Our Changing Relationships

Editor’s Note by Angela Berquist

Spring is finally here, and, in honor of the season, we’re examining relationships of all sorts, including our wonderful relationship to the people we’ve met in Jamaica. As we know, some of our relationships can, and even should, be work. That’s how we grow! Let’s embrace our relationships and accept them for what they can be.

Remember our summer issue explores the future of TA. Where is TA going and what can it become? The world has changed since Eric Berne’s day. What are we doing to adapt? Our future is of great importance.

Our Jamaican Colleagues

by Valerie Chang

Seated: Shirley Lot Lee, Valerie Chang.

The good news is that I went to the Jamaica Gathering again this year and enjoyed the wonderful people as well as the delicious setting. Although none of our Jamaican friends were able to join us for the whole Gathering, seven of them came over to be with us on Tuesday, February 6th. All of us were honored and pleased that they drove two to three hours to be with us for a day.

For those of you who remember the people we have worked with in Jamaica, and for those who haven’t met some of the wonderful human service professionals in Jamaica, let me introduce the people who joined us. Sharon Brown is the director of the counseling program and Lita Allen is on the social work faculty at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, in Kingston. Pauline Bain helped to create and now directs an education program similar to the GED programs in the United States. Her daughter-in-law, Samora Bain, works with the Red Cross. Shirley Lot Lee is developing a program to work with families that include family members who are disabled. Vivian Panton is the director of the Police Chaplains who serve throughout Jamaica. Rupert Campbell, one of the police chaplains joined the group.

The Jamaican group arrived just in time to join in as we learned to teach about ego states and games through improvisation. We had a great time as we improvised roles such as an older woman riding in the back seat of a car driven on Jamaican roads by a teenager who has just learned to drive. The older woman had to stay in a victim role and, as I remember, from a critical parent ego state. The teenage boy was in free child ego state and in a persecutor position. We laughed until tears rolled.

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Dear USATAA members,

I am writing in to remind you about the International Transactional Analysis Conference in San Francisco, California on August 8-12, 2007. The conference is being held at The Westin San Francisco Airport Hotel, a lovely boutique hotel close to the San Francisco airport. We have obtained great room rates, $109.00 for a single or double room. Early bird registration for USATAA members before June 1, 2007 is $395.00, which includes four day conference tuition, an opening reception on Wednesday evening, three lunches and all coffee breaks.

An impressive scientific program is being developed. Information about the program will be forthcoming as soon it is finalized. More than 40 workshops have already been submitted by presenters from around the world. There is a great line-up of pre-conference institutes scheduled for August 6, 7, 8 and an impressive international faculty of keynote presenters. To read about the program, the institutes and other events go to www.usataaconference.org. You can make your hotel reservations and register for the conference at this website.

An international faculty will offer a TA 101 on August 7 and 8; BOC exams will take place on August 8 and there is a Training and Certification trainers’ meeting on August 7.

There is a lot to do around the area where the hotel is located. Wonderful restaurants and shopping areas are within walking distance, or no more than a five-minute drive away.

Transportation to central San Francisco is very convenient; about 30 minutes by public transportation. There is so much to do in California before and after the conference. We will be posting links for more tour information on the conference website shortly.

We encourage people to register for the conference and other events, and to reserve hotel rooms as soon as possible so we can fill the hotel with conference participants.

We are excited about another great international conference of Transactional Analysts and invite you to come and contribute to its success.

Looking forward to seeing you in San Francisco; SIGN UP NOW.!!

Warmly yours,

Felipe
Felipe Garcia
Conference Chairman

San Francisco Conference News:

Now’s the time to make your plans for San Francisco, August 6-12! Take a look at the rich pre-conference program with many institutes (some providing CEU’s) and a special all-star TA 101.

Register, make hotel reservations, and see current information on the program as it is being planned by visiting www.usataaconference.org. Early bird registration ends June 1. Book your room now and get the fantastic rate of $109 plus tax, single OR double.

You can also sign up for the conference blog and you will receive informative updates and offers of free downloadable TA books or articles, thanks to Laurie Weiss’s creative thinking and networking.

Here’s a taste of what’s planned. You’ll want to read the compelling descriptions of these talks and institutes at the conference website!

