

Society for
Interpersonal
Theory and
Research

SITAR Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 2000

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Past President

Leonard M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
len@psych.stanford.edu

President

Aaron Pincus, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802
alp6@psu.edu

President-Elect

Chris Wagner, Ph.D.
Department of Rehabilitation
Counseling
Virginia Commonwealth
University
P.O. Box 980330
Richmond, VA 23298-0330
ccwagner@vcu.edu

Vice President

Michael Gurtman, Ph.D.
Psychology Department
University of Wisconsin-
Parkside
Kenosha, WI 53141
gurtman@uwp.edu

Executive Officer

Stephen Strack, Ph.D.
VA Ambulatory Care Center
351 East Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
snstrack@aol.com

Members-at-Large

Lynn Alden, Ph.D.
University of British Columbia
lalden@neuron3.psych.ubc.ca

Kenneth Locke, Ph.D.
University of Idaho, Moscow
klocke@uidaho.edu

Krista Trobst, Ph.D.
York University
ktrobst@aol.com

President's Message

This is a pivotal year for SITAR. The stability and success of our three annual meetings has led us to a necessary consideration of our further development and growth. In order to accomplish the mission and aims of the society (including facilitation and communication of interpersonal theory and research) we hope to widen our scope of activities and resources in order to provide members with a unique set of outlets and aids for scholarly and professional endeavors. Simply put, we are moving out of our backyard and into the real world!

Our annual business meeting was held on June 20, 2000, at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Much of what was discussed and approved at the meeting reflects the efforts and goals just mentioned, including the adoption of our constitution and by-laws (in effect July

1, 2000), incorporation as a nonprofit scientific society in California, election of new officers, and the decision to request annual membership dues. This and other society news is reviewed in this newsletter.

The Society officers and members-at-large for 2000-2001 are listed on this page. Nominations and elections of future officers will follow the guidelines set forth in the SITAR by-laws.

The executive committee is currently focusing on three major goals for this year, all of which we hope will expand

what SITAR can provide for its members. These goals are (a) expand membership, visibility, and interaction within the scientific community, (b) upgrade our website and listserv, and (c) develop an interactive society newsletter. To accomplish them, we have established subcommittees to oversee each task. We invite members interested in joining a subcommittee to contact current members via e-mail. We are hoping to add at least one person to each group. Current subcommittees are: Newsletter (Steve Strack, Aaron Pincus), Web Site (Ken Locke, Chris Wagner), and Expansion/Membership (Lynn Alden, Krista Trobst).

The most pivotal decision approved at the business meeting was the initiation of annual membership dues. This was a serious decision that was given significant thought. Please see [continued on page 3]



Third Annual Meeting

SITAR held its third annual meeting on June 19-20, 2000, at Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois. Approximately 50 people attended a thoroughly enjoyable two days that included a diverse program of talks and posters as well as a delicious lakeside barbecue. Thanks again to onsite host Michael Gurtman for doing

Len Horowitz for organizing a stimulating array of presentations, and Steve Strack, who does everything we never think of to keep us running smoothly! Finally, thanks to all who attended and participated. If you missed the meeting and would like a copy of the program and abstracts, contact Steve Strack.

Next Stop: Montreal!

Our 4th annual meeting will be held in Montreal, Quebec, on Friday, May 18 and Saturday, May 19, 2001. Debbie Moskowitz is our on-site hostess. We are currently working on final arrangements. Details regarding travel, lodging, and a call for papers will be included in our next newsletter, and will be posted on the listserv.

Past, Present, and Future by Len Horowitz

SITAR was conceived four years ago during a luncheon following an American Psychological Association symposium (Michael Gurtman organized both). We envisioned a small, congenial group devoted to the study of interpersonal processes. Since then, we have had three annual meetings—in Snow Bird, Utah, in Madison, Wisconsin, and in Evanston, Illinois. We seem to be thriving. . . and here to stay! For me personally, it has been a gratifying journey, watching our society take root.

