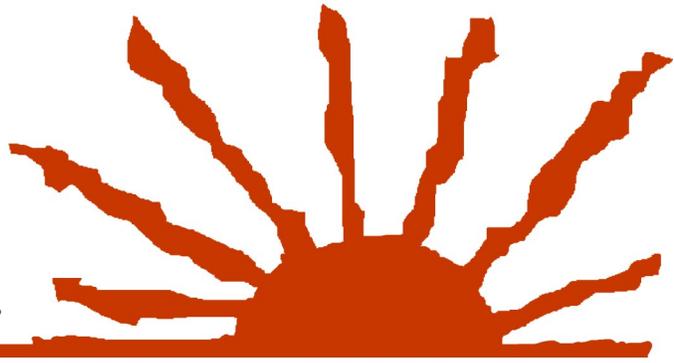


# SWPA



southwestern psychological association

## SWPA Newsletter

March 2016

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### President's Column: Our Path

By Dr. Christian L. Hart

President

We are only a month away from the 62<sup>nd</sup> annual SWPA conference. This will be my first and last conference as the president of SWPA. I am very excited. Attending scientific conferences like SWPA is a fantastic experience and a testament to humanity's progress. That statement made clear that I am a huge nerd. I'll embrace it. I love being around other nerds at conferences and talking about our nerdy scientific discoveries. I enjoy it so much

because it just feels fun, but also because I know we are following a long tradition of scientists advancing the frontiers of understanding the world around us.

As we wind through this political season, it is apparent in the daily news the stark divide between those who choose to open their eyes and examine evidence critically versus those who hold tight to a version of the universe that fits only their wishes and opinions. Hippocrates offered, "There are in fact two things, science and opinion; the former begets knowledge, the latter ignorance." As psychologists, we choose the path of science. I believe we are better for it. To see the universe as it is- to see people as they are- we need science.

We are pathetically poor at accurately perceiving the reality of the universe around us. Our logic is biased, our perceptions distorted, and our common sense overflowing with prejudice and error. Any armchair scrutiny of human nature surely runs deep with fouled analysis and misfigured conclusions. Relying entirely on common sense cripples us and draws us in toward the rocky shore. Our common sense convinces us that the world is flat. It is science that shows us that our common sense is dead wrong, that we are fallible, and that our base understanding is often feeble and lacking.

As we endeavor to understand behavior and mental processes, all is not what it seems. Psychology is often more elusive, more convoluted, and more sophisticated than we first think. Sometimes, it is unimaginable, as it runs so counter to the delusions we have held for generations. As scientists, we summon the strength to lay down these delusions and accept the hard truths of reality, even when they shatter our favorite beliefs about how the world works. That is the core tenet of the scientific life. We prefer the truth of knowing the world as it is, not how we wish it to be. Our science is not perfect, because we are not perfect. But, science does give us the best or closest approximation of the world around us.

Every year, we gather at our conference and update and incrementally advance and revise

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## Undergraduate students: An endangered resource?

By **Dr. Thomas J. Faulkenberry**

**Texas State Representative**

As I conclude and reflect upon the first of my two years as Texas Representative of SWPA, I am thankful to have the opportunity to represent the 51 departments of psychology in our state. In the spirit of the election season, I would like to use my column to present a “political” platform of sorts. No, it is not a platform related to the goals of any one political party, and as such, I shouldn’t lose too many friends over it. Rather, it is a platform of resource protection. I firmly believe that we need to do everything in our power to protect one of the greatest, yet endangered resources in our organization: our undergraduate student members.



One might argue that this group is certainly not endangered, and as such, suffers no need to be protected. For one thing, undergraduates are our biggest single membership group, comprising 49.5% of our membership in 2015. However, total graduate student membership is less than half of that number. Thus, while our undergraduate membership is strong, something is happening to them after graduation. While there are likely many factors behind this phenomenon, I want to focus on how we can best serve our current undergraduate members (and simultaneously benefit from the wonderful resource that they provide).

