

OPINION

IN THIS ISSUE

ASSOCIATION 4

• APA's Council of Representatives passes a \$52 million budget for 1993, during a meeting marked by tension and two failed measures to delineate the authority of the association's Board of Directors, **pg. 1**

[• Council takes action on various agenda items, **pg. 4**]

• Bryant L. Welch, JD, PhD, leaves his post as executive director for practice to become a consultant to APA, coordinating its strategy to include psychology in national health-care reform, **pg. 1**

• APA's Board of Directors boosts its contingency fund and that of council to \$100,000 each and looks at long-range planning issues during a rapid-fire meeting that involved only three hours of open session, **pg. 4**

• APA President Frank Farley, PhD, testifies before a House subcommittee on the need for more research money for health and behavior, **pg. 7**

• Head Start, the country's major social program for disadvantaged children, has grown and, in some cases thrived, thanks to the contributions of some dedicated psychologists, **pg. 8**

• The Practice Directorate is seeking more volunteers for local Head Start centers in a program it has formally initiated, **pg. 9**

• Miss America visits Capitol Hill with APA's Bill Bailey to speak out on AIDS issues, **pg. 10**

• APA President Frank Farley, PhD, is looking for psychologists with a vision for his Second Century Assembly, which will define what psychology has become and develop a blueprint for the future of the field, **pg. 10**

• The APA-Smithsonian 1991 lecture series was such a hit that the two are collaborating again on a series titled "The transitional years: A psychological look at mid-life in the '90s," **pg. 11**

Science Directorate 14

• Recent studies show older men with low cholesterol are slightly more likely to die a violent death. They are more apt to be depressed and some are low in the neurotransmitter serotonin, as are those with depression and impulsive and violent tendencies, **pg. 14**

• New studies debunk the old myth that teens take more risks because they feel invulnerable, **pg. 15**

• The Council of Representatives approves revised Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the Care and Use of Animals at its February meeting, **pg. 16**

• From the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, researchers examine the roots of parents' low scores on tests of psychological well-being, **pg. 17**

• Also from AAAS, researchers describe how people judge others' competence on characteristics that have little to do with ability—gender, wealth, dress, gestures and speech patterns, **pg. 18**

Practice Directorate 22

• The Practice Directorate stresses the importance of outpatient mental health care for a national health care plan at a breakfast briefing for staff and members of the House of Representatives, **pg. 22**

• Utilization review for short-term outpatient therapy costs more than it saves and interferes with treatment, Practice Directorate staff says, **pg. 23**

• The Practice Directorate is teaming up with outside organizations and large national coalitions in its effort to shape the debate on national health care. The newest group with which it is building ties is Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders, **pg. 24**

• The private psychiatric hospital scandal in Texas is hurting psychology and mental health patients, **pg. 25**

Public Interest Directorate 28

• With the recent public spotlight on homosexuality, homosexuals report emotional swings, from feeling outcast and fearful to feeling empowered and unified, **pg. 28**

• Two psychologists testified on opposite sides of a Colorado lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the state's anti-gay-rights amendment, **pg. 29**

• Psychologists foster an understanding of children's response to disasters, **pg. 30**

• Psychologists develop strategies for parents to help children cope when disaster strikes, **pg. 30**

• Lenore Walker, EdD, is one of 10 who visited first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, JD, for tea and discussion on the issue of domestic abuse, **pg. 32**

• U.S. and Western European psychologists are working to alleviate mental suffering in the former Yugoslav republics, **pg. 33**

Education Directorate 36

• With tighter budgets has come a new political reality for public universities. Legislatures are increasingly vocal about their concerns about the quality of education, the relevance of university research and academe's commitment to the public, **pg. 36**

• With National Science Foundation grants, three psychologists are developing summer workshops for high school psychology teachers, **pg. 38**

• Doctoral candidate Steve Barille found the right combination of physical and emotional support in an internship program that provides comprehensive training in counseling psychology. Mr. Barille is paralyzed from the neck down, **pg. 40**