In my opinion, the interpersonal approach is the one theoretical approach that can integrate the best of the other theoretical approaches. Like the cognitive-behavioral approach, it emphasizes objectively observable behavior and systematic research. Like the psychodynamic approach, it concerns interpersonal motivation, conflict, and de-



fense. Like the humanistic approach, it emphasizes the self, relationships, communication, empathy, perspective-taking, and support. It also provides a meaningful way to conceptualize psychopathology as more than a list of disparate symptoms and traits. In an era in which psychiatry has become so lopsidedly biological, it is refreshing to have a forum that redirects attention to the interpersonal basis of disorders and treatment.

The interpersonal approach poses unique questions like these: What do people want from interpersonal interactions? How do they succeed or fail in satisfying those wants? How are interpersonal processes related to a person's self-image and other internal representations and beliefs? What are the consequences of unsatisfied interpersonal motives? What is the evolutionary origin of interpersonal motives? How are interpersonal processes related to emotion? The work reported at our meetings has touched on all of these topics (and many more), providing very interesting food for thought.

"The time is ripe for developing a relatively broad theory about interpersonal processes."

I think the time is ripe for developing a relatively broad theory about interpersonal processes. We already have an elegant methodology for uncovering and exploring the fundamental organization of several interpersonal domains. We also have a legacy of important theoretical principles, such as the principle of complementarity, upon which to build. Many of us also admire relevant theoretical constructs from devel-

opmental psychology concerning attachment and separation/individuation. But we still need to expand these ideas and synthesize them into a broader theory.

How, for example, should we conceptualize interpersonal motives? What is the relationship between (1) agency as a broad motive, (2) a general need to dominate others, and (3) a specific goal to influence a friend's choice of car? How does motivational conflict produce symptoms and other effects? We also need a better theoretical understanding of the self-image. How is it to be described? How does the self-image relate to other interpersonal cognitions, and how do both affect interpersonal interactions?

A Report From the Website Subcommittee

The website subcommittee—Chris Wagner and Ken Locke—recently welcomed Jamie Nekich to the web development team. Jamie is both a psychologist and a talented web designer. Building on the excellent site created by Michael Gurtman, our goal is to add interesting content while making the pages more visually compelling and easy to navigate. Some of the content we hope to add are (a) membership and registration forms that can be completed on-line, (b) a list of recent publications with links to article and book abstracts, (c) detailed summaries or slide sets of the papers presented at the three SITAR conferences as well as further information about SITAR members and their programs of research, (d) descriptions of important issues in and applications of interpersonal theory and research, and (e) member list with contact information. To increase inter-

est our site, we have also considered adding the following types of pages (a) advertisements for jobs or research opportunities for students, (b) tips on how and where to publish interpersonal research, (c) links to free downloadable research tools, such as instruments and computer programs, (d) actually publishing brief, peer-reviewed electronic reports on interpersonal topics, and (e) if you all can send in enough interpersonal theory and research jokes, having a page of (tasteful and erudite) humor as well. You can send your jokes (and any serious comments or suggestions as well) to klocke@uidaho.edu.

Our only obstacle so far has been settling on a domain name. We had hoped to register the domain name www.sitar.org.

www.sitar.org, which would require us to host the site with a private ISP. Unfortunately, the SITAR Company, a real estate brokerage firm owned by a Mr. William Sitar already owns the "sitar.org" name. We asked them to let us use it—taking various interpersonal stances toward them ranging from warm dominance to complete groveling—but they refused. So, we have decided to use a slightly longer domain name and host the site at one of the universities with which the web team is affiliated. The new site will be up and running (and the new site address will be announced) in December. Until then, our official site is still

www.uwp.edu/academic/psychology/faculty/gurtman/sitar.



Membership

SITAR is moving ahead and looking to grow! As Aaron Pincus noted in his President's Message, SITAR is ready to expand as an international, scientific society. To accomplish this we need capital.

At this year's business meeting we officially graduated from our status as an informal group, and began accepting dues-paid memberships on July 1, 2000. During the business meeting members voted unanimously to "grandfather" all nondues-paying individuals into formal membership with the submission of a simple application and payment of \$25.00. The assessment of \$25.00 in annual dues should give SITAR the money it needs to reach its short-term goals: Register as a corporation, begin a new web site, mail semiannual newsletters, and operate a modest office to conduct official business.

