

Memories of Harriet Kimble Wrye

Earlier this summer Harriet Wrye, a cherished member and former President of LAISPS, died. We know only that the cause of her death was drowning in a pond. More details might become known at some future time. The following are memories of Harriet by some of us who knew her well and loved her.

By
Alan Spivak

The news of Harriet's death was shocking and painful! All the more so, since I had just been with her at the memorial in Malibu several weeks earlier for her husband, Jim Wheeler. I still cannot quite grasp that two such dear friends, both of whom were vigorous, caring, and engaging people, are no longer with us.

At the memorial, Harriet expressed to me that she was in a good place, considering Jim's recent and sudden death from a fall while hiking, and that she felt lucky to have good friends living nearby. It was also a comfort to her that her horse who she deeply loved was barned close to her. Given the occasion, she looked quite healthy and composed and we had a moving exchange of memories of our many adventures together with Jim, both in Los Angeles and during our travels abroad, after IPA Congresses.

Harriet had been a bright and guiding light within LAISPS for many years. She seamlessly evolved from candidate to member to training analyst, eventually becoming President. She and I shared an interest in the study of maternal transferences and, with Mike Horowitz serving as a superb discussant, we had presented together at a LAISPS scientific meeting, where we shared our thinking, including some opposing ideas on the source of these transferences and how men and women experienced them.

It is a testament to Harriet's strength of character that, knowing of our differences, but also embracing constructive dialogue, when she presented another paper to LAISPS on her take on maternal erotic transference, (MET), she invited me to be the discussant. Not long after this presentation, she and LAISPS member Judy Welles collaborated to write their book *Narration of Desire*. Harriet told me that she did much of her writing from the passenger seat of their car, on weekends, while Jim was driving her to and from Twinbrook, their family ranch in the Sierras.

Harriet met people readily and graciously which fueled her knack for organizing and for leadership. One of my favorite memories is her Chairing a Planning Committee to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Freud inventing psychoanalysis in Vienna as Lumiere was inventing the magic lantern in Paris. She asked me to be Treasurer. For two years the committee met monthly in her home in Malibu. The committee consisted of some splendid colleagues from each of the Los Angeles Institutes, some of whom had connections to the film industry. The program itself was held in Los Angeles just following the IPA Congress in San Francisco. The very well attended day-long event consisted mainly of small group meetings with some of the finest film makers and heads of studios in the industry. Sylvia Jones and I moderated one group with the writer and director, Henry Jaglom. LAISPS member Deborah Stern gave an outstanding talk to start things out.

Harriet also organized, at an IPA Congress in Amsterdam, a large very special dinner celebration at the Zuider Zee, which included a beautiful boat ride, at sunset, to and from Amsterdam. She was a gracious hostess who made all feel welcome and relaxed.

Later that evening, we arrived back at our hotel in Amsterdam around 11:30 PM. Owen Renick who recently had been president of APsaA., and whom we knew from a presentation he had given at LAISPS, persuaded us to join him at a dance club called "Das Es" (The It). Late as it was, how could we analysts resist that offer? Harriet was all for it. When we arrived, we discovered, to our surprise, that it was a gay/lesbian club. Non-plussed, Harriet began dancing with Jim and then reached for my hand to join them. A couple of minutes later she left her two macho bros to dance with each other. Then the wife of Marvin Margolis, whose husband, was the current president of APsaA. and who Harriet had been chatting with beside the dance floor, sent Marvin to dance with us. His wife later told me she had never been able to get Marvin to dance before. Apparently, he had just needed the right partners. Of course, Harriet who had instigated all the fun, was smiling on the sideline, obviously tickled.

Of the many memories of Harriet that flood my mind, professional and social, it is others of our playful and warm friendship that most touch and warm my heart. Harriet was one of a group of Los Angeles colleague-friends who called ourselves "cycle-analysts". Included in our small band of brothers and sisters were Francine Kirkpatrick, Jim Bews, Pete Wolson, Dan Paul and, of course, our non-analyst friend Jim Wheeler. We rode together on weekends, commonly on the bicycle path at the beach, or on longer treks up or down PCH 60-80 miles. One day as we were biking together on PCH, Jim and Harriet pulled alongside me, riding their yellow tandem bicycle. When Harriet, from her seat behind Jim could hear, I shouted, "My God I am about to be humiliated by a yellow centipede"! Harriet laughed, as she and Jim then left me in the dust.

Harriet, Jim, and I traveled to Norway for a five day bike trip that began with our donning crampons and hiking up a glacier. When we got to the top Jim turned himself into a human toboggan by dropping down on his butt, lifting his crampon fitted legs and sliding at speed to the bottom. Harriet with a combined look of playful delight and terror followed him and I followed her, while filming it all with my Super 8 movie camera.

