

ADULT DEVELOPMENTS

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The Upcoming 14th Annual Adult Development Symposium

Presented by
 The Society for Research in Adult
 Development and Salem State College

*Friday through Sunday, June 18-20,
 1999*

*Salem State College
 Salem, Massachusetts*

The 14th annual symposium of the Society for Research in Adult Development (SRAD) will be held Friday through Sunday, June 18 through 20, at Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts. Each year, about one hundred researchers, practitioners, and students of adult development meet at the SRAD symposium to explore various topics in the field of positive adult development. (Please see "About SRAD: The Study of Lifelong Development and Learning" later in this bulletin for more definition of what this domain entails.) SRAD works hard to create opportunities for stimulating, friendly, and respectful conversations and interchanges on adult development at this symposium.

Typically at the symposium, investigators present data and theories—as well as applications—on a variety of topics relating to positive adult development from many traditions and points-of-view, often from an interdisciplinary perspective. Among the subjects addressed by members and participants are life periods, seasons, stages, and levels; whole-life approaches; consciousness; clinical development; adult attachment; careers; and expertise, wisdom, and life span. Additional topics concern social, moral, ethical, ego, artistic, institutional, organizational, political, and family issues as well as epistemology and mathematical-scientific development. The symposium includes presentations of papers selected for their diversity and applicability, poster sessions, work and discussion groups that apply research and theory to current problems, and plenary sessions.

(Continued on the next page, first column)

Contents

The Upcoming 14th Annual Adult Development Symposium	Page 1
Threads of Adult Development <i>by Michael Lamport Commons</i>	Page 1
The SRAD Web Site	Page 2
The SRAD Adult Development Listserv <i>by Bernie Folta</i>	Page 4
SRAD Is Preparing Special Issues of the <i>Journal of Adult Development</i>	Page 4
The <i>Journal of Adult Development</i>	Page 4
The SRAD Symposium in 1998 <i>by Bernie Folta</i>	Page 5
About SRAD: The Study of Lifelong Development and Learning	Page 6
The "Call for Papers" for the Symposium	Page 7
Message from the Executive Director <i>by Mel Miller</i>	Page 7
Notes from the 1998 SRAD Business Meeting <i>by Patrice Miller and Michael Commons</i>	Page 8
Editor's Notebook <i>by Bernie Folta</i>	Page 9
SRAD Membership and How To Become A Member	Page 10
Combined Form for SRAD Membership and 1999 Symposium Registration	Page 11

Threads Of Adult Development

by Michael Lamport Commons

This review conceptually analyses the multidimensional threads of adult development. Here, threads, the sequence of events in a life's unspoken narrative, run throughout the whole course of adult lives. These threads are like successive parts of a hypercomplex lattice. Each thread can be represented by a series of points along a conceptual variable. Such variables include content—the direction of adult development and its subvariables—as well as process—the manner studied and its subvariables. These variables are often complex, more like systems than single variables. Examples of some of these variables and subvariables are given below. Each study of adult development can be considered to be embedded in one or more of these threads, and it possibly contributes to the accumulation of knowledge in this field. This brief review will discuss the dimensions along which the contemporary study of adult development is conceptualized and studied.

The Direction of Development

The four major forms of adult development are positive adult development, directionless change, stasis, and decline. The first of the four forms, positive adult developmental processes, is divided into at least six parts: hierarchical complexity (orders, stages), knowledge, experience, expertise, wisdom, and spirituality. Change, the second of the forms, is divided into periods,

(Continued on the next page, second column)

Upcoming Symposium...*(Continued from the first page, first column)***The Keynote Speakers**

This year's plenary speakers will be Kurt W. Fischer, Ph.D., and Jack Demick, Ph.D. Dr. Fischer is professor of human development and psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is the author of *Human Development: From Conception Through Adolescence* and editor of numerous other books. His topic, at the plenary session on Saturday, June 19, is "Dynamics of Adult Cognitive-Emotional Development." Dr. Demick is chair of the department of psychology at Suffolk University in Boston and editor of the *Journal of Adult Development*. He is the author of *Parental Development* and editor of a number of other books. His topic, at the keynote session on Friday, June 18, is "What Are the Roots That Clutch?: What Adoption and Foster Care Can Tell Us About Adult Development."

About Salem State, the Site of the Symposium, and Salem, Massachusetts

Salem State College is a four-year public university, founded in 1854. It has about 5500 undergraduates in five undergraduate schools and about 500 graduate students in the graduate school. Full-time faculty number about 300.

Salem State is located on a 62-acre campus in Salem, Massachusetts. That's indeed the town in which the famous Salem witch trials were held in 1692. A number of attractions, such as the Witch House, the Salem Witch Museum, and the Witch Dungeon Museum—in addition to a number of others—commemorate that event. Salem is on the coast about 16 miles north of Boston so its maritime history is also celebrated with such attractions as the Stephen Phillips Memorial Trust House, which contains the furnishings of Salem sea captains, and the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, which has preserved wharves and buildings. Needless to say, the town is steeped in history, and symposium attendees may well want to schedule extra days to explore the city—which has a population of about 40,000—as well as the region and Boston.

A detailed program of symposium presentations and sessions will be available in the spring. Please see the advance registration form at the end of this *Bulletin*.