President's Message (cont.)

the membership application included in this newsletter. I would like to emphasize that we are keenly aware of the responsibility that comes with this request. We will work hard to develop unique society resources, outlets, and activities for interpersonal theory and research. In recognition of the support of our current members, we have also implemented a "grandfathering" period for dues. From now until December 31, 2000, current members (i.e., those on our listserve and address list) can simply submit annual dues using the form included here and also posted on our listserve. Beginning January 1, 2001, applications for membership will be processed as per SITAR by-laws. We appreciatively ask for your patience and support.

Following the close of our meeting in Evanston, a large group of attendees gathered for an open forum to discuss the scope of the Society and its future plans and goals. Everyone was enthusiastic about the continued growth of SITAR, and what follows is a brief summary of some of the ideas and suggestions that were made.

Included in this mailing is a membership application. If you haven't already become a dues-paying member, consider doing so now. Membership status offers a number of benefits including receiving the SITAR newsletter, invitation for attendance at the annual meeting, access to the SITAR website and

Become a dues-paying member now. The "grandfathering" period ends Dec. 31, 2000

listserve, and most of all, the opportunity to interact with scholars interested in interpersonal topics.

The "grandfathering" period for current members ends on December 31, 2000. After that individuals who want to join SITAR will need to submit a more formal application and be ac-

As we begin efforts to expand membership and increase visibility, it is important to reach some consensus regarding the scope of SITAR. Michael Gurtman pointed out that interpersonal processes and interaction are so basic and pervasive as to potentially cause an "identity crisis" for the Society. Looking over the program for our meeting in Evanston, topics included psychopathology, psychotherapy, imagined audiences, substance use, perspective taking, complementarity, discourse analysis, emotion, head injury, and interpersonal cognitions, motives, traits, and problems. Earlier this year, I had sent a request to the listserve asking for input on the scope of interpersonal theory and re-

"The most pivotal decision approved at the business meeting was the initiation of annual membership dues."

search. The range of suggestions was even wider than what was represented in the Evanston program! To help us begin to target the appropriate outlets for announcements, advertisements, and invitations for future participation, we need to further articulate who we want to become and who we want to connect with. The executive committee is in agreement that we should strive

accepted based on guidelines set forth in the Society's by-laws.

It is the primary goal of the Expansion/Membership Subcommittee to expand and define membership during the coming year. As part of this mandate, we welcome feedback from members about their vision for the Society, and welcome interested persons to become a part of the subcommittee.

We need your help to increase membership. Do you know of any "interpersonal searchers" who may not be aware of SITAR? You probably do! Submit the names and addresses of potential members to us and we will send them information about the Society along with an invitation to join.

Finally, if you have any ideas or suggestions about expanding membership, let us know. We welcome your input.

Lynn Alden and Krista Trobst
Expansion/Membership Subcommittee

for inclusiveness without sliding into diffusion. In addition, long term growth was considered, including the potential to develop a journal devoted to interpersonal theory and research, and the possibility of joining a national organization like the American Psychological Association as a division. While we are obviously a long way off from the latter, it is important to keep an eye toward our long term future as well as our short term growth. I invite people with opinions on these matters to submit them to the newsletter subcommittee. These will appear in our first newsletter forum.

Finally, we would like to ask our members to help in our efforts to increase visibility. If you have a personal web page, please consider mentioning SITAR and adding a link to our site!

On a personal note, I want to say that I am honored to be serving as SITAR president and truly believe we have begun something unique! SITAR is poised to grow and with your help, I hope to continue our momentum throughout the next year!

