a mat and a space on the floor and are free to scream, cry, contort, bang, kick, or process their feelings in any way they see fit—so long as it doesn't hurt themselves or others.

We've found that letting out whatever's been bottled up—as deeply as possible—has a cumulative effect. It cleans out feelings we've been conditioned all our lives to stuff down, creating the space for freedom, power, integration and joy. Get more and more of this suppressed stuff out of us and our lives begin to change. We begin to recover the clarity and power we were conceived with.

Here are some of our evolving ground rules, calculated to create safety, trust and empowerment:

- ◆ **Do not hurt anyone or anything—including yourself.** Specifically, you can hit a mat or a pillow, but not a person, nor anything not meant to be hit. You can neither touch, nor interact with another participant, without their permission. The context is safety and respect.
- ◆ **Confidentiality:** What goes on in the group room, stays in the group room. We do not share any of what goes on with others. Gossip and intimacy cannot co-exist.
- ◆ **No cross-talk:** This means two things: 1) not talking during another member's turn to share without that member's permission, and 2) discussing a member's work during or after a session without that member's permission.
- ◆ **Go deeper:** Do not intentionally engage in conflict with any group

member during the group. If feelings come up regarding a group member, take them to "the mat", one of the mats we do our work on. Try not to aim anger, for example, at anyone in the room. We're finding that violating this may drive not only the target of the anger from the group but other members as well, particularly new members and people who are trying out our process. And, to state the obvious, we're trying to draw people to this process, not drive them away. Safety!

- ◆ **Noise:** We make noise. Sobbing, screaming, pounding and laughing are all par for the course. Our group is a place to let it out safely.
- ◆ **Facilitating and buddying:** Members may choose to work alone, buddy with another, or go back and forth. Say what you want and ask for permission.
- ◆ **Peer group, no therapists as such:** Our group is not run by certified therapists, although occasionally, members of our community who are certified therapists may come to our group as participants, and many of us have been involved with feeling related therapies for years as participants and peer leaders. As such we have a wealth of practical experience.
- ◆ **Separate business meeting:** As we continue growing, we may occasionally schedule some time to discuss and resolve business related issues. We try to minimize this so as not to excessively cut into group time.
- ◆ **Main objective:** Make this group work for you to get what you want.

Art Brown is a NY comedian, filmmaker, and the author of Everything I need to know, I learned from Cartoons. www.ArtBrownProductions.com.

Saying “No” to Circumcision

This piece was written for the Op-Ed page of the Washington Post, but was never published. Robert, a retired research editor at Gallaudet University, presented “The Impact of Neonatal Circumcision: Implications for Doctors of Men’s Experiences in Regressive Therapy” at the Tenth International Symposium on Genital Integrity in 2008 at the University of Keele, Staffordshire, UK. Robert is planning to do a workshop on circumcision at the 2011 IPA Summer Convention and will get into the relationship of this subject to primal therapy there. Meanwhile, if anyone is bothered by some of the information presented here, feel free to contact Robert at rcloverjohnson@verizon.net.

By Robert Clover Johnson

As I marched with a small but passionate group of anti-circumcision activists from the U.S. Capitol to the White House on April 2 this year, several mothers of intact (i.e., not circumcised) boys chanted “YouTube circumcision!” to curious observers on the sidewalks of Pennsylvania Avenue. These mothers knew from their own experience that watching videos of circumcision online—in effect, opening the doors that hospitals have traditionally kept closed to parents when their sons are circumcised—is often the quickest way to persuade prospective parents that this highly traumatic, purely elective, mainly cosmetic surgery, which removes significant amounts of healthy erogenous tissue from the penis, is not a good choice for their child.

In the past, parents based decisions about circumcising their sons on such factors as a doctor’s recommendation regarding supposed health benefits, the circumcised father’s wish to have his son look like him, the often ill-informed opinions of relatives, or hearsay information about “what everyone does these days.” But in this age of the Internet, combined with such medical advances as amniocentesis, American parents anticipating the birth of a baby boy—especially mothers-to-be—are increasingly seeking information about circumcision online at sites like Intact America, the National

Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers (NOCIRC), Mothering.com, drmomma.org, or babygooroo.com months before their boy is born. Consequently, when doctors or nurses ask if they want their newborn son circumcised, increasing numbers of parents are saying “No!” emphatically, without even asking for a medical opinion. Since hospitals are required by federal law to get the signed consent of parents before circumcising a baby boy, the practice could theoretically stop tomorrow if all new parents simply said “No!” to circumcision.

And in fact, though rates of infant male circumcision in U.S. hospitals have been steadily dropping since an all-time high of 80% in 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta reported in 2010 that a survey of U.S. hospitals had revealed that only 32.5% of baby boys born in hospitals in 2009 were circumcised in those hospitals. This 23.5% drop from a rate of 56% as recently as 2006 was the steepest ever noted over a three-year span.

The current decline in circumcision rates cannot be attributed to lack of trying by organizations that favor circumcision as an option. Many websites can be found that describe circumcision as an important prophylactic against urinary tract infections (UTIs) and such diseases as HIV/AIDS. But most new parents, free to weigh one set of arguments against another, appear to be finding pro-circumcision arguments less convincing than those that favor allowing boys to keep their foreskins. For example, using antibiotics to cure UTIs makes more sense to them than amputating their baby’s foreskin to prevent these diseases. And planning to advise their sons to use condoms or to be faith-

ful to one uninfected partner seems much more sensible to young couples than circumcising their baby boy to prevent him from eventually getting HIV/AIDS.

