

Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter

the Transformer

for AVP Workshop Leaders

Summer 1997

WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

AVP goes to College in Russia

by Kay Anderson, AVP Northern California

In November and December 1996, an international group of AVP facilitators converged on Moscow to offer Basic workshops to students of Pedagogical Colleges (where elementary school teachers are trained in four years, starting as young as 16). A series of workshops were also held to train the faculty of these colleges and others as facilitators. In six weeks, about 150 people were given 7 workshops, plus 17 Russian facilitators were trained.

The facilitator team who went to Russia was chosen on the basis of their interest, willingness to come to Russia in winter, and answers



The human pretzel comes to Russia

to a brief questionnaire, focusing primarily on their health and the fearlessness of their previous travel adventures.

Five of us arranged our schedules so we could be there at some point during the six weeks. Ruth Hillman from Canada brought much prisoner experience. Mary and Patrick Finn from Buffalo brought special gifts – Mary with lots of school and community experience, and Patrick who uses the AVP exercises and philosophy to teach language arts at the University of Buffalo. Istvan Fedor had the unique experience of starting AVP in Hungary and using the techniques with many different kinds of people (including a recent workshop for the blind). Jonathan Silvey from England, who happened to be in Moscow, had just finished his training for facilitators shortly before he arrived, and is committed to starting AVP in the Nottingham region. I had experience doing the workshops in Russia before, and could provide some assurance it would go fine. It was the dream team! We enjoyed fine health, good spirits, consistently good reviews, and even mild winter weather.

The enthusiasm of student groups was aston-

WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

AVP Goes to College in Russia *continued*

ishing. We finished early with the first group (the translation task was always a wild card), but they did not want to leave early, even though the work was very intense. They asked if they could play their favorite light and livelies again, and asked that we teach them more.

In the evaluations, they said what was new and valuable. Teamwork, for example, was an important new skill for them.

"At times I did not recognize myself, I was so active. Team work helped me generate new ideas. It was a new idea to most of us, but everyone enjoyed it."

"Teamwork is really a terrific idea! For me, it was the first time I worked in this style."

They also said some transformations occurred:

"I am a very emotional person. I lose my temper often which causes lots of conflicts in my communications with people, like my teachers, relatives and friends. I never put myself in other people's shoes, but the workshop helped me look at myself and my conduct with different eyes. In the future I will try to be more thoughtful of other people, thinking twice before doing something. the recommendations given during the workshop will, definitely, help me with this."

"It seems that now I know what to do to understand people and help them in difficult situations. I suffer from the influence of the man I live, I mean I am under his heel. The workshop helped my analyze my mistakes. It gave me confidence in myself. I want to start our relationship anew, being patient and independent at the same time."

A very practical young woman said:

"I want to use the information I got in writing my thesis as well as in looking for my future husband."

And, finally, a statement that expressed the goals of an AVP workshop better than I could have said it myself. very practical young woman said:

"During the workshop, we became more open to one another. We did not feel shy, tried to find common ways with other people, discovered a lot of good things about ourselves, learned to listen and understand others, solve problems and love each other."

The first meeting of AVP-Russia was held in December. It will be coordinated under the care of Friends House Moscow (FHM).

The AVP-Russia group is asking for continued support from experienced facilitators from around the world. There may be opportunities to go this summer to train facilitators in Chechnya or Ingushetia. Possibly this fall groups will be organized in Moscow. There is an interest in developing a program for work in prisons and, as a strong facilitator group develops in Moscow, those connections will be built.

It is very exciting to think that the post cold war era allows us to work together through the common language and experience of AVP. If you want to hear more about the opportunities to participate in the US or Russia, Please contact me:

Kay Anderson, 723 Schrader Street, San Francisco, CA 94117 • Phone: 415-668-3077 * Fax: 415-751-0302 * kayander@igc.org

WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

Come to the 5th anniversary of AVP/USA... **AVP/USA Meets in New Jersey on Labor Day**

The 1997 Board and Annual Meeting will be held at Burlington Conference Center in Burlington, New Jersey on the fifth anniversary of AVP/USA. The Meeting starts on Friday evening, August 29 and ends on Monday, September 1 (Labor Day) after lunch. All facilitators are invited to attend.

