

EAP ASSOCIATION

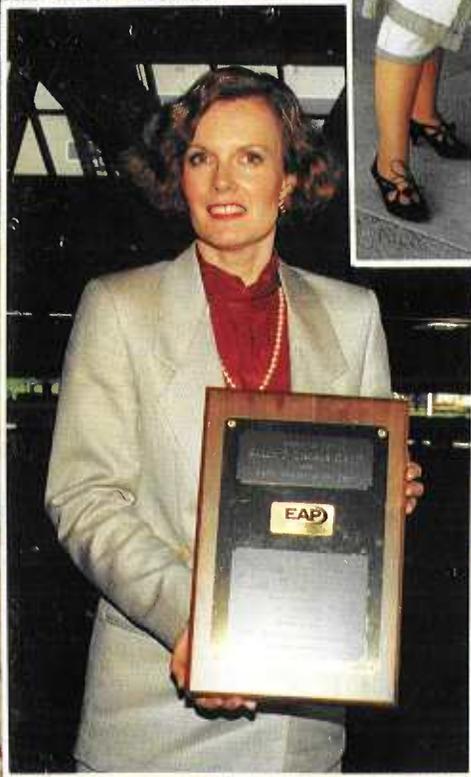
EXCHANGE

DECEMBER 1989



VOL. 19 NO. 12

The awards, the professional training, the camaraderie, the record turnout: from stern to stern, it was EAPA's best conference ever!



18th
National
Conference
Makes
a Big Splash
in Baltimore



EDITOR'S COMMENT

EAPA's 18TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE will be remembered for years to come as a

watershed event. If sheer volume means anything, this year's conference brought in about 700 more people than ever before, as total registration catapulted to over 2,200. (A final count is still not available.) More than likely, a variety of factors contributed to the turnout, including the accessibility and affordability of Baltimore, the introduction of professional development hours, which lured attendees to the workshops in droves, the variety of special-interest groups that now meet during EAPA's National Conference, and the growing utilization of EAPs as a drug-free workplace strategy.

This month, the *Exchange* recaps the reunions, rhetoric and resolutions that were the sum and substance of this year's event. It's one more for the archives, but will stand as an enduring testimonial to the strength of our maturing profession.

NEW CHALLENGES COME WITH MATURITY, and there were more of them during this National Conference than ever before. Overseeing an exhibit hall that was roughly the size of two football fields, managing a decentralized housing arrangement, and planning for literally hundreds of other accommodations presented some new logistical

You Had to be There!

kinks. As they say in the entertainment industry, "The show must go on," and

indeed it did. From the convention's nerve center—the registration area—veteran EAPA conference managers Judith Evans and Ellen Miller were once again the troubleshooters who kept problems in check.

ON THE COVER of this month's issue, you will notice a modification of our masthead. The Board of Directors voted to install *EAP Association Exchange* as the permanent name of the magazine, in keeping with the full spelling of "Association" in EAPA's new logo.

Want to know which topics will be featured in the *Exchange* during the coming year? An editorial agenda has been set by the magazine's Advisory Committee for the first eight months of 1990 and appears on page 10. You, as EAP professionals, are out there where the action is. If you have information that is pertinent to one of our themes, we hope to hear from you.