I believe that one of the best ways to serve our undergraduates is to get them involved in our research. The benefits to the student are myriad and obvious: experience for graduate school, lines for the students’ vitas, etc. However, mentoring undergraduates in research has a lot of benefit for the faculty as well. It is no secret that most of the day-to-day functioning of my research lab is due to the hard work of undergraduate volunteers. In addition, there is a certain freedom that comes from mentoring undergraduate projects, as the stakes tend not to be as high for them compared to masters or doctoral students. Indeed, one of my recent lines of research started from an undergraduate’s project that we started “just to see what would happen.”

As we are heading into our SWPA convention in Dallas this April, I want to urge everyone to take a role in the development of our undergraduates. Go to their talks. Ask good questions. Challenge them, but don’t beat them down. If we take the time to nurture their development now, we will increase our chances of retaining them as members later, which will help our organization survive and flourish in the future.

## Experience SWPA

**Join us at the SWPA 2016 convention April 8-10, 2016!**

The convention will be held in Dallas, Texas at the [Omni Dallas Hotel](#) for a great series of talks on the theme of *Evolutionary Psychology: The Adapted Mind* as well as a whole host of other topics and activities ([Check the Program](#)).

Some of the speakers will be:

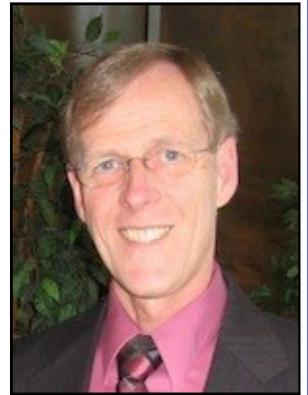
Dr. David Buss from University of Texas  
 Dr. Martie Haselton from UCLA  
 Dr. Robert Kurzban from University of Pennsylvania  
 Dr. Daniel Fessler from UCLA  
 Dr. Hector Garcia from UT Health Science Center at San Antonio  
 Dr. Ann Devlin from Connecticut College  
 Dr. Jeffrey Spies from the Center for Open Science  
 Dr. Brian Collisson from Marian University  
 Dr. Mauricio Papini from Texas Christian University



The hotel is amazing! It is located in the heart of downtown Dallas near numerous food and entertainment options. The hotel offers a roof-top pool, a great fitness facility, a spa, and several restaurants and lounges inside the hotel. Staying at the conference hotel also offers you many opportunities to socialize with other SWPA members and engage in SWPA activities. We hope to see you there!

## SWPA Finances Remain Strong- Information and Issues

By **Dr. Arn Froese** **Treasurer/Past-President**



### *Financial updates*

I have the pleasure of watching SWPA's numbers throughout the year. I know that's not the same as watching March Madness or the Super Bowl, or playing your own numbers with fantasy sports. But you have a vested interest in SWPA operations as you might in some of those other spectator activities. So I'll share with you what you have heard from me before—SWPA continues to build its strength in paving the way to a stable organizational future.

Last year we held our convention in Wichita, and we knew we would have lower attendance, lower numbers of dues-paying members, and lower convention registrations. We budgeted for the expected declines and finished the year (June 30 for us) with surpluses. This year we anticipated a bounce back to our Texas convention levels and we budgeted expected increases over last year for both income and expenses.

Our numbers for this year confirm our expectations. As of February 20th, our income is 20% higher than it was last year. That income mostly comes from dues and registration, but we are also up in exhibit booth payments and advertising. Earlier in the year—close to abstract submission time—we receive a large number of dues payments because those payments are required for people to submit abstracts. Many people pay the dues and wait until later to pay registration. Thus, our current dues payments are closer to our budget (77%) than our registrations (47%). This means that many people will be paying their registrations between now and convention time.

Our total expenses for 2016 are just over \$78,000. Our current income for the year is just \$13,000 lower than those budgeted expenses. We will easily collect that amount and more before the convention is over.

Last year we raised the registration fees because we anticipated additional expenses. The major additional expenses we have this year are purchasing liability insurance, increasing speaker expenses, adding paid help at the registration desk, increasing audio-visual for the larger hotel and number of rooms we use, and increasing the food and beverage expenses for our social and coffee hours. You will see a coffee hour on Saturday afternoon this year—a benefit we have not typically provided.

