Becky Schumacher

The 90s and Current Status of the Association

In the last issue I addressed a few of the initial events that influenced the development of the Association. In this article, I will highlight a few more of the significant events that encompass the rich history of ASGW.

First though, I must correct an error in my last article where I stated that the Peg Carroll tapes were commissioned in 1980. The correct year was 1985. My apology for any confusion. Actually, 1980 marked the development and approval of the Ethical Guidelines for Group Leaders as well as the Guidelines for Training Group Leaders. The 1980s also recorded additional “firsts”:

First Research Award presented to George Gazda and Jerry Mobley; and,

First Eminent Career Award recognized Walt Lifton.

The 1990s brought significant services to members and expansion of the Association. Did you know that our biennial conference began in 1990 in St. Petersburg, FL? Or, that the First Strategic Planning Meeting was held in 1992 in New Albany, IN with over 50 ASGW leaders? The 1990s also are known for the ASGW Training Institutes, which began under the direction of Peg Carroll. Additionally, professional development, human rights, diversity, and advocacy projects underscored the productivity of this decade.

The late 1990s brought another change, change in the ACA membership structure. ACA no longer required a division membership when joining ACA. While this restructuring impacted ASGW’s membership totals, the leaders of the Association were not deterred in how the Association could remain diligent to benefits and services for members and group work. The biennial ASGW Conferences continued, more dedication to human rights and diversity projects instituted, as well as how ASGW could advance group work within a larger context of the profession. ASGW remained committed to benefits for members and promoting group work.

Today, ASGW is in the midst of planning for the 2014 ASGW Conference and researching sites for the 2016 Conference. Today, ASGW works with as many as five or more distributors to sell the books, training tapes and products ASGW has developed over the past decade. The use of social media has additionally expanded how ASGW promotes group work. Podcasts and the ability to preview a video tape, unheard of just a few years ago, are now a part of the ASGW website. Today the ASGW website serves as a valuable resource for members and those individuals interested in group work. Because of the demand for how we manage all of our products we sell, and social media avenues we have in place, logistics of management became a critical operational need. The Board supported an interim half time Executive Director last year and this year approved a half time Executive Director specifically to oversee the multiple professional

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And so, 40 years and counting, ASGW continues the outstanding work dedicated to promoting best practices, research, and training. The 2012 Fall Board meeting was held in September to lay the ground work for this upcoming year. A major focus was dedicated to continuing the process began last year to plan strategically about ASGW’s service to members and to professionals dedicated to group work. My thank you and appreciation for the dedication and hard work of the Board members, Niloufer Merchant, Alicia Homrich, Deborah Rubel, Amy Nitza, and Carolyn Thomas. Additionally, the half-time Executive Director Janice Delucia-Waack, the ASGW Newsletter Editor Sam Steen, and Christine Bhat, process observer, each provide significant contributions to the successful work of the Board.

In March, ACA will hold the annual convention in Cincinnati. ASGW events will be held at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati. Additionally, ASGW will have a suite on Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23 for Committees to meet, and which will also serve as a community gathering place for ASGW members and interested group workers to stop in for conversations, and make connections with group workers. Please do make a stop at the ASGW Suite. Here are additional ASGW events that I hope you can attend:

**On March 22**
- *ASGW Awards Luncheon* noon – 2:00 pm
- *Joint reception* with ACES 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**On March 23**
- *ASGW Fellows Recognition* 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
- *Annual Community Meeting* at 4:00 – 5:30 pm where we will engage in a discussion about the state of affairs of ASGW, and opportunities to discuss ASGW and network and converse with group workers.
- *ASGW Celebrating Group Work: A Community Reception* at 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm. A reception for members and nonmembers to celebrate group work.

In closing, I welcome dialogue with you about ASGW and what the Association can do to better meet your needs. Email me your ideas and thoughts. Until ACA in Cincinnati, my best wishes to you all for a productive, healthy, and invigorating winter season.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT**

Alicia Homrich

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**Just One Word!**

*Can you sum up ASGW in just one word?* That was the request of Christine Bhat, our Process Observer at the ASGW Fall 2012 Executive Board Meeting. It was a challenging task for the 9 people in attendance, some of whom have been members almost as long as ASGW has been in existence (since 1975).