Rudy M. Yandrick
RUDY M. YANDRICK
EDITOR

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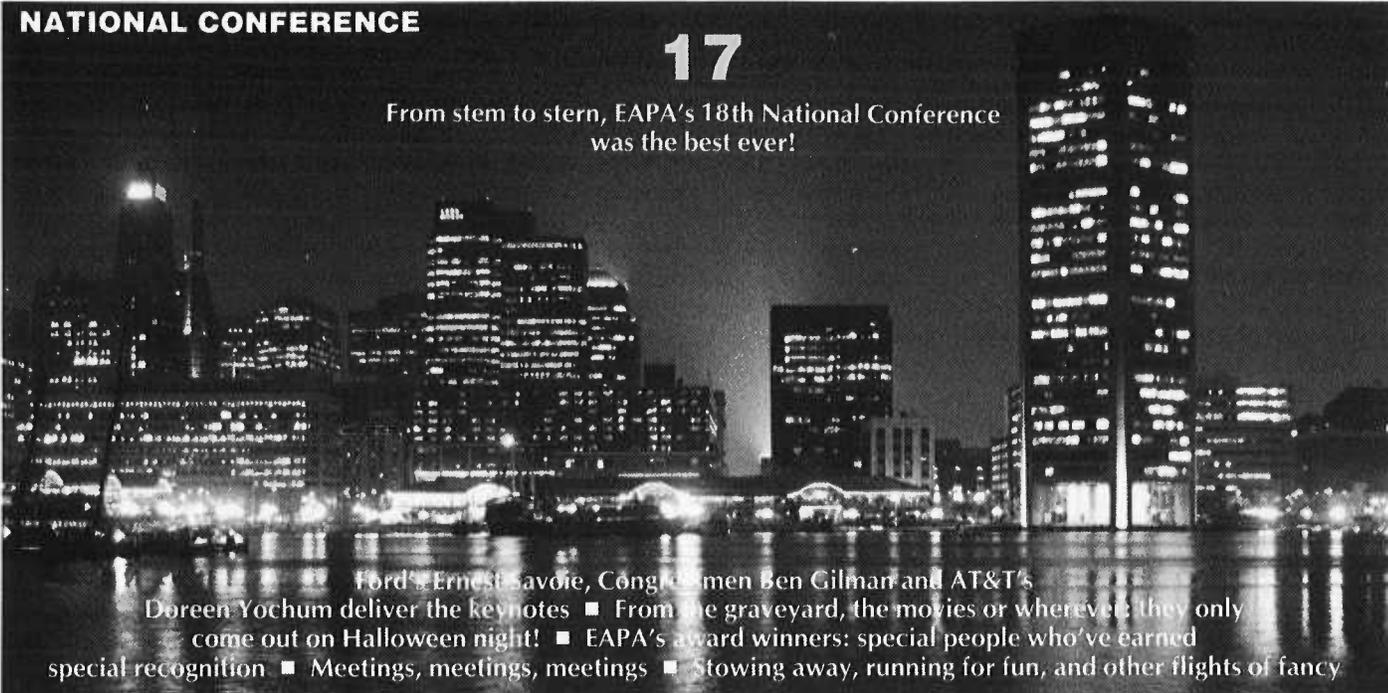
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ON THE COVER

The persons shown on this month's cover are among EAPA's finest. From the lower left to upper right, Sally Lipscomb was honored as "EAPA Member of the Year." Talking shop are Vice President-Operations Tamara Cagney, President Tom Pasco and new Treasurer Pat Patrick. Outgoing members of the Employee Assistance Certification Commission were honored. They are (l-r): Brenda Blair, George Cobbs, Debra Reynolds and Jesse Bernstein.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thomas J. Delaney Jr.

A consultant to the federal government on aging programs called to ask why EAPs are not aggressively trying to take over the administration of corporate eldercare programs. I explained that EAPs often have to assist employers to learn about eldercare, but the operation and administration of eldercare programs is beyond the scope of EAPs, as are the operation of mental health and substance abuse services, child care and remedial education. All of these services are ones that EAP clients may need, and the EAP practitioner can have an important role in identifying needs, working with policy makers to assure they are available, and identifying appropriate service providers. This is a long way from operating or administering these services, though.

THREE "ENCOUNTERS"

The focus and purpose of EAPs are to help employees remain on the job and assist them in resolving health, behavioral, and other personal problems that are interfering with job performance. I recently had three "encounters" which caused me to reflect on our role in the workplace and how it might be changing. First, in early October, I participated in a seminar sponsored by the American Gas Association that was designed to help human resources directors from utilities meet the D.O.T. anti-drug regulations. One of my fellow panelists was the medical director of a large utility which has had an EAP for many years. He made a statement which impressed me. He said: "We discourage frivolous use of the EAP." I wondered what he meant and had a chance to ask the corporate EAP director when I saw him at EAPA's National Conference—the second encounter. He explained that people who volunteer and are referred to the EAP are required to focus on the job setting and how the problem relates to it. The company believes that the EAP can be most helpful to employees if it

concentrates on doing exclusively what it has been assigned to do. The company also feels that company benefits, labor-union agreements, charities that it and its employees support and public agencies that it supports through taxes all have roles that need to be kept separate from the EAP.

Third, in October, I also participated in a meeting at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to discuss the role of employers in helping people with AIDS. The participants came from a wide range of programs, including several longtime leaders in the EAP field. These people reported on how they have assisted employees with AIDS, counseled other employees about minimizing the risk of exposure to AIDS, and how they provide leadership in developing AIDS policies for their organizations. The discussions will be very helpful to NIDA in developing national policies and arranging funding priorities. However, some of the non-EAP people in the group then proceeded to insist that EAPs have a responsibility for employees with AIDS after they can no longer work. Others said that the EAP must become an advocate in their companies to get employers to push for changes in the community. Here, again, I believe EAPs will lose their focus if they pick up these non-job-related functions. This, in turn, will lead them to be spread too thin to do what we really do well; that is, help employ-

ees with addictions, mental illness or other stigmatized health and personal problems.