On websites opposed to circumcision, parents-to-be learn that the male prepuce, or foreskin, is designed by nature to protect the penis from diseases, not to cause them. They also learn that the foreskin contains nearly three-fourths of the erogenous nerves that make sex so enjoyable for intact men. They learn that intercourse with an intact man is generally more trouble-free and enjoyable for women as well. They learn that the United States is the only country in the world that for decades has routinely circumcised most of its newborn boys for so-called “medical” reasons and that none of these “reasons” bears up very well to close scrutiny. They learn that more than 80% of men worldwide are intact, including nearly all non-Jewish and non-Muslim men in Europe,

South and Central America, Russia, China, Japan, and India. They learn that the trauma of circumcision can interfere with mother-child bonding and can lay the groundwork for shyness or aggression in boys and men. Also, they learn that in 1996, federal legislation made female genital mutilation illegal in the United States and that under the principle of equal protection under law boys as well as girls should be pro-

protected from this harmful surgery.

Parents-to-be who are unswayed by human rights arguments should consider the likelihood that boys who are circumcised from now on in America will probably be in the minority. In a conformist society like the U.S., that may be the most persuasive argument of all



Robert at the White House

Exploring Breathwork

By Bill Whitesell

I have long been intrigued by breathwork—from Patanjali's yoga sutras to Orr's rebirthing, Kabbal's quantum light breath, and Grof's holotropics—as a form of meditation and as an access to inner spaces. Recently, I have pursued solo work using various guided meditation and musical combinations that are apt for me.

I find that rapid deep breathing, especially when combined with evocative music, can quickly move me to a regressed state where primal feelings emerge. While guided meditation programs sometimes suggest a sitting posture, I prefer to lie on my back. I find it helpful to raise energy levels by allowing myself to rhythmically move hips or legs, rotate my head, or thrash with my arms. Of course, I give myself freedom to add my own soundtrack—one reason why the music has to be loud.

Often I come to a point where I

must choose to continue the rapid deep breathing or just go with the release of primal feelings. If I'm really wailing, it's clear that primal release is the priority. But at other times, the choice is less clear. When I do stick with the breathing for a while longer, I typically begin to feel that it's becoming mechanical and then bail into my primal process. However, I wonder if I'm thereby missing an interesting altered state of consciousness. Grof, after all, turned to breathwork in part as an alternative to LSD.

There are also controversies regarding hyperventilation. Apparently, hyperventilation produces numbness, tingling, and lightheadedness because reduced carbon dioxide raises the pH level of the blood, which causes constriction of blood vessels. Physiological damage is a possible concern because vasoconstriction can reduce oxygen supply to some tissues (paradoxically, caused by rapid deep breathing). Breathwork advocates, however, maintain that the

physiological effects of voluntary hyperventilation are not harmful and quickly reversible.

A research paper (Rhinewine and Williams, *J. of Alternative Medicine*, 2007) found that the cerebral vascular effects of voluntary hyperventilation slow and lower EEG frequencies in a way that suggests a weakening of the usual inhibitory activity of the brain's frontal lobes. Thus, the emergence into awareness of previously avoided internal stimuli could help explain the catharsis and euphoria sometimes observed after eight minutes of voluntary hyperventilation, and even the subjective visions after fifteen minutes.

For me, primal process now goes beyond clearing stored emotional charge to exploring inner freedom and wholeness. I love the sweet spots of unbounded openness and love. I'm looking to experience more of them with primal breathwork.

IPA ROSES to . . .

- ◆ Sandy Weymouth for his unstinting hospitality once again in hosting the March board meeting.
- ◆ Jean Rashkind and Alex Tadeskung, who created a Spring Retreat that encouraged dark feelings and bright pleasures in equal doses, and most helpful assistance from Anna Puleo, who orchestrated and recorded the schedule each day.
- ◆ Art Brown for lending his expertise to design the Summer Convention flyer, and many others for distribution chores.
- ◆ Bill Gronwald for initiating and leading an IPA project to promote deep-feeling modalities (see p. 3).
- ◆ Art Brown for proofreading this issue, and Alex Tadeskung and Harriet Geller for Spring Retreat photos.
- ◆ Newsletter contributors Gary Bradley, Art Brown, Barbara Ann Bryan, Anne de Nada, Harriet Geller, David Gorsky, Bill Gronwald, Robert Johnson, Denise Kline, Jean Rashkind, Alice Rose, Sam Turton, William Whitesell

IPA Membership Dues

	<u>Single</u>	<u>Joint</u>
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Less than \$15,000	\$15	\$22

- All dues cover the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31 and are tax deductible.
- To qualify for joint membership, both members must live at the same address and pool resources. Joint members will receive one mailing per household.
- You may pay by check or money order, payable to IPA in US funds. Please add \$20 if paying through non-US banks.
- You may pay by credit card: Mastercharge or VISA.

To contact the IPA Treasurer, please call (703) 734-1405 or email treasurer@primals.org.

Fill in the membership application form at primals.org/membership and email or snail mail to: IPA, 811 Whann Ave., McLean, VA, USA 22101