

Philip M. Helfaer, Leslie Case, John Conger, Margit Koemeda & Vincentia Schroeter

Inside the Backroom



Bioenergetic Analysis

25. Volume, No. 1, 2015, Page 11–18

Psychosozial-Verlag

DOI: [10.30820/0743-4804-2015-25-11](https://doi.org/10.30820/0743-4804-2015-25-11)



Bibliographic information of Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (The German Library)
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

2015 Psychosozial-Verlag, Gießen, Germany
info@psychosozial-verlag.de
www.psychosozial-verlag.de



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). This license allows private use and unmodified distribution, but prohibits editing and commercial use (further information can be found at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). The terms of the Creative Commons licence only apply to the original material. The reuse of material from other sources (marked with a reference) such as charts, illustrations, photos and text extracts may require further permission for use from the respective copyrights holder.

Cover design & layout based on drafts by Hanspeter Ludwig, Wetzlar

<https://doi.org/10.30820/0743-4804-2015-25>
ISBN (PDF-E-Book) 978-3-8379-7256-6
ISBN (Print) 978-3-8379-2481-7
ISSN (Online) 2747-8882 · ISSN (Print) 0743-4804

Inside the Backroom

The Clinical Journal of Bioenergetic Analysis 5 Chief Editors Speak out The 30 Year Perspective 1984–2014

Introduction

2015 is the year presenting this 25th volume of the clinical journal of *Bioenergetic Analysis*. 2015 also marks our 30th year of production of the journal.

To honor this 30th year here is the list of Chief Editors who took the helm over the years to provide a product that contained written material for the Bioenergetic community. Journals included the latest thinking in the field, the creative use of new and classic techniques, articles comparing Bioenergetics to other schools in psychotherapy and philosophy, research and examinations of topics within and beyond psychotherapy. Over the years various authors have taken themes of their interest and woven in new colors and shapes to contribute to the general zeitgeist of knowledge to inspire all of us in the Bioenergetic community.

Chief editors list:

1. Phil Helfaer: 1985–1990
2. Ed Svasta: 1991
3. Leslie Case: 1992–1993
4. John Conger: 1995
5. Miki Frank: 1996
6. John Conger: 1997–2004
7. Margit Koemeda: 2005–2007
8. Vincentia Schroeter: 2008-present

We have all had a team of editors, reviewers and proofreaders to help us with the annual task of putting together these volumes. Along with the authors, all these people have been essential to the process of completing the journals each year. I re-

quested notes from past chiefs and here are some of their messages sent for you to read about their time in the editing room.

An Exciting Time: First Issues of the Bioenergetic Journal (Philip M. Helfaer, Ph.D.)

I am looking at a large black and white photograph, which for me is imbued with warm memories. It is dated May 9, 1984, so it is not a digital photograph sent from a smart phone; it is from a conventional film camera. The photo shows two men, standing side by side, virtually shoulder to shoulder. A younger man on the left, slightly turned toward the older man, is holding a booklet in his hands and looks very excited and happy. He looks out at an audience. The older man, also looking very pleased and happy, regards the booklet. The younger man is a younger version of myself and the older man is Alexander Lowen, M.D., originator of bioenergetic analysis. The date indicates I would have been 50 years old, and Dr. Lowen would have been 74. The place the picture was taken was Liberty, New York, U.S.A., at the Grossinger resort. The occasion is the presentation of the very first issue, Volume 1, Number 1, of *Bioenergetic Analysis: The Clinical Journal of the International Institute for Bioenergetic Analysis*. Perhaps some readers of this journal will enjoy the story of how that occasion came to pass and how it almost did not come to pass.