The SRAD Web Site

SRAD has had a Web site since 1996. Recently, though, it changed locations. Here's the new address:

<http://www.norwich.edu/srad>

Please update your browser bookmark.

Threads...*(Continued from the first page, second column)*

usually defined by decades and seasons, that concern the themes in the life course. Stasis, the third form, shows there is no change between something measured at two ages. Decline, the fourth form, is divided into at least six parts—namely, retrieval memory, memory speed, horizontal complexity (bits), strength, agility, and health.

Nondevelopmental forms include adulthood and adult human behavior. Sometimes, papers discuss adulthood, mention it in the topic words, and have adult participants. However, the measurements of adult behavior are made only once within some small age range. Hence, there is no possibility of determining whether there is development or not. Such studies can be considered to be a nondevelopmental form, as distinct from the four major developmental forms.

The Manner Studied

All four of the above possible forms of development—positive adult development, directionless change, stasis, and decline—are studied in different ways. I use three broad classifications for the acquisition of knowledge and the verification of truth in general. Here, the first and third types of claims of truth are not considered final or immutable, but hopefully progressive, where inquiry moves from paradigmatic knowledge to improved paradigmatic knowledge—e.g. Einstein's improvement of Newton's model (third type below) or Riemann's extension of Euclid's model (first type below).

The first kind of truth is analytic truth, which has no independent observations. It consists of a constructed system based on axioms. The kind of works that fall into this category are philosophical, logical, and mathematical ones, including computer simulations. The second kind of truth is experiential truth, which has one independent observation although multiple participants may report the same experience. Examples of this are fiction, music, movies, and religion.

The third classification for the verification of truth is empirical truth, which requires two independent paths for the observation of the same events. Empirical truth may be further broken down into four paradigms. The first consists of chaotic, inconsistent historical paradigms. These might be whole-life studies, clinical studies, descriptive studies from various perspectives, or evaluations of proclivities, performances, or attitude. A second methodological paradigm consists of three possibilities. These are interviews, both structured and unstructured; questionnaires; and tests of many different forms—including profile-generating tests of personality, interests, abnormality, and skill on one hand, and single-scale tests of strength, impairment, acuity, sensitivity, and development on the other. The third and fourth methodological paradigms are simply quasi-experiments and true experiments.

Many of these means for studying adults may be carried out cross-sectionally or longitudinally, and these methods may even be combined. Most studies are cross-sectional, in which some feature of participants who vary in age and education is measured. However, the participants are studied only once. In contrast, longitudinal studies measure some feature of the same participants from the same cohort at least twice. Some studies even measure multiple cohorts a dozen times. The longitudinal design makes it much easier to control for apparent change in participant performance that is really due to differences in the characteristics of participants from different sample groups. For example, the political party affiliation of 20-year-olds might be different from the party affiliation of 60-year-olds. However, there may be no developmental change. The 60-year-olds may have maintained the present affiliation since they were in their 20's as opposed to having changed their affiliation as they aged. Whereas longitudinal studies measure variation over time, cross-sectional studies make it possible to look at variation within a sample at a single time-point of measurement. The best studies combine both longitudinal and cross-sectional techniques.

There are varying degrees of agreement about the many claims that have been set forth concerning the value and dangers of experimental interventions—that is, programmed experiments versus natural ones. If there were no possible harms or excessive costs, every scientific investigator prefers true experimental interventions, in which the conditions are systematically varied and include control groups. Investigators also generally support the true experiment where one of the interventions may be beneficial, as in testing for positive effects of drugs.

But nature and circumstance do not always offer possible benefits. Sometimes, life provides interventions that are suspected to produce harmful effects. For moral reasons, we generally will not assign participants to potentially harmful conditions that promise no benefits. Yet, this means that there are many questions about whether or not the suspected harms are truly the cause of the problems we later see—at least until nature provides a valid "natural experiment" or until some investigator comes up with a clever design to tease out the possible answer.

Arguments are often made for not evaluating efficacy claims for mental health and educational services of various kinds. Interventions in both education and in therapy tend to be complex and multidimensional. To run a true experiment, something has to be done with one group that is not done with another. Many people feel that restricting variation of what a teacher or therapist does will harm students and patients. This is especially true in mental health where, to get a control group, one treatment would be chosen randomly instead of another. In many drug studies treatment is withheld in half the patients and a placebo given to the other half. A further consideration is that a practitioner may feel that doing research interferes with the quality of professional practice,

although there is no evidence to support this contention. In fact, people who participate in studies generally do better, as shown by the placebo effect.

Conclusion

The number and complexity of the possible outcomes of interventions also leads to problems in studying adult development. Professionals are quite often loath to reduce the complex changes that may arise in therapy and education to operationalized performance on a few scales. Hence, only a few studies tease apart these two threads of adult development—namely, the threads of the direction of development and its subvariables and the threads of the manner studied and its subvariables.

Even fewer studies consider the multidimensional nature of adulthood and adult development, and fewer yet consider some of the fundamental bases of adult life—for example, "nature versus nurture" and the implications of evolution. The nature-nurture issue is hardly explored. The evolutionary basis for what is common in development among adult humans has not been studied much, and those studies that have been done have, more often than not, been outside of psychology. The evolutionary basis of adult behavior includes, on one hand, the genetic basis for what varies among humans, and the environmental basis includes, on the other hand, what commonalities and differences are due to childhood experiences. These last explorations, as to what childhood experiences determine which adult behaviors, are most often naturalistic studies. Frequently, the gross environmental variables that represent possible determinants of adult life are income, education of mother and father, own education, social class, culture and subculture, gender, gender roles in society, age roles in society, mental illness, method of parenting, spousal status, family arrangement, and politics. If most studies included such gross variables, the increased comparability of the studies might make clearer which of these variables are more highly predictive of various adult developmental outcomes. Although most of these variables should be included, specific determinants should be examined as well.

