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## Climbing Our Personal Mountains

*Most of INSIGHT'S readers know that the faculty and trainees of IIGP have routinely gone on "retreats" for many years. In fact, I (editor) attended my first retreat in 1979, and have attended all but two retreats since then. Sometimes difficult, retreats have played a crucial role in this writer's development as a clinician, as well as a person living his personal life. But for those IIGP friends who are neither clinicians or trainees, the quality and substance of a retreat probably have been sort of a mystery. While going through some old journals, I found an article I wrote almost 30 years ago with Victor Stoeffer, MSW, IIGP-trained like me and a former co-therapist.*

*I found an excerpt you might find interesting which I think exemplifies the quality and content of retreats. The subject of this abridged excerpt is "H," one of the therapists participating in the two-week-long retreat. His identity is so well disguised that I couldn't remember who it is, even though I co-wrote the paper.*

### ***(Edited Excerpts from "Group Supervision in a Retreat Setting") Paul P. Shultz & Victor R. Stoeffer\****

The following is an account of how an issue arising in supervision meetings on the retreat may thread its way through the whole week, resolving itself in a recreational activity. With a spirit of camaraderie, participants push one another beyond what are experienced as comfortable limits, but within an atmosphere of deep respect. Some of the participants had brought along boots for hiking in the mountains, while others had moderate or little interest in this. H had very little interest. When five of the group left early on the first morning to climb a small mountain nearby, H and the others remained behind. By midmorning, the hikers had reached the peak of the mountain and were sitting together enjoying the beauty of the countryside. Then they walked back



\* *Group Analysis*, 19(3), (1986).



**Save  
the  
Date**

**October  
15, 2014**

**Our next  
Benefit Dinner  
is scheduled for  
October 15,  
later this year.  
Anyone who has  
attended in the  
past knows how  
much fun it can  
be, having a  
chance to say  
hello to people  
you might  
otherwise not  
see. And it's  
for a cause  
all of us truly  
believe in.  
Put it in your  
calendar today!**

## **Climbing Our Personal Mountains (con't.)**

*(Edited Excerpts from "Group Supervision in a Retreat Setting")*

**Paul P. Shultz & Victor R. Stoeffler\***

to the cars, relaxed at a patio breakfast, and returned for a shower before the supervisory meeting. Later, as H presented his case, he related a difficulty with his patient which touched a number of difficult personal issues: the recent loss of his father after a lingering illness, his recent discovery that he had troublesome physical symptoms of unknown cause and his growing dissatisfaction with his current work situation. Sounding like a defeated man, he spoke of his fear that he might have an as yet undiagnosed fatal illness. Calling attention to his lifeless mode of speech and fixed gaze, several participants noted that H looked like a "dying man" who had given up struggling for life. "You may indeed be dying," said one participant, "but you should be out there on the mountain hiking with us in any case! You should be fighting for every moment of life you have!" H's passivity was addressed again in later meetings. Despite constant encouragement and confrontation by the others, H still did not attempt the climb, although as the week drew to an end, all the others had done so. However, on the second-to-the-last day, H yielded to the pressure and decided to climb with the rest of us. He gave himself a head start, slowly moving up the trail. The rest of us caught up with him, passed him and later saw from above that he had turned back. Some of us were angry with him, some sad, but we continued on our way.

As we sat on top of the small mountain watching some hot air balloons flaunt their gay colors in the brilliant morning sunshine, a shadow was cast on our mood by our realization that H was missing this glorious sight because he had given up. Perhaps he had given up on life as well, much as patients are tempted to do when therapy becomes difficult.

On our final day in Arizona, we all rose early to climb. As soon as we arrived in the parking lot, H headed up the mountain. The rest of us did our routine stretching, and then started off. Ahead, we could see H slowly plodding along. His stooped posture and hooded outfit suggested to some of us the image of an old monk travelling through a medieval countryside. Soon we overtook him and lost sight of him, and when we were all on top of the mountain except for H there was speculation as to whether he had turned back, or would make an effort to reach the summit. After enjoying the view and resting, we began to think about heading back down the mountain. But should we be waiting for H? How much is appropriate when trying to help someone? Then one of us spotted a stooped figure far below, looking like a pilgrim struggling towards his goal. Several of us yelled encouraging words, but the wind carried our voices off to the desert. We waved, but he was so bent over, as if studying each footstep intensely, that he could not see us. Yet he kept going! As he approached the final stretch, one of us went down to meet him and encourage him to come to the top. Moments passed. Then H's grey, wavy hair and smiling countenance popped from behind a rock. We let out a cheer. A moment later, we were all together again. We stood together on the peak of the mountain we had struggled independently to conquer.