The Board Members came up with a healthy list of 21 words (OK... most of us came up with more than one... and there were a few duplicates). Many of the words described the “feeling” of...
ASGW and the community of group workers. Other words were “action” words that described our endeavors or accomplishments. Some of the terms were proffered as descriptions of the spirit of ASGW.

If you wanted to describe ASGW to a colleague or student or supervisee or prospective member: What word would YOU use to describe the essence of ASGW?! If you send me your word, I will send you the list generated from the Fall Board Meeting! If your word matches one of the 21 on the list, I will also send you an ASGW key ring!!

Back to the Fall Board Meeting: What a great meeting it was! We had a wonderful working group of officers accompanied by our Governing Council Representative, Carolyn Thomas; Executive Director Janice Delucia-Waack; Sam Steen, The Group Worker Newsletter Editor; and, Process Observer Christine Bhat. I was impressed with the model of leadership and policy governance that has developed since I was last on the Board eight years ago. This is a small team that exhibits the best a task group has to offer: focused, goal-oriented action. It was evident to me that the intention behind all decisions was to represent the best interests of the ASGW membership while promoting the values of group work. I am grateful to be part of such a dedicated assembly of professionals.

So, what is YOUR word? Let me know!

Email your word to me at ahomrich@rollins.edu!

Welcome
NEW BRANCH LEADERS

Several state ASGW branches have new leadership. ASGW members in the following states who are not members of their own branches may want to contact their president and become involved at the state level.

**Maine ASGW**
President: Eric Rutberg
ericrutberg@yahoo.com
204/645-7010

**Michigan ASGW**
President: Conrad Aumann
Conrad.aumann@macombcountymi.gov

**Virginia ASGW**
Co-Presidents: Hillary Press
hdpress@fcps.edu
Ellissia Price
ellissia.price@fcps.edu

**Ohio ASGW**
President: Allison Sandrock-Arnekrans
asandro@rockets.utoledo.edu
419/297-6007

**Tennessee ASGW (Reactivating)**
Contact Person: Ginny Dansby
Ginny.Dansby@mtsu.edu

Note: Please help us keep our branch contact information up to date. Send your current state branch information and news to us. ASGW State Branch Committee Co-Chairs:

Tekesha Jackson tjaks34@aum.edu 334/244-3469
M. Carolyn Thomas mthomas@aum.edu 334/244-3437

Nominate Your State Branch for the ASGW State Branch Award for 2012

Tell the ASGW members about the important things that have been accomplished in your state branch in the last year. We want to hear about your workshops, publications, membership services and all your special activities.

**What:** Tell us what your branch has been doing this past year. Feel free to submit supporting material. ASGW wants to recognize your branch for your contributions.

**When:** Send your letter of nomination and supporting materials by January 31st, 2013.

**Where:** The branch award is given at the ASGW luncheon at the ACA Convention in Cincinnati, OH

**Who:** Please include in your nomination materials the name and contact information of the person who will accept the award at the ASGW luncheon.

**How:** Submit materials to:

M. Carolyn Thomas
9360 Vaughn Road
Pike Road, AL 36064
mthomas@aum.edu
334/244-3437
GROUP WORK IN ACTION
By Rachel Vannatta

The Group Work in Action column is where we will be discussing different practical matters of group work and asking for readers to respond to the issues presented. We begin this column with a topic that I recently had the chance to personally experience as a doctoral candidate at George Washington University. Our ASGW Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers (2000) identifies an experiential requirement of at least 10 hours (and a suggestion of 20 hours) of observation and participation in a group experience as a member and/or leader. Additionally, the 2009 CACREP standards require a minimum of 10 hours of participation in a small group for all master’s level students.

As many of you are aware, the literature has described several different leaders for these groups. Some counselor education programs have doctoral students as group leaders; others have the professors teaching the course as the group leader. Still some other programs have students participate in a group that is facilitated by a counselor in the community who may not be affiliated with the school or program. This past semester I along with another doctoral student led a few groups of pre-service masters’ level school, clinical and rehab students. As a leader and co-leader of these groups, I really appreciated the opportunity to practice my group leadership skills, and develop as a group counselor. Furthermore, I received supervision on these experiences. On the other hand, I found that it was extremely challenging to facilitate these groups in a number of ways. One difficulty was helping the students feel comfortable with me as the leader because I knew some of the participants before starting the group as their former teaching assistant in a previous semester. In other words, there are pros and cons to each of these structures.

