



Dear Friends,

Belief in the historical accuracy of “recovered repressed memories” continues its journey through our culture, its passage sometimes marked by incidents that seem discouraging, as though no progress had been made. For example, on January 6, 2010 *Time* magazine published an article called: “How childhood trauma can cause adult obesity,” a seeming backslide to the early 1990s when lists of signs and symptoms of alleged sexual abuse were touted as abundant, although without empirical base. (See p. 5) As we begin a new year, however, the broad perspective is far more encouraging than not. For example, a group of psychologists has started a movement to reform the way that psychologists are certified, (p. 3) and a legal decision in Minnesota (p. 10) reinforces the understanding that there is a lack of scientific evidence for the theory of repressed and recovered memories. Minnesota District Court Judge Gregg E. Johnson wrote that one of the parties in a case:

“failed to meet his burden of proof under the Frye-Mack standard of showing that the theory of repressed and recovered memory is reliable and trustworthy based on well-recognized scientific principles because of the significant methodological flaws in the studies presented by plaintiff in support of that theory and the lack of any test to show reliability.” [1]

In fact, a slew of popular articles have appeared in recent months that warn of the dangers of recovered memories. We suspect that you will enjoy the conclusion to one of these as much as we did.

“So when it comes to memories, you’ll do well to remember that they are very unreliable. And when it comes to repressed memories, you’ll do best to forget the whole thing.” [2]

In this issue of the newsletter, we invite you to learn more about three of the FMSF’s brilliant and dedicated scientific advisors who have contributed to the research and publications that have done so much to speed the recovered memory phenomenon to its inevitable demise. (See p. 7)

Even though the FMSF problem continues to shrink, the danger of a flare up remains. The story of the Mohler arrests in Missouri (p. 11), the news that the Santa Clara, California District Attorney’s office failed to give more than 3,300 videotapes of medical exams in child sex abuse cases to defense attorneys (p. 9), and the knowledge that a therapist that the Minnesota Board of Psychology found to have violated numerous laws and regulations when she encouraged a patient’s delusions of satanic cult rituals and government mind-control experiments is allowed to continue to treat patients (p. 5) are all reminders that there remains work to be done.

We thank you for your notes of encouragement and for your financial support that enables us to work together in an effort to prevent a resurgence of the recovered memory phenomenon.

A number of families have written to say how sad they are about the approach of the end of the printed version of the newsletter. One mother said “No. You can’t stop!” and she sent us a large donation to continue to send out a print version to families who need it. Even though our reason for planning to stop was not financial, we accepted the check and we thank this generous member for you. As a consequence of her determination, we will continue to send the print version for as long as there is a newsletter.

At the same time, we will not stop encouraging readers to participate in the most exciting development in the transmission of ideas in our lifetime. It’s true that for us seniors using computer/internet technology can be a challenge: arthritic fingers, vision problems, and the fact that it takes seniors longer to learn new things are all obstacles. But the

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The next newsletter will be sent in April 2010.

benefits are astounding. A huge world opens, as does the opportunity to keep expanding our minds and knowledge. Reluctant techies could try getting both the printed and electronic versions until they feel comfortable with the ease and speed (not to mention the ability to view and print material in larger print) of the Internet.

We wish to make a special acknowledgment and send our thanks for a gift by Samuel Donald Schack, Ph.D., of Buffalo, New York of \$100,000 to the Center for Inquiry in Amherst, New York for the establishment of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation Library Archives. Although Dr. Schack was not personally involved, he has maintained an active interest in the Foundation since its inception. This very generous contribution means that the FMSF Archives will be available to the public early this spring. The Archives will be housed in a special section of the larger CFI library and will have work-spaces and electronic equipment available for researchers. This tremendous gift ensures that the letters from families (identification removed), the videotapes, the books, the legal documents, and the outrageous flyers and advertisements that fully document the existence of the tragic recovered memory phenomenon can be available to researchers, not just now but for years in the future. The FMSF Archives will be a reminder to all of the devastation that can take place when people who may have the best of intentions ignore the lessons of science.

Now that the FMSF Archives are almost in place, it is time for the Foundation to focus on updating the website. Because of the success of FMSF in its original mission to disseminate the findings of relevant scientific research to families, to the general public and to the media, it is now critical, as the administrative office winds down, that the FMSF website become as user friendly as possible while carrying historical as well as up-to-date citations and references to relevant scientific research studies. This will help future afflicted families, provide relevant information where needed by the legal system, and aid future researchers, scholars, and historians investigating false memory issues. A more user friendly website will serve as an enduring legacy of FMSF which would not be possible without the loyal supportive members throughout the world.

We enter the new year and the new decade with the expectation that we will continue to see diminished numbers of families newly accused and with the hope increased numbers of families that are reunited.

**Pamela**

1. John Doe76C vs. Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. No 62-C9-06-003962. Minn. 2nd Judicial District. Dec 8, 2009.

2. Mason, S. (2010, January 6). Recovered memory syndrome: A modern witch-hunt. People. Retrieved on January 7, 2010 from <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/look-it-way/201001/recovered-memory-syndrome>.



### **Excerpts: Is Your Therapist A Little Behind the Times?**

“The practice of clinical psychology—which includes psychotherapy—is akin to medicine as it was practiced a century ago. For at least 2,000-years, medicine was locked in a struggle between those who viewed it as an art and those who saw it as a science. Until the last century, most medical practitioners were guided by intuition and tradition, not by science. Healers commonly used ineffective and often injurious practices such as blistering, purging and bleeding. Such techniques were used year after year, and century after century, with physicians firmly convinced that they were helping their patients.

“While psychologists certainly do not use such harmful practices, a similar dynamic appears to be at work in clinical psychology today. Many psychotherapists openly state that scientific research is largely irrelevant to their practice. Most say that their clinical techniques largely reflect their own insights and experience; they tend not to use the most effective types of treatments available; and they admit to little in the way of scientific training.”

“But we believe that graduate education is largely to blame for this dismal situation. Graduate programs in psychology do not select science-oriented students to begin with and do not train students to understand and use science once they are enrolled.”

“Medicine reformed itself...There are now about 160 medical schools in this country, including schools that grant M.D. and D.O. degrees. They meet rigorous standards of evaluation through relevant professional organizations...”

“About half of clinical psychologists are trained today in for-profit schools that are not associated with universities, and many such programs explicitly play down science. Relative to university-based programs, these schools have very large class sizes, faculty with marginal scientific credentials and low admission standards.”

“In essence, many of the students being trained by graduate schools are not prepared to understand or use research evidence, let alone contribute their own... Our report and prescription is an attempt to serve as the equivalent of the Flexner Report for clinical psychology. We hope it leads to increased scrutiny of the programs that train psychotherapists... A new science-based accreditation system will mean that, eventually, patients entering a psychologist’s office can expect to receive the best care that psychological science has to offer.”

Baker, T., McFall, R. and Shodan, V. (2009, November 15). Is your therapist a little behind the times. *Washington Post* <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/13/AR2009111302221.html>

## PROPOSAL FOR A NEW PSYCHOLOGY

### ACCREDITATION SYSTEM [1]

[http://www.psychologicalscience.org/journals/index.cfm?journal=pspi&content=pspi/9\\_2](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/journals/index.cfm?journal=pspi&content=pspi/9_2)

*“We propose that clinical psychology has not fulfilled its obligations to public health because, as a field, it is deeply ambivalent about the role of science and research in dictating the course and content of its practice. In this sense, it resembles medicine at a point in history when its practitioners were operating in a largely prescientific manner.” (p. 77)*

In a strongly worded paper published in November in the journal *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 9(2), 67-103, authors Timothy Baker, Richard McFall, and Varda Shoham argue that the only way in which clinical psychology can be moved to a more scientific foundation is with the implementation of a new accreditation system for psychologists. They present cogent reasons why the current accreditation system of the American Psychological Association (APA) fails and why it is intransigent to change.<sup>[2]</sup>

The writers begin by noting that as the demand for mental health care has been growing, psychologists have been increasingly bypassed. They say “psychologists have not made good business and clinical cases for the value of their services and interventions.” (p. 69) What psychologists need to demonstrate is that the services they offer are truly beneficial and that they are cost effective. The only way that this can be done is to base practice on therapies that have been shown through research to be effective. Unfortunately, research shows that the majority of clinical psychologists ignore science.

