

AHP Page

Ruth Finer

40,352 keystrokes later, and I haven't yet finished the analysis of the survey of members' views on conferences. Of the returns entered onto the computer so far, preliminary analysis shows some interesting trends.

AHPP members have responded disproportionately highly: while they are about 20% of AHP's membership they form a much greater proportion of respondents so far. I think I will leave my interpretations until I have completed the analysis. A very high proportion of respondents haven't attended any AHP or AHPP or joint conferences within the last six years. With particular reference to our last joint AHP/AHPP conference in Leicester, the date is the reason most often cited for not attending, followed by cost of conference fees and cost of travel. These findings (while still provisional) confirm our wonderings. A higher proportion of respondents than I would have expected say they dislike conferences in general and many of them then go on and give very helpful comments and suggestions for future meetings. However a much smaller percentage say they wouldn't be likely to go to any one-day (non-residential) conferences.

Of topics listed for potential one-day meetings, votes cast so far show the top ten as follows: The Creative Use of Fear; Living and Working with the Shadow; Chaos and Chaos Theory; New Trends in Psychotherapy — the Narrative Approach; Integrative Practice; Celebrating Differ-

ences; Conflict between Peoples — How Can Humanistic Psychology Help; Therapy for the Sick or Human Potential Development for All? — The Crisis Facing the Humanistic Psychology Movement; The Place of Existential Concerns in Short-Term Counselling; From Dumping to Dialogue — Encounter between Humanistic Psychology and the Analytic Tradition.

And no, I haven't been counting the key depressions as I've been entering the questionnaire returns: the software package provides this and other statistics such as the fact that it takes me an hour to enter eighteen questionnaires.

And now a report of AHP Committee business. Work is continuing on the Festival of Humanistic Psychology, to be held on 11 October at Hillcroft College, Surbiton. Its purpose is to promote humanistic psychology, to demonstrate the areas it covers and ways of getting involved, through various trainings, for example. There will be an exhibition, workshops, videos and sessions for practitioner exchange as well as a plenary. Anyone who would like to book an exhibition space for themselves or their organisation should contact Dylanie Walker on 0345 078506 or e-mail ahp@saqnet.co.uk.

Yes, AHP has an Internet address and a new telephone number. This 0345 phone number means that in future, as our office moves around, the telephone number can remain the same. It also has the advantage for callers that they pay only the cost of a local call, regardless of where in the UK

they call from. We are upgrading our internal systems, and considering a new logo and new-style headed notepaper too, as well as a homepage on the Internet.

At the July Committee meeting we found ourselves again in the position of having lots of ideas and not enough people to carry them out. It's clear that for AHP to be a vibrant association, we need an injection of energy from the wider membership. Over the coming months we hope to come

up with proposals aimed at bridging the gaps.

I'm glad to report on the closer working relationship between the AHP Committee and the AHPP Board. With the Chair of each attending the other's meetings, much better communication is fostered. In my report of the conferences survey I shall be passing on to both bodies the comments you have made about the AHP/AHPP relationship — no censorship.

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Eric Whitton

In the middle of a hot summer's day it is hard to focus on the 'burning' issues of humanistic psychology. However, I happen to have spent the past month buried in piles of paper produced by students which have to be assessed for examination purposes. And it occurs to me that in all the concerns that take up so much time about standards of training, the needs of the trainees can get overlooked. For the past seventeen years I have been engaged in a basic training programme in counselling. For most of this time we have aimed to be student-centred as a reflection of the humanistic approach for which we are training people. Sadly over the five years I have noticed that increasingly institutional and academic demands have tended to blur this important element. We are concerned rightly to have appropriate standards and to be concerned about the public and to protect our professional status, but the needs of the very people who will carry these out in practice can easily be left out, so that they become the victims of a sys-

tem. One of the basic tenets of humanistic endeavour is that we trust people we work with. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to take the feelings and needs of trainees seriously enough that they are included in the decisions about their professional development. It is questionable, for instance, whether increasing the number of hours beyond a certain point either necessarily improves the quality of the training, or is in the best interests of helping trainees to grow. If we believe that it is helpful for clients to take responsibility for themselves, then surely we need to provide an environment where trainees will experience and value this for themselves as part of their learning rather than to be told what is good for them. One of the benefits of our accreditation process is that it allows prospective practitioners to choose what sort of training is best for them, so that they can internalise the standards they aspire to. We are equally concerned for the way people develop as we are for the content and quantity of the training process.