Harriet, at Jim's memorial, reminded me of our motor trip in Portugal where we stayed nightly at beautiful posadas, sometimes getting lost on route. We also reminisced about a summer bike race in Mexico, where we traveled with Francine Kirkpatrick. When we discovered that the 120 mile ride was in 120 degree heat, mostly on an incline into the sun and some wind, the ladies had the good sense to bow out and to stay in the air conditioned hotel while Jim and I, narcissistically and masochistically, did the ride. Always the thoughtful hostess, Harriet, along with Francine, then arranged for us to have plenty of beer waiting, at the local watering hole, when, hours later, their exhausted warriors returned.

As I left Jim's memorial, Harriet's last words to me were that she and Jim had lived a good life and that "There is more to life than psychoanalysis." Harriet, indeed, lived what she preached. I was very lucky to have had her in my life as a friend for so long. She will forever be in my heart and remain an unforgettable person to the many lives she touched in the LAISPS community as colleague, training analyst and mentor!

By
Terrence McBride

I met Harriet in 1977 when I was working as Assistant Director at the Didi Hirsch Mental Center. At the time LAISPS held its Institute classes there. Since I worked late on Wednesday nights, I was asked to unlock the front door to let the candidates into the building. Harriet was one of the first-year candidates. The next year I when I became a candidate, Harriet's class was combined with the new incoming class and we became classmates. Besides being classmates, we also shared the same analyst. From the beginning she always addressed affectionately me as "Bro."

Harriet was a vibrant and forceful presence at LAISPS from the time that she was a candidate until she retired. She was one of the first among the members of the younger generation of LAISPS to become President when it came time for them to start taking over from the founders. As President she was an active and capable leader, determined to make a difference, as we moved in the direction of applying for membership in the IPA. She remained an essential participant throughout the entire process. Also, during that time, she and I were members of the Planning Committee for the 1995 IPA Congress in San Francisco. Usually, we alternated attending monthly meetings at the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis, but one time we traveled together on behalf of the CIPS New Groups Committee to meet with prominent members of The Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California (PINC). Our purpose was to encourage them to join CIPS, an effort that was eventually successful. It was a very enjoyable trip during which we also had the opportunity to spend more time together and to get to know each other more personally. This became one of the fond memories that I have of my relationship with Harriet. When I was President of LAISPS, she was very supportive and always available if I ever needed help.

Sometime later, Harriet was diagnosed with breast cancer. As a result, she underwent exhaustive treatment, including extended chemotherapy. Her handling of that was remarkable. She continued to practice, she participated in a LAISPS workshop and she cultivated a large support group which she called her "bosom buddies," quintessential Harriet. I felt privileged to be included in that group, as well as being part of the celebration of her recovery.

Late last year Harriet called me to ask for a referral, which also gave us a chance to talk and catch up. Little did I know that that would be the last time that I would have contact with her. It's comforting to know that Harriet may be gone but she remains alive in the minds of those of us who knew and worked with her.

By
Peter Wolson

Harriet Wrye was a dear friend of mine. She was an elegant, wonderful analyst, a beautiful, sophisticated person with a sparkling intellect who radiated a vibrant love of life. I was shocked, like so many others, to learn of her sudden death. She had just been mourning the passing of her husband, Jim Wheeler, as well as her son, Gabriel, who had died shortly before him. And then tragedy struck her as well.

As friends, we shared a passion for literature, culture, athletic activities, and psychoanalysis. She was an expert horse woman and always owned horses (as well as llamas). About six years ago while visiting her

spectacular home in a redwood alcove in Aptos, near Santa Cruz, she taught me how to control one of her Icelandic horses by figuratively becoming part of its herd (since horses are herd animals). She learned a technique of using horses as an adjunct to psychotherapy from the Icelandic owner of the two beautiful horses she purchased.

Harriet was extraordinarily brave and adventurous, climbing and cycling all over the world with Jim. She climbed Kilimanjaro, and even killed a bear with a rifle that had been raiding her refrigerator and threatening her children at her high Sierra retreat, Twin Brooks. She said she loved Jim's intense, adventurous spirit which inspired her to challenge herself but feared the risks he took.

I met Harriet in our candidate class at LAISPS. She lived in a sprawling California-styled Pacific Palisades home on the land side of Pacific Coast Highway that had awesome views of the ocean from every room. She generously hosted many LAISPS' general meetings and provided refreshments. She had been married to ex-husband Donald Wrye, a famous director of such movies as: Ice Castles, Divorce Wars and the TV series, Amerika, with whom she had her two children, Gabriel and Ariel.

Harriet was one of LAISPS' first graduate analysts to publish articles in professional journals, like the IJP. She wrote creatively about what she coined "the maternal erotic transference," and elaborated on this primordial dynamic in a highly respected book, *The Narration of Desire*, co-authored with Judy Welles, another LAISPS analyst. She also self-published a fascinating autobiography: *Pulling Up Stakes: Stepping Into Freedom*, about her sabbatical from psychoanalysis and Los Angeles after 30 years of clinical practice, traveling with her husband and six llamas into the high Sierras, which turned into a spiritual pilgrimage.

