



# LifeMember

## OWL NEWSLETTER

Summer Edition 2026

e-Newsletter



## Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Owl News!

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
CHILD & ADOLESCENT  
PSYCHIATRY

WWW.AACAP.ORG

## Quotes About Summer

Planting the Seeds  
of Big Ideas

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

— James Baldwin

"The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect, but by the play instinct arising from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the object it loves."

— Carl Jung

"The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

"If I have 1,000 ideas and only one turns out to be good, I am satisfied."

— Alfred Nobel

# COMMITTEE

**Margery R. Johnson, MD**  
Co-Chair

**Ellen H. Sholevar, MD**  
Co-Chair

**Balkozar S. Adam, MD**

**Clarence Chou, MD**

**Peter R. Cohen, MD**

**Martin J. Drell, MD**  
Editor

**Geraldine S. Fox, MD**

**Randall B. Gurak, MD**

**Paramjit Toor Joshi, MD**

**Douglas A. Kramer, MD**

**John Lingas, MD**

**Renee Mehlinger-Mitchel, MD**

**William J. Swift, MD**

**Carrie Sylvester, MD, MPH**

**Jillian West**  
Managing Editor

## SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR THE OWL NEWS!

We want to hear from you! Let us know what you are up to, how you're doing, and more! Please send materials to [communications@aacap.org](mailto:communications@aacap.org)

# IN THIS ISSUE

**Co-Chair Column: Leaving Work Unfinished** **03**  
Margery R. Johnson, MD, DLFAACAP

**Editor Letter: Movie Review: "My Dinner with Andre" (1981)** **05**  
Martin J. Drell, MD

**Watch of the Owl** **09**  
John T. McCarthy, MD

**Adolescence: A Big Busy Boulevard** **10**  
Alan Sandler, MD, MPH, DLFAACAP

**In Memoriam** **12**

**Donors List** **13**

**AACAP Statements** **15**

- **Mental Health Awareness Month 2026 AACAP Urges Immediate Action to Address the Youth Mental Health Crisis**
- **Presidential Statement on Recent MAHA Actions Related to Psychiatric Medications**

## COVER ART:



A barn owl stands among a field of bluebells, surrounded by soft greens and warm light. The bright, open landscape gives the image a sense of possibility and optimism, while the owl's watchful gaze feels focused on what's ahead. A fitting image of curiosity, hope, and new beginnings.

## Leaving Work Unfinished

By Margery R. Johnson, MD, DLFAACAP



Margery R. Johnson, MD,  
DLFAACAP

**As the relatively new co-chair of the Life Members Committee,** I approached writing my first column with considerable trepidation. So many of the articles in the Owl newsletter are inspiring accounts of the wonderful things that people are doing in retirement. But as someone who is still working full time (although no longer doing night call or weekend coverage of an inpatient unit!) I have no words of wisdom about having a fulfilling retirement. I realize that a good part of why I am still working, doing pretty much what I have been doing for the last 45 years, is the sense that I have not accomplished enough, that I have not made a substantial contribution to our profession, and that I have not finished anything substantial. I worry about leaving things unfinished.

Just a few days before I started writing this column, Pope Leo XIV celebrated Mass at the Basílica de la Sagrada Família in Barcelona, blessing the recently completed central tower of the



Basílica de la Sagrada Família

cathedral. When I visited this cathedral a few years ago, I marveled at its beauty and complexity, and the fact that it was still under construction. Antoni Gaudí, the architect of the cathedral, died 100 years ago, and the cathedral is not yet completed. Gaudí knew he would

never see his masterpiece, which he had worked on for 40 years, completed. Reading about the Pope's visit just made something click. It got me thinking about work that you'll never see completed, even after 40 years.

## Leaving Work Unfinished

---

The musician Bono (66 years old) talks about “cathedral thinking,” referring to the fact that the great European cathedrals took centuries to build. He discusses this concept in terms of his philanthropic efforts that are aimed at producing foundational changes, rather than quick fixes, in world health and economic development. This is a useful idea when, as child psychiatrists, we struggle against societal and institutional pathologies.

When you're young, you expect to accomplish things and see them come to completion. Mozart died somewhat mysteriously at 35, leaving his Requiem Mass incomplete, and Schubert, who died at 31, did not expect to write the “Unfinished Symphony.” But when you're older, you have to come to grips with knowing that you will be working on something that you will not be able to see to completion. The artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, whose work involved major site-specific installations such as “The Pont Neuf Wrapped” and the “Gates” in Central Park, were planning major future installations right up until their deaths at age 84 (Christo) and 74 (Jeanne-Claude), knowing that their son would spend many years completing them. Their son is still working on them, by the way.

I recently bought a home in the White Mountains of Arizona, in order to escape the summer heat, and it sits on a little over an acre of land. While there are plenty of native evergreens on the property, my husband is determined to plant some fruit trees that remind him of his childhood in

Eastern Europe. I initially thought it foolish to undertake such a project, but then I recalled the saying about old people who plant trees. I had to Google the Greek proverb, which is translated as “A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.” Google also led me to an African proverb: “The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The next best time to plant a tree is today.”

In our current fast-paced culture we expect to see things finished and to move on to the next project. We like to cross things off our “To Do List,” but maybe there is some merit to acknowledging that some things will be left unfinished.

