

ASCA News • January 2000

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From the Desk of Executive Director George Bilotta

With the holiday season now a memory, and the inaugural hoopla of ushering in the millennium completed, we settle down and look forward to the possibilities and challenges that the year 2000 will offer. The onset of a new year, of a new century and millennium marks a unique sign in our life's journey. Involuntarily, we join an historical transition. For many people it only means more of the same. For other people who will wholeheartedly embrace this period as a reflective time of renewal, it means hope, possibilities, resolution, growth and adventure.

I have never been one for new year's resolutions. It does not fit my character or timing. However, I do believe that there can be something uniquely different about the first year of a new millennium. It just seems that it is auspiciously potent with possibilities, of thinking differently, of behaving differently, of trying different ways, of approaching life differently, of embracing our daily routines from a different perspective.

Ultimately, I think this year offers opportunities to enhance the meaning of our daily lives, to adjust and nuance what we want our lives to be all about. Instead of making this year a year of doing, maybe this year would be better used as a year of pausing and reflecting on what we really want our lives to be all about. This is a fundamental and grounding question. What do I want my life to be all about? What is life calling me to be? Maybe through the monthly ASCA News I will try to develop this theme for us to reflect upon and to share insights with one another.

If you have not tried our new ASCA e-Meeting, you might give it a try. Just log onto our web site at www.ascasupport.org and click on ASCA e-Meeting. Also, I am planning to be in San Francisco in mid-February. I will try to come around to all the ASCA meetings during that time to touch base with everyone. I will be in touch with the co-secretaries.

Peace and blessings for the coming year!



ASCA Meeting Ongoing Education Moment: Guideline #5:

We ask that no one attend our meeting under the influence of alcohol or drugs, unless the medication is prescribed by a physician.

We are all well aware that many survivors of childhood abuse have become chemically addicted or tend to abuse alcohol, drugs and food. Alcohol and drugs, as well as food and work, etc. are often used by survivors to lessen and numb the

pain. We sometime use them to escape from the reality of the past and the discomfort of the present. Many have worked through and/or persist in working on their sobriety as they continue their journey of recovery from childhood abuse.

To attend an ASCA meeting under the influence of alcohol or a drug not prescribed by a physician is not helpful nor respectful to either self nor to others attending the ASCA meeting. Even a single glass of wine or one beer can alter our mood and feelings. We should try to come to our ASCA meetings not only unaltered from chemical substances but also from anything else that would tend to alter or numb our mood or feelings.



Leaping Upon the Mountains: Men Proclaiming Victory over Sexual Child Abuse A new book by Michael Lew

As therapists, survivors, allies, or simply caring humans, it is essential to contradict destructive ideas; we must search for messages that reflect the reality of human strength, caring, resilience, courage, creativity and love. I'm not suggesting denial; we cannot ignore grim realities of life. But there is far more to human existence than unhappiness. The world is richly beautiful, infinitely diverse - and so are we. -- Mike Lew, from *Leaping Upon the Mountains*

When the ground breaking *Victims No Longer* was released in 1988, it challenged widespread misconceptions about male victimization. This revolutionary work continues to provide hope, understanding and essential advice for healing to the millions of men who are survivors of boyhood sexual trauma and those who care about them.

Leaping Upon the Mountains, Mike Lew's long awaited second book focuses on the reality of recovery. Its information comes directly from the experts - male survivors who have engaged in a visible process of change - courageously, persistently, and triumphantly.

Presenting the first real investigation of what male survivors themselves identify as most important during various stages of their recovery, *Leaping Upon the Mountains* contains powerfully moving contributions from hundreds of men of all ages and backgrounds throughout the United States and 45 other countries.

This book is about the successes. Its contributors speak eloquently and persuasively of the reality of recovery. It is not a work of fiction, but a compilation of many truths, many realities - a quilt, pieced together from men's experiences - forming an impressively triumphant pattern. Taken together, they state, lucidly and forcefully, that recovery work produces changes that are real, important, and permanent. *Leaping Upon the Mountains* is a celebration of successful recovery.

For information about ordering Leaping Upon the Mountains and Small Wonder Books and the Next Step Counseling, visit their Web site at:
<http://www.abbington.com/smallwonder/index.html>, or send \$19.94 plus \$4 postage per book for shipping to: Small Wonder Books, PO Box 1146, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.



Rotation C Topic: Possible ASCA Meeting Topic for January Looking Forward: Forming the Future

Throughout the year, transitional dates like New Year's Day, a birthday, an anniversary; or events like a graduation, geographic relocation, a birth or death, provide us with events with which to pause and reflect, to assess and dream. These moments encourage us to look forward and to imagine what the future can hold for us. In looking forward, in imagining our future we initially lay the groundwork, the basic formation for tomorrow's future, next month's future, next year's future...

Balance between looking back, especially concerning our past childhood abuse, and looking forward to the lives that we would like and deserve to have, and the kind of person we would like to be, can be challenging. It is difficult, some would say almost impossible, to look forward to our future, when we have not fully disclosed the story, the people and events of our past abuse. Usually it is the secret, the hidden, the closed, the suppressed that becomes the major obstacle to imagining and forming our future.

Looking forward and forming our future does not necessitate nor require resolving, healing, fixing, reconciling or rectifying all the various elements from our past abuse. As long as we have thoroughly told our story, we no longer use our daily life energies to hide, suppress, deny. Forming our future has more to do with the practical everyday scenarios of planting seeds, of taking concrete steps, of doing.

Questions:

1. What occasions or events tend to encourage you to pause, to reflect, to assess, to dream about your future?
 2. How do you negotiate the balance between looking back and looking forward?
 3. What are you doing to pause, to reflect, to plant seeds, to take steps to form your future?
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Co-Secretary Update

Any updates for current Co-Secretaries of ASCA meetings are included in this section of the ASCA NEWS. In addition, Co-Secretaries or some designated person from the meeting should be downloading the ASCA NEWS. It is then duplicated and distributed to the meeting membership.

Remember that the fee for the 1st Quarter of 2000 for listing your meeting on our web site is presently due. For information concerning this refer to the last paragraph in the "ASCA Meeting List" section of our web page. Make your \$10 check payable to The Morris Center and mail to: The Morris Center, 173 Malden Street, West Boylston, MA, 01583.

For the San Francisco Bay area ASCA meetings, the \$15 fee for the 1st Quarter of 2000 for the ASCA telephone voice mail listing is also presently due. Please forward your payment of \$15 payable to: Dorothy Boerste. Mail to Dorothy Boerste, 1537 Franklin St. #307, San Francisco, CA, 94109.

If you have a question or a situation that needs discussion, you can always reach George Bilotta, Executive Director, by e-mailing him or telephoning him directly in Massachusetts 508.835.6054. Never hesitate to e-mail or call.



Observations, Questions, Comments!

If you have any observations, questions and/or comments that you want to share concerning ASCA and THE MORRIS CENTER, George Bilotta, welcomes your inquiries, phone: 508.835.6054, e-mail: georgebilotta@cs.com. If you would like to contribute a poem, story, article, etc. to our ASCA News please contact us.