My hope is that we can get people from the different approaches represented by the various threads of adulthood and its development talking to each other. Through such discussion, people from the different threads may form a more integrative view of adult development. This should be especially useful in positive adult development. Often, different content and different methodology in the various domains obscures a commonality and unity of the phenomena.

New tools must be developed and used to make comparisons across instruments easier. For example, both Kurt Fischer and I have measured development in many domains using the same form of measurement tools. For Fischer, these have included supported tests of performance on a task. In this kind of measurement, there is a standard demonstration of a solution to a task followed by tests of performance on that task. I myself have

used standard unsupported interviews and written multiple-choice problems. We have also tried to examine the relationship between the complexity of tasks people solve and the content of those tasks.

Theories in our field need to be less metaphorical and polemical, and they need to be clearer on what is assumed, asserted, and measured. Also, the relationship between what knowledge now exists and the resulting choice of method of inquiry should be stated. Changes like these would help tie together the threads of adult development.

The SRAD Adult Development Listserv

by **Bernie Folta**

Besides its Web site (mentioned earlier in this issue), SRAD sponsors an adult development "listserv." In case you don't know, a listserv is a kind of group e-mail capability through the Internet. A participant sends an e-mail to the listserver (a computer at a certain address), and it distributes a copy of that message, as an e-mail, to all the people who are subscribers to the list. So, a listserv functions as kind of an electronic discussion group, implemented through e-mail. Michael Commons, one of SRAD's founders and longtime members, is in charge of the SRAD "adultdev" listserv.

How do you get on the list? Simply send an e-mail to this address...

listproc@listserver.tiac.net

... with the following message (and nothing else) in the body of the e-mail:

subscribe adultdev *yourfullname*

Don't put anything in the "subject" field of the e-mail form, and don't include a "signature."

I myself joined the adultdev listserv on June 21, 1998, the third day of the 1998 SRAD Symposium. It was at the symposium that I learned how to subscribe. Soon, I was receiving e-mail messages from the other participants. As of the middle of January, 1999, there were 29 subscribers. I'm a counting/measuring type so I've kept track of all the messages, which are called postings. Here's what the activity has been:

June 1998 (after the 21st) 1

July 1998 33

August 1998 9

(The listserv seemed to be
down from about August 18
to September 14.)

September 1998 32

October 1998 3

November 1998 5

December 1998 17

January 1999 7

I myself posted a message on August 20. Here's what I wrote:

"I have some content analysis projects coming up, and I'm trying to decide between two software programs—QSR NUDIST and Ethnograph. Does anyone have any information about them—strengths, weaknesses, opinions, etc.? (I do have CATPAC, but I think that's going to require a fair amount of "tuning.") Also, it looks like neither NUDIST nor Ethnograph (nor CATPAC) are thesaurus-based. Do you know of any thesaurus-based qualitative text-analysis programs? Also, are such programs as dtSearch and askSam (and ZyIndex) useful in any way for content analysis? Any information anyone can provide—or directions to point me in—will be greatly appreciated."

Soon, I received responses from Anna-Maija Pirttila-Backman of Helsinki, Finland; Carol Boellhoff Giesen of St. Mary's College of Maryland; and Ron Irwin of Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Ron, who replied twice, was especially helpful. He put me onto a listserv dedicated to the topic of content analysis, and I joined it. So now, I'm a member of two listservs. And, by the way, a number of my software questions got answered.

**SRAD Is Preparing Special
Issues of the
*Journal of Adult Development***

SRAD is preparing special issues of the *Journal of Adult Development*, whose editor is Jack Demick, on the following topics: parenting; relativistic thinking (based on Perry, King, Kitchener, and others); postformal stages; and cultural change, addressing both organizational and cross-cultural change. Also sought are papers addressing development across domains with single measures of stage used across domains.

Please send preliminary papers—in APA format—for initial comments. To save space, please single-space the material with double spaces between paragraphs. Send them as e-mail attachments in either WordPerfect or Word for IBM-compatible PC's or HTML e-mail attachments for Macs. You may also send such files on IBM formatted disks. Please send to:

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**The *Journal of Adult
Development***

As the only professional journal emphasizing positive change in adulthood, the *Journal of Adult Development* seeks to expand the discourse in adult development by publishing works that employ various forms of inquiry, including controlled experiments, longitudinal studies, single case studies, narratives, and theoretical analyses. Book reviews and commentaries are also published. While the *Journal* maintains high standards of work quality, it follows inclusive publishing principles in order to represent the diversity of perspectives in the field of adult development.

The SRAD Symposium In 1998

by **Bernie Folta**

The 1998 SRAD Symposium was last summer—Friday through Sunday, June 19 through June 21—but I remember it well. One reason for that is because it was my first one. I'm new to SRAD, and until I went to the symposium, I didn't have a solid grip on what SRAD was all about. Now I do. I was impressed with the symposium and am happy to be a part of SRAD. Another reason I remember the symposium well is because it was held just "up the hill" from where I live—namely, on the Vermont College campus of Norwich University in Montpelier, Vermont. It's a five-minute walk from my house.