What's going on at the conference?

The theme of the meeting is "Celebration of the AVP Family."

Mini-workshops will offer new ideas. Some of the possible mini-workshop topics are:

- Spirituality Workshop
- Diversity Workshop
- Native American Workshop
- Youth Workshops

The Issues Forum was a big success at the winter meeting. One of the topics being considered for Labor Day is: National Office Composition and Functions. This will be a "threshing" session to promote dialog, but not necessarily arrive at a decision.

The Board & Annual Meeting will focus on the future of AVP/USA. Agenda items are:

- Plans for putting AVP/USA on the road to financial stability. Especially involving the national office.
- Report from the Structure Review Committee and possible changes to structure and function.
- Discussion of circumstances where facilitators might be paid (ie: workshops for prison staff.)
- Our relationship to children's and youth programs inside and outside AVP. Includ-

ing a proposed change in workshop hours.

- Election of officers and filling vacancies in Vice-Chair and Fund Raising and Finance.
- Financial report for 1996-97 and proposed budget for 1997-98.
- Establish Conference Committee to plan the Winter Board Meeting and the International Conference in Miami next year.
- Update from Leadership Team and ratification of interim decisions.

A Tribute and Memorial to Marge Zybas, Bill Wood and other prominent AVPers that have passed away this year. For those that can't attend, please write down your memories and reflections and send them to the national office so they can be shared at the conference and given to family members.

Accommodations and Costs The Burlington Conference Center is located in New Jersey, northeast of Philadelphia and near the intersection of the Jersey Turnpike and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The conference center is adjacent to the historic Burlington Meeting House which was established in 1687.

Accommodations will be dormitory style (bring your own bedding) to keep down costs. The total cost of the weekend will be \$145.00 including meals.

Those flying should book to the Philadelphia International Airport. Transportation from the airport to the conference center will be provided at 3:00, 6:00 and 11:00 pm on August 29. Bus service is available from the train station. Call the national office for a registration packet at 713-747-9999

AROUND AVP

AVP with the Gypsies in Hungary

by Susanna Eveson, AVP Canada



Can AVP help some of the most despised and dispossed people on earth? The Gypsies are the "untouchables" of

Hungary. They are avoided and treated with contempt everywhere but not by everyone. They live in housing and sanitary conditions that make Brazilian favelas and U.S. Indian Reservations seem luxurious. Many are illiterate and children do not take baths, more often than not wearing the same clothes until they fall off in tatters.

Like many underclass groups, the Gypsies live in a culture of violence. Disagreements are settled by arguments which only end when the first blood is drawn. The loser is the person who is injured.

It should be no surprise that the Gypsies make up about 90 percent of the prison population. Their conditions in prison are even worse than on the street. At the prison in Debrecen, inmates are locked in their cells 23 hours a day. They frequently do not get the one hour of exercise that is required. The prison is 150 percent over capacity. Showers are permitted only once a week. This is certainly not the ideal situation for an AVP workshop. Nonetheless, lead facilitator, Kati Bodnar has persevered and led three prison workshops in the last year.

On my trip to Hungary in May and June, I was asked to lead a Basic workshop in Debrecan prison. 21 of the 23 participants were

Gypsies. Most were very young men awaiting trial. Some had waited more than two years for their day in court. Street smart and trusting no one, they were a very tough group to work with.

Slowly, we won them over and they began to trust us. They loved to play music, sing and dance; these were the Light & Liveliest. Then they really began to shine when we got to the role plays. Gypsies are natural actors and they even do role plays in their cells. Often they role play their court cases with the loser assigned to do the detested chores in the cell. As you can see from the photo below, we ended up with many smiling faces and much beautiful music.