*“Copious evidence suggests that many clinical psychologists today,*

*perhaps the majority, are deeply ambivalent about the role of science in informing their practice. For instance, they value personal clinical experience over research evidence, tend to use assessment practices that have dubious psychometric support, and tend not to use procedures for which there is the strongest evidence of efficacy.” (p. 77)*

Walter Mischel of Columbia University who wrote an editorial that appeared in the same journal stated: “The disconnect between much of clinical practice and the advances in psychological science is an unconscionable embarrassment.”

Clinical psychology, the writers suggest, is now at a place of development where medicine was in the early 1900s when Abraham Flexner wrote a report on medical education that was published by the Carnegie Foundation. The Flexner report pointed to the rational scientific medical practices with proven therapeutic efficacy that had been developed and pointed out that most doctors were still being trained in techniques such as bleeding and purging that had no known efficacy. The American Medical Association adopted new standards for the training of physicians that resulted in the closing of many of the existing training schools for doctors. The report revolutionized medical education until it became what it is today: highly standardized and highly demanding. The authors of the new report point out:

*“Still, reform did not occur overnight. Inferior medical schools survived, and charlatans continued to practice. (Of course, medicine is not entirely free from such problems even today.)” (p. 79).*

Baker and colleagues present much evidence to support the observation: “Unlike the AMA in the early 1990s, there is no clear evidence that the APA [American Psychological Association] sees a need to enhance the

scientific basis of training or practice.” (p. 84) Indeed, a 2006 APA report, “Evidence-Based Practice in Psychology (APA Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice, 2006), “actually equates the personal experiences of the clinician and client preferences with scientific evidence – a striking embrace of prescientific perspective.” (p. 84) Apparently the APA has no reason to change the status quo.

The authors carefully point out why retraining is not sought by clinical psychologists who are now practicing. The problem is that: “considerable evidence indicates that many, if not most, clinicians view science or research as having relatively little relevance to their practice activities and decisions.” (p. 80) When these clinicians are exposed to the information and training of the new effective therapies, they ignore them. “Regardless of the reasons, practice has remained largely a craft, not a science.” (p. 83)

In a response to the Baker et al. paper, officials of the APA defend their system saying it’s “accreditation system does encourage an understanding of scientific research...”<sup>[3]</sup> As readers of the *FMSF Newsletter* are well aware, however, vast numbers of APA accredited courses are totally unscientific, including courses in satanic ritual abuse and auras.

In 2006, in frustration, a group of the leading scientifically oriented clinical psychology departments joined to provide a new assessment program: The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS). The hope is that the new accreditation system will promote a new brand of clinical science training and “foster a new breed of integrative clinical scientists who will work to reform the mental health care system.” (p. 87) The PCSAS accreditation should be a badge of distinction and provide a powerful positive example.

Will this new report and the creation of a new system of accreditation

make a change or will it be relegated to the heap of languishing great ideas? Perhaps the time has finally come when there are a sufficient number of concerned professionals to take strong action. FMSF families know only too well how important and how needed these changes are.

1. Baker, T.B., McFall, R.M., Shoham, V. (2009). Current status and future prospects of clinical psychology: Toward a scientifically principled approach to mental and behavioral health care. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 9(2), 67-103.

[http://www.psychologicalscience.org/journals/index.cfm?journal=pspi&content=pspi/9\\_2](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/journals/index.cfm?journal=pspi&content=pspi/9_2)

2. The Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) was initiated by the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science (APCS). Information is available at: <http://www.pcsas.org/history.html>

"The idea of creating an accreditation system targeted on doctoral education and training in psychological clinical science had been discussed for many years—at least since 1992, when the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the Association for Psychological Science (APS), and the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGDOP) sponsored a special summit meeting on accreditation in Chicago. The birth of PCSAS can be traced to a special meeting on accreditation organized by the APCS executive committee, held in Tucson, AZ, in January 2006. This meeting culminated in the decision to pursue development of a new accreditation system."

3. Aujla, S. (2009, October 2). Report calls for added science in psychology Ph.D. programs. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved on September 21, 2009 from <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Report-Calls-for-Increased-148697/>

### Some additional articles about the Baker et al. report.

*Los Angeles Times:*

[http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/booster\\_shots/2009/10/do-therapists-know-what-theyre-doing-dont-bank-on-it-three-psychologists-say.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/booster_shots/2009/10/do-therapists-know-what-theyre-doing-dont-bank-on-it-three-psychologists-say.html)

and  
<http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-psychotherapy112010jan11,0,3172452,print.story>

*Newsweek:*

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/216506>

*Nature:* <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v461/n7266/pdf/461847a.pdf>

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*FMSF Newsletter readers may be interested to read again what FMSF published about restructuring education of psychotherapists back in 2000.*

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### Is Restructuring of Professional Education of Psychotherapists Necessary -- or Possible?

Charles C. Congdon, M.D.

According to William Longmire in a recent issue of *The Pharos*,<sup>[1]</sup> "as recently as the end of the nineteenth century, medical education in the United States was in a deplorable state. Hundreds of medical schools were little more than academically anemic apprenticeships." Longmire cites extensively from Abraham Flexner<sup>[2]</sup> who was noted for a famous study and report on medical education in the early part of the 20th century. Flexner was convinced that the central deficiencies in medical education at the time were (1) the failure to teach state-of-the-art knowledge, and (2) the absence of science-based and evidence-based medical education. A revolution in medical education resulted from the Flexner report. Medical schools were overhauled, many were closed and the curriculum became science-based. To this day, doctors still worry about keeping a balance between research and practice in professional education.

Several contemporary observers have made the analogy between medical education at the turn of the century and professional education of psychotherapists now. For example, Paul McHugh, Chief of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, has commented frequently about the comparison and the importance of improving education in the mental health fields.<sup>[3]</sup>

The time is right. There was no scientific foundation for psychiatry in its early years, but that has changed in the past two decades with a veritable

explosion of scientific knowledge about mental disorders and how to treat them. In *Therapy's Delusions*, Watters and Ofshe also bluntly make the comparison:<sup>[4]</sup>

"Flexner's conclusion could not be more true of the mental health field at present. As medicine was a hundred years ago, the mental health field is now plagued by a large gap between its research and clinical applications."

In a 1994 survey, Michael Yapko<sup>[5]</sup> documented professional ignorance of basic facts about memory and hypnosis. In that same year Robyn Dawes<sup>[6]</sup> exposed the unscientific ideas that were a part of current professional training. The lives of families, individuals and children have been tragically shattered because of this lack of scientific understanding, a harm well-documented in books by Mark Pendergrast,<sup>[7]</sup> Terence Campbell,<sup>[8]</sup> Tana Dineen,<sup>[9]</sup> Joan Acocella,<sup>[10]</sup> and Margaret Hagen,<sup>[11]</sup> to name a few.

If a similar tragedy is to be prevented in the future, improved professional education must be an important part of the effort. Medical education was transformed and became science-based. Can education for mental health professionals be similarly transformed?

What would the process be? Who would provide the leadership? What would the curriculum look like? How would such a program encompass the multitude of different mental health professionals and regulatory groups?

If there is to be a reform of education in psychotherapy, it must be a fundamental reform. It will require scientific integrity and scientific thought. Attention to the form without substance won't work. In my opinion, the content for any restructuring of professional education in psychotherapy should come from the educators themselves with attention to the issues outsiders raise. Outsiders are essential for change, but content is an insider game.

Is it possible to have a “Flexner” investigation and report on the professional education in psychotherapy? It seems to me that could be the first step in bridging the gap between research and clinical applications in professional education.