The 1998 SRAD symposium started off, as is traditional, with three all-day preliminary workshops. I chose to go to Michael Commons's "Moving Up Through the Postformal Stages." Frankly, I had never known—or thought about—whether there was anything "beyond Piaget." Now I know there is—a *lot* more.

After the workshops on Friday, the keynote was given by Polly Young-Eisendrath, Ph.D., of Burlington, Vermont. Polly, a Jungian analyst, is also clinical associate professor in psychiatry at the Medical College of the University of Vermont. Polly spoke on "The Problem of Female Desire." She has written a number of books, among which are *The Resilient Spirit: Transforming Suffering into Insight and Renewal*, and *You're Not What I Expected: Love After the Romance Has Ended*. She is also an editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*.

From my previous life as a corporate type, I'm an experienced conference-goer so one of the first things I did with the schedule of events was to check off the sessions I might go to. This involved choices since most of the sessions were concurrent. For me a checkmark means "yes, go," a "p" means "possible," and an "n" means "note." Soon, my schedule was all covered with markings. Since I'm new to the field of positive adult development, I chose sessions that would seem to give a broad flavor of the field. They succeeded, and I received an orientation in many areas.

I won't list the sessions I attended, but many of the sessions had handouts, and I grabbed one whenever I could—both from the

sessions I attended as well as from sessions that I didn't (when they had extras).

Here's a list of the papers and handouts I got.

- Developmental Assessment of Adults' Academic Writing Ability: Longitudinal Outcomes of Four Case Studies
by Cheryl Armon, Antioch University, Los Angeles,
and
Ed Frankel, UCLA
- Evidence of Universality in the Development of Higher States of Consciousness
by Carole L. Bandy, Norwich University, and Julia K. Guttman, Iowa Wesleyan College
- The Identity Abacus
by Margaret Blanchard, Norwich University
- Late Adulthood and Sexual Meaning-Making
by Michael Bloomfield, Fitchberg State College, and Meredith Stanford-Pollock, Worcester State College
- Supervisors' Perceived Successes and Failures in Supervision
by Deb Cardinal, Jennifer Hylton, Rhea McKay, and Paula Morrisette, all of Antioch New England Graduate School
- The Study of Personality: Multiple Facets
by Susanne Cook-Greuter (Copyright 1998)
- Conceptions of Fidelity and Infidelity in Adult Psychosexual Development
by Albert Erdynast, Antioch University, Los Angeles
- The Ken Wilber Debate
by Joel Funk, Plymouth State College
- Exploring the Upper End of Emotional/Spiritual Development
by Julia K. Guttman, Iowa Wesleyan College, and Carole Bandy, Norwich University
- Spirituality and Developmental Models of the Life Course: Meditation, Consciousness, Mind, and Transcendence
by Ronald R. Irwin, Carleton University, Ottawa
- Relationship of Connected and Separate Knowing to Interpersonal Orientation, Argumentativeness, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and General and Social Self-Efficacy
by Kim H. Knight, Roger Williams University, and Morton H. Elfenbein, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
- The Search for Hope and New Theory—Challenges for the Third Wave of Progressive Education
by Jackson Kytte, Vermont College of Norwich University
- Student Changes and Program Influences during a Period of Professional Preparation: A Qualitative Pilot Study
by Garrett McAuliffe, Old Dominion University, Chuck Keating, Old Dominion University, and Karen Eriksen, Private Practice, Alexandria, Virginia
- The Shadow and the Substance: Spirituality and Transformation in Graduate Education
by Christine Michael and Kate Waitte, Vermont College of Norwich University
- Understanding Artmaking as Adult Developmental Context
by Carol Philips, Harvard University
- Relativistic Thinking and Life Stress among College Students
by Rebecca Regeth, Paul Tunnicliff, Rena Eitouni, and Audrey Flores, Stephen F. Austin State University
- Adolescent Meaning Making and Faith Development: A Heideggerian Hermeneutical Analysis
by Gerard A. Tobin, Loyola University, Chicago

There were other papers and handouts, but those were the ones I "scooped up." If you'd like a copy of any of them (except, until I get permission, the one that's copyright), just contact me,



and I'll be happy to send one off to you. How to contact me is given at the end of the "Editor's Notebook" column, later in

this *Bulletin*. If you were a presenter and have an update to something listed above, please let me know.

I had never *heard* of Ken Wilber before, and at the symposium I got a fascinating introduction to his theory in Joel Funk's session. I even got to ask a "test probe" question—how might the phenomenon of dreams fit into Wilber's theory.

One of the things that struck me about the symposium was that both educators and clinicians were present, and this led, at times, to differing points-of-view based on the differing roles. For example, many teachers don't see themselves in the role of a counselor, especially when a student is having personal problems, which, in many cases, affects their academic performance. Similarly, many therapists don't see themselves in a didactic role when they are practicing clinicians. (There are exceptions—because there are numerous theories of psychotherapy, but it's my impression that in most of them the therapist is a more of a facilitator rather than a teacher.) In a nutshell, the tension between the two roles might be expressed this way: to what degree does a teacher counsel (in a therapeutic sense), especially when personal matters intersect with academic matters, and to what degree (and how overtly) does a clinician teach, especially when a new skill might make a significant positive difference in a client's life? The symposium, of course, did not resolve this issue, but certainly, for me at least, it raised such questions and issues, and that was not something I had thought about before.