AROUND AVP

AVP Hungary Update

- A workshop was for the unemployed in the town of Nyirbator. The participants included unemployed individuals and employment counselors from Family Services.
- Facilitator's Meetings are being held on a regular basis in Debrecen near the Rumanian border and Szeged near the Serbian border.
- A Training for Trainers Workshop was held and 12 new facilitators were trained. The new facilitators include social workers, artists and factory workers. In Hungary, before a facilitator becomes a lead trainer, they are required to complete an internship of three Basics and three Advanced Workshops. At least one workshop must be a prison workshop.
- AVP is reaching the highest levels in the correctional system. Csoti Andras, the First Assistant to the Prison Administrator for Hungary has requested AVP training for prison staff.
- Susanna Eveson and other AVP facilitators spoke at the European Conference for Conflict Resolution in Education (ENCORE) in early June. Held in Hungary's second largest city, Pecs, the conference was attended by many teachers and educators. There is an interest in getting the AVP program into the schools for both teachers and students.
- The Basic Manual has been published in Hungarian and there is a pressing need to translate the Advanced Manual and the Training for Trainers into Hungarian also.

1998 International Conference in Miami

Plans are being made to hold the 1998 AVP International Conference in Miami. The International Newtork has focused on Latin America and participation from more AVP groups in Latin America is expected. A special theme of the conference will be diversity. The AVP-USA Annual Meeting for 1998 will be scheduled prior to the conference. If you would like to get involved in planning the program, join the Conference Committee. You don't need to attend the Board meetings to be on the committee. More information will appear in upcoming Transformers.

AVP Workshops Planned in Croatia

A month-long project to begin the AVP program in Croatia is being sponsored by the Peace Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Steve Angell is coordinating the project and will be the lead trainer. One other facilitator is needed. For more information contact: Mary Arnett, Peace Committee staff member 1-800-220-0796 Ext. 7232. Fax: 215-567-2096

AVP in Equador

Eugene Braun lives in Quito and recently took an AVP workshop when visiting the US, He's interested in getting AVP started in the prisons. He would like to hear from any Spanish speaking trainer visiting Ecuador. You may contact him at Casilla 17-11-6004, Quito, Ecuador, SA

AVP Trainer Helpful Hints

by Edward Falby, AVP-Connecticut

Do I really have to be smart to be an AVP Trainer? No. There are qualities that make a good trainer; none of us possess all of these qualities. Some are a must, and as a help, here is a guide on "Which Ones Do I Need."

- W** Willingness – Let there be a willingness about you in all that you do; new challenges will be supported.
- H** Honesty – Always be honest in your way of being.
- I** Interest – Allow your interests to help you really experience each workshop.
- C** Commitment – Make a commitment towards respecting yourself and others. Be committed to participation.
- H** Humaneness – Never become mechanical in your presentations; allow humaneness to shine through.
- O** Openness – Be ready to experience new ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. Be open to these by showing respect and patience while experiencing these expressions.
- N** New – Bring yourself anew to each workshop; remember that the participants, the team, and yourself bring new experiences that give each workshop a life of its own.
- E** Energy – Remember that you set the tone of the workshops. When energy levels seem low. Allow responsibility as a team member to shine with an energetic spark.
- S** Supportive – Remember to always support the honest efforts of all the participants and team members. We all are at different

levels of acceptance, desire, openness and willingness. We need to be very sensitive and supportive to any positive efforts or steps taken by anyone in the workshop.

- D** Dedication – Your dedication to the AVP process and philosophies will shine through you as a new way of life. Allow it to enlighten others.
 - O** Only – Only take the steps you are ready, willing, and prepared to take. Only those that we wish to master should we continue to practice.
 - I** Involvement – AVP workshops and processes have grown from the first few seeds of knowledge given us, first from our friends the Quakers and then from all the past and present participants and team members. You have some of the seeds of knowledge too. Please share them and help us create a new exercise or L&L.
 - N** New – Allow yourself to be renewed by enjoying every workshop you facilitate. Spirituality is a great thing.
 - E** Exercises – Be prepared to present and debrief any exercise you volunteer for, or create. Flexibility and help is allowed.
 - E** Equal – Remember equality equals empowerment! Never present yourself in an unequal manner to the participants or your teammates.
 - D** Desire – Desire is the driving force of change; remember, it is your responsibility as a team member to help create the desire in the participants and to encourage their desires for a non-violent lifestyle.
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AVP FORUM

A New Light & Lively... **Earthquake**

From the Landing Strip in New York City

This is an active light and lively. It involves moving "houses" and "tenants" and occasionally an earthquake that destroys all the "houses." And then the "houses" have to be built up again. It goes like this:

Ask everyone to divide into groups of threes. All participants should be in a group of three except the leader.