Sometime in 1983, I received a letter, probably from Ed Svasta who was associate director of the institute at that time. It informed me that the executive committee (Ed, Len Hochman, Vivian Guze, Myron Koltuv, and Dr. Lowen) had agreed to offer me the opportunity to start a journal – as, they said, I had proposed doing. This was news to me. Dr. Lowen and I had talked about the idea of a journal; we both thought it would be a good idea. As I recall that was the extent of it. In any case, the executive committee invited me to come to New York to meet with them and tell them “my plans.” I went down to New York. The committee talked about various other matters of business, and then discussed the idea of publishing a journal. They agreed I should take on the task of launching it. I requested a budget of \$5000, a lot of money at the time, to hire a secretary and buy a computer. This request was granted. I returned home and started trying to figure out what to do next.

How did one create a professional journal from scratch for an organization that had never published a journal? I had no idea. At that time, there was no Internet available where you could learn about everything under the sun. My first act as an editor, then, was to purchase a book named *The Chicago Manual of Style*. It is a huge fat manual that was (and still is) one of the bibles of publishing. I studied it thoroughly.

Luckily, I discovered a congenial person living in our small town in Massachusetts who agreed to do the secretarial work. I purchased one of the first home computers, called a Kay Pro. You have to realize this was the very beginning of the information age and home computers. This Kay Pro was an impossibly complex thing that had to be programmed for every operation since it had no memory. I hired another young woman who was interested in learning it and she helped us through the first couple of issues. A few years later I purchased for myself the first Apple Macintosh computer, the one that put Apple on the map, and I learned how to use it.

These first issues of the journal were literally hand made. We had to do every step of publishing: type manuscripts, do “layouts” or “paste-ups” of every page, have a graphic designer do the covers, and of course I also did all the copy editing. For the first couple of issues we even took care of mailing out copies. We did all this in our home in Pepperell. Fortunately, we had a room downstairs we could devote to the journal.

I had to arrange for a printer. I found one of those unique individuals who find their way to small rural towns and develop a printing business. He lived in a large, drafty old farmhouse in Townsend, Massachusetts. He had an equally large, old, even draftier barn. The barn was filled with old-fashioned printing presses, those huge fascinating machines that could set type and print thousands of pages. I don't remember how many were in the first “run” of the journal – maybe 1500, maybe more, a lot of boxes in any case. I thought they came out beautifully.

I'm sure you'll believe me when I say, it was a lot of work. For that first issue, Velma, my wife, and I loaded several boxes of the journals into our car when we drove down to Grossinger's for the biennial conference. I was so excited about bringing the journal to the conference I wasn't sleeping.

I suppose it was the first full day of the conference. The New York Society was hosting the conference that year, and someone from that group was chairing the meeting. I approached him and asked for a five minute break in the program to introduce the journal. He refused. He said, “All I can say is that if you take a five minute break in the meeting, it will become known as the ‘Phil Helfaer memorial break.’” I was nonplussed by this bizarre threat, but I knew that the matter was too important to be put off in that way and I went to Dr. Lowen. We went to the meeting together, he introduced me, and I introduced the journal.

I was heartened by the response of all present (or almost all). Everyone was really excited about it! On that occasion, we were offering copies for sale, for \$5! I had announced that copies would be available for purchase at the close of the session. When the session closed everyone ran to the front reception area to buy a copy! It was a great moment!

After the conference, we had to deal with mailing copies to subscribers. We did this by hand for the first couple of issues. It was too much for one person. After the

second issue, I told the executive committee that we would have to find another way to produce and distribute. Dr. Lowen's long time secretary, Ruth MacKenzie agreed to take on that job.

For those first several issues, the completion of each one felt like a triumph against high odds. It was not easy to get material. Manuscripts had to be submitted in typed form. After I got my Macintosh, people could send floppy discs, but I don't recall when that became possible. Virtually none of the older therapists and trainers were in the habit of writing, and it was difficult to get enough material to fill an issue with qualified papers. I filled in the first few issues with quite a bit of material that Dr. Lowen had written previously in his quest to develop his work.

So that's the story of the beginnings of the journal of the IIBA. Establishing the journal meant a lot to me. I still feel a pride in that accomplishment and in those first six issues I edited.