### *What to expect between now and convention time*

Here are several important reminders about communication and payments as we approach convention time:

If you can't sign in to your web page and you request a password reset, be aware that people who never get their return email almost always are missing the email because their server is blocking emails from [webmaster@swpsych.org](mailto:webmaster@swpsych.org). If you don't receive a return email, check your spam or trash box. If you don't see it there, contact your computer tech people at your institution and ask them to unblock our address. You can also get help by contacting our Membership

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## Membership Report (March 5, 2016)

By **Dr. Amy Bohmann** **Membership Registrar**

The current membership report:

- **20** Life Members
- **41** Past Presidents
- **311** Professional Members
- **566** Graduate Student Members
- **583** Undergraduate Student Members





## An Interview with Dr. Max M. Krasnow, Harvard University

By Dr. Christian L. Hart

President

In anticipation of our upcoming SWPA conference in Dallas, I wanted to interview someone with expertise on the theme of our conference, “Evolutionary Psychology; The Adapted Mind.” I interviewed Dr. Max Krasnow, a professor of psychology and director of the Evolutionary Psychology Laboratory at Harvard University. Max earned his B.A. and Ph.D in Psychology from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His research focuses primarily on the evolutionary origins of human cooperation and social behavior.

CH: Max, thanks again for participating in this brief interview. I wanted to ask a few questions to get a sense of how you view evolutionary psychology and where you think it is taking us. People have a lot of different ideas about what evolutionary psychology is. What does it mean to be an evolutionary psychologist?

MK: Evolutionary psychologists apply the logic of adaptationism to the study of human nature. What does that mean? Because of the physical process of natural selection—some traits cause their genetic basis to be reproduced better than others—over time organisms come to accumulate features that functioned in the past to increase their long-term reproductive rate. But, importantly, adaptationism brings into focus the fact that not all traits can be equally conceived in this model; there is a difference between adaptations and byproducts of adaptations. For example, humans like most vertebrates use hemoglobin in our red blood cells to transport oxygen to our tissues. This property is part of the adaptive function (or adaptation), as efficiently and effectively transporting oxygen allowed our ancestors to reproduce better than those who did so less effectively or efficiently. But, hemoglobin has other properties besides oxygen transport, such as appearing red when it is oxygenated. This is a byproduct, as having red blood per se did not affect reproduction. This is an important difference: Even if you didn’t know anything about blood, knowing that oxygen transport was an adaptive problem allows you to predict that it should have properties that facilitate it; in contrast, you wouldn’t be able to predict that blood should turn red when oxygenated. Thus, a major component of evolutionary psychology is sifting the adaptations from the byproducts and only applying the model to the former. You can use this simple model to take what we know about the past (geology, chemistry, paleontology, etc.) to predict the features that should be present in organisms today.



**Dr. Max M. Krasnow**  
Harvard University

CH: What does the evolutionary perspective offer that other psychological perspectives don’t offer?

MK: The unique power that evolutionary psychology brings to the table is a vastly improved ability to predict the design of human nature. Many approaches to psychology are intensely data driven, requiring a lot of observation for every new empirical insight, let alone generalization or new inference. Often new psychological phenomena are discovered in the data, not predicted in advance. For example, we’ve been studying spatial cognition for well over 50 years, finding very often that men outperform women on many apparently different tests of spatial ability. It took an evolutionary hypothesis to predict in advance a particular type of spatial problem that women should be better at than men—remembering the locations of gatherable resources—and then find it (Krasnow et al, *Evolution & Human Behavior* 2011; New et al, *Proc Roy Soc B* 2007). How many more years of data driven science would it have taken to stumble onto that finding? Seen through the lens of evolutionary psychology, human nature is a vast collection of adaptations for solving the host of adaptive problems our ancestors had to have solved to survive to reproduce, including those involving hazard avoidance, food acquisition, mating, navigating social life, parenting, skill and knowledge learning, etc. By getting specific about these areas, evolutionary psychologists produce testable predictions about the design of adaptations in human nature.