About SRAD: The Study Of Lifelong Development and Learning

Editor's Note: Old members know, newer members know some, but prospective members maybe don't know—what SRAD is all about. So, we are printing the following overview and background. Thanks to Michael L. Commons, founding member, for his help with this. If you're a member who has additional perspectives on SRAD's background, please let me know.

The Society for Research in Adult Development (SRAD) is committed to the study of positive adult development from an interdisciplinary perspective. Positive adult development refers to development starting in late adolescence and continuing throughout life. The focus is on the changes and expanded capabilities that improve the quality of life of individuals as they adapt to the challenges of adulthood's ages and stages. This emphasis is in contrast to views and studies which emphasize decline, as studied in gerontology.

The field of positive adult development has differentiated itself from the larger fields of adulthood and aging by focusing on the dimensions of every adult life-stage from a positive perspective. Positive adult development extends Jean Piaget's concept of formal operations (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958) to include further

stages. Also, the field has further extended Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1969), whose stages had been expanded by Kohlberg himself (1981, 1984).

But positive adult development has also increasingly moved beyond the domain of cognitive and moral development into such areas as adult attachment; transformative education; therapy as development; the development of individuals within organizations; the development of individuals varying in gender, race, culture, and sexual orientation; ego development; epistemological, moral, and ethical development; parenting; political development; religious development; and others.

The Society encourages research, applications, and theoretical and interdisciplinary work, and its annual symposium includes presentations on a variety of topics relevant to positive adult development.

SRAD Background

The year 1998 marked the 20th anniversary of the informal founding of SRAD by Michael Commons and Francis Richards in 1978. Important precursors include Lawrence Kohlberg's (1969) construction of his moral stages 4 and 5 (systematic and metasytematic), Perry's (1968) book on intellectual and ethical development in college students, and Patricia Arlin's (1975) work on problem finding. All of these stimulated people to think about how to decide if a particular response or behavior was at a postformal—that is, post-Piagetian—stage.

Commons and Richards (1978) reported their first work on postformal operations at the Western Psychological Association. Part of this work appeared in Judith Stevens-Long's (1979) adult life text. Kurt Fischer (1980 *et al.*, 1984) published his skill theory, which included postformal stages. In addition, Sternberg (1984) published his first work on postformal analogies.

One might say, however, that it was the first "Beyond Formal Operations" symposium, held at Harvard in the spring of 1981, which launched this field of study. This symposium was organized by Michael Commons, then a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard (and now research associate and lecturer at Harvard Medical School); Suzanne Benack, then a graduate student (and now professor at Union College); and Francis Ashbury Richards, then a graduate student (and now at the State of Rhode Island). The symposium was sponsored and supported by Shepard White of Harvard's Department of Psychology and Social Relations and was further supported by the Dare Association, an independent, nonprofit organization in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that supports projects in the sciences and the arts. Organizational arrangements were provided by Patrice Marie Miller, Terrence A. Youk, David R. Marion, Martin N. Davidson, Eloise Coupey, and Joel R. Peck, all of whom were students or faculty at Harvard at the time.

At that first symposium, fifteen papers were presented, most of which appear in Commons, Richards, and Armon's "Beyond Formal Operations" volume (1984). It was at this 1981 symposium that the groundwork for a formal society was laid, and SRAD came into being not long afterward. SRAD's principal founding members were Cheryl Armon, Michael Basseches, Suzanne Benack, Maria A. Broderick, Michael L. Commons, John Cerella, David Marion, Francis Asbury Richards, Dawn Ellen Schrader, and Johannes Gerhard Sonnert.

Extensive applications have developed out of the positive adult development perspective. Among these are the four postformal stages of Commons and Richards and their theory of hierarchical complexity (Commons, Richards, & Kuhn, 1982; Commons *et al.*, 1998); Armon's work (1984) on ethical judgment about the good life; Miller's *et al.* (1994 and in press) on spirituality; Cook-Greuter's (1990) on ego-development, and Sinnott's (1981, 1984) relativistic account of development in everyday life, to name a few.

A further step in SRAD's development occurred in 1992 when Michael L. Commons founded the *Journal of Adult Development*. Jack Demick of Suffolk University has served as editor from the beginning.

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The "Call For Papers" For The Symposium

The Call For Papers for the upcoming June 1999 symposium was widely mailed in December 1998. The previously-stated deadline for submissions has been extended—until March 15, 1999. We are not reproducing the Call For Papers here, but if you'd like to get a copy (and maybe get a quick proposal in), please contact Sharon Dickinson at Norwich University at (802) 485-2134 or by e-mail to sharond@norwich.edu. The information is also available on the SRAD Web site, whose address is <http://www.norwich.edu/srad>.

Message From The Executive Director

by Mel Miller

As we begin a new year in SRAD, I'd like to officially and formally welcome Bernie Folta as the new editor for our SRAD newsletter. In addition to being a psychologist interested in adult development, Mr. Folta also comes to us with extensive background in both newsletter editing and journalism. Bernie, we welcome you. →

As Bernie enters this new position, we should also take a minute to thank Mac Greene, the previous editor, for his diligent work on the SRAD newsletter. Mac performed a wonderful service in this editorial capacity for the past few years. He introduced new sections and columns to the newsletter and increased overall participation on many fronts. For your hard work and dedication, Mac—we thank you.