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

The Power of Simplicity
Jack Dusay, MD, Founding member of ITAA

Co-creating Community and the Processes of Change
Adrienne Lee, President of the European Association of Transactional Analysis (EATA)

Relationship, Choice, and Change
Richard G. Erskine, Ph.D., Training Director, Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy

Liberating Self and Others through Cooperation: Teaching, Learning, Schooling, and Script
Giles Barrow, M.A., M.Ed., Educational Consultant, author

The Power of Dialogue in Resolving Conflict: Personal, Organizational, and International Bridge Building
George Kohlrieser, Ph.D., author, hostage negotiator, Professor of Leadership and Organizational Behavior

The Power of Co-creative Relationships
Bernd Schmid, Ph.D., founder director of the Institut für Systemische Beratung in Wiesloch, Germany.

One World! One TA?
Panel on assumptions of TA as it is applied around the world
John Heath, B.Sc., M.Ed., moderator

PRE-CONFERENCE PROGRAM:

Theory and Practice of Transactional Analysis
August 7-8. This meets the TA 101 qualification.
Organized by Gaylon Palmer.
TWO-DAY INSTITUTES:
The Force Is with You: CFQ Healing Qigong
   Nancy Porter-Steele, Ph.D. and Curtis Steele, M.D.
How to Work with the Different Personality Adaptations
   Vann Joines Ph.D.
Existential Role Imago Contact Analysis
   Gordon Law, M.Ed.
How to Do Psychotherapy: Steps to Becoming a Mature Psychotherapist
   Graham Barnes, Ph.D.
The Star Trek Model of Couples Therapy – Psychogenetics and the Redecision Model in Couples Therapy
   Phyllis Jenkins and Anne Teachworth

ONE-DAY INSTITUTES:
Breaking the Communication Barrier
   Abe Wagne, MSWr
Transactional Analysis & Projectives: Assessment of Children's Perception of Self and Others
   Fatma Torun Reid, M.A.
Structural Organizational Transactional Consulting (SOTC)
   Thomas Steinert, Ph.D.
The Unconscious Motivators that Determine Our Choices and Relationships
   Fanita English, MSW
Beyond the First Draft! Writing for Professional Journals
   Bill Cornell, M.A. and Robin Fryer, MSW
Treating Couples and Families Systemically with a Transactional Analysis Perspective
   Robert Massey, Ph.D.

Joining the USATAA Gathering
from Germany
by Andrea Klingen

Traveling to Jamaica was a particular experience for our little group from Germany. For all of us it was the first visit to Jamaica and the first opportunity to take part in a TA Conference outside Europe. We first heard about the Gathering from Fanita English, therefore, we already expected the Gathering might be an adventure. We were interested because Fanita had inspired us during her workshops in Germany so many times.

To describe our experience I would like to refer to Fanita’s concept of the three motivators: Survival Motivator, Quiescence (or Tranquil) Motivator and Passionate (or Expressive) Motivator. Each of the three motivators may be active or inactive at any given moment. The core of energy available to any motivator sensitized us to our homeostatic balance.

The Survival Motivator drove some of us for a while (i.e., we traveled by car over the Blue Mountains without knowing that the roads are not similar to German roads).

Step by step we became more and more enthusiastic about our unbelievable expedition. After arriving at Frenchman’s Cove, we found needs were different for each person: some of us mainly relaxed on the beautiful beach and some of us were inspired by the exceptional environment. On the whole, our motivator was the Quiescence Motivator. We felt invited by an open-minded and warm community. This activated our curiosity and creativity and our Passionate Motivator.

On the one hand, we found that the differences of language and professional associations separated us into different groups and individuals. But on the other hand, the language and the appreciation of TA turned us into an integrated larger community.

Personally, I hope to reconnect at the International Transactional Analysis Conference in San Francisco this summer and to build up new relationships with TA people from all over the world.

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Relationships Beyond Borders

by Lucy Freedman

I was first introduced to Scram in the book *Rasta Heart* by Robert Roskind, and met him in person when I attended a concert organized by Robert in Jamaica in 2003. We were both on our way to Port Antonio after the concert at the University of West Indies in Kingston, so we shared a taxi for next three or four hours, including a stop for a meal on the way. After feeling a bit unsure of what I was getting into as I set out on that trip, I enjoyed getting to know Scram. I learned a little of how to listen in Jamaican. We have now become good friends and are joyful when we see each other. Being connected with Scram, I feel more at home when I am in Port Antonio.

My California friend Mich (pronounced Meesh) went to Jamaica on a separate occasion, and became friends with Annetta (also known as "English") who is a delight to know even though our lives could hardly seem more different. Just the same, whenever we see her it's as if no time has passed. Mich and I have met her children and grandchildren, and we stay in touch regularly.