CH: Evolutionary psychology has been derided by some people from the field of psychology and from some outside of

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# The Fart Theory of Love

By Dr. John Terrizzi Jr.

Texas Woman's University



People have been puzzling over the perplexity of love for millennia, but they have been largely sniffing in the wrong direction. As it turns out, it may be that disgust, a seemingly unrelated emotion, is the key to unlocking the mysteries of love. From an evolutionary perspective, disgust serves an important adaptive function. It encourages us to avoid situations that could make us sick by evoking a feeling of ickiness. As such, it is a culture-creating emotion that incents prophylactic norm formation. It makes it easy for us to learn that we shouldn't play with dog poop and that we should wash our hands.

So what does all of this have to do with love? Well, as it turns out, one of the most common route of infectious disease is person-to-person contact. That is, often when we get sick it is because we unknowingly come into contact with the bodily fluids of somebody whom is already infected. This has important evolutionary implications. If other people can make us sick, disgust should make us more cautious with our interpersonal interactions. Indeed, we do try to avoid contact with people who are visibly ill and we especially find it distasteful to come into contact with their vomit, diarrhea, or phlegm.

Disgust, however, has broader implications for our social behavior. In our ancestral past, we lived in intimate tribal communities that were geographically confined. There was no high speed transit and global travel. As a result, there was differential exposure to infectious disease, which meant that people who were not part of our intimate community may have been harboring a disease for which we had no immunity. Thus, we should be motivated to be especially cautious about swapping our bodily fluids with strangers. Indeed, when you ask participants how disgusted they would be if they smelled a complete stranger's fart versus their partner's fart, they are, not surprisingly, dramatically more disgusted by the prospect of sniffing a complete stranger's fart.

Interestingly, the more disgusted participants are by the bodily fluids and functions of strangers relative to their partners, the more securely attached and invested in their relationships they report being. Moreover, for women, the more disgusted they are by complete strangers relative to their partners, the more likely they are to report having more frequent and intense orgasms with their partner. Thus, I give you the fart theory of love. Love is not being disgusted by your partner's farts and your partner not being disgusted by yours.

\*If interested in fart theory or disgust, feel free to visit with Dr. Terrizzi in Dallas.

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what we know about psychology. We still know very little. It is a long, slow grind. Though, hopefully, the journey is an exciting one for each of us. Every experiment shows us something new that we didn't know the day before. Even when our studies fail to yield proof of what we expected, they often prove something else. The delight of unexpected discoveries waits around every turn.

Research and the scientific enterprise is much more than a profession or an academic pursuit. It its best, it is a passion and a joy. Discovery is an invigorating ingredient of life. That moment when an elegant investigation yields a hidden secret of human nature is electrifying. It is such a pleasure to gather around once a year and share that joy of discovery with the other members of SWPA. While we each have different perspectives, different theories, and different research agendas, we are all bound together by our philosophy. Our shared philosophy is that knowledge is better than ignorance, fact trumps mere opinion, and fearless acceptance of reality fairs us better than hiding our heads in the sand. We, as a group, choose not to be enslaved by ignorance and dogma. We come together as psychologists, light that candle, and collectively peer through the darkness, searching for what lies beyond.

See you in Dallas!

-Chris



## Passing of SWPA Past-President Warren H. Jones, Ph.D.

By **Dr. Christian L. Hart**

**President**

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of SWPA Past-president Warren H. Jones. Warren Jones earned his Ph.D. in

Social and Personality Psychology in 1974 from Oklahoma State University. He then taught at University of Tulsa, eventually rising to department chair and dean. He served as SWPA President in 1986 when the conference was held in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1990, Dr. Jones was appointed Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, serving there until his retirement in 2008. Warren Jones was a distinguished scholar in the field of Social/Personality Psychology. His research focused on interpersonal relationships, shyness, loneliness, betrayal, guilt, forgiveness, trust, and commitment. He authored more than 60 scholarly articles, wrote or edited more than 10 volumes, and wrote over 30 book chapters. Dr. Jones served as an Editor for several journals, including the *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*. In thankful appreciation of his service, SWPA observes the passing Dr. Warren H. Jones.