## Howard Packman

We here at IIGP are saddened to pass along the news that Howard Packman, a long-time and loyal friend of the Institute passed away last May. For years he had battled a rare, incurable kidney disease, taking as much as he could from life despite his difficulty. Howard and his wife Ilaine lived in Sedona, Arizona since leaving Michigan years ago, and spent each summer living on their boat as they sailed the Great Lakes until Howard's illness forced him to give it up. Howard's smile will be remembered by those who knew him.



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## Save the Date! IIGP Annual Benefit Dinner

Once again you have the opportunity to join other friends of IIGP at our Annual Benefit Dinner. On Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at 5:30 P.M. we will join together for cocktails at the Meadowbrook Country Club, followed by a dinner we expect to be superb. As usual, there will be silent and live auctions where you will have a chance to bid on all sorts of interesting things. This year we added a new feature, a raffle drawing. Buy tickets now from any of us for a chance to win a cash prize of \$2500.00. For those of you who are familiar with IIGP but never attended the Benefit Dinner, this is great opportunity to catch up with old friends you might otherwise not see. Call Deborah at 248-353-5333 to reserve your tickets. And don't forget IIGP is a fully-accredited non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status for tax deductible contributions. What could be a better cause than training people to be qualified psychotherapists?

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## Educational Updates

Welcome, **Dr. Abu-Hamdan!** The Institute is pleased to welcome our most recent student to our training program. Dr. Maha Abu-Hamdan received her Ph.D. with honors from the University of Detroit Clinical Psychology program. She completed a practicum at Oakland University and her internship at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. As she begins with the IIGP program, she also maintains her private practice with adolescents and adults.



She brings enthusiasm, curiosity and determination to her training at IIGP, noting: ***"I am pursuing this training because I believe it will add a great positive impact when working with clients. It is important to better understand yourself and how that impacts the relationship between client and therapist."***

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## IIGP Newsbites



**Margaret Cooney-Casey**, former IIGP Board Trustee and longtime friend of IIGP, has been nominated by the Beaumont Health System/Beaumont Foundation to receive the Dr. John S. Lore Award for Outstanding Fund-raising Executives. As President of the Beaumont Foundation, Margaret overcame multiple challenges in building a successful funding campaign. Margaret was on hand when BLEA (the original version of the IIGP) was transformed into a fundamentally different organization. Margaret helped us maintain a realistic perspective that contributed to building our new organization, IIGP. Congratulations, Margaret!

**David Baker, LMSW**, IIGP faculty member, has been a soccer fan all his life. (In Nigeria, where David grew up, they called it football.) He and his three sons, Eric, Steve and Greg have always been fans of the World Cup. This year, all four of them had the thrill of traveling to Brazil to attend the World Cup in person. We hope they don't come back permanently crazed by contact with the other fans.





THE INSTITUTE  
FOR INDIVIDUAL  
AND GROUP  
PSYCHOTHERAPY

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

All seminars are held at  
**29600 Northwestern Hwy.  
Ste 100A  
Southfield, MI 48034**

The Institute offers these classes for physicians, psychologists and social workers. IIGP is approved by the Michigan State Medical Society and by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for physicians and psychologists. IIGP maintains responsibility for the programs and their content. Our programs are approved by the Michigan Social Workers Continuing Education Collaborative for Social Workers for Continuing Education.

#### Reservations are required.

Please send an email to [seminars@iigp.org](mailto:seminars@iigp.org) or call **(248) 353-5333** for reservations or for special accommodations.

# 2014 TUESDAY SEMINARS

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**Role of the Frontal Cortex from the Perspective of Recent Research  
Can We Separate Feelings From Thinking? Doing the Hardest Thing**

September 2, 9 & 16—12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. —\$50.00

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**Reiki and Psychotherapy**

October 7 & 14 —12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. — IIGP Staff Seminar

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**Sex, Intimacy and Psychotherapy**

November 4, 11 & 18 —12:15 p.m. 1:30 p.m. — \$50.00

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**Harnessing Our Inner Power With a Little Help from Machiavelli**

December 2, 9 & 16—12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. — \$50.00

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Visit us on the web at [www.iigp.org](http://www.iigp.org)