We are interested in hearing from our readers what they have experienced in their own work regarding the experiential component of graduate training, as participants in graduate school, as professors of group counseling courses, or as doctoral leaders of groups in master’s programs. What, in your experience, has worked the best? What has not worked well in the past? What are some things that our colleagues should be mindful of? Should there be a standard way group leadership is handled in master’s level training groups? Please send your responses to vannatta@gwmail.gwu.edu and/or sammys-teen@hotmail.com. We would like to select some responses to put in the next edition of the newsletter or our ASGW website.

ACA Governing Council Report

M. Carolyn Thomas, ASGW Representative

Since my last report, I have attended three ACA Governing Council meetings, New Orleans, LA in March, 2011, National Harbor, VA in October, 2011, and San Francisco, CA in March, 2012. Several important decisions were made during these meetings.

Governance. Restructuring ACA governance has been an issue for several years. Most of the proposed models diminished the representation of individual branches. Restructuring of the Council was defeated at the last meeting. However, the Council will now meet only once a year at the ACA Conference, and will utilize conference calls to keep up to date with important business. The Executive Committee will be expanded and will have additional authority to make decisions.

Nomination of ACA President-Elect. Nominees must now (a) be a member of an officially chartered ACA branch, if there is one in the jurisdiction in which the nominee lives or works, (b) have ten years of consecutive membership in ACA prior to candidacy, (c) have no major ethical sanctions during the immediate ten years prior to candidacy, and (d) have served in at least two of the leadership roles as President of an ACA national division or organizational affiliate, ACA Region Chair, or Division, Organizational Affiliate, or Region Representative on the ACA Governing Council. In addition, nominees may not be a candidate for primary leadership offices of ACA divisions, regions, or affiliates. Nominations must now be made prior to the ACA convention so that materials can be verified and approved by the ACA Nominations and Elections Committee and the Governing Council.

In addition to serving as your ASGW representative, I have also served on the ACA Financial Affairs Committee and Investment Subcommittee for two years, taking part in two face-to-face meetings to finalize the ACA budgets and investment policies, and monthly conference calls. I have recently been appointed to the Audit Committee. ACA is financially strong. Publication sales are down, but income has increased due to the monthly CEU opportunities and leadership institutes. A most positive milestone is the increase of membership. Don Locke’s goal was to reach a membership of 50,000. Membership is now more than 51,000, the highest since 2003.

As always, I am honored to represent ASGW and its members on the Governing Council and its important committees. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns. mthomas@aum.edu or 334/244-3437

By Rachel Vannatta
I’ve recently been thinking about our state level branches over the past couple of months. Now this isn’t something that I can say I think about daily, but I did reflect on the Virginia branch of ASGW and how it has played a significant role in my professional development initially as a practitioner in both elementary and high school and then later as a doctoral student at George Mason. The reasons behind my sentiments include the obvious contributions VASGW has exposed me to such as vast opportunities for networking, sharing ideas with others, and gathering hard-copies of lesson plans me and my colleagues. A couple of years ago I was the Keynote speaker for VASGW and this was an extremely rewarding experience for me because it was the first time that I have been the featured speaker. More interestingly, one of the current co-presidents of VASGW was a former student of mine when I taught one of my first classes as a budding professor. As a result of these close personal and professional ties, I’d like to feature the Virginia Association for Specialists in Group Work (VASGW) in this Groupology section. We plan to periodically use the Groupology section to discuss information that is related to the happenings at the state branch level. Below I’ve asked current Co-Presidents of VASGW, Ellissia Price who works as the Elementary Counseling Specialist and Hilary Press a professional school counselor at Groveton Elementary school both in Fairfax County Public Schools to answer a few questions via email. They were asked to share their experiences and recommendations for others currently engaging in such important professional development or who have the desire to do so. I hope you find some of this information below informative and we welcome the chance for you to contact myself or Ellissia and Hilary at edprice@fcps.edu with questions or reactions to their work.