I also met Gloria, whom I now know as Priestess G., when a group from the University of the West Indies (UWI) attended a TA training program during our USATAA Jamaica Gathering. I saw her walking along the conference center road in a colorful dress and head wrap. We started talking then both personally and about social change and Jamaican women's hardships. She has since made a trip to the US, and, most recently, Mich and I visited her again in Montego Bay after this year's conference. She didn't attend because she was out in the country clearing her ancestral land to put up a dwelling for herself.

Mich and I are in the extended family of Sarah who used to work at Frenchman's Cove. Sarah and I talk when she and her family are in Jamaica, and when she or her son Dwayne is in the US on a work program. The difficulty of getting work is a regular theme in our conversations.

These people are all linked with many others whom we have gotten to know by sight and name—and often as a result of having fun together. We also share bonds that come from our hopes for social justice and our willingness to communicate about our beliefs. More than one synchronicity has appeared that makes us feel connected in ways that one wouldn't normally expect.

Our lives are in completely different contexts, and yet, the personal friendships have grown since we first met. I have to credit Mich, whose outgoing style invites laughter and connection, with being able to bridge cultures and see who people are. I also credit the warmth of the Jamaican culture, people's openness to share and to include others.

Others in the USATAA community have become friends with people who have participated in TA training that has taken place over some years now. Our group has grown to include social workers and educators who have begun using TA. Six people associated with UWI made the trek from Kingston to Port Antonio to spend a day with us. Phyllis Jenkins from California led a delightful group improvisation session that had everyone playing and laughing while sharing an educational experience.

Several of our conference sessions addressed relationships among cultures. In a very relevant presentation, Felipe Garcia listed the levels at which systems of oppression or injustice can be manifested—the individual, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional. All these levels affect our relationships with our friends, for example:

*Institutionally,* there is the backdrop of First World privilege against Third World poverty. For instance, Jamaica doesn't provide free public education. School is a privilege you have to pay for. We were very aware of inequities in our rights and expectations depending on where we live.

At the *cultural level,* whether First or Third world, we all find similarities and differences that can be delightful opportunities to share experiences. This year, Scram and his friends came to the Gathering and presented an evening of Nyahbingi drumming, which got everyone moving. Another time, half the group went to Scram's home-cooking restaurant for a four-course vegetarian feast.

*Interpersonally,* we do what we can to acknowledge and address the inequities in our cultures by sharing information, resources, hospitality, and kindness on all sides. Occasional contact by phone, letters, and email helps keep friendships current.

While I am uncertain at times in unknown territory, a stance of I'm OK — You're OK and seeking to communicate has allowed me to learn how to relax with friends in their surroundings. Individually, these relationships, although distant and sporadic, enrich my life and help me to experience huge amounts of gratitude, for friends, for my own life, and for the freedom to engage with others beyond the borders of my land and background.

One of the great things about TA is this exactly—that the chance to travel and hang out with conscious folks goes together with assumptions that foster healthy relationships.

Lucy Freedman is Coordinator of Communications for USATAA, president of Syntax Communication Modeling Corporation, and a past president of ITAA.
To Be or Not To Be Transparent
by Morris Haimowitz

An occasional client will be getting up to leave at the end of the session and then hurriedly exclaim, “Oh! I have something important to add.” The therapist may tell the client to be seated and let it out.

Or the therapist may say, I know it’s important, but bring it up next week, while thinking to himself, I have to pee, and there’s another client waiting. If he said that, he would be in a full transparent relationship with his client.

If he just said, “I know it’s important but bring it up next week,” without telling the client about the need to pee and that there is someone else waiting, he is in a less than full relationship. I like to think I am transparent. I say what I am thinking and feeling. My goal is to be in a full relationship with others. But here is where I got tested:

I had this problem when I was teaching in a church basement, with between 25 and 100 persons who came and went freely during the three-hour session. A lady who had been silent for many weeks got up at noon, as the class was beginning to leave, and revealed that her daughter only weighs 75 pounds and is dying of anorexia.

I know anorexia is difficult. I have a psychiatrist friend who told me he had twelve young women in the hospital, each in a room alone. Each young woman was given a tray of food and, as a reward for eating everything on the tray; they could get a book or a radio to play. If that didn’t work after a few weeks, they got tube feeding . . . and then were sent home to die. So the lady started screaming. Perls crawled under a table, put his hands over his ears. (When I saw him do that, I thought a therapist has freedom to do almost anything).

He was telling the client, “You are angry, and I am getting away from you.”

I saw Carl Rogers in a similar situation. The client was screaming about her daughter. Rogers said, “You are angry, and I am here with you.”

