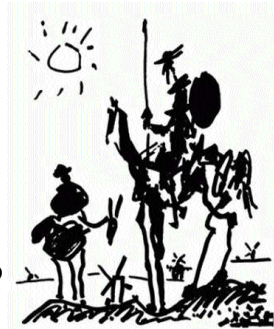


The Founding of the ISSD

Richard P. Kluft, MD

There is little to do in a dungeon. Captured and enslaved on his way back to Spain after serving in the Spanish army, Miguel de Cervantes is surrounded by his fellow captives. It is his turn to provide what amusement he can. In a moment of theater that never fails to thrill me, he rises and invites his cellmates to “Enter my imagination! Behold a knight...” With those words, *The Man of La Mancha* takes leave of its prologue scene and begins the wonderful story of *Don Quixote*.



How does this relate to Su Baker’s pinning me into a corner with a fusillade of e-mail requests and reminders to write something about the founding of the ISSD? I will leave that to your imaginations! Is there some parallel to the story of Don Quixote and the history of the ISSD? Again, I will leave that to your individual associative networks.

...gathering the usual suspects...

Imagine it is the early 1970s. Cornelia “Connie” Wilbur, finally disgusted by the latest in a long series of rejections of her scientific papers, is completing her collaboration with Flora Rheta Schreiber on *Sybil*. It will be published in 1973. With several collaborators, Connie is completing scientific papers on a male multiple named Jonah that will be published in 1972. Ralph Allison is drafting his first papers on the treatment of what will some day be called MPD and DID for the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, and describing the first large series of multiples since Despine, in the 1830s. Margaretta Bowers and her colleagues are completing their classic paper on hypnosis with MPD for the *International Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*. Jack and Helen Watkins are developing ego state theory and therapy. Phil Coons and I are encountering our first multiples, and discovering that not everyone is overjoyed, neither with our observations, nor with us for making these observations.



Cornelia “Connie” Wilbur,
who died in 1992.

By the mid-1970s Bennett Braun is now on the scene, rapidly developing a

In writing this reminiscence, I consulted George Greaves’ chapter, “A History of Multiple Personality Disorder,” in R.P. Kluft & C.G. Fine (Eds.), *Clinical Perspectives on Multiple Personality Disorder* (pp. 355-380). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

descriptive literature and treatment plans for multiples. Frank Putnam is a medical student in Indiana, where he will encounter Phil Coons. George Greaves has found his third case of MPD, and is immersing himself in the world's literature, preparing to write a review article. I am assembling a series of MPD patients, developing diagnostic strategies, and inventing hypnotic techniques for their treatment. By the late 1970s, Steve Marmer has discovered MPD in an analytic control case and is writing up his experiences. Emmanuel Berman is reviewing the psychoanalytic literature on MPD. Eugene Bliss is assembling his series of multiples, and developing the autohypnosis theory of MPD. David Spiegel is beginning to study the relationship of hypnosis and trauma, and finding multiples. Jean Goodwin is studying trauma and formulating her own ideas. Ralph Allison, David Caul, Connie Wilbur, and others are planning a course on MPD for the American Psychiatric Association. At Yale, Richard Löwenstein and Frank Putnam are becoming friends with a shared interest in dissociation.



Buddy Braun

Between 1980 and 1984 all of these individuals will be bursting into print, and initiating the modern era of the study of DID. And as they do, almost every one of them will share a realization already all too plain to Connie Wilbur – that regardless of the quality of one's contribution, whoever works with MPD will be regarded as outside the mainstream of the mental health sciences.

When those in the field met, often at the workshops at the American Psychiatric Association, they talked about the need for an organization and a scientific forum for the developing field of the dissociative disorders. At that moment in time, it just did not seem possible to create a home for this field within any of the established mental health organizations.

...The ISSMP—...

Where would such an organization come from? Connie Wilbur was charismatic, and had developed an informal roster of clinicians interested in MPD from those she met while lecturing, or who called her for advice. Ralph Allison did the same, and began to circulate a short-lived newsletter, *Memos on Multiplicity*.



Ralph Allison

However, one serendipitous network sprang into existence, and provided the kernel of what would become the ISSD. In 1980 George Greaves published "Multiple personality 165 years after Mary Reynolds" in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. The response to this article was nothing short of amazing. Within 18 months, George received over 5,000 requests for reprints from over 55 countries. To place this achievement in

perspective, I have never received even one tenth that volume of requests for anything I have written.