1. Longmire, W.P. The Halstedian influence goes west: Personal and historical remarks. *The Pharos*/Summer 1999, p. 19-24. (Halsted was a reformer of surgical training in the U.S. around 1904.)
2. Flexner, A. Medical education in the United States and Canada; a report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. 1910.
3. McHugh, P. public remarks.
4. Watters, E. and Ofshe, R. *Therapy's delusions: The myth of the unconscious and the exploitation of today's walking worried*. Scribner, 1999. p. 230-231.
5. Yapko, M. *Suggestions of abuse*. Simon & Schuster, 1994.
6. Dawes, R. M. *House of Cards: Psychology and Psychotherapy Built on Myth*. Free Press, 1994.
7. Pendergrast, M. *Victims of memory: Sex abuse accusations and shattered lives*, 2nd Edition. Upper Access, 1996.
8. Campbell, T.W. *Smoke and mirrors: The devastating effect of false sexual abuse claims*. Insight Books, Plenum Press, 1998.
9. Dineen, T. *Manufacturing victims: What the psychology industry is doing to people*, 2nd Edition. Robert Davies, 1998.
10. Acocella, J. *Creating hysteria: Women and multiple personality disorder*. Jossey Bass, 1999.
11. Hagen, M.A. *Whores of the court: The fraud of psychiatric testimony and the rape of American justice*. Harper Collins, 1997.

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“For a hundred years, people thought memory was wired into the brain. Instead, we find it can be rewired—you can add false information to it, make it stronger, make it weaker, and possibly even make it disappear.”

Karim Nader. Quoted in McGowan, K. (2009, July). Out of the past. *Discover*. p. 32

### Minnesota: Therapist Who Encouraged Delusions of Satanic Cult Rituals to Continue Practicing

In a disciplinary report in October, 2009, the Minnesota Board of Psychology allowed St. Cloud psychologist Suzanne James, Ph.D., to maintain her license even though she was found to have violated numerous laws and regulations when she encouraged a patient's delusions of satanic cult rituals and government mind-control experiments. The Board said that James could continue to see patients with multiple personality as long as she discusses her treatment methods with a supervising psychologist and has training on professional boundaries.

A complaint was filed in 2006 by a relative of the patient after Dr. James brought her to a hotel so that she could avoid members of a cult supposedly following her. The relative who filed the complaint received a reply three years later. She has said that she is disappointed and thinks “this lady needs her license taken away.”

In 1999 the Minnesota Board of Psychology prohibited psychologist Renee Fredrickson from treating patients who might believe in cult abuse.<sup>[1]</sup> That case was brought by attorney R. Christopher Barden who has commented that licensing boards must struggle with conflicts of interest because they are supervising peers. According to the *Star Tribune*, “Barden described such agencies as ‘captured boards’ that act more like therapists than regulators aimed at protecting the public.” Barden stated: “The problem of how to deal with harmful quack psychotherapies goes far beyond what a small staff of licensing boards can manage.”<sup>[2]</sup>

1. See *FMSF Newsletter*, Vol 8 No 5, 1999.

2. Pabst, L. (2009, October 31). Disturbed patient, disturbing therapy. *Star Tribune*, A1. Pabst, L. (2009, December 7). Family: State failed patient. *Star Tribune*. A11.

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### Does Childhood Trauma Cause Adult Obesity?

Maia Szalavitz, M. (2010, January 5). How childhood trauma can cause adult obesity. *Time*. Retrieved on January 6, 2010 from <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1951240,00.htm>

A recent article in *Time* magazine claims that childhood trauma can be a cause of adult obesity. This conclusion is based on data from the Adverse Childhood Experiences study that includes thousands of patients in the Kaiser Permanente health system. From this huge database, Dr. Vincent Felitti and his colleagues recorded 17,000 reports of negative childhood experiences such as neglect, living with only one parent, having a mentally ill, incarcerated or drug-addicted parent, witnessing domestic violence, and sexual, physical or emotional abuse. Then the researchers searched for correlations between the experiences and adult health.

It seems but a minute ago that researchers were claiming that childhood sexual abuse was the cause of bulimia and anorexia. If one believes the claims, trauma causes a person to be too fat *or* too thin. *FMSF Newsletter* readers recall all too well the early 1990 lists of problems believed to be caused by sexual abuse: wearing clothes that were too tight or to be too thin; to be sexually repressed or to be sexually promiscuous (i.e. Blume, E.S., 1989. *Secret Survivors*). Indeed, people have claimed that more than 700 different symptoms are *caused* by childhood sexual abuse.

Does trauma cause adult obesity? Although there appears to be some evidence that physical abuse is associated with adult obesity (Bentley & Widom, 2009), the research presented in the *Time* article does not support the conclusion that trauma *causes* adult obesity.

It is one of the most elementary mistakes in psychology, as students are taught in “psych 101,” that correlation

does not prove causality. When we have dinner, the sun often sets, but it does not follow the dinner caused the sun to set. People who smoke have a higher incidence of adult-onset diabetes. Should we conclude that smoking helps cause adult onset diabetes? No, because when people *stop* smoking, their risk of diabetes goes up even higher. In other words, people who happen to smoke also happen to be at risk for diabetes for reasons completely independent of smoking. If anything, smoking seems to be slightly protecting them from diabetes. This example shows that just because A comes before B or A is associated with B, it would be foolish and naïve to assume that A has caused B.

But the mistakes go even deeper than that. The *Time* report mentions that the researchers recorded “reports of adverse experiences.” When we ask people to describe experiences that they had in the past (a so-called retrospective study), their recollection of the past is colored by their experiences in the present – a phenomenon known as “recall bias.” For example, one study looked at women who gave birth to a deformed infant and compared them to women who gave birth to a normal infant (Werler, Pober, Nelson, & Holmes, 1989). When the women were asked to recall exposures that they had experienced during pregnancy (such as taking antibiotics or over-the-counter drugs) the women with deformed infants were much more likely to recall such exposures than the women with normal infants. But when the investigators compared the actual documented histories of the two groups, there was no difference in exposure rates. This finding is hardly surprising. Women with a deformed infant would almost certainly be more likely to think carefully about any possible exposures that they might have had, whereas women with normal infants would be unlikely to think as hard about it.

So in short, between 1) the fallacy that correlation implies causality and 2) the problems caused by recall bias, it would be extraordinarily naïve to assume that just because one group of people reports a higher level of a given childhood experience than another group, one could assume that this childhood experience somehow *caused* the symptoms of the first group.

So what about the issue of childhood sexual abuse? It turns out that there are actual studies documenting the error of relying on people’s retrospective reports that they were sexually abused, and then assuming that the sexual abuse played a causal role in their current adult problems. For example, in one of the largest, best controlled, and most sophisticated prospective studies of the effects of childhood abuse to be published (Widom, Weiler, & Cottler, 1999), Dr. Cathy Widom and her colleagues performed a 20-year follow up of a sample of 1,196 participants. These included 676 individuals who had been abused or neglected in childhood, and a matched group of 520 other individuals of similar gender, age, race, and approximate social class with no evidence of childhood abuse. On the follow-up interviews 20 years later, Widom and her colleagues found that rates of drug and alcohol abuse or dependence were virtually identical among individuals in the abused group and in the comparison group. Specifically, a lifetime history of substance abuse or dependence was found in 35% of the participants who were known to have been abused, and in 34% of the comparison participants. Among participants who specifically were victims of sexual abuse, as opposed to physical abuse or neglect, the lifetime rate of substance abuse was 33%. Thus, the study provided no support for the theory that childhood sexual abuse causes individuals to develop substance abuse problems in

adulthood.

But here’s what makes this study really interesting: at the time of the follow-up interview, Widom and her colleagues did not disclose that they were aware of the abuse histories of the participants from the data that they had collected 20 years earlier. However, they asked the participants, during the course of the follow-up interview, whether the participants had been abused as children. Interestingly, the participants with substance abuse problems were much more likely to claim that they had been abused than were participants who did not have substance abuse problems! In other words, if one had relied simply on the *retrospective* claims of the participants, and had not possessed the hard data collected 20 years earlier, one would have erroneously concluded that childhood abuse was associated with substance abuse later in life!