I will end this story with the following. There are several papers of enduring value in the first six issues, a few of which are included in the recent reader. In particular, however, I commend to the current readers of this journal some of the papers by Alexander Lowen. These are especially, "A Case of Migraine," (Volume 1, Number 2), "A Psychosomatic Illness," (Volume 2, Number 1), and "Opening Address on Narcissism, Sexuality and Culture," (Volume 3, Number 2). These papers beautifully illustrate and describe Dr. Lowen's focus on the energetic processes of the body, important vicissitudes of energetic process in the course of therapy including those relating to illness, the singular importance of the focus on sexuality, the capacity to 'see the person' as the most basic condition of therapy, and the sense of Dr. Lowen's attitude and feeling concerning the human, feelingful presence of the therapist as a real person in the therapeutic dyad.

IIBA Journal 1992 and 1993 (Leslie Case)

I was the second editor of our journal. I was surprised to be asked, as I had not published any books or articles at the time, and had no editorial experience. Nonetheless, I accepted, with excitement and trepidation, and permission from the Executive Committee for my sister (a writer/editor) to work with me.

It was a daunting experience to follow Phil Helfaer, a Reichian and Lowenian scholar, an original thinker, a writer, a passionate man, the creator and editor of our journal for six years.

It took me a while to find my own way. I created a new look for the cover, with a new name. The look was bold and colorful, with a mauve background. Majenta

surrounded the bioenergetic insignnia. The journal was now called simply *The Journal*. The size of the J, however, was huge.

I did not have Editorial Consultants as Phil did. I liked the idea of going back and forth with the writer of each article, working together to make the article the very best it could be. Some writers loved these interactions; others felt that I was controlling their words and did not like it at all.

For the most part, *The Journal* had the same focus as in the past – communication within the bioenergetic community; disseminating its ideas, theories, and practices to others outside our arena. It continued to feature case studies and book reviews. I added a new section, “Short Items,” for poems and anecdotes, brief essays, and miscellaneous entries; and a “Letters to the Editor” section.

I encouraged the membership to send me case studies of people they worked with, reviews of books that had meaning for them, creative submissions for the short items section; and to express their viewpoints about the journal in general and specific articles as well, to comment if an article touched or angered them. I hoped for a back and forth interchange with our entire membership.

The responses were encouraging: recognition that Phil Helfaer was a hard act to follow; appreciation for the inclusion of the soft colors, the feminine into bioenergetics to balance Phil’s handsome, masculine presence; appreciation for the content and the graceful format; delighted disbelief that I included a poem in the first issue; and the one that made my day, “Beautiful. Exciting. Sexy.” What I did not hear, but imagined: *The Journal* was “not professional enough.” Although we were years away from reorganization within IIBA (Arles, 2000), there was a growing desire to increase our connectedness with other professional organizations; and a beautiful, exciting, sexy journal was absolutely not the way to get there!

John Conger, 1995 and 1997–2004

When I took over the editorship from the New York leadership, the journal appeared to publish within a fairly narrow range of authors. Lowen’s secretary was typing out submissions and the printing price was high. I made a few basic changes so that the authors submitted completed work and got the journal printed at half the price. I also focused on writing from the broad international community. The tone of the journal was more informal and available so that the readership might include the students and not a select few. At the time I turned the leadership over, the need had changed in Europe for the journal to represent Bioenergetics as a serious scientific process. I was studying to be a psychoanalyst and was glad to pass the journal on to take its new position.

Margit Koemeda, 2005–2008

After one or two decades of expansion and creativity, during the eighties and nineties European health administrations tried to “professionalize” psychotherapy and it got increasingly difficult for bioenergetic analysis, which, according to APA standards, did not belong to the “evidence based” approaches. This is because we had no research, namely no RCT (randomized controlled trials) or other quantitative studies to remain among the acknowledged approaches.

The Swiss Society spent a lot of time and effort keeping track of the continuously evolving requirements and tried to stay connected to the evolving forces in the process of psychotherapeutic professionalization. Hugo Steinman and I were active in this process, until in 2002 when Hugo got elected as president of the IIBA. For the first time in the history of the IIBA a European had become president. Efforts to reorganize the Institute and install more democratic structures were undertaken.