Any field must change with the times to remain viable. After these three encounters in October, I decided to do a reality check to see if I wasn't just stuck with an outdated EAP model. I called Dr. Paul Roman at the University of Georgia and reiterated to him what I had heard. From the vantage point of an objective, applied researcher who stays in formal contact with a large contingent of the EAP field, Paul provided an historical perspective. As usual, Paul's advice is sound and helpful to all of us. Remember—it was the "Core Technology" which he and Dr. Terry Blum identified which the field overwhelmingly accepted as the base competencies for certifying EAP practitioners. Paul feels that the same thing is happening to the EAP field as happened to the personnel field in the late 1960s.

Personally, I was working in personnel offices in the 60s and I remember the phenomenon well. Every social cause, charity and theory which either caught the boss's eye or (perhaps more likely) he was trying to get rid of, was dumped on the personnel office. I remember the blood banks, the charity drives, the programs to prevent high school students from dropping out. Most of these were worthy causes, and many warranted employer and union support. The problem was that the core

NEW BOARD APPOINTMENTS

EAPA President Tom Pasco has announced new appointments to the Board of Directors. **Pat Patrick** has replaced Bob Challenger, who recently joined the National EAPA staff, as Treasurer. **Jack Hennessy** has been appointed chair of the Treatment Committee.

With the addition of four new regions to the United States, the new regional representatives are: **Alpha**

Brown, Mid-Atlantic Region; **Janet Deming**, North Central Region; **Daniel C. Hearn**, Southwestern Region; and **James E. Lehman**, Western Region. (See page 25 for a photo of the new regional representatives.)

Complete biographical backgrounds on each of the appointees will appear in the January issue.

personnel functions suffered. The same thing is happening now with EAPs. We are being asked to take on a lot of important, worthwhile, but secondary, functions.

By the early 1970s, the personnel profession started to define its parameters. A similar step will probably be needed to allow EAPs to focus on what we do best for labor and management—help troubled employees.

UPDATING THE STANDARDS

At the Board of Directors meeting on November 1, Standards Committee chair Debra Reynolds proposed a comprehensive plan to develop EAP program standards. This is a critical project for our profession. It is so critical, in fact, that the Board voted to have Debra implement her plan, even though funds for it were not previously earmarked in the budget. Certainly, the standards will place parameters on the EAP practice. However, each of us can do the same by being alert to the numerous new tasks that are suggested for EAP and checking to see how they fit in with our Core Technology.

WESTERN REGION ISSUES CALL FOR PAPERS

A Call for Papers has been issued for the Western Region Conference, scheduled for May 13-16 in Scottsdale, AZ. The conference theme will be "**Heating up for the 90s.**" Workshop tracks have not been set in advance. Instead, persons wishing to present should draft an abstract and program outline based on the six content areas of the EACC's CEAP designation program. (See page 46, under the "PDH-approved Training," for a listing.) The Western Region's Program Committee plans to group the selected presenters into panels in cases where the speakers' topics are compatible. *Single abstracts for an entire panel of speakers are being accepted.* **The Program Committee is working on a tight schedule, so interested persons should contact the program chairperson, Dr. William Mermis, at (602) 965-2271 as soon as possible.**

Another major presentation at the Board meeting was the draft of an EPA monograph on managed mental health care. This is now being reviewed by the Board. Among its issues are the relationship between various managed care schemes and EAP. It gets to the parameter issue from a different perspective. At what point do EAP people say to others that they are infringing on our areas of expertise? There are also the questions of how much financial or benefits management an EAP should do and how to relate to the other parts of the company that are doing managed care. Al-

though eldercare is a personal concern and benefits management is rather impersonal, these same basic questions about parameters apply.

Upon returning to Washington after the National Conference, *The Washington Post* provided yet another example of how EAPs can be handed programs that appear far afield from our basic mission. It printed a memorandum from Attorney General Dick Thornburgh to all employees of the Department of Justice. It was about the adoption of children. According to the *Post*, this memo was part of a political decision to appeal to the "pro-life" advocates in the national dispute on abortion. The memorandum included a sentence that stated: "The Employee Assistance Program...will expand its service to include referrals and counseling of those considering adoptions."

There is no doubt that employees who have not been able to have their own children or who are weighing a decision to expand their current family may have serious concerns that manifest at the workplace. This is also true for an employee who has an unwanted pregnancy. However, it does point out the potential danger of EAPs being misused by public and private management unless we maintain our parameters.

As Roman and Blum stated in their August 1988 article in *THE ALMACAN* entitled "The Core Technology of Employee Assistance Programs: A Reaffirmation," "...in the evolution of the EAP specialty, there is a risk that it will lose sight of its original mission. With each stretch in the parameters of an occupational group, there is typically a 'back to basics' movement which serves to reassess the collective identity of the occupation. At this point, a 'core technology' can be an instrument to evaluate specific changes that are occurring." □

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