**Virginia Association for Specialist of Group Work (VASGW)**

1. **Could you share with us how long your branch been in existence?**

   The Virginia Association for Specialist in Group Work (VASGW) was chartered in 1976 with thirty-five charter members.

2. **Regarding your member demographics, who do your members mainly consist of?**

   As of August 2012 we have a total of eighty-six VASGW members. 
   The majority of the members are current professional school counselors.

3. **Out of all the great things that you all have been doing, what are you currently most proud of?**

   **Group-a-Rama**

   “In spring 1995, Group-A-Rama celebrated its 10th Anniversary -191 registrants, 19 great workshops and a dynamite keynote speaker! When reflecting on the origins of Group-A-Rama, we must pay honor to Dr. Dorothy Blum, the Coordinator of Elementary Guidance for Fairfax County Public Schools. She had the vision and spirit to initiate a conference where group programs would be featured. In 1984-1985, Dr. Blum, Director of Guidance at Marshall High School, was instrumental in providing a conference on a Saturday afternoon at Marshall High School. Twenty-five people attended to hear four workshops presented by Dr. Mel Riddle (assistant principal at Chantilly HS), Dr. Rich Paritzky, Dr. Libby Hoffman (professor at Virginia Tech University) and Dr. D. Bohen. Janice Stoodley (assistant principal at McLean HS) coined the workshop name --Group-A-Rama.” 

   From the 1995 VASGW Newsletter by Eleanor Mandes, President, 1995.

   In 1986 Group-a-Rama (GAR) moved to George Mason University with Dee Bohen as president. Between 1987-1989 the conference was held at Devonshire Administrative Center under the leadership of Janice Stoodley, president, June Jones, president, 1988, and in 1989 at Oakton HS with Kathy Nolan, president. In 1990 the GAR moved again to Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) Nursing Building, Annandale, VA campus and on March 3, 1992 Group-a-Rama was held at the NVCCs’ new Ernst Community Cultural Center where it is currently held.

   In 2012, we celebrated the 27th anniversary of Group-a-Rama with 176 registrants with an outstanding keynote and fifteen sessions focused on a variety of groups, the group process, and the practical applications. The theme of the conference was Empowering Kids: What Counselors Can Do to Make a Difference with Academics. VASGW was also very excited to welcome Dr. Pam Brott, president of VCA who updated attendees about the state of VCA. The keynote Speaker, Ann Dolin, Founder of Educational Connections, gave a presentation on empowering kids by teaching them organization, time management and study skills in the classroom. Many other outstanding and well known speakers presented workshops including: Neil McNerney, Dr. MaryBeth McCormac, Dr. Rosemary Thompson, Dr. William “Flip” Clay, Ruth Perlstein and Leslie Schaffer.
Topics included bullying prevention and internet safety, bibliotherapy, eating disorders, facilitation strategies, grief and loss, ADHD/ADD, anxiety, trauma, diversity, etc. These presentations address the identified needs of the members and centered on groups for K-12 students and/or parents.

Historically, presenters have included practitioners: counselors, social workers, psychologists, from school, community, and private practice; authors and researchers from the fields of counseling, psychology, medicine and education; educators from local universities; and students in masters level programs that utilize group work.

A small group of vendors, educational and community are included.

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

- In 2012 VASGW contributed $1000 to the Virginia Counselor Association Foundation (VCAF) to help fund grants to current counseling students and the keynote for the Virginia Counselor Association annual convention.

- Through donations from the many outstanding speakers, board members and MARCO Publishing, VASGW raised over $200.00 for the VCA Challenge Fund!

**AWARDS**

- Each year that VASGW has submitted an application for the ASGW Outstanding Branch Award, VASGW has won this prestigious award.

- In 2010, we nominated, Carol Hoffman, a VASGW board member and professional school counselor, at Poplar Tree Elementary School, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, VA, for the Virginia Counselor Association (VCA) Outstanding School Counselor for 2010. Mrs. Hoffman received the award at the VCA convention that fall. (see picture)

- Annually the co-presidents have received the Outstanding Leadership for a Division Award from the Virginia Counselor Association (VCA).

4. *What are some goals that you all have for your organization in the future?*

**The VASGW Goals for 2012-2013:**

- Grow membership by 20% over 2012.

- Develop a grants program for practitioners and/or students to encourage group work and to provide a pipeline of presenters for Group-a-Rama.