Last year's SRAD symposium at Vermont College in Montpelier, Vermont, June 19-21, 1998, was a huge success. Participants seemed to enjoy the informality of our Vermont College campus and eagerly joined in the spirit of our low-key interactive and collegial meeting. Seminars on such topics as transformative education, clinical and research explorations, personality development, postformal development, and spiritual development in adulthood were well-attended and enjoyed by many. A few brave souls participated in (and enjoyed) an orienteering experience in Montpelier's Hubbard Park after the formal portion of the last day's activities had been concluded. SRAD hopes to return to Vermont College of Norwich University for its annual meeting in the near future.

Plans for the fourteenth annual symposium, coming up in June, are well under way. The 1999 symposium will be held at Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts. Patti Miller, a longtime SRAD member, is heading the local arrangements committee. Accompanying Patti on the committee are Sophia Evett, Teresa Lyons, Janet Stubbs, and others, all members of the Salem State Psychology Department. Michael Commons of Harvard is also helping out. The administration and faculty at Salem State seem eager to host our symposium, and their administration seems to be doing everything possible to facilitate our planned weekend and help make it a success.

Other new developments in SRAD include: 1) the relocation of our Web site to Norwich University (Vermont College of Norwich University) at www.norwich.edu/srad; 2) the reactivation of our *adultdev* listserv thanks to the efforts of Michael Commons, and 3) plans to organize special editions of the *Journal of Adult Development*, which, highlighting presentations made at SRAD symposia, are well underway.

As you can see from the above, there is considerable activity in the SRAD arena these days. Please join us and get involved with SRAD in some meaningful way. Please participate in next year's symposium and/or volunteer to help in some other form. Your contribution and involvement in SRAD are welcomed, and they are essential to the ongoing success of the organization. Please join in our effort to champion and promote ongoing theory and research related to the many facets of positive adult development.

Best wishes for 1999. We'll see you at Salem.

Notes From The 1998 SRAD Business Meeting

By Patrice Miller and Michael Commons

The meeting took place in two parts. The first part, held on Sunday morning, June 22, was facilitated by Mel Miller of Vermont College/Norwich University. The second part, held that afternoon, was facilitated by Patrice Marie Miller of Salem State College and Harvard Medical School.

During the morning meeting, the group discussed the symposium. People expressed a lot of support for the reflection groups. There was discussion about the current format for the presentation of papers. Many seemed to like it, but alternatives were also suggested. For example, one way to structure the sessions at which papers are presented, especially those that had multiple papers, would be to have everyone present first hear a short, ten-minute summary of each paper. Then, people would go into smaller group discussions with the presentation that they were most interested in. It was suggested that by having fewer presenters per session, there could be more discussion in a session. This could, however, mean more concurrent sessions.

This year, it seemed, the concurrent sessions seemed to be different enough that most people did not report wanting to go to more than one session during the same time period. To facilitate this in the future, there could be categories or topics that SRAD would attempt to have represented at each symposium.

One participant felt that instead of the onus being on the presenter, the onus should be on the audience, in the sense that there could be longer, workshop-type sessions in which both presenter and audience would be expected to be active participants. Another participant observed that not all of the presenters seemed to be prepared for a ten-minute summary format. In that context, someone pointed out that 10 minutes was about 1000 words, and this could be a guide for the length of a summary—an "oral abstract." The sense of the participants was that people really liked a more interactive session, and among the suggestions for more interactivity was having roundtable discussions and having the chairs arranged in a more interactive way, such as in circles.

Many participants felt that every presenter should have a paper ready to hand out so that those who were interested in more detail or in the bibliography could get a copy of the presenter's paper. The presentations that were primarily presentations of data might, on the other hand, be structured somewhat differently. A participant suggested that presenters use their overheads to structure their talk. Another suggestion was that people post their papers on the Web before the symposium so that individuals coming to the meeting could read the papers in advance and then be prepared to discuss the content. In a summary statement, one participant felt that having a variety of types of sessions was the key to keeping everyone's interest.

A number of attendees observed that the pace of this year's symposium seemed better than last year's—there was time to think about and talk about what participants had heard.

Someone suggested that reflection groups occur earlier in the meeting, and it was also suggested that the business meeting be held earlier in the symposium.

During the afternoon part of the business meeting, all the participants first gave Sharon Dickinson a hearty and heartfelt thanks for all her efforts in organizing the symposium.

Four specific topics were discussed in the afternoon session: diversity issues; next year's meeting; the newsletter and/or a 'zine'; and the *Journal*. Two of the attendees at the racism focus group gave a report of the discussion in that group. A number of concrete suggestions had been made, including scholarships for doctoral students or others with diverse backgrounds to come and present, taking seriously the idea that topic matters (with the inclusion of certain topics diversity is more likely), communicating with Michael Cole's on-line discussion group, including specific mention of diversity in the Call for Papers, putting a summary of the discussion into the newsletter and asking for continuing commentary and discussion, and doing more marketing of the organization, specifically geared toward diverse populations. With additional discussion, the afternoon attendees came up with additional ideas, including possibly co-sponsoring the meeting at a historically African-American institution and doing more follow up with people of diverse backgrounds who do attend the symposium, asking them to attend again.