In her later years, she became increasingly devoted to Zen Buddhism, studying under a world-renowned Vietnamese teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh. On one occasion, she traveled to Viet Nam with him on a Buddhist pilgrimage. She was ordained at Deer Park Monastery in Escondido and told me in an email, "What a privilege to be granted the opportunity to have him as my teacher." Harriet confided that her practice of Zen gave her a deep sense of inner peace.

She was President of LAISPS when we first applied to become a full component society of the IPA. She expertly prepared us for our initial meetings and became a good friend of Brian Robertson, who at the time was President of the Canadian Psychoanalytic Association. Eventually, Brian became our primary IPA chairperson and helped facilitate our acceptance as a full component society into the IPA.

It's hard for me to picture this world without Harriet, without her vibrant, beautiful spirit.

I miss her greatly.

In Loving Memory of Harriet: Expect the Unexpected

One day in the fall of 1990, while thinking about a third training supervisor, the name, "Harriet Wrye", came to mind. I got out the phone book. Harriet's first supervisory act was to interrupt me and say, "You love this patient". Given the high interiority of mid-Century American analysis that was a dominant presence in the analytic preconscious of the time, this comment was unexpected—and delightfully freeing. Harriet's individuality, her creativity, her confidence had come right through and, in the next

years—as well as in the following 30 --kept coming, along with her brilliance. She had surprised a lot of people, too, at the 1989 International Congress in Rome where she drew vociferous objections from the audience. To claims that the body was not a subject of analysis, Joyce McDougall responded from the audience: Yes. It. Is. Needless to say, supervision with Harriet meant being opened to analysis, body-to-body, but it could entail physicality in a lot of ways. Learning from Harriet might mean visiting her llamas, or walking through the Santa Cruz Redwoods, or sitting in her meditation circle. When I told her that I was bringing my newborn to my analysis, she opened her home to us as a regular “nursing pitstop” to use en route. Her comments, too, were often embodied—artistic, metaphoric, poetic. Once, when visiting me in Santa Barbara, she spontaneously walked through my home. She told me that I display my shoes in my closet like works of art. Unexpected, artful, and, I realized, correct. Then there was her extraordinary life: the theorizing, the writing, the horses, the houses and then pulling up the house’s stakes for a few years. Her treks, her adventures. Her humanity, activism, friendship, and generosity. Her love. Whether she was intelligently breaking the rules or rewriting the rules, Harriet intuitively, intelligently, inventively, and consistently stepped to the beat of her inner drummer. To me, possibly the ultimate step was to Buddhism. She was an inveterate analyst but, I think, she also separated. I felt it, too; she talked about the ways psychoanalysis and Buddhism had commonality and I added the ways that they didn’t. As I evolved and separated from Harriet, Harriet evolved and separated from me. What a lesson in supervision and in life—letting one’s parent go.

Beth Berlese

Michael Diamond’s Thoughts and Memories of Harriet Kimble Wrye

It is with sadness yet joy that I offer a few thoughts and memories about Harriet, an extraordinary woman whom I treasured as a mentor, colleague, and eventually a friend. As she conveyed so eloquently in her 2011 memoir, *Pulling Up Stakes: Stepping Into Freedom*, Harriet approached life as an adventure and spiritual odyssey that combined psychoanalytic acumen with Buddhist wisdom. I was fortunate to become friends with Harriet some twenty years ago when she invited me to present with her on our mutual interests in Film and Psychoanalysis at an IPA Congress in New Orleans. Shortly thereafter, we joined together with a few others, including Karen Redding and Marjorie Schuman from LAISPS (along with Trudi Goodman prior to beginning Insight LA) to form a small, monthly Buddhist-oriented meditation group. However, what I will always remember most about Harriet, beyond her depth of thinking and lightness of being, was an evening together in New Orleans along with her late-husband Jim Wheeler. After our IPA presentation, the three of us went out for a crayfish feast, after which Harriet suggested we go creole dancing. Jim and I somewhat reluctantly agreed and soon enough we were all on the dance floor when every eye in the room became captivated by Harriet as we watched her graceful gliding and incredibly sensuous dancing. This was the eros of Harriet who only a few hours earlier in presenting a rich and stimulating psychoanalytic discussion, held the attention of a large room filled with analysts from the world over. While this memory can only offer a glimpse of what made Harriet so unique, most any colleague or friend who knew her will easily recognize how deeply her life was marked by searching, discovery, redemption, delight, and considerable generativity. One of my main regrets in her retiring from the LAISPS community, and now with her all-too-sudden passing, is that so many of our more recent graduates and current candidates missed the opportunity both to learn from and know her. Just as her writings were often difficult to put down, my memories of her will live forever. I feel certain that the many LAISPS’ians who came to think, laugh, and cry with her will likewise carry an enduring and exhilarating sense of this remarkable human being. RIP dear Harriet!!