Aaron Pincus, President

Society for Interpersonal Theory and Research

2020 Fremont Avenue
P.O. Box 608
South Pasadena, CA 91031-0608

Phone/FAX: 626-441-0614

Newsletter e-mail: snstrack@aol.com

SITAR

Listserve:
sitar-l@venus.vcu.edu
Web Site:

[www.uwp.edu/
academic/psychology/
faculty/gurtman/sitar](http://www.uwp.edu/academic/psychology/faculty/gurtman/sitar)

SITAR: Mission, Aims, and Activities

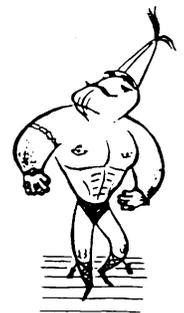
The Society is an international, multidisciplinary, scientific association devoted to interpersonal theory and research. By encouraging systematic theory and empirical research, it seeks to clarify the processes and mechanisms of interpersonal interactions that explain interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena of normal and abnormal psychology.

The goals of the Society are (1) to encourage the development of this research, (2) to foster the communication, understanding, and application of research findings, and (3) to enhance the scientific and social value of this research.

The activities of the Society include: (1) regular meetings for the communication of current research ideas, methods, and findings; (2) discussion of work in progress; (3) maintenance of an inventory of data and data-gathering resources available for use by members of the Society; and (4) facilitation of collaborative research.

Coffee Mugs and a Few T-Shirts Still Available

Show your interpersonal spirit with a SITAR coffee mug and Steigenplex T-shirt. Both feature delightful illustrations by New Yorker® cartoonist William Steig, which were made famous by Jerry Wiggins when he applied them to his circumplex portrayal of personality styles. Mr. Steig waved his usual royalty fee to allow us to reproduce his cartoons for fundraising! Mugs are in almond with blue lettering. They cost just \$10.00 each (shipping included). We have only a few T-shirts left. To be exact, we have two XL in white, with red and black lettering. We also have three S and three XL in black, with white and red lettering. The T-Shirts are \$16.00 each (shipping included). Contact Steve Strack (snstrack@aol.com) to place an order.



© W. Steig

You Are Invited to Participate...

Since we're an interpersonal society, we want to make our newsletter as interactive with members as possible. Below are a number of ways we hope to accomplish this. Please e-mail replies, submissions, or suggestions to the newsletter subcommittee (snstrack@aol.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

NAME THE NEWSLETTER: Have you got a catchy name in mind? We sure hope somebody does!

4TH ANNUAL MEETING: Are there critical topics or issues you'd like to see included at the next meeting? Do you have ideas for improving our meeting or program? Send us your suggestions for focal panels/discussions and innovations for enhancing our meetings.

OPINION, RESEARCH AND RECENT PUBLICATIONS: What are you up to? Tired of waiting a year and a half for your "in press" article to come out? Excited about a new study you're conducting? Have an opinion on current or future issues in

interpersonal theory and research? Send us a summary! Our first newsletter forum will focus on defining the scope of SITAR (see President's Message).

GOOD NEWS: New job? Tenure or promotion? Funded Grant? Award or other Recognition? Graduation? Anything happening you'd like your colleagues to know? Submit a brief announcement via email to the newsletter subcommittee. We will regularly include member updates and announcements in the newsletter.

JOBS: Is your department or agency searching for a position that includes interpersonal theory and research? If so, we are happy to post a notice in the newsletter.

MEMBER PROFILES: Suggestions for member profiles welcome!

STUDENTS: Student news and perspectives on interpersonal theory and research are encouraged. Let us know what's up!

Incorporation

Work is now underway to make SITAR a nonprofit, scientific corporation in the State of California. Incorporating allows us to operate as a tax-exempt organization and will give us the legal protection we need to grow. The choice of incorporating in California was a matter of convenience and money. SITAR is currently headquartered in California, and the State makes it fairly easy for nonprofit groups to establish themselves as corporations. The process takes six months and costs about \$300.

Newsletter Subcommittee

The newsletter subcommittee is currently a 'group' of two: Steve Strack and Aaron Pincus. Our goal this year is to inaugurate the SITAR newsletter with three mailings. Newsletters will include Society news and announcements, but most importantly, serve as outlets for members' opinions, news, announcements, and research. Please send us your ideas and suggestions. Also, we invite members interested in joining the newsletter subcommittee to contact us by e-mail.