- Increase the number of participants at group-a-Rama.

5. *Do you have any ideas on how anyone from the ASGW community can help you accomplish these goals?*

- Provide a model and technical support for the development of the grants program mentioned above.

6. *And finally, do you have some recommendations for other state branches trying to start up, or continue similar efforts?*

a. Keep registration affordable. We have maintained the number of conference participants, between 150-200, by keeping our registration fee affordable and providing lunch.

b. Develop relationships with local university, district level, and community staffs whose interests are focused on utilizing the group process to address personal-social/mental health issues. We have been successful in identifying speakers and presenters through these relationships.

c. Address the identified needs of the membership but always seek to be on the cutting edge of the latest research, too.

d. Emphasize the "practical!" Participants should always leave each session with practical ideas and strategies that they can implement immediately.

e. Provide food and parking.

f. Start small.

g. Locate the conference within an hour's driving time for most participants.
As the current newsletter editor, I’ve come from a longstanding tradition of folks who have been in this role before. Ask any number of members who have been associated with ASGW for at least a couple of years, and I guarantee you will find a lot of folks who have worn this mantle. And now I am the editor of the GroupWorker and I do so with pride. Not too long ago, a great colleague and friend of mine wondered why on earth I would resort to doing the work of what he deemed that of a graduate student. At first, I thought, ‘that’s exactly why I am doing this work.’ I’ve come to learn that it’s a lot easier to manage because apparently folks used to have to personally stuff envelopes and mail the newsletter manually. The work is also low maintenance, until of course we need to find people who are interested in spending the time writing a Practice Idea for the newsletter.

We discussed that being affiliated with ASGW allows us all to be involved in “interesting” things with “cool people.” I couldn’t agree more even despite my status as a non-voting member of the board. These are some of the reasons I may have been interested in taking on the role as the Newsletter Editor. However, now I’ve come to expand my reasoning behind engaging in this work. During our recent board meeting a few weeks ago, a wise woman was pushing and challenging me to give more of myself as the GroupWorker editor. Basically she said, “if you’re gonna do this work then do it right!” From this day forward, I have begun the important work of sharing my own vision of ASGW through my lens as the Newsletter editor. I am not sure how this concerted effort to put more of myself into this work will unfold, but I do look forward to the process. Process, isn’t that what it’s all about! Spoken like a true budding group expert! In this edition I’d like to draw your attention to some of the modifications you may encounter in your reading. There is a new section entitled “Groupology” where we will highlight the work of state branches whenever we can. We have also included a section entitled “Group Work in Action” where we will be discussing different practical matters of group work and asking for readers to respond to the issues presented. Finally, we plan on including a “Graduate Student Corner” in future editions, which will be a place to specifically address some of the issues of graduate student group workers. The “Practice Ideas” column will remain the same and we will run new practice ideas as we get them. One last thing, you will notice that in this edition some of our contributors do a nice job of taking us back through a collection of salient historical snapshots of where ASGW has been as an organization. These commentaries (Presidents’ column as well as the VASGW highlights) are quite skillful and succinct in reminding us where we’ve come from. It is our hope that the strong professional identity ASGW has developed over time, will only continue to become more robust. I along with my colleague Rachel Vannatta use the GroupWorker to contribute to this mission.

Janice & Niloufer
Birthday Twins

Preparing to celebrate during our recent board meeting in Jacksonville, Fl.
ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIALISTS
IN GROUP WORK
2014 National Convention

February 6–9, 2014
Orlando, Florida

Plans are underway to create another special experience in Orlando, FL, for ASGW 2014 on February 6-9, 2014. Please visit the ASGW website for more information on special early bird registration rates and hotel arrangements. If you are interested in contributing to the planning process for the 2014 ASGW conference, please send an email to asgwconference@gmail.com.

Welcome

To our newest board members Deb Rubel (treasurer) and Alicia Homrich (president-elect), whom are both already making significant contributions to ASGW.

A SGW
BOARD MEMBERS

Back L-R: Christine Bhat, Becky Schumacher, Niloufer Merchant, Amy Nitzaa, Alicia Homrich. Front L-R: Sam Steen, Janice DeLucia-Waack, Carolyn Thomas, Deb Rubel