During this time the consciousness that the IIBA membership belonged to different cultures and spoke different languages was growing. Since I had served on other editorial boards of scientific journals in German speaking countries, one day Hugo asked me if I would be willing to take on the editor’s job for *Bioenergetic Analysis*.

In order to proliferate our body-oriented approach to a wider professional public, I thought we should have a publishing company for our journal, having contacted several of them for a book on Bioenergetic Analysis, which I had edited shortly before. The Psychosozial-Verlag in Gießen, Germany, finally agreed to publish *Bioenergetic Analysis* at a reasonable price. Barbara Bendel, our much appreciated IIBA administrator at that time agreed to mail volumes to our membership.

What I had underestimated was the difficulty of doing editorial work in a language that is not my first language. Fortunately, Vincentia Schroeter joined our editorial board from the beginning and helped with the translation of papers into English. Maê Nascimento from Brazil also joined our editorial board and she arranged to have our first joint issue translated into Portuguese. In this way the new editorial board represented at least three continents – Europe, North America and South America.

After three issues I was happy to pass on the chief editorship to Vincentia, as she is a native English speaker and does a wonderful job editing papers, which were originally written in other languages and then translated into English. Maê and I remained on the board (Maê with an intermission of several years, while she was serving on the IIBA BOT), and the three of us collaborate in a very constructive and pleasant way!

Musings on Chief Editors Job (Vincentia Schroeter, 2008–2015)

I reviewed my 8 years as editor in chief and here are some of my thoughts as I skimmed the volumes:

2008: The IIBA conference had been in Spain in 2007. This was my first trip to Spain, which was the homeland of my grandparents. In the Lowenian spirit of grounding, the cover photo on the journal is of my foot making its first step onto the land of my ancestors. I learned much from Margit as she helped me with the transition to chief editor. We changed our instructions to authors. For the first year all material was sent digitally, with no more need for paper copies. Margit and Maë were my valuable editing team, as I got my feet wet in my new job.

2009: Our founder, Alexander Lowen died October 28, 2008, just before this volume went to press, which made us all sad. For the first time we accepted papers from students in training in order to expose readers to written work from IIBA curriculum programs.

2010: The cover was a green tinted photo of Alexander Lowen and the volume contained memorial notes on his passing. A new addition sent from the Board of Trustees was to translate English abstracts of each published paper into 6 other languages for non-English speaking members.

2011: Along with professional papers, we included three book reviews and a creativity section that involved poetry, inspired by Bioenergetic concepts.

2012: Most papers were keynotes or articles from the 2011 IIBA conference in San Diego, California in the USA, which was a well-attended conference, with 32 countries represented.

2013: This year we suffered the deaths of prominent IIBA members, Frank Hladkey, Elaine Tucillo and David Campbell and memorialized them in this volume. Elaine's final paper is published in this edition.

2014: Many papers were originally presented at the 2013 IIBA conference in Sicily. Three articles were from Brazilian colleagues, including one classic paper on core energetics. Three papers were from the USA and one from Germany, providing proof that diverse voices are continuing to rise to be heard.

I was asked to comment on why we do this unpaid work:

Personally, although I am slow at it, I enjoy copy editing and proofreading every line of a paper. My goal is to make the article as clear as possible for the reader, while maintaining the original voice of the author. Sometimes I feel frustrated when I spend 10 or more hours proofreading one paper. Then I feel humble as I remember that these authors are often writing scholarly papers in English, which is often a second, third, or fourth language for some of them, while I can only write in English!

Summary

As you can read from these editor reports, the landscape has changed in the community over thirty years and with it the face of the journal over time. We remain open to new developments and modern thinking in the form of articles, as long as they are grounded in the theories and practice of Bioenergetic Analysis, as originally designed by our esteemed founder, Alexander Lowen.