Another study by Raphael and colleagues (Raphael, Widom, & Lange, 2001), based on the same long-term follow-up study data, tested to see whether childhood sexual abuse was associated with complaints of pain in adulthood. As with the drug abuse study, this research found that people who have been physically and sexually abused as children did not show an elevated rate of pain syndromes as opposed to the comparison group. Once again, however, when the adults were asked *retrospectively* about sexual abuse, the ones with pain were much more likely to report a history of abuse. Therefore, if we had simply relied on people’s retrospective reports, we would have erroneously concluded that childhood sexual abuse was somehow associated with adult pain syndromes.

The research reported in *Time* can be compared to results from a prospective study reported by Bentley and Widom (2009) involving *court substantiated* physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect incidents. Bentley

and Widom found that a “30-year follow-up of children with documented histories of abuse and neglect” demonstrates the long-term impact of childhood physical abuse on adult weight. Neither sexual abuse nor neglect showed this relationship. Bentley and Widom cite the strengths and weaknesses of their study, noting: “Because much childhood victimization occurs in the context of multiproblem homes, the maltreatment may be a marker for other family problems that together lead to higher [body mass index]. These findings do not take into account the likely contribution of hereditary influences on the predisposition to become overweight.”

Bentley and Widom do not claim that childhood physical abuse *causes* adult obesity. They state that there is an “increased risk for physically abused children to be overweight in adulthood.”

One cannot help but wonder why *Time* chose to publish an article based on such weak results when so many strong papers exist. Perhaps it is because our culture still clings to the Freudian notion that all our problems stem from past “trauma.”

Bentley, T. & Widom, C.S. (2009). A 30-year follow-up of the effects of child abuse and neglect on obesity in adulthood. *Obesity, 17(10)*, 1900-1905.

Pope, H. (1997). *Psychology Astray: Fallacies in Studies of “Repressed Memory” and Childhood Trauma*. Upton Books.

Raphael, K. G., Widom, C. S., & Lange, G. (2001). Childhood victimization and pain in adulthood: a prospective investigation. *Pain, 92(1-2)*, 283-293.

Werler, M. M., Pober, B. R., Nelson, K., & Holmes, L. B. (1989). Reporting accuracy among mothers of malformed and nonmalformed infants. *Am J Epidemiol, 129(2)*, 415-421.

Widom, C. S., Weiler, B. L., & Cottler, L. B. (1999). Childhood victimization and drug abuse: a comparison of prospective and retrospective findings. *J Consult Clin Psychol, 67(6)*, 867-880.



“I have a photographic memory, but I don’t have same-day service.”

Peggy D. Joseph

### Three FMSF Advisors in the News

**Aaron T. Beck**, FMSF Advisor since June 1995, is the subject of the lead article in the current edition of *The American Scholar*, Vol. 78, Issue 4 (published by Phi Beta Kappa) <http://www.theamericanscholar.org/the-doctor-is-in/>

#### The Doctor Is IN By Daniel B. Smith

At 88, Aaron Beck is now revered for an approach to psychotherapy that pushed Freudian analysis aside.

A few excerpts:

“Beck is the inventor of cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT)...the most well-funded, deeply researched, popular, and rapidly growing psychotherapy in existence. It is taught in nearly every clinical psychology and psychiatric residency program in America, and it is the cornerstone of a new, \$117 million program implemented by the U.S. Army to foster mental resiliency in soldiers. Beck, in turn, is today arguably the most well-known psychotherapist alive. In 2006, Beck won the Lasker Award, the most prestigious scientific honor in the United States, often referred to as the “American Nobel.” In 2007, he was short-listed for the actual Nobel, in physiology or medicine, although unlike every laureate in the 105-year history of the prize, he has never conducted biological research or invented a physiological or biological tool.”

\* \* \*

“The power of this approach has led it to be adopted, in one form or another, by a vast number of mental-health professionals. “Most psychotherapists, consciously or unconsciously, are doing a lot of the things that Beck pushed,” says the Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist Eric Kandel. “They’re more directly involved, they’re giving more suggestions, they’re pointing out thought processes. Whether they call it Beckian or not, and whether or not they’re doing other things as well, they’re doing Beckian kind of stuff.” And yet, as Kandel and

others are quick to point out, Beck’s revolutionary impact does not emanate from his development of CBT, but from the methodical way in which he developed it. “The crucial point is, Beck took a form of psychotherapy and he did a series of systematic, empirical studies that showed that it’s more effective than placebo, and that it’s as effective as antidepressant drugs in mild and moderate depression.”

“Kandel says. “And he wrote a manual for the therapy, a cookbook, so that others could do studies as well.” His rigorous, scientific, data-driven approach to psychotherapy represented, Kandel says, a “major, major advance” for the profession.”

\* \* \*

“He hasn’t been the only person to insist that psychotherapy rest on a foundation of replicable data — he wasn’t even the first — but he has been the position’s most dogged, visible, sophisticated, and influential proponent. As a consequence, psychotherapy has been moving steadily from a model that is “eminence-based,” as a rueful saying has it, to one that is “evidence-based” — a powerful watchword in the field. Over the past several years, federal and state agencies in the United States and government-based health-care systems abroad have been spending hundreds of millions of dollars to disseminate psychotherapies for which there is a solid core of scientific evidence, while insurance companies have been encouraging the clinicians within their systems to practice “empirically supported therapies” (EST) above others. In short, more and more, Freud’s world of subterranean drives is becoming Beck’s world of scientific accountability.”

\* \* \*

“In England, the empirically supported therapies movement now benefits from full governmental support. In 2007, the British government announced it would be spending close to \$300 million to train and employ 3,600 additional psychotherapists, pri-

marily in CBT. This official endorsement has proved a powerful incentive for therapists not historically predisposed to empirical research to prove that what they do is valid. Peter Fonagy, one of England's leading psychoanalysts and chief executive of the Anna Freud Centre, has called on his colleagues to end their "splendid isolation" from the mainstream and to adopt "a scientific attitude that celebrates the value of the replication of observations rather than their uniqueness."

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**Elizabeth Loftus** Advisor since April 1992 was the winner of The Joseph Priestley Award: October 15, 2009, <http://www.dickinson.edu/news/priestley/ind2009.html>  
Dickinson College's press release follows:

### **What's the matter with memory?**

"Plenty, according to Elizabeth Loftus, Ph.D., a distinguished professor and recognized expert in the field. Loftus explained the controversies surrounding this unreliable human resource during an October 15, 2009 lecture at Dickinson College.

"The author of 22 books, Loftus has researched human memory, eyewitness testimony and courtroom procedure for 20 years. Her work has been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation, and she has been an expert witness consultant in hundreds of cases. Loftus was awarded the 2009 Joseph Priestley Award for her contributions to society's understanding of childhood abuse and traumatic recovered memories. Named for the Pennsylvania scientist and scholar who discovered oxygen, the annual award honors distinguished scientists whose research contributes to the welfare of humankind.

"Elizabeth Loftus, distinguished professor at the University of California—Irvine and an expert psychology witness in many prominent cases [is] the 2009 recipient of the college's Joseph Priestley Award. Loftus

has been an expert witness or consultant in hundreds of cases, including the McMartin pre-school molestation case, the Hillside Strangler, the Abscam cases, the trial of Oliver North, the trial of the officers accused in the Rodney King beating, the Menendez brothers, the Bosnian War trials in the Hague, the Oklahoma Bombing case, and litigation involving Michael Jackson, Martha Stewart, Scooter Libby and the Duke University Lacrosse players. Loftus also has worked on numerous cases involving allegations of "repressed memories," such as those involving George Franklin of San Mateo, Calif., Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago and Gary Ramona of Napa, California.