It was mentioned that 1500 copies of the Call for Papers were sent out last year. The suggestion was made that perhaps SRAD could also advertise or announce the symposium in selected journals or publications, especially those that might have a diverse readership. Some members felt that it was less important to concentrate specifically on diversity than to strengthen the organization in general—in terms of membership, for example. It would be good, someone suggested, to be both more scientifically rigorous and more diverse.

The site for next year's meeting came under discussion. Originally, the plan had been to have it in California, but participants there cannot undertake to sponsor the meeting until the year 2000. Two possibilities for 1999 were discussed. There was some sentiment for returning to Vermont. Among the advantages were the savings to SRAD of certain administrative expenses, the nearness of sleeping quarters to meeting rooms, and the good food. A disadvantage was that Montpelier was relatively difficult to get to, compared with a metropolitan area, but the effect of this was less clear. SRAD members had, in the past, discussed the possibility of having the conference at Salem State College in Massachusetts. Patrice Marie Miller had indicated that the college would most likely be supportive. Certain expenses, such as that for accommodations, might also be lessened because of Salem State's participation. People mentioned that Salem is also a nice small town with many tourist attractions, especially several in connection with its history as the site of the Salem witch trials.

There was an attempt in the afternoon session to decide the site for next year, but because so many people were absent at this late, concluding point in the symposium, the consensus was that it would be impossible to have a representative vote. The sense of the meeting was that Patrice Marie Miller would investigate the possibility of having the meeting at Salem State and report to Mel Miller, the executive director, who would make the final decision, weighing all the considerations.

Mel reported to the group some information about the *Journal*. He had recently spoken with Jack Demick, who is currently the editor of the *Journal of Adult Development*, he said, and Jack indicated that he is actively recruiting issues and ideas from SRAD and would like to have one yearly issue of "the best" papers from the symposium. He would also like to have people from SRAD do special issues. Mel Miller and Susanne Cook-Greuter, for example, might do one in honor of Skip Alexander. He would like to see about two issues a year essentially done by SRAD. Given these recent developments, Mel said that he felt there is less of a need for SRAD to try and undertake another journal.

Bernie Folta is the new newsletter editor, Mel announced. He creates an excellent newsletter for a psychoanalytic group in Vermont, he said, and has agreed to do SRAD's. Bernie, who was present, carried out a short survey of the attendees of their preferences about the newsletter. The brief survey showed that most attendees at the business meeting wanted the newsletter to come out two-to-three times a year and that among the content people said they'd like to see, to mention a few things, were reports on current events in adult development, short "think pieces," information about SRAD, cutting-edge ideas, and who is doing what. Bernie will begin putting together a newsletter soon, so people who have something to contribute should send it to him.

Editor's Notebook

by Bernie Folta

As Mel Miller announced, I'm the new editor of *Adult Developments—The SRAD Bulletin*, and I'd like to introduce myself. I'm in the M.A. program in clinical psychology at St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont, where I have completed all the coursework, but not yet my thesis. (And it won't get done, either, if I keep being distracted by interesting things to do, like editing the *SRAD Bulletin*.) I'm a student member of the APA, including Division 39 (Psychoanalysis), and I'm a student member of the Vermont Psychological Association. I'm also a student member of the Vermont Association for Psychoanalytic Studies (VAPS) and have been the editor of their three-times-a-year newsletter for the past four years.

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More than 30 years ago, when I was an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, I majored in psych for one semester. I

still remember Experimental. My rat lived in a Skinner box accompanied by a continuous tone, day and night, produced by an audio oscillator. Willy—that was my rat's name—could shut off the tone by pressing the Skinner box's lever, and a drum recorder captured the action. The purpose was to determine "Motivating Characteristics of a Constant Auditory Field," my topic in this undergraduate course. Well, as far as Willy was concerned, I proved that the constant auditory field had *no* motivating characteristics. After the study, my landlady said no, I couldn't keep Willy up in my room.

After my semester of psychology, I moved on to something else (English), and I went on to get an M.A.T. in English from Northwestern University. My current studies and work in psychology are, for one thing, the resumption of a psychology "thread" from earlier in my life.

Before this relatively recent immersion in psychology, for 27 years I worked in the computer department of the National Life Insurance Company in Montpelier, Vermont. I started as a programmer trainee. When I ended my career there with early retirement in 1995, I was Director of Technology Research and Strategic Planning.

I've been doing some teaching. This is the sixth semester I've taught an Introduction to Psychology course at the Montpelier division of the statewide Community College of Vermont, and last semester I also taught a course in operating systems, spreadsheets, and programming at Vermont Technical College in Randolph, Vermont.

During the 1980's, even while working at the insurance company, I did quite a lot of part-time work as a freelance writer and photographer with northern Vermont daily and weekly newspapers. (The director of public relations at the company was a national magazine writer so that kind of "moonlighting" was OK.) I was an arts critic and feature writer—writing theater, music, and visual arts reviews and features as well as articles on topics ranging from churches and religion to business and computers. Sports stories were something I never did get to write although I took a lot of basketball and hockey shots in my photographer role. I also had a monthly arts column for three years and an every-two-weeks food column for eight years. In 1993, I was the founding editor (doing the first two issues) of *The Montpelier Bridge*, a nonprofit community newspaper which has been going for over five years now.