Perls was having a full (?) relationship with his client, being, or pretending to be, transparent. Rogers was just being a therapist.

Later, I asked Perls "Who would you like to be your therapist?" He answered, "Carl Rogers."

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Couple Therapy from a Perspective
Synthesizing TA and Addictions Treatment Models
by Roxanne Barksdale

In July 2006 when I learned that the title of the August 2007 ITAA & USATAA Conference in San Francisco would be Cooperation and Power: Relationships, Choices and Change, I was astonished. Coincidentally, I had spent the last five years engaged in exploration of just these concepts, particularly in reconciling the most intimate of relationships: marriage/partnership. The integration of these concepts has been fundamental in my drive to develop a process of doing couples therapy that addresses both the contempt and immobility that I often observe with the couples who seek me for counsel.

You see, although I really enjoy working with couples in psychotherapy, I have continued to be frustrated that, in spite of the work of multiple qualified and skillful therapists, the divorce rate for couples in the western world still hovers between 40 and 50%. Indeed, the most intimate adult relationships of our lives are painfully ruptured about half the time they are instituted. So, this has inspired me over the years to explore the variety of couple therapy treatment models on our professional palettes so I can search for a model
I first heard of Fritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt therapy, in 1965 when I went to Carmel, California from Chicago to train at Berne’s Transactional Analysis Institute where David Kupfer, Bob Goulding, and Mary (then Edwards) Goulding also taught and practiced. Perls lived and practiced at Esalen in Big Sur, close to Carmel.

One day, quite naively, I asked Berne, “Now that I am temporarily in California, shouldn’t I also spend time at Esalen and learn Gestalt, since both TA and Gestalt take a ‘here-and-now’ approach to treatment?” Wow! That question was a big mistake! Berne stiffened; his facial expression was like the one I’d seen when I referred to a Chicago psychoanalyst he disliked intensely. I concluded that Gestalt was a topic that could only be broached at my peril.

This story occurred a few years later when I was practicing as a TA therapist in Chicago. During this period, Fritz Perls was making plans to leave Esalen and open a new Institute in Canada. To build up his following, he shuttled between California and New York. Friends of mine, therapists who wanted to learn Gestalt treatment techniques, invited me to join them to form a group of “Gestalt trainees” who would sponsor regular “stopovers” for Perls in Chicago. And so, each month he spent a weekend with the group, which also organized public presentations. Eventually this core group formed the Chicago Gestalt Institute.

At the time, my practice was going very well with quite a number of “classic” TA treatment groups, so I didn’t feel any necessity to add to my treatment techniques. However, for the first time in my life, I was alone at home. Both my children were far away at college, and my husband was in Paris on a year’s Fulbright project. (True I’d joined him for a month, but I couldn’t afford more time away from my practice.) My weekends were quite dull, and it seemed interesting to fill my empty time in the company of professional friends.

So, in spite of Berne’s taboo, I joined the group and started learning Gestalt therapy with Fritz Perls. His primary teaching method was for us to work with him individually in the presence of the group. During a typical training day, we’d take turns volunteering as “patients” by sitting down on a chair next to him, (not in front of him), facing an empty chair.

We started by stating a problem or a concern, or by describing a dream. Perls would soon interrupt with directions, for instance, to repeat an episode from the dream in the present tense, or to describe oneself as someone in the dream and to “be” that person, addressing another person on the empty chair. Then we switched chairs, becoming the other person, conducting a dialogue between the two, and so on. Frequently, he prompted us, specifying that one must only verbalize or repeat a “prompt” if it corresponds to what we felt. Otherwise, we could change the prompt if we felt differently. His prompts were often quite extreme, aimed to articulate what he thought we felt unconsciously and didn’t dare say. It was a strict rule that in the “patient”

**An Important Treatment Session with Fritz Perls**

by Fanita English

I first heard of Fritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt therapy, in 1965 when I went to Carmel, California from Chicago to train at Berne’s Transactional Analysis Institute where David Kupfer, Bob Goulding, and Mary (then Edwards) Goulding also taught and practiced. Perls lived and practiced at Esalen in Big Sur, close to Carmel.
role, we weren’t to face or dialogue with him or any one else, but only with the empty chair.

A few months after we started, I experienced bouts of overwhelming anxiety, without any sense of what triggered them. I might be feeling quite pleased (for instance, after running a treatment group that went particularly well) when suddenly I’d feel overpowered by thoughts about how I don’t have much longer to live. I felt I’d wasted years being ineffective and professionally unproductive. I had eight years of fruitless psychoanalysis before having had the good fortune to find TA, but now it’s too late. I’m already 52 and there’s very little time left to develop whatever creative potential I may still have. Death is around the corner. It’s too late…too late…and I’d experience various bad somatic symptoms.