## Dr. Warren H. Jones



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Registrar, Dr. Amy Bohmann at [amy.bohmann@tamusa.edu](mailto:amy.bohmann@tamusa.edu). She can get your password to you, but she can not unblock your system's email settings. Faculty members, ask your students if they received this newsletter. If they didn't, their computer is blocking SWPA communications.

Reserve your convention hotel rooms as soon as possible. The Hotel's cutoff date for holding our rooms is March 7. If you try to register after that, you may or may not find a room available at the convention price.

The Early Bird registration discount ends at midnight, March 6th. After that time, registration will cost \$40. Remember that paying your dues does not register you for the convention.

Online registration will close on March 31 at midnight. After that time, you will only be able to register on site, and on site registration is \$55. We do this to encourage members to register before the convention so that we can prepare your registration badge before you arrive at the convention.

That's the numbers news. I'll see you in Dallas.

Arn Froese

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our field. Why does there seem to be a degree of contempt for evolutionary psychology?

MK: There are more than a few answers to this question. I think a lot of what is going on, though, is that 1) most critics don't actually know what evolutionary psychology is, mistaking it for genetic determinism, social Darwinism, justification for sexism or racism, etc., (which it isn't) and 2) the debate is often not scientific but coalitional. Actually, I think #1 is mostly due to #2; our psychology gets weird in coalitional contexts. (Look no further than our current political climate for evidence of this.) When a situation is coalitionalized, object truth seeking can go out the window (if it was ever there in the first place). Coalitions posed major adaptive problems for ancestral humans—staying on the right side of the group was the difference between life and death. We should thus expect mechanisms designed to help us cultivate and maintain coalitions. The problem is that this adaptive problem is not well solved by objective truth seeking. In other words, it was likely better to be wrong but well-liked than right and alone. Who would you trust on more on your team: John who is conversant with the other side, acknowledges when they are right, and would support their agenda when it makes sense, or Pete who is a strict partisan, thinks the other side is evil and would never think of colluding them? Despite that many of our better angels may want to like John, my guess is that we have design to prefer Pete over John because Pete seems more committed to the group, and for that reason we are also designed to be Pete so that we stay on our group's good side. If you construe Evolutionary Psychology as an enemy coalition, that likely interferes with your reasoned understanding of the field and imbues your misunderstanding with moral opprobrium. I'll likely offend some detractors with this answer, but I challenge them to actually engage with the theoretical commitments of Evolutionary Psychology (I'll point for starters to Chapter 1 of *The Adapted Mind*, now over 25 years in print) and show me how from the start it contained any of the elements I listed above in point 1.

CH: Does evolutionary psychology have any practical applications that could improve our lives?

MK: If your car breaks, would you want your mechanic to have a manual to your car, or just tinker around guessing? A proper understanding of human nature is like the instruction manual, and there are many applications where your model of human nature matters. When our psychology 'breaks' we go to clinical psychologists and psychiatrists for help. It has to be the case that a more accurate model of human nature would help the treatment of psychopathology. Politicians and business officers design policies that try to accomplish goals, and whether stated or not these policies always rely on a model of human nature. If the model is wrong, the policy is likely to fail.

CH: How do you think evolutionary perspectives will have changed the field of psychology 50 years from now?

MK: Evolutionary Psychology has had enough critical mass to be a "thing" for around 25 or 30 years. While it certainly isn't accepted throughout the field, parts of evolutionary psychology have become influential in specific sub-fields, like social psychology and vision science. My guess (or at least hope) is that in another 50 years the principles of Evolutionary Psychology will become one of the background assumptions of the field and 'evolutionary psychology' will cease to be anything different than 'psychology'.

CH: Max, thanks so much for the great interview. It was a pleasure chatting with you. I appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts with SWPA.

## SWPA Newsletter

**By Dr. Drew Curtis** Newsletter Coordinator

As always, I am happy to deliver the SWPA newsletter. I hope it receives you all well. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas related to the newsletter: [drew.curtis@angelo.edu](mailto:drew.curtis@angelo.edu).

- Drew