"Loftus' research for the last 20 years has focused on human memory, eyewitness testimony and courtroom procedure. Loftus argues that people have been led to remember non-existent events from the recent past as well as non-existent events from childhood. She said individuals can be led to falsely believe that they had experiences that would have been highly traumatic had they actually happened, and that false beliefs have consequences for people, affecting later thoughts, intentions and behaviors.

"Loftus is a professor of law and holds positions in the Departments of Psychology & Social Behavior, and Criminology, Law & Society. She has a faculty appointment in the Department of Cognitive Sciences and is a fellow of the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory. She has published 22 books and more than 450 scientific articles. Her fourth book, *Eyewitness Testimony*, won a National Media Award (Distinguished Contribution) from the American Psychological Foundation. One of her most widely read books, *The Myth of Repressed Memory*, co-authored with Katherine Ketcham, has been translated into Dutch, Taiwanese, French, German, Japanese and other languages.

"Her work has been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation.

She served as president for several organizations, including the Western Psychological Association in 1984 and 2004-05, and the Association for Psychological Science in 1998-99.

"In addition to holding several honorary degrees, Loftus has received numerous awards and honors for her research. In 2002, the National Academy of Sciences gave her the inaugural Henry & Bryna David Lectureship (an award for "application of the best social and behavioral sciences research to public policy issues"). The article that she wrote in conjunction with this award was subsequently selected for inclusion in "The Best American Science and Nature Writing." In 2005, she won the Grawemeyer Prize in Psychology (to honor ideas of "great significance and impact"). In 2006, she was elected to the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States. This year, she received the Distinguished Contributions to Psychology and Law Award from the American Psychology-Law Society.

"In a study published by the *Review of General Psychology*, Loftus was ranked 58th among the 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century, along with Freud, Skinner and Piaget. She was the top-ranked woman on the list.

"Each year the Priestley Celebration at Dickinson brings to campus a distinguished scientist to be honored for discoveries which contribute to the welfare of mankind. The award is made in memory of Joseph Priestley, discoverer of oxygen. During the celebration, the college's collection of Priestley apparatus and memorabilia is displayed. Award recipients are given an honorarium and a ceramic medallion struck from an original 1779 mold by Josiah Wedgwood which bears a likeness of Priestley derived from a pen-and-ink drawing by John Flaxman."

Media Contact: Office of Media Relations 717-245-1289, [media@dickinson.edu](mailto:media@dickinson.edu)

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**Martin Gardner**, FMSF Advisor since April 1993, was the subject of a birthday profile in *The New York Times*.

### For Decades, Puzzling People With Mathematics

By John Tierney, October 20, 2009  
[www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/science/20tier.html?\\_r=1&scp=2&sq=martin%20gardner&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/science/20tier.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=martin%20gardner&st=cse)

In October, Martin Gardner celebrated his 95th birthday with the publication of his second book of the year, a collection of essays and mathematical puzzles. According to Tierney, Gardner, who has published 70 books, is the “world’s best-known recreational mathematician and has probably introduced more people to the joys of math than anyone in history.

In 1956 the editor of *Scientific American* asked Gardner if he could write a monthly column on “recreational mathematics,” Tierney writes that the term sounded “even more oxymoronic in 1956 than it does today.” Gardner accepted the challenge and became known to thousands and thousands and thousands of people who enjoyed his mathematical puzzles for a quarter century.

Gardner relinquished his column in 1981 but continued to write books and essays. Tierney comments that his “reputation among mathematicians, puzzlists and magicians just kept growing.” Starting in 1994, a “Gathering for Gardner” event has been held every two years in Atlanta.

Some excerpts:

“The number of puzzles I’ve invented you can count on your fingers,” Mr. Gardner says. Through his hundreds of columns and dozens of books, he always credited others for the material and insisted that he wasn’t even a good mathematician.

“I don’t think I ever wrote a column that required calculus,” he says. “The big secret of my success as a columnist was that I didn’t know much about math.

“I had to struggle to get everything clear before I wrote a column, so that meant I could write it in a way that people could understand.”

\* \* \*

“Many have tried to emulate him; no one has succeeded,” says Ronald Graham, a mathematician at the University of California, San Diego. “Martin has turned thousands of children into mathematicians, and thousands of mathematicians into children.”

\* \* \*

Mr. Gardner says he has been gratified to see more and more teachers incorporating puzzles into the math curriculum. The pleasure of puzzle-solving, as he sees it, is a happy byproduct of evolution.

\* \* \*

“If all sentient beings in the universe disappeared,” he writes, “there would remain a sense in which mathematical objects and theorems would continue to exist even though there would be no one around to write or talk about them. Huge prime numbers would continue to be prime even if no one had proved them prime.”

Unmentioned in this piece is Martin Gardner’s role in exposing pseudoscience, particularly in his long-running column in *The Skeptical Inquirer*, “Notes of a Fringe-Watcher.”

□

“Memory, it turns out, has a surprising amount in common with imagination, conjuring worlds that never existed until they were forged by our minds.”

McGowan, K. (2009, July). Out of the past. *Discover*. p. 32

“How can one tell where memory ends and imagination begins?”

Ellen Anderson Gholson Glasgow

“The past is malleable and flexible, changing as our recollection interprets and re-explains what has happened.”

Peter Berger

□

### More than Three Thousand Videotapes in Child Sexual Abuse Cases Dating Back to 1991 Withheld From Defense Attorneys

Kaplan, T. (2010, January 6). Santa Clara County judge orders man freed. *Mercury News*. Retrieved on January 7, 2010 from [http://mercurynews.com/top-stories/ci\\_14136010?nlick\\_check+1](http://mercurynews.com/top-stories/ci_14136010?nlick_check+1)

On January 6, 2010, Santa Clara County California Superior Court Judge Andrea Bryan ordered a man who had been sentenced to 38 years to life should be “freed on the grounds the trial prosecutor in the child molestation case committed ‘numerous acts of misconduct,’ including giving false testimony.”

The man had been convicted in 2008 of sexually assaulting a young relative, but the conviction was overturned because the prosecution had withheld a videotape of the alleged victim’s physical exam. When the videotape was obtained after the conviction, it contradicted prosecution testimony that the child had been abused. In addition, the alleged victim states the man did not abuse him. Prosecutors had attempted to retry the man.

Public defender Mary Greenwood commented on the decision:

“The court sent a resounding affirmation that prosecutorial integrity is a key component to justice in the courthouse. Where a prosecutor commits misconduct, the entire justice system is imperiled and public confidence is compromised.”

The videotape was not the only tape not given to defense counsel. It appears that since 1991 that 3,300 videotapes were not shown to defense counsel in child sex abuse cases. Santa Clara prosecutors stated that they were aware of the videotapes but claim that “most of the tapes are of little value.” Judge Bryan’s decision supports the belief of legal experts that “dozens of other child sex abuse convictions in [Santa Clara County] are at risk of being overturned.”

### Minnesota Court Excludes Expert Testimony on Repressed and Recovered Memories.

John Doe76C vs Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. No 62-C9-06-003962. Minn. 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District. Dec 8, 2009.

On December 9, 2009, after a three-day *Frye-Mack* evidentiary hearing, Minnesota District Court Judge Gregg E. Johnson ruled that expert testimony about repressed and recovered memory could not be presented by the plaintiffs. The purpose of a *Frye-Mack* hearing is to establish that a scientific theory is generally accepted in the relevant scientific community and that the particular scientific evidence has foundational reliability.

Judge Johnson concluded:

“Plaintiff failed to meet his burden of proof under the *Frye-Mack* standard of showing that the theory of repressed and recovered memory is reliable and trustworthy based on well-recognized scientific principles because of the significant methodological flaws in the studies presented by plaintiff in support of that theory and the lack of any test to show reliability.”