Ask two members of each group to form a "house" by facing each other and raising their arms above their heads and joining hands.

The third member of each group is the "tenant" and stands in the middle inside the "house."

The leader who is the odd person out, may call one of the three following commands.

- A. "Tenant" In this case the houses stay in place and each tenant must move to a new house. The leader tries to find a new house and the person that is left out is the new leader.
- B. "House" In this case the tenants stay in place and each house must move to find a new tenant. The leader tries to find a new house.
- C. "Earthquake" In this case all the houses are destroyed and everyone must change. New pairs make houses and tenants jump in to occupy them.

The exercise helps to promote cooperation and is great fun.

A New Light & Lively... **Laugh Track**

From Chris Nancarrow, AVP Victoria, BC

This is a variation of the Machine light and lively. Explain that we are going to make a mechanical laugh track by coming to the center one by one. Each person makes a different laugh; perhaps a deep belly laugh or a little giggle – whatever appeals to the person.

After the first person, each person joins with one hand to form the laugh machine, and keeps making the same laugh over and over. Keep up the noises until everyone is laughing contagiously, even if they are not part of the laugh machine.

A New Light & Lively... **Stop the Music**

From Betty & Rudy Cypser, AVP-NY

This is a little like pattern ball. Ask all the participants to stand in a circle. Then take a tennis ball and begin to toss it around the circle in a random pattern.

The leader then stands outside the circle and faces away from the group so he or she cannot see who has the ball.

The leader then begins to sing a song. It can be any kind of a song that the person chooses. The leader then stops singing, perhaps in the middle of a phrase. The person in the circle that has the ball at the time the music stops is the next leader.

The new leader then steps out of the circle, turns away from the group and sings another song.

New Exercise...

Choosing a Focus Topic for a Second Level Workshop

by Peter Laughingwolf, AVP-Bay Area, Northern California

Purpose: To arrive at a group consensus on the choice of a topic for a Second-Level workshop.

Time: However long it takes!

Presentation: The major difference between Basic and Second-Level workshops is that we choose a focus topic. The facilitators have a skeleton agenda including concentric circles and small group exercises as we did in the Basic: light & livelies, gatherings and closings, role plays and mediation exercises. We also have a large collection of exercises that have been used in previous Second-Level workshops here and around the world.

The Basic workshop was designed as kind of a smorgasbord of experiences, since we have no idea what the expectations of any particular group will be.

At the Second-Level, we like the group to come to consensus on a focus topic that will limit and therefore deepen our shared experience. You probably won't see much of us during breaks and meals as we will be busy putting together the agenda to reflect the focus topic that we select here.

Setup: Do's and Don'ts

Do's: One way to begin this exercise is to ask the group if anyone has a particular concern they would like the workshop to focus on. Ask for their reasons in choosing this topic. They may strike a chord with other participants, and hopefully will lead to consensus

on the purpose for this particular workshop. Generally, we have found that having the experience of coming to this preliminary consensus, finding consensus on the focus topic goes fairly quickly.

Be sure to make a clear check for consensus after closing this exercise. "Does anyone have any reservations about this focus for the workshop?"

Don'ts: Don't mention the list of topics from the Second Level Manual. Choosing from a list of options is one of the hardest things to reach consensus on. If by some horrid quirk of fate you find yourself in that position, try suggesting that the group make its choice by eliminating the topics that individuals don't want to explore.

If necessary, you may work with two topics. Don't offer to work with more than two. This tends to dilute the impact of the exercise.