I decided to seek help from Perls. The next weekend, I was the first to volunteer as “patient” by sitting down on the seat next to him. What follows is exactly how the session went:

Fanita begins by saying that during the past few weeks she has developed tremendous anxiety – maybe about death? About not wanting to die. The anxiety is incapacitating. It wells up suddenly, unexpectedly, at the strangest times. Is it because she is alone at home, all her family is away, or is it because…

Fritz: interrupts (typically, he never allowed patients to speculate about causes)

“Turn around, look me in the eyes, and say: ‘Fritz, you are going to die’”

Fanita: obediently repeats, weakly: “Fritz, you are going to die”.

Fritz: (very sternly) “I told you to turn around and look at me!”

Fanita: “But I thought that is not allowed!”

Fritz: (impatiently) “Just do as I say!”

Fanita turns around, vaguely looks at him, and says, again weakly: “Fritz, you are going to die!”

Fritz: “Look me in the eyes, and say it!”

Fanita looks Fritz in the eyes (I still remember his rather bloated bloodshot blue eyes, with an unflinching gaze) “Fritz, you are going to die!”

Fritz: “Can’t hear you – louder!” (a favorite technique of his)

Fanita: (pretty loud) “Fritz, you are going to die!”

Fritz: “Louder!”

Fanita: (yells) “Fritz, you are going to die!”

Fritz: “Repeat, louder!”

Fanita: (screams at the top of her voice) “Fritz, you are going to die, you are going to die!” and breaks down into sobs.

Fritz: (very sarcastically) “Why do you cry? What is it to you if I die?”

Fanita: (still crying)” Because it means I, also, will die!”

Fritz: (Firm and sober) YES… Now get back to your seat (meaning, that’s the end of the session) and do the “Now” exercise with the group. (The “Now” exercise was an awareness exercise developed by Fritz. You say out loud: Now I see…a lamp, a chair, etc. Now I hear…the rumbling of a car, the clock ticking, etc. Now I touch…soft cloth, skin, etc. Now I feel….a stomach growl, a parched throat, etc., and continue on in this vein.)

Fanita: “But we haven’t yet worked on my problem!”

Fritz: (in stern schoolmaster tone that brooks no contradiction) “Do as I say!”

Fanita: (very dissatisfied) goes back to her seat, and proceeds with the Now exercise along with the group, after which Fritz announces: “Next!” (meaning he is ready for another volunteer).

I can’t remember anything else about that day, or even the entire weekend.

The “death anxiety” (or greed about wanting to live more life) never recurred, not even years later when, in Sri Lanka when the road in front of the car was blocked by a boulder and landslides of wet earth were raining down and it seemed certain we would die.

Perls died about three years later – unexpectedly, and in Chicago!!

Berne, though much younger, also unexpectedly died about 8 months before. Although Berne objected to Gestalt techniques and Perls used to be sarcastic about TA, I was told the Gouldings, brought about a positive encounter between these two men, perhaps a year or so before their deaths.

The Gouldings incorporated some Gestalt techniques into TA by developing their Redecision therapy. Myself, I tend to keep the two methods separate, and make a separate sub-contract with a client in a group before using Gestalt techniques. By now, I’ve developed my own way of working. Nonetheless, I owe a big debt of gratitude to Perls for what I learned from him in addition to all that my TA teachers taught me.
Our Jamaican Colleagues

Continued from page 1

down our faces and talked about ways to use this active learning method to enhance personal understanding of TA ego states and game roles. During the many variations on the improvisation the entire Jamaican group played roles, as did most of us.

In discussions with the Jamaican group, we urged them to consider attending the conference in San Francisco. At least a couple of them said they were going to make every effort to do so. We talked about the training needs that they had identified and considered ways we might work together to respond to those needs. No definite plans were made, but they are interested in developing a training program for school counselors.

Rocky Mountain Report

by Abe Wagner

There are a number of active members in the Rocky Mountain Region. Dan Caubel from Scarsdale AZ, is the new North American Representative to the ITAA Board of Trustees. Laurie and Jonathon Weiss are developing a Blog to create interest in the upcoming conference in San Francisco in August. Abe Wagner has just returned from a very successful engagement in Buenos Aires, where he did three CEO groups and their response to TA was excellent. He made contact with Jorge Close, TSTA, who has been inactive and now plans to be more active. He continues his consulting and training practice throughout the world.