Of particular interest in this decision were Judge Johnson’s comments about the inclusion of “dissociative amnesia” in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association (*DSM-IV*). Proponents of recovered memories have long cited as proof of their acceptance the fact that “dissociative amnesia” is mentioned in this manual. Judge Johnson disagreed and wrote:

“However, the court does not agree that inclusion of dissociative amnesia in the *DSM-IV* establishes that the theory of repressed and recovered memories has attained general acceptance or has been scientifically proven. The United States Supreme Court has recognized that a diagnosis in the *DSM-IV*, ‘may mask vigorous debate within the profession about the very contours of the mental disease itself.’ Clark v. Arizona, 548 U.S. 735, 774, 126S. Ct 2709, 2734 (2006). *The DSM-IV* is not a ‘scientific paper or a scientific reference or a scientific review article.’ (Tr. 315). And it ‘does not, by itself, establish the validity of a diagnostic entity.’ (Tr. 431). In fact, as the United States Supreme Court recently acknowledged in Clark, the *DSM-IV* itself cautions against the use of psychiatric diagnoses in forensic settings due to the ‘significant risks that diagnostic information will be misused or misunderstood. These dangers arise because of the imperfect fit between the questions of ultimate concern to law and the information contained in a clinical diagnosis.’” (p. 2)

The experts for the plaintiff were Constance Dalenberg, Ph.D. and James A. Chu, M.D.

The experts for the defendants were Harrison G. Pope,

Jr., M.D., William M. Grove, Ph.D., and Elizabeth F. Loftus, Ph.D.

Patrick Noaker and Michael Finnegan of Jeff Anderson & Associates, St Paul, Minnesota represented the plaintiffs.

Christopher Barden and Thomas Wieser of Meier, Kennedy & Quinn, Charered, St. Paul, Minnesota represented the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Anna Restovich of George F. Restovich & Associated, Rochester, Minnesota represented the Diocese of Winona.

\* \* \* \*

### Some other cases in which recovered memory testimony was deemed unscientific:

Hamanne, et al. v. Humenansky, Ramsey County Minnesota File No. C4-94-203, Judge Bertrand Poritsky, June 30, 1995, Transcript page 83-84. “The Frye hearing has been concluded and we are still on the record.. It’s my finding, first, that the theory a person can block out of awareness [repress or dissociate] a long stream of [traumatic] events and subsequently recall them accurately is not supported by experts in the field. And further that there is no agreement by experts that there is general agreement that such [recovered memory] evidence is reliable and trustworthy. That’s the Frye standard. As to the Daubert standard, it is also my ruling that such [recovered memory] evidence is not reliable nor helpful to the jury.”

Carlson v. Humenansky (Minnesota Trial Ct), Judge Bertrand Poritsky (January, 1996). Judge Poritsky again found (as he had in Hamanne v. Humenansky) that repression and recovered memories were unreliable concepts, not accepted by the relevant scientific community, not helpful to a jury and thus inadmissible.

Engstrom v. Engstrom California App., 2nd App. Dist., Div 2, (CA 1997) “[Repressed memory] is not generally accepted as valid and reliable by a respectable majority of the pertinent scientific community...”

State of New Hampshire v. Hungerford and State of New Hampshire v. Morahan 698 A.2d 1244 (N.H. 1997) “The phenomenon of recovery of repressed memories has not yet reached the point where we may perceive these particular recovered memories as reliable.”

State of New Hampshire v. Walters 697 A.2d 916 (N.H. 1997) “[W]e conclude, as we did in Hungerford , that “[t]he indicia of reliability present in the particular memories in [this] case do not rise to such a level that they overcome the divisive state of the scientific debate on the issue.”

State of Rhode Island v. Quattrocchi, C.A. No. P92-3759 (R.I. 1999) [on remand from the Rhode Island Supreme Court 681 A.2d 879 (R.I. 1999)] “The State has not met its burden of establishing that repressed recollection is reliable and admissible as scientific evidence.”

State of New Hampshire vs. Bourgelais, Docket No. 02-S-2834, Judge T. Nadeau, April 4, 2005. “the State’s motion [to use repressed memory evidence at trial] is denied... the court

determines, based on the law and the evidence, that the reliability of memory retrieval has not been sufficiently established..."

Rivers v. Father Flanagan's Boys Town, Doc 1024, Case No. 743, Nebraska State Court Judge Sandra L. Dougherty, November 25, 2005. "In conclusion, the Court finds and concludes that Rivers has not met his burden of establishing that repressed and recovered memory is reliable and admissible as scientific evidence or that it is properly applied in this case. The Plaintiff's evidence lacks the scientific reliability and proper application necessary to admission under Rule 702 and Daubert/Schaferman. As a result, the Court finds and concludes that the Defendants' Motion in Limine No. 1 (banning all testimony regarding repressed and recovered memories) shall be sustained."

Duffy v. Father Flanagan's Boys Town, Case No. 8:03CV31, United States District Court for the District of Nebraska, Memorandum and Order of January 26, 2006 by Hon. Laurie Smith Camp, U.S. District Judge. "[Plaintiff] Duffy filed a motion of withdrawal of expert testimony on the issue of repressed memory.... [thus] judgment will be granted to [Defendant] as a matter of law."

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### **Update to FMSF Newsletter Articles 2004 and 2008:**<sup>[1]</sup>

The New York State Education Department's Office of Professional Discipline will soon be taking action on an ethics complaint filed by Lucian and Josie Parlato, of Amherst, New York against James A. Brigante, a licensed clinical social worker, also of Amherst.

Brigante began to treat Jodi Gburek, the married daughter of Mrs. Parlato, in March of 2000. Two years later, on March 8, 2002, in the midst of a visitation dispute concerning Jodi Gburek's son, Shane Naab, Brigante wrote a lurid and false letter which accused Mr. and Mrs. Parlato of abusing Jodi sexually, emotionally and

physically in her childhood and thereby implying that the Parlato's should be denied any visitation rights with their grandson.

Mr. and Mrs. Parlato originally contacted the Office of Professional Discipline in March 2003, but were not able to make any headway because of the refusal of Jodi Gburek to release the confidential records of her therapy sessions with Brigante.

It was only after recent proceedings in the New York State Supreme Court that the Parlatos were able to obtain the written records of Brigante's therapy sessions with Jodi Gburek, plus an autobiographical narrative written by Gburek which was the basis of Brigante's defamatory letter.

The ethics complaint, which now will be thoroughly investigated by the Education Department's Office of Professional Discipline in Buffalo, New York, alleges that Brigante grossly misrepresented the contents of his therapy session records with Jodi Gburek, and that he suppressed the secret narrative written by Jodi Gburek,

Mr. and Mrs. Parlato also charge that in his letter of March 8, 2002, Brigante expounded a theory of repressed memory which is nothing but a creature of Brigante's imagination and is not recognized by the scientific community.

The Parlatos were involved in litigation in several New York State courts from March 2002 up to two months ago. They are now requesting the Department of Education to discipline Brigante because of his unethical conduct and the deleterious effect his actions have had on their family. The discipline imposed upon Brigante could range from reprimand to revocation of his license to practice social work in New York State.

Brigante is no longer treating Jodi Gburek.

1. FMSF Newsletters, Vol 13 No. 1 and Vol. 17 No 4.

□

### **Missouri Sex Abuse Charges Divide Community**

By B.D. in Overland Park, KS

On November 11, 2009, a 77-year-old grandfather and his four sons were arrested and charged with child sexual abuse, allegedly occurring on the family farm between 1988 and 1995. Arrested were; Burrell Edward Mohler, Sr., 77 and his sons, Jared Leroy Mohler, 48, David A. Mohler, 52, Burrell Edward Mohler, Jr., 53, and Roland Neil Mohler, 47.

