

# THE RSN NEWS

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## **REFLECTION**

**by Stan Roat**

Reading the RSN Newsletter is a great way to remember my own history and those who helped me grow. The May RSN News reminded me of the joy of knowing Helen Terkelson. I hadn't known she came up through the Institute of Pastoral Care as I had.

I started my clinical journey at Elgin State Hospital in 1959 and 1960. Charles Sullivan was the Supervisor, with Clarence Brunniga and Anton Boisen. This was my first experience as a "living human document." I was hungry and I had found candy.

From 1968 to 1970 the US Army Chief of Chaplains asked Chaplain Tom Harris to demonstrate the value of ACPE to the Army. Tom asked me to assist, and we started a CPE -like program with the seven hospitals throughout Germany. We trained all the hospital chaplains and involved the Hospital Commanders in the training. Tom and I were located in Heidelberg. We had IPR sessions, verbatims, and individual supervision was supplied by someone in each chaplain's local hospital (psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker). This program lasted for one year after it was set up and involved a lot of traveling by everyone. At the end of the year, the Hospital Commanders were very enthusiastic, saying they had never understood how effective and useful the chaplains were on the hospital team. I learned that Dick Denson was being trained as a Supervisor at the same time we were demonstrating CPE, so when our Medical Command of Europe gave their approval of the program, Dick was moved into Walter Reed Medical Center to open the Army's first accredited CPE center (around 1970 or 71). I remember feeling jealous.

But, my opportunity came in 1972 to 1974 at Central Islip State Hospital, with Dick Lehman as my supervisor. It was extremely hard for me to become open to my emotions and everyone was supportive of my struggle. I learned first hand that our chronic anxiety isn't laid down until we go through acute pain. I finally became Full Supervisor in Minneapolis, MN in 1975.

My first CPE center was at Ft. Gordon, Georgia in 1974. Since it was one of the early centers that was not based in a hospital, it entailed ministry in any area where the chaplain students were already assigned. Tom Summers, of the accrediting committee, finally declared, "You want us to accredit an entire city!" I agreed. My next CPE center was hospital based in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1978. While in Nuremberg, I assisted in the supervision in a German CPE (KSA) program at the Erlangen University Hospital, just north of Nuremberg, from 1982 to 1983, with Wilhelm Polster as the KSA Supervisor. The student groups at the Erlangen hospital consisted of German seminary students who were training for the mission field. The second group were medical students (who had wondered what chaplains did in the hospital). That was lot of fun. I hope they are better physicians for the experience. In 1984 I returned to Ft. Gordon, GA and, regretfully, my first task was to close my old CPE center. That was painful.

I am currently in private practice with my wife Susan. I now have a nine year old son, Reid, who is a delight. I get to see Dick Lehman and his wife, Marilyn, occasionally. That is a good experience. We have enjoyed talking about Anton Boisen and finding good restaurants!