If you run into trouble reaching consensus:

Be very cautious about not singling out individuals or groups for lack of consensus. Always turn to the group for creative solutions to the impasse. Remember to hold the conflict in a positive perspective.

If there is an impasse, there is without doubt another solution that hasn't been proposed yet, upon which people will find they can agree.

AVP FORUM

The Bag Exercise

By Theodore Hayward, Sing Sing, AVP-NY

Purpose: To help remove the blocks to community in the beginning of the workshop.

Time: 15 Minutes

Materials: Newsprint and markers

Procedure:

1. Participants are asked to brainstorm things that might block the sense of community in the group. This would include items such as fear, put downs, ego, jealousy etc. All items are written down on newsprint.
2. Then the sheet is placed in a transparent trash bag to symbolize that this is the trash that needs to be avoided in the workshop. The bag is then taped to the wall for the rest of the workshop.
3. If problems arise during the workshop, the participants are then referred to the Trash BAG to see if this problem is listed. This can lead to a discussion of how to keep the problem in the trash bag rather than in the workshop.

Order Your Supplement

The exercises described above and to the left are just two of the 48 new exercises included in the Supplement to the Basic and Advanced Manuals. The Supplement contains over 200 pages of new material.

Just order your copy from the AVP-USA Office, P.O. Box 300431, Houston, TX 77230-0431 or call 713-747-9999. The cost is \$10.00 plus shipping.

A Tribute to Marge Zybas

By Sharon Truesdail, President, AVP-New York

I feel strongly that I cannot let Marge pass without saying a few words publically about her.

Marge was indeed a strong mentor for many of us. I had the pleasure of working with her on one of the most difficult workshops of my 15 year history with AVP. What I learned about compassion from Marge helped me mold my life!!!

What is little known or said about Marge is that she not only devoted the last 20 years to leading AVP workshops, but also to keeping the organization growing. Without ever asking or receiving recognition, Marge spent many years performing the time consuming and difficult tasks of gathering records, paying attention to information and offering support. She often traveled to support new AVP groups forming that had limited experience but great desire.

Marge was like a gardner for a land owner. She tended the grounds with great love, time, energy and attention, without ever taking ownership of the land. The blossoms of her work spring forth in those of us that have been touched by her tending. The fruits of her labor can be seen all across this country. Like many masters of her craft, Marge is only now recognized by her passing.

In writing this love letter I have learned yet another lesson from Marge. I must not only stop and smell the roses along the way, but I must also recognize the gardner as I do it.

Marge Zybas died peacefully on June 16, 1997 after a long struggle with cancer. She often led more than 25 workshops per year and helped to create the AVP program in NY, NJ and Maryland.

AROUND AVP

AVP-USA Needs Leaders

The Nominating Committee is seeking volunteer leaders for the positions of Board Vice-Chair and a Fundraising & Finance Committee Chairperson. Nominees will need to be selected by the time of the AVP-USA Annual Meeting over Labor Day.

Duties of the Vice-Chair include serving on the leadership team, attendance at two Board meetings each year, maintaining contact with the AVP/USA committees, as well as willingness to serve as Chairperson when necessary. If you would like more information, contact Rick Krouskop at 318-797-1412 or e-mail: rkrouskop@usa.net.

The Fund Raising & Finance Committee Chair guides the committee as they seek out funding and develop fundraising campaigns and strategies. In the past this has included foundation grants and individual donor campaigns. See the article on "Fundraising Fun." Current chair Kaki Sjogren has done some major work and has made progress during her tenure and is now due for a break. If you have questions, please contact her at 215-423-4115 or e-mail: kaksjog@aol.com.

The nominating committee is still incomplete and needs representation from each region. Those regions currently represented are New York, South Central and South East. If you would like to serve on the Nominating Committee or would be willing to be considered for any of the positions outlined above, please contact Betsy Rothstein at 212-685-1578, e-mail: bgr4456@is2.ntu.edu, or Jan Krouskop at 318-797-1412, e-mail: jankrouskop@usa.net

Fundraising Fun

There is a fundraising potential in all of us. Individuals and groups are really eager to support valuable efforts like AVP. They just need to be asked to give.