Why was Greaves' article so successful? It was well written, and full of useful observations and ideas which by now have been cited so often from derivative sources that few even recall the magnitude of Greaves' contributions. Furthermore, Greaves' timing could not have been better. In 1980, DSM-III had just declared the dissociative disorders distinct diagnostic entities; Allison and Schwarz' popular book on multiplicity, *Minds in Many Pieces*, was published; Milton Rosenbaum's article demonstrating that MPD had been inadvertently and inappropriately condensed with schizophrenia by Bleuler came out; Phil Coons' paper on the diagnosis of MPD became available; Steve Marmer's psychoanalytic study of a multiple came out in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*; and Eugene Bliss' classic study of 14 multiples was published in the prestigious *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Greaves' article was the most general, clinically relevant, and comprehensive resource in the literature at a time when interest in MPD was soaring. No matter how a person became interested in dissociation, he or she would inevitably track down this article, the premier reference of the moment.



George Greaves

Greaves began what was probably the first MPD study group (in Atlanta), compiled and computerized a mailing list from the article requests. Sensing that thousands of clinicians were interested in MPD, he formed a steering committee in 1982 to brainstorm ways to bring interested clinicians together in an organization. This committee began with Greaves, David Caul, Emmanuel Berman (who had returned to his native Israel), John Burns, Jane Yates, Jackie Damgaard, Helen Coale, and Jeffrey Brandsma. They were joined by Chris Sizemore ("Eve") in 1983. The name selected for this organization was the *International Society for the Study of Multiple Personality*. They began to publish the *ISSMP Newsletter* quarterly.

...integrating groups...

In 1983 there were at least three groups of clinicians and scholars talking about putting an organization together. The first centered around the faculty of the American Psychiatric Association workshop, which had included, at one time or another, in alphabetical order, Ralph Allison, Bennett Braun, Joel Brende, David Caul, Philip Coons, Richard Kluft, Frank Putnam, Roberta Sachs, Frank Saculla, and Cornelia Wilbur. I fear I am omitting one or two names because I cannot locate all of the early rosters. The second was the group put together by Greaves. Another group from the Pacific Northwest had actually tried to put together a meeting on MPD. However, they had sent out

flyers listing as presenters some members of the APA course faculty who had not actually agreed to present. Many from the APA course faculty decided not to work with them. As time went on, the Northwest group went on to play active and constructive roles in the field.

The American Psychiatric Association course on MPD was first put together and directed by Ralph Allison in 1978, and repeated in 1979. I took the course as a student in 1978, and was added to the faculty at Connie Wilbur's request in 1979, when the APA was in Chicago. There I met an amazingly energetic man named Bennett G. Braun. He, David Caul and I had a memorable dinner together that cemented our friendship and our collaboration. When the course was not repeated in 1980, I decided to try to resuscitate it. I consulted Ralph Allison, because I did not want to "jump his claim." He told me he was not interested in doing the course again. I asked Buddy Braun to join me as co-director of this new project, and got David Caul and Connie Wilbur's blessings and commitments to participate. The course resumed in its new incarnation in 1981, with me as Director and Braun as co-Director.

In 1983 the American Psychiatric Association was held earlier than usual, and met in New York City. Buddy Braun informed me that George Greaves had asked to come up and meet with the people on the APA faculty to talk about combining forces to start an organization. I believe that George had also tried to reach me, but we did not connect. I have a vague recall, which I cannot be sure is accurate, that David Caul, who was part of both groups, promoted the process with Buddy and George. I know David spoke to me about the wisdom of getting together.

George Greaves had already put together a massive mailing list, a rudimentary organization, a study group, and a newsletter. Buddy Braun had already done some preliminary work promoting the idea of a major conference on multiple personality and dissociation to Rush Medical College in Chicago, and had the support of the Chairman of Psychiatry, Jan Fawcett. We agreed to have a dinner meeting in New York City after the course, which George attended.

...New York steam baths...

I remember April 30, 1983 as one of the best and one of the most uncomfortable days of my professional life. As Director and resident obsessive-compulsive, it was my job to monitor the clock and contain the speakers, all of whom had more to say than their allotted time allowed. While other faculty could stay or go unless they were teaching, I was on the speaker's platform all day, passing notes to let people know how much time they still had, and giving them the hook when necessary. While this was usually not an issue, on this

April 30th, the temperature in New York City abruptly soared to over 80 degrees. While this was usually not an issue, the hotel in which our course took place had no plans to turn on its air conditioning for another month. My interventions with the hotel's management were futile. The course was held in a veritable steam bath. I sweated through my clothing, and could not leave to get some other outfit. Many attendees stripped to their undershirts. Some took off their shirts. A few started leaving to buy shorts or bathing suits in a nearby store, and returned dressed for the beach. As the day went on, I increasingly resembled the passed-over wilted lettuce at the end of a long day in a cheap salad bar, and often felt faint. By day's end I entertained the notion of skipping the dinner meeting completely, or going only after I had crashed for an hour or so. I was persuaded to stay.