#### **The Accusations:**

The arrests came following police interviews with Burrell Ed Jr.'s 26-year-old daughter. According to the Probable Cause Statement: "She had suppressed many of the memories of abuse perpetrated on her as well as her siblings and is very fearful of her grandfather, father, and uncles. During this interview, she identified eight specific memories of abuse and a ninth that was allegedly perpetrated on her brother that she was forced to watch."<sup>[1]</sup>

The accusations included mock weddings, rapes, and being forced into sexual relations with the family dog. Supposedly the girl became pregnant in 1995 and was forced to have an abortion. The daughter told investigators that as she and her siblings were abused, they were told to write details of the abuse. Those notes were buried in mason jars around the family farm. "The children were told to write down bad memories and bury them there and the memories would go away," said Sgt. Colin Stosberg of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. <sup>[2]</sup>

Since those original interviews, investigators contacted two other sisters and one brother who corroborated the memories in one way or another. The brother stated that he had once dug up and reburied the mason jars containing the notes written by the sisters.<sup>[3]</sup>

One sister recalled being forced into sexual relations with a horse and she implicated a sixth man, Darrel Mohler, brother of the grandfather. Darrel was then arrested outside his Florida home and jailed in Lafayette County. Investigators say some of the reported abuse occurred in other locations, and they expect further charges to be filed in those jurisdictions. [4]

Lending credence to the allegations is Burrell "Ed" Jr.'s ex-wife and the mother of the accusers, Jeanette Mohler. Jeanette claims that she knew of the abuse at the time it took place. Although she admits she did not take the information to authorities, she said that she spoke to the ex-husband of Ed's new wife and to a clergyman in Ed's church. [5]

### **The Accusations Expand:**

Soon the siblings began reporting that they had been used in child pornography, and they said they remembered multiple murders committed by their grandfather, father, and uncles. The men are alleged to have written coded messages in a Louis L'Amour book about the murders and to have kept souvenirs of coins and jewelry from the victims. The siblings led investigators to an area of the family farm where they say they helped to bury a 300-pound man. The man, the sisters say, had been kidnapped from his own driveway, then choked and stabbed to death by the siblings at the request of their father. [6]

When the accusers recounted memories of having seen another child held captive in the basement of the farm house for several years, Sheriff Alumbaugh of Lafayette County issued a public plea for other victims to come forward: "I believe that there is, and I believe every investigator here, after seeing the evidence, believes there's more victims..." and "Pedophiles don't stop at one." [7]

When these accusations became public, another accuser came forward. A young woman, not related to the

family, claimed to have been held as a sex slave in Burrell Sr.'s basement for two years. She says she was impregnated twice. The first baby was murdered and buried in the dirt basement. A few days later, a concrete floor was poured that covered the gravesite. [8]

### **The Reports:**

During the weeks following the arrests, local papers and television news led with sensational headlines about the arrests. The Mohler family was regularly referred to as a 'clan,' which may perpetuate the idea of incestuous hillbillies. We're told daily of the other items located in the searches and farm excavation: an ax from a shed; a box-like area in a basement; hand-labeled video tapes; an unidentified bone fragment; a shard of glass. These were all reported as significant findings. The nightly news also featured demonstrations by members of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

When one of the accused men finally posted bond, Sheriff Alumbaugh did not allow him and his attorney to leave by the door closest to their vehicle. Instead, the Sheriff guided them to the front door and the long gauntlet walk through reporters.

### **A Closer Look:**

A review of the allegations raises many questions. For example, the "box-like" structure located with radar in the basement was only dirt. There was no baby under the concrete. The 300-pound man allegedly buried behind the barn has similarly disappeared. Despite the seizures of Louis L'Amour books and jewelry, no connections can be made to any missing person at any time. There were no mason jars discovered after excavating the entire farm where many were supposedly buried. "After a two-day search on the Mohler family farm, police uncovered a portion of a credit card, the sole of a boot or shoe, an unknown type of bone, eye glasses and

broken glass." [9]

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sheriff Alumbaugh announced that the woman who reported having been held for two years in the family basement "is no longer a part of this investigation." [10] He has declined to say why.

Missouri's Case net shows that the mother, Jeanette Mohler (Cyr), made numerous court appearances through the years in regard to visitation, child support, and even requests for protection orders against Ed Jr. The protection orders were all denied. Why would she not have reported her accusations of abuse in one of those proceedings? [11]

Although the local newspapers made sweeping reports of "incest porn" found in Burrell, Sr.'s home, a closer look at the actual titles reveals a different story. Burrell Sr.'s collection appears to be a hodge-podge of various legal pornography and does not indicate any predilection toward young people. [12]

To date, none of the men has been charged with possession of child porn or with murder. The Lafayette County prosecutor, Kellie Ritchie says she does not expect to file any additional charges. No charges have been filed by any of the other jurisdictions that readers were told would be involved. [13]

After having made public gruesome details of the accusations, the probable cause statements, the search warrant requests, seizure documents from the searches, the results of the excavations, and the erroneously incriminating sounding porn titles, the sheriff's department is now saying they will not comment on any evidence uncovered.

### **Thoughts of a Skeptic:**

This case reminds us of how fragile our reputations truly are. All it takes is an accusation.

These men are not vagabonds. They had careers, owned homes, paid taxes, and were active in their churches. Family, neighbors, and friends

report being “shocked” by the allegations. People who knew these men considered them to be hardworking, charitable, and kind right up until the day they were accused. [14]

There is a concept in the law, “Falsus in Unum, Falsus in Omibus” (False in one thing, false in everything). No evidence, no “treasures,” no coded messages in books, no bodies buried at the farm have been found to support the claims of murder. In my mind, this fact destroys the credibility of the other claims.

1. <http://fox4kc.com/media/acrobat/2009-11/50431694.pdf>

2. <http://www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2009/11/18/rimessider/entry5697513.shtml>

3. <http://www.fox4kc.com/media/acrobat/2009-11/50551390.pdf>

4. KMBC-TV Kansas City November 11, 2009

5. <http://www.fox4kc.com/wdaf-mohler-victim-young-111309.0,1950952.story>

6. <http://www.fox4kc.com/wdaf-mohler-murder-accusations-112509.0,3479214.story>

7. <http://www.kctv5.com/news/21590039/detail.html>

8. <http://www.kctv5.com/news/21633549/detail.html>

9. <http://www.fox4kc.com/wdaf-mohler-sex-crimes-search-warrant-111709.0,1861641.story>

10. <http://www.fox4kc.com/wdaf-mohler-in-court-120209.0,4352667.story>

11. <http://www.fox4kc.com/wdaf-mohler-men-charges-111909.0,6667250.stor>

12. Search Warrant Seizures;  
[http://blogs.kansascity.com/crime\\_scene/2009/11/what-police-found-while-searching-mohler-properties.html](http://blogs.kansascity.com/crime_scene/2009/11/what-police-found-while-searching-mohler-properties.html)

13 <http://www.examiner.com/x-8922-Portland-Skepticism-Examiner~y2009m12d18-Is-Lafayette-County-cherrypicking-accusations-in-Mohler-case>

14. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/11/14/mohler.family/>



#### Don't Miss This!

Read the interesting insights of retractor Jeanette Bartha in an online interview. See: <http://www.process.org/discept/2009/11/15/rememering-lies-interview-with-psychiatric-abuse-victim-jeannette-bartha>

### From Our Holiday Mail— Update from Friends

My husband and I were early members of the FMS Foundation when it was first formed. My husband's sister accused his mother of sexual abuse after attending months of “therapy” for depression provided by a social worker using *A Courage to Heal*. Your support was valuable to us as we tried to sort through the accusations that were tearing his family apart. We attended a meeting organized by the Foundation and the wonderful speakers there helped shed light on what we were going through.

I was so angry at this type of therapy that I went back to school to obtain a masters degree in counseling. It has been my pleasure to work for 11 years as a Crisis Counselor during which I took every opportunity to educate people about false and repressed memories of abuse.

I'm enclosing newspaper articles about several men in Missouri who have been accused. Once you are educated about FMS, your antennae never go down and the stories just don't seem right. They remind me of the Wenatchee, Washington sexual abuse hysteria back in the mid 1990s. Some of the men had asked for public defenders but were told that they did not qualify, possibly because they own farms. I remember meeting a farmer and his wife at one of the FMSF meetings I attended who told me about having to sell their farm and house to raise money for bail and defense. The man spent some time in jail before he was declared innocent. Their story was very sad – but aren't all our stories?