I have a lot of experience "wordsmithing," but I don't want this to be *my* newsletter I'd like it to be *yours*. I know, I know, *every* editor of an association newsletter says that, and some of them continually publish pleas for contributions. You won't find *me* doing that because that kind of "badgering" bothers me a lot. What may happen, though, is that you may get a quiet little phone call or quick little e-mail from me wondering whether you have an idea for a little piece you might like to do sometime.

At the end of last June's SRAD symposium—during the business meeting, I got a chance to survey the people present about what

they'd like to see in this *Bulletin*. A few of the suggestions I received are given in Patti Miller and Michael Commons's report of that meeting earlier in this issue, but here are some more of the ideas:

- a paper from the symposium in each issue
- brief book reviews
- humor
- highlights of relevant journal articles
- reports of ongoing and proposed research
- short "think"/opinion pieces
- information on who is working on what projects
- interviews
- speculative articles
- reports of cutting-edge projects in adult development
- information on sharing resources and data
- political and governmental issues affecting the field

* * *

Not long ago, I spoke with Mac Greene, my predecessor as editor. He was most helpful, giving me some background and a number of ideas. Thanks, Mac. I'm pretty sure we'll be hearing more from Mac in the future.

* * *

Norwich University and its Vermont College division have provided significant support to SRAD through the agency of Jackson Kytle, Ph.D., Dean of Vermont College and vice president of Norwich University, and for this, SRAD expresses its sincere thanks.

* * *

We're planning the next issue of this *Bulletin* for next fall. Here's how to contact me for anything in connection with *Adult Developments—The SRAD Bulletin*.

Bernard W. Folta Phone: (802) 223-3231
 P.O. Box 826 Fax: (802) 223-4625
 Montpelier, VT 05601 E-mail: bernief@delphi.com

**SRAD Membership And
 How To Become A Member**

The international membership of the Society for Research in Adult Development includes people from all disciplines who are interested in positive adult development. We extend an invitation to all those interested in this field to join us whether their context is adult development in the individual or whether it's development within the framework of families, work, school, or communities.

For practitioners, the Society offers an opportunity to discover the latest ideas in the field and to explore the application of those ideas to everyday problems and challenges. For academic researchers and theoreticians, the Society offers the

opportunity to share ideas, often in a deeper way, with other researchers and theoreticians through discussion and the exchange of papers and to explore the application of their ideas to the problems and opportunities of daily life by working on them with practitioners from many fields.

The Society supports diversity within its membership. Such diversity includes differences in professional status, academic discipline, occupation, race, culture, gender, and sexual orientation. Applicants from Canada, other parts of North and South America, and other countries are most welcome.

Among the benefits of membership in SRAD are—

- you become part of a network of people interested in and working in the field of positive adult development.
- you receive a one-year subscription to the *Journal of Adult Development*.
- you receive the newsletter of the Society, *Adult Developments—The SRAD Bulletin*.
- you receive the Call for Papers for SRAD's annual symposia and other communiqués.

Membership And Symposium Registration Form

SRAD's membership year is from the beginning of one annual symposium to the beginning of the one the following year. The symposium registration fee includes SRAD membership so that symposium attendees are automatically members for the year following the symposium they attend.

The combined form for both SRAD membership (only) and for symposium registration follows. Please return the form to Mel Miller, SRAD's executive director, whose address is at the bottom of the form.

If you prefer to sign up through e-mail, please provide the information requested on the form, and send to Sharon Dickinson at **srad@norwich.edu**. Your separate check should be sent to Melvin Miller, whose mail address is at the bottom of the form..

Student scholarships covering the symposium registration fee are available. Please contact Mel Miller, the executive director, for more information at **srad@norwich.edu** by e-mail or (802) 485-2134 by phone.

If you have suggestions for SRAD, or you wish to note ways you could become involved, please append a note. Thank you for joining the Society and for your continued membership.

**Combined Form For SRAD Membership
 And 1999 Symposium Registration**
 (Use as appropriate)

Note: Membership is included in the symposium fee so persons who attend the symposium are members for the ensuing year.

Category:

- Membership for the remainder of the 1998-1999 year
- Membership for 1999-2000 (without symposium registration)
- Registration for the 1999 annual SRAD symposium to be held June 18-20, 1999, in Salem, Massachusetts (Registration includes SRAD membership for 1999-2000.)

Fees:

- Annual membership fee (without symposium registration)
 - Regular membership, \$45 (US)
 - Student membership, \$35 (US)
- Symposium fee (includes SRAD membership for 1999-2000)
 - Regular fee, \$165 (US)
 - Student fee, \$65 (US)

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City, State/Province _____

ZIP/Postal Code & Country _____

Phones, Office & Home _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Web page _____

Students: Degree expected, year, school _____

Please make check payable, with appropriate fees in U.S. dollars, to SRAD (Society for Research in Adult Development), and please return this completed form, with remittance, to:

SRAD
c/o Melvin E. Miller, Ph. D.
Norwich University
Box 21
Northfield, VT 05663, U.S.A.

ADULT DEVELOPMENTS-
The SRAD Bulletin
c/o Melvin E. Miller, Ph.D.
Norwich University
Box 21
Northfield, VT 05663 U.S.A.

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SRAD Annual Symposium

**Friday through Sunday,
June 18-20, 1999,
at Salem State College,
Salem, Massachusetts**

Additional information inside