Attendees of the 1996 AVP-USA National Board Meeting enjoyed a six point problem solving on raising funds for the national while balancing the interests of the regional and local levels.

Results have included the production of a fundraising video called "Have You Seen Mrs. Mumbley's Moneytree?"

Locals in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania participated in a national phonathon which produced nearly \$10,000 in contributions. Your local can be a big contributor by agreeing to participate in the next phonathon.

Volunteers will learn how to solicit funds in an AVP appropriate way by viewing the video. The video will be available for viewing at the Annual Meeting in Burlington, NJ. Volunteers can enjoy not only the satisfaction of raising much-needed funds, but also the joy of speaking to AVP facilitators across the country. Please discuss this at the next meeting of your local AVP group. If your group is willing to help, call the national office before the beginning of October.

Another simple way you can support the national office is by asking for a contribution form your local meeting, church, synagogue or other religious group. If you belong to a civic group, they may be willing to support the vital work of AVP also. If you want a sample letter of request for funds, contact Margie Kerr.

AROUND AVP

Death of Bill Wood

As you may know, Debby and Bill Wood have been key AVP leaders on the local, regional and national levels. Bill attended many of the AVP-USA meetings.

We are sad to report that Bill wood was stricken with a cerebral hemorage on May 5, fell into a coma and died two weeks later. In addition to AVP, Bill was a leader in the American Friends Service Committee, Pendle Hill, Powell House and Friends United Meeting. He will be missed greatly.

Call AVP Long Distance

Did you know that you can make long distance calls for 10¢ a minute 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? And you can contribute to AVP-USA at the same time? This is a wonderful way for facilitators and friends of AVP to provide financial support.

If you subscribe to EXCEL, 5% of usage fees can go to AVP-USA. To learn more about this, or to sign up for the service, call Bruce Thron-Weber at 1-888-999-7926 Ext. 9738

Notes from AVP in Germany

Projekt Alternativen zur Gewalt (PAG) is growing. The program has expanded to local groups throughout Germany including the Rhineland, Hanover, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Bad Pyrmont and an independent sister group in Bavaria. PAG now has 30 to 40 trainers but only about five lead trainers. For information contact: Bernard Klinghammer, Kaliweg 31, 30952 Ronnenberg, Germany Phone/Fax: 49-5109-7695

Transforming Power... The Book!

By Hal Brody, AVP-San Diego

Transforming Power is the heart of the AVP program. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a book that told stories of Transforming Power and the way that it has changed peoples lives. You can make this happen.

Please take the time to write down your Transforming Power stories. Just tell us what happened, they don't have to be perfectly written. We want to put this into a book this year so the deadline for stories is September 1, 1997. Please send your stories to:

Hal Brody
AVP-San Diego
3950 North Cordoba Avenue
Spring Valley, CA 91977

IBM Donates Computer

The AVP-USA office has been delighted to receive a 100mh PC340 Pentium computer with a 1.2 gig hard drive and a 14" color monitor. The new computer was donated by IBM and this replaces our aging computer which was often slow and troublesome.

Articles Needed

In this issue, there are many articles about AVP around the world, but not a great deal about AVP in the USA. We need news from your local AVP group. Please send articles or copies of your newsletter to: Fred Feucht, Transformer Editor, 88 Mountain Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570

Articles inside...

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AVP in Hungary

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Spanish Basic Manual	\$20.00
AVP Brochures	\$15.00 per 100

Send your order to the AVP-USA office:

Alternatives to Violence Project-USA
P.O. Box 300431
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Transformer Editor: Fred Feucht

Facilitator Mailing List: Janet Lugo

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Please send any address changes to Janet Lugo at: 46 Main Street, 9, Mechanicsville, NY 12118

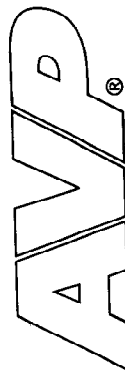
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