A mom



### Just Enjoying Today

After 15 years of separation, it's been over three years now that we

have been back with our daughter. We are in contact weekly and get together for lunch or dinner at least twice a month. She always wants to be included in family gatherings and has even gone camping for the past two years in Glacier National Park with her cousins.

We have not talked about the past—We are just enjoying today. Thanks to FMSF for being there.

A mom and dad



### Courage to Keep on Living

You are my friends, truly, for when at the nadir of my life, you rescued me. It was your positive approach to life, coupled with my religion that sustained me.

After the bombshell fell, and from one of my very own children, for days I lived in a trance, reflecting on my life, my manhood, my sanity. I was doubtful of all that I had been: a teacher, musician, father, protector and guide to children, business executive, respected member of Knights of Columbus, my church, and family.

Then, in 1992, I read about the new organization, FMSF that had been founded in Philadelphia specifically to return some sanity to the world that had gone berserk about decades old child molestation.

I felt that I had a friend who understood my dilemma. Almost immediately, I found the courage to attack my problem. After the first meeting of the local FMS group, I knew exactly what to do.

My Catholic upbringing taught me “examination of conscience.” I truly reviewed every second, every possible occasion that could have caused my child to make such a horrible accusation. I could find nothing. I then knew that I had no reason to feel any guilt about my behavior and I felt secure in my innocence. I found both courage and a renewed optimism in life.

At the next FMSF meeting, I gave

a strong speech relating to my “adventure.” Afterward, more than 20 people came to me to tell me that they also found that with innocence comes the courage to keep on living, to forgive their children, to continue to love them, and to hope that someday the accusers may themselves find peace and the courage to reconcile.

A father



### No Happy Ending Yet

In 1998, our daughter accused her father of abuse in her therapist’s office. In 2009, he wanted to see her so he went to her home and knocked on the door. Her husband answered and told him to wait in the car. A little while later our daughter came out swinging a Bible and saying hurtful things. It was terribly sad.

We were always so proud of this daughter who now has two children we have never seen. Someday I know I will phone you with the great news of our daughter’s return. Until then, we will continue to wait to hear again her laughter, encouragement and long talks.

A sad mom



### Wanting to Talk

In the last FMSF Newsletter, a “Mom” asked if there was a way the Foundation could assist with conciliation — negotiation between cast off parents and wrong-thinking accusers. The editorial answer was “no” because the accusers must communicate to allow this. Regrettably, this is true. However, we understand the motivation of the “mom.” Most of the newsletter deals with academic questions and ongoing research, which is great, but parents are desperately looking for a way to get their children back.

It might help both my family and the “Mom” if we could communicate. Perhaps you could forward this letter to her and see if she would like to

email us. My wife is the person accused and she would like to talk to others mothers who have been accused. If there are readers who are interested in doing this, our email is aaitken@cogeco.ca

A searching dad



“Syndromes, profiles, and indicators are simply hypotheses that provide direction for investigation. In and of themselves they are unreliable and cannot be used to prove anything. They are a start in the search for reliable and admissible opinion evidence, but only a start. Accurate data collection and proper scientific reasoning are required thereafter if there is any reliable expert evidence to arise from that beginning.”

Alan Gold. (2009). *Expert Evidence in Criminal Law: The Scientific Approach*. (p. 221)

### SOME BOOKS OF INTEREST

#### Remembering Trauma

Richard McNally

#### Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology

S. O. Lilienfeld, S.J. Lynn, J.M. Lohr

#### Psychology Astray: Fallacies in Studies of “Repressed Memory” and Childhood Trauma

Harrison G. Pope, Jr., M.D.

#### Remembering Our Childhood: How Memory Betrays Us

Karl Sabbagh

#### Making Minds and Madness: From Hysteria to Depression

Chapter 3

“A Black Box Named *Sybil*”

Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen

#### Try to Remember: Psychiatry’s Clash Over Meaning, Memory, and Mind

Paul McHugh, M.D.

### Recovering Lost Memories

“Recovering lost memories from childhood was a hot form of psychotherapy about 20 years ago. It fell out of favor when some patients exhibited “false-memory syndrome.” But what about the others? Do many people truly block certain childhood memories, then remember them as adults”

-L.J. Brey, Escondido, Calif.

“Some people surely do, but there’s no way to know their number because evidence of the memories seldom exists. What is known now, however, is that false memories— happy or sad, blocked or not—are much more common than anyone had ever realized. They can be formed or triggered by all sorts of innocent catalysts.

“Studies that were cleverly designed to plant innocuous incorrect memories in unwitting volunteers have shown that one-third to two-thirds of the participants recalled events that never happened.”

vos Savant, Marilyn (2009, October 11). Ask Marilyn. *Parade*, 18.

### The Rutherford Family Speaks to FMS Families

The DVD made by the Rutherford family is *the* most popular DVD of FMSF families. It covers the complete story from accusation, to retraction and reconciliation. Family members describe the things they did to cope and to help reunite. Of particular interest are Beth Rutherford’s comments about what her family did that helped her to retract and return.

Available in DVD format only:

To order send request to

FMSF -DVD, 1955 Locust St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

\$10.00 per DVD; Canada add \$4.00;

other countries add \$10.00

Make checks payable to FMS Foundation

## Web Sites of Interest

[www.seweb.uci.edu/faculty/loftus/](http://www.seweb.uci.edu/faculty/loftus/)  
Elizabeth Loftus

<http://www.theisticsatanism.com/asp/>  
Against Satanic Panics

[comp.uark.edu/~lampinen/read.html](http://comp.uark.edu/~lampinen/read.html)  
The Lampinen Lab False Memory Reading Group.  
University of Arkansas

[www.exploratorium.edu/memory/](http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/)  
The Exploratorium Memory Exhibit

[www.tmdArchives.org](http://www.tmdArchives.org)  
The Memory Debate Archives

<http://www.psyfmfrance.fr>  
French False Memory Group

[www.psychoheresy-aware.org/ministry.html](http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/ministry.html)  
The Bobgans question Christian counseling

[www.IllinoisFMS.org](http://www.IllinoisFMS.org)  
Illinois-Wisconsin FMS Society

[www.ltech.net/OHIOarmhp](http://www.ltech.net/OHIOarmhp)  
Ohio Group

[recoveredmemorytherapy.blogspot.com](http://recoveredmemorytherapy.blogspot.com)  
Matt Stone's updates on Australia FMS

[www.bfms.org.uk](http://www.bfms.org.uk)  
British False Memory Society

[www.religioustolerance.org/sra.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/sra.htm)  
Information about Satanic Ritual Abuse

[www.angryparents.net](http://www.angryparents.net)  
Parents Against Cruel Therapy

[www.geocities.com/newcosanz](http://www.geocities.com/newcosanz)  
New Zealand FMS Group

[www.peterellis.org.nz](http://www.peterellis.org.nz)  
Site run by Brian Robinson contains information about Christchurch Creche and other cases.

[www.werkgroepwfh.nl](http://www.werkgroepwfh.nl)  
Netherlands FMS Group

[www.falseallegation.org](http://www.falseallegation.org)  
National Child Abuse  
Defense & Resource Center

[www.nasw.org/users/markp](http://www.nasw.org/users/markp)  
Excerpts from *Victims of Memory*

[www.rickross.com/groups/fsm.html](http://www.rickross.com/groups/fsm.html)  
Ross Institute

[www.enigma.se/info/FFI.htm](http://www.enigma.se/info/FFI.htm)  
FMS in Scandanavia - Janet Hagbom

[www.ncrj.org/](http://www.ncrj.org/)  
National Center for Reason & Justice

[www.traumaversterking.nl](http://www.traumaversterking.nl)  
English language web site of Dutch retractor.

[www.quackwatch.org](http://www.quackwatch.org)  
This site is run by Stephen Barrett, M.D.

[www.stopbadtherapy.com](http://www.stopbadtherapy.com)  
Contains information about filing complaints.

[www.FMSFonline.org](http://www.FMSFonline.org)  
Web site of FMS Foundation.

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