...Mamma Leone's & the ISSMP&D...

There was some confusion about where to dine. As the nearest thing to a New Yorker among those consulted, I suggested Mama Leone's Restaurant because I had been there many times over the years. It was close, moderate, and we could get a reservation. And so, we were off to Mama Leone's.

George Greaves has written that Buddy and his fiancée Jane Dubrow, Bobbi Sachs, David Caul, Frank Putnam, and I were present. I tend to think some others who were there have been overlooked. In any case, it was an evening full of laughter, hopes, and dreams. George Greaves had seen the APA faculty in action, and was generous with his praise and admiration. The faculty was impressed with the groundwork George had already done. Everyone seemed ready to listen to everyone else, and to listen with respect. I don't recall any difficult moments. For all the hilarity of the evening, you might have thought we would have racked up quite a bar bill. The checks tell another story. Hardly anyone had a second drink, and some were non-drinkers.

We all reflected on the terrible plight of MPD patients, who were usually misdiagnosed for years, and who often received inadequate and/or inappropriate treatment. We wanted to be able to advocate for this group of patients, to provide education to teach clinicians how to diagnose and treat them, and to promote research to better understand dissociative patients and how to treat them.

When we got down to organizational matters, it quickly became apparent is that we already had most of the pieces we needed to go forward. Buddy Braun had a conference in planning that was sanctioned by a medical school

that could provide continuing education credits, and would be in a position to provide the organization with some administrative support. George Greaves had the foundation for a membership drive in place. From my APA work, I could put a workshop program together and assemble a faculty. We were just beginning to appreciate where Frank Putnam would be able to take the field, and were very optimistic about the future of dissociation research.

The APA faculty joined the Greaves steering committee *en masse*, and we were underway as a fledgling organization before dessert. I think it was Buddy who proposed changing the name George had created to the *International Society for the Study of Multiple Personality & Dissociation*. He was always looking to the future, and believed that a focus on multiple personality per se was overly restrictive.

...Buddy and George...

What I cannot tell you about, that is crucial to this whole topic of “founding,” is how Buddy and George accomplished what they did. Buddy brought the power and prestige of a major medical school on board. George was the right man in the right place at the right time, and he seized the opportunity to put MPD before the mental health professions with more success than anyone else before or since. These two men put tremendous savvy and energy behind their efforts, and deserve enormous credit.

In the year between the meeting at Mama Leone’s and the First International Conference on Multiple Personality and Dissociation in Chicago, the Continuing Education Department at Rush (with special praise and gratitude to Vickie O’Sullivan) was heroic in putting the meeting together. Buddy Braun worked with more energy than I can imagine to orchestrate the Scientific Program, and although I ostensibly was creating the workshop program, he was a force in the Workshop Program as well, doing a lot of work that I got credit for. For example, it was Buddy who persuaded Jack and Helen Watkins to teach their ego-state workshop. I was appointed to the Adjunct Faculty of Rush Medical College so the Rush imprint could be given to the workshops as well as the scientific meetings, and so that if Buddy were unavailable, there was a back-up Rush person to address any crises that might arise.

...the founders...

So, how was the ISSD founded? I’ve told you what I know in terms of people and events, but I think there are factors more important than those details of the history itself. It is easy to found an organization. But it is hard to protect it, nurture it, grow it, and give it the sort of spirit and atmosphere that will give it a chance to survive, and make others want to help it “live long and

prosper.”

The founding took place at a particular time and place, and in a particular atmosphere. I'll try to enumerate some factors I considered to be powerful determinants of the founding and initial success of the ISSMP&D. Those of us who were interested in trauma were determined to fight pressures to deny its existence and its consequences. Many of us were members of a generation becoming acutely aware of the mistreatment of women and children, open to the newer literatures of abuse and to the arguments of Feminism. Many of us were familiar with the terrible impact of the Viet Nam war on our society and upon many of those who went to Southeast Asia as normal young men, and returned as shattered shells, only to have their problems largely denied and minimized or blamed on themselves, the victims, for several years. Some of us had been involved in the Anti-War and Civil Rights movements. We knew that efforts to promote the well-being of MPD patients was only another aspect of confronting man's inhumanity to man, and were prepared to fight the good fight. We knew that established authority could not be assumed to be beyond corruption and mendacity. The lack of approval for our endeavors by the mental health establishment was not a deterrent. We knew going in that we were a grass-roots organization unbeholding to others.