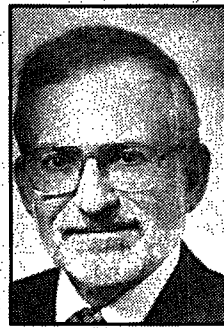
REGULAR FEATURES

Briefly	44
Classified ads	51
In the public interest	34
Judicial notebook	12
Letters	3
Notes & news	46
Running commentary	2
Science directions	20
Speaking of education	42
Thrills	3

RUNNING COMMENTARY

Social issues stances:
why APA takes them

By Raymond D. Fowler, PhD
Chief Executive Officer



Why does APA take positions on controversial social issues like abortion, women's rights and sexual orientation? That's a question I'm often asked by members who oppose APA's taking positions on social issues. Other members feel, just as passionately, that we should express ourselves even more strongly on a broad range of social problems. Still other members are not sure why APA has taken positions on some issues—such as desegregation of the public schools—and not on others, such as nuclear war and global warming. I'd like to provide some historical context for APA's social policy stands and describe how a determination is made of which positions to take.

The recent controversy surrounding President Clinton's effort to lift the ban on gays in the military illustrates the conflict that often accompanies social change of any kind. Desegregation of schools and the military, the women's rights movement, the legalization of abortion, AIDS education and other issues all have sparked controversy.

While most of these changes are accepted by society over time, some, such as abortion, continue to stimulate heated debate. Recently, social issues have been so prominent that it is nearly impossible to turn on the television or pick up a newspaper without hearing or seeing a story featuring one.

Prior to World War II, APA's official role in social issues was minimal. When a position was taken, it usually centered on the rights of APA members. For example, the Society for the Study of Social Issues, which later became APA's Div. 9, was created in 1936, in part to prod the association to address the high rate of unemployment among psychologists during the Depression. In the early 1950s, APA addressed such social issues as academic freedom and discrimination against African-American members at convention sites.

APA's bylaws were amended in 1956 to permit APA to take a stand on social issues where psychologists have special competence, especially those that jeopardize APA's goals of discovering truth and applying scientific knowledge in the interest of human welfare.

Few would deny that in keeping with our mission of promoting human welfare, APA has a responsibility to share the literature of psychology. However, the membership has long debated whether our responsibility extends to taking a more active stance, passing resolutions and advocating for our positions. Over the years, interpretations of our mission have been debated, broadened and narrowed several times.

Georgé Miller, PhD, in his now famous 1969 presidential address, encouraged us to "give psychology away" to the public and to experts in other fields so that they could improve conditions in their own lives and in society at large.

APA President Leona Tyler, PhD, in the late 1960s published the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Public Affairs, which included guidelines for determining the relative importance of issues to APA and the appropriate level of involvement. The essence of the "Tyler Report," which has often been used to guide the association, is that the association should focus its advocacy most prominently on areas where psychology has solid supporting research data.

Over the years, APA has steered clear of taking positions on issues that lie outside our expertise and for which there are no psychological data. For example, we would probably never take a position on space exploration. However, the range of issues on which we might take a stand is fairly broad, given that almost every social issue has a psychological component. APA has passed resolutions on a diverse array of issues, including the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, sexual orientation, corporal punishment, handgun control, nuclear arms, homelessness and many others.

Since the mid-1970s, APA has kept close contact with policy-makers, federal agency administrators and Congress, with the mission of providing accurate information to legislators on key issues at the right time. Our objective has been more to inform than to persuade, letting key decision-makers know what the research shows about better ways to treat the aged or the effects of violence on children, for example. In this process, APA has developed and repeatedly drawn on an incredible database, the PsycINFO system, a tremendous national asset that also serves the world.

The Board of Directors will be discussing the limits of advocacy at one of its future retreat meetings. Only one thing is certain—in the 21st century, as society faces social issues concerning overpopulation, new diseases, and increased cultural diversity, among others, psychology will continue to have a vital role to play and a significant contribution to make.