

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our meetings in Hawaii were extremely successful, well attended, and occasionally provocative. At our professional session, we had the pleasure of hearing from this year's Manfred Guttmacher Award winner, Morton Birnbaum, M.D., LL.B., a physician-lawyer who has pioneered the early cases and efforts in the right to treatment area. In addition, there were APA sections on law and psychiatry, in which many of our members presented papers; there were also other presentations scattered throughout the APA meetings dealing with forensic psychiatry.

Two panels presented by AAPL members were well attended. The first focused on newer concepts of criminal responsibility, especially the American Law Institute's Model Penal Code, as exemplified in the Arthur Bremer Case. Our past president, Jonas Rappoport, moderated that panel. Later in the week, I had the pleasure of moderating a panel on the right to treatment, which included many viewpoints, including that of Dr. Morton Birnbaum.

At our business meeting we adopted a resolution denouncing invasions of privacy and upholding confidentiality of the doctor-patient relationship. This resulted in a statement deploring the government-sanctioned intrusion into the confidential relationship between Daniel Ellsberg and his psychiatrist. The statement went further in expressing a need to maintain an atmosphere of confidence in the privacy of this relationship for all patients and for all who contemplate becoming patients in the future. We resolved that governmental intrusions into the privacy of these relationships were anti-therapeutic and must perforce produce a deleterious effect on psychotherapy.

We are looking ahead to October 18 through 20 for our annual meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Lynn Blunt, Chairman of the Program Committee, assures me the meeting will be stimulating, provocative, and exciting. Bob Bowman and Herb Thomas have worked together in preparing for a comfortable and interesting time in Pittsburgh, including afterhours sessions. This year we are reserving time for meetings of our special Task Forces, so that members may get together and work toward the study of the special areas of interest and eventually develop position statements, which will be reviewed, modified, or rejected, by all members present. Task Force chairmen are requested to contact their members and make plans to meet at least once during the Fall Conference.

The Nominating Committee has produced a slate of candidates to be elected for offices at the fall meeting. Since this will be my final President's Column, I want to take this opportunity to thank the membership for its confidence in me, and hope that I have justified your faith in me by maintaining the high standards set by my predecessor, Jonas Rappoport. In reviewing the two years during which I have been President of AAPL, I found a tremendous growth in our organization, both in number of members and in quality of development. The appearance of the BULLETIN in its new format certainly reflects the stability and growth of the Academy, and I want to acknowledge the excellent work that Herb Thomas has done in this regard. The initial Task Forces designed to study specific problems have developed and, I believe, are now moving toward important goal-oriented presentations. The purpose of the Academy is to study and teach, and I believe that we have made steady progress in these most important academic areas.

We are now considering publishing a series of monographs in legal psychiatry that will become helpful guides for practicing psychiatrists and for instruction of psychiatric residents and medical students. Many new ideas have been proposed, and these must be developed and effectively implemented during the next several years. We need the stimulation, input and leadership of our younger members as well as the wisdom and guidance of our seniors. By working together, I know we can truly represent legal psychiatry in a most significant and important manner to our colleagues and to the country. I hope to see you all in Pittsburgh in October.