We were a passionate and excited group. We were embarking on a journey of discovery. In our young field, every meeting of its participants was likely to be a major learning experience for all of us. There was so much to learn, and each new bit of information advanced the field and enriched our work. We were driven not so much by a fascination with MPD as by the intoxicating rush of discoveries and innovations. We could see the field developing and growing before our eyes, and this enhanced our morale and gave us tremendous reinforcement and momentum.

The people who came together to found the ISSMP&D were an energetic and capable group. No one was just along for the ride. We backed one another and pitched in when needed. You never heard expressions like, "That's not my job." If a thing needed to get done, it was going to get done. A corollary was that no one was excluded from anything. As we tell an MPD's alters, "You are all in this together!"

Several of the founders were understood by all to be peacemakers who set a tone of respect and warmth that largely determined our dealings with one another. A group ego ideal of harmony was established, and was so tangible



that most egotistical riffs died promptly of embarrassment without being confronted. While everyone played a role in peacemaking at times, it was impossible to squabble in front of Connie Wilbur, and David Caul and Bobbi Sachs radiated waves of tranquility and gently but firmly defused potential difficulties. Another major affective factor that fueled us was Buddy Braun's insistence that our meetings should be "educational parties." We made sure we had fun, and included everyone we could in the merriment.

The founders were able to see the past of the field, and could envision the continuity of the field. We could see the future of the field taking shape in our own projects, and in the faces and ideas of bright young people ready to come into their own and push the field still further.

We already could anticipate the contributions of Frank Putnam, Eve Bernstein Carlson, Richard Løwenstein, Catherine Fine, Colin Ross and others. Each APA workshop identified yet another handful of gifted colleagues who seemed interested in becoming involved. We knew of the interest the hypnosis societies had in our work, and could anticipate the entry of a new group of scholars into our field.

...Rush Medical College, and ASCH...

There were two important powers behind the scenes of the founding and development of the ISSMP&D who played such important roles that without them things might not have gone as well as they did. Jan Fawcett, MD, Chairman of Psychiatry at Rush Medical College, backed the ISSMP&D with the resources and prestige of his Department through his support of Buddy and the International Conferences. These Conferences officially were Rush Medical College continuing education activities during which the ISSMP&D had its administrative meetings. Bill Hoffman, Executive Vice President of the *American Society of Clinical Hypnosis*, a man with decades of experience staffing medical organizations and leading voluntary organizations, was unflinchingly generous with his time and knowledge. The first two ISSMP&D Presidents, Buddy Braun and I, knew Bill from ASCH and turned to him as a mentor in helping the ISSMP&D get off the ground. There were very few organizational problems Bill had not already encountered and mastered in the course of his career, and he saved the ISSMP&D from many of the blunders new organizations are prone to encounter. Whenever Buddy or I were unsure how to proceed, we tended to use measures and approaches derived from those of ASCH. Without Jan Fawcett and Bill Hoffman, the ISSMP&D would have had a much more difficult time getting underway and surviving.



Jan Fawcett

...Rick Kluff's own role...

What was my own role? I did a lot here and there. I kept out of Buddy's way, and did the same for George. I gave my advice and help when it was requested. Since Buddy and I were very close, I was able to step in for him at some junctures with the meetings and managing the organization as it emerged. Probably my most important contribution was directing the APA courses, and in the process assembling a critical mass of scholars and clinician educators who could demonstrate the emerging credibility of the field and educate a new generation of clinicians. When these pioneers came on board for the formation of the ISSMP&D, the organization was able to get underway with a core of talented and distinguished colleagues who were already adept at working as a team and supporting one another as well as contributing to the field. This group was able to imbue the ISSMP&D and the Rush Conferences with a tremendous amount of collegiality and scholarly integrity from the first, which made it much easier for Rush to support our endeavors. Also, I brought a great deal of experience organizing workshops to the International Conferences. I served as Workshop Director for many years. A second area of my early contributions, which George Greaves emphasized, was that my articles were able to demonstrate that MPD patients could be identified in large numbers and that many could be treated successfully. This, some have said, helped to establish the credibility of the field at a very early juncture, and made affiliation with a society for the study of MPD a more attractive and congenial idea.



Ricky the Kid