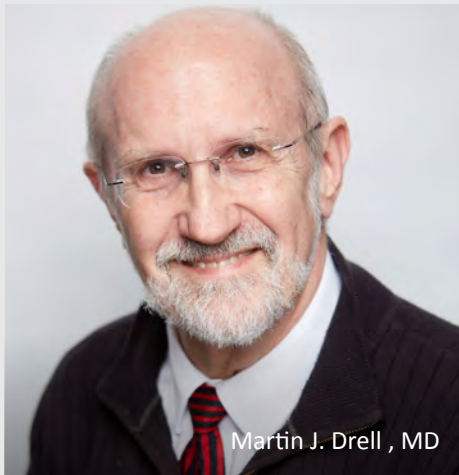
One of the wonderful things about the profession of child psychiatry is that we are all planting trees in whose shade we will never sit, and building cathedrals that we will never see to completion. One of the most important functions of the Life Members Committee is to fund educational grants for medical students, general psychiatry residents and fellows in child and adolescent psychiatry to attend the Annual Meeting. Trainees also attend mentoring sessions which they describe as meaningful, even life changing. Every contribution to the fund is an example of cathedral thinking.

I enjoy hearing about all of the amazing things that my retired colleagues are doing: teaching, creating beautiful works of art, volunteering as consultants, writing, serving on boards and other wonderful, creative endeavors. Maybe someday I will retire, but not just yet. ■



## Movie Review - "My Dinner with Andre" (1981)

By Martin J. Drell, MD



Martin J. Drell, MD

**I love movies and have since my earliest years.** Saturdays were the best days. They started at the Auburn Theater with morning matinees that included a movie preceded by cartoons, cliff-hanger serials, and the "crazy races," where you'd get a prize if the winner's number matched a number on your ticket. How cool was that? The movies were often Westerns. I especially liked Randolph Scott. On Saturday evenings, as I got older, there was NBC's Saturday Night at the Movies (1961–1978). It was in dazzling color on our new color TV. I just kept watching movies and never stopped.

In high school, I wrote, directed, and starred in a Woody Allen-influenced movie in which I played an eccentric, sex-crazed psychoanalyst based on the character of Dr. Fritz Fassbender in the 1965 movie "What's New Pussycat?" I deeply regret that my 8mm copy and the script have been lost to posterity.

My cinema habits continued in college, medical school, residency, and in my professional life. I seldom rewatched movies, as there were always new movies coming out. Along the way, while reading about the comedy writer S. J. Perelman, who wrote some of the early Marx Brothers movies ("Monkey Business," "Horse Feathers") and who worked at *The New Yorker* from 1931 to 1979, I learned of a running column of his called "Cloudland Revisited" where he revisited movies and books he loved as a "naïve young person." The recurring theme of the column was that he was invariably disappointed. This planted an idea that eventually led me to revisit films I had seen decades earlier. This idea—which was greatly assisted by cable TV and, especially, the Turner Classic Movies Channel—led to my sometimes breaking my "only new films" rule.

This column reports on the 1981 movie "My Dinner with Andre," which I enjoyed upon first viewing but did not fully understand and relate to. Unlike Perelman, upon rewatching, I found myself far from disappointed.

"My Dinner with Andre" has no traditional plot. There are no shootings, car chases, special effects, or AI. Instead, the movie documents the conversation of two middle-aged friends over the span of a two-hour dinner.

The movie opens with Wallace Shawn, a playwright whose fortunes have declined. After some early success, no one was now buying his works. His back-up job as an actor was not going well either. He is traveling by subway to a fancy dinner with Andre Gregory, a former collaborator whom he has not seen in years. Andre, at the peak of a successful career, had abruptly disappeared from New York. Wallace



was puzzled by Andre's actions, especially as he had always seemed a "stay at home with the family" person. He notes that around the same time Andre disappeared, the famous avant-garde Polish director Jerzy Grotowski had also disappeared. Wallace continues that he had heard through friends that Andre had returned to the city and was not doing well. Andre had been seen crying in public allegedly after Ingrid Bergman was quoted to have said in the movie "Autumn

## Movie Review - "My Dinner with Andre" (1981)

---

Sonata" (1978 by Ingmar Bergman) that she "could only live in her art, but not in her life."

Wallace worries about Andre's mental state and questions what he wants from him. He doubts if he can help his friend and defensively decides to deal with his fear by being a detective at the dinner. He vows to only ask questions about Andre's disappearance.

His strategy works for a while, but Wallace becomes increasingly discomforted by his friend's answers that seem to be degenerating into a confusing, dreamlike stream of consciousness. To the question about the disappearance, Andre explains that Grotowsky had asked him to accompany him to Europe. He told Grotowsky that he would only go if Grotowsky provided him with 40 women who did not speak English and who loved plays and transported the women to a virgin forest where they would all sit around until a spontaneous improvisation occurred.

Andre felt that this was akin to Konstantin Stanislavski's acting lessons on how actors could understand the essence of their characters. The actor needs to ask questions about the characters portrayed such as: Who are you? Why do you exist? Where did you come from? And where are you going?

Watching the film, I was struck by how these questions mirror the work of psychodynamic therapy and existential philosophy. I suspected that this was the major theme of the movie. It is about existential angst in everyday life. Andre comments that everyone plays a role which they all too often assume to such an extent that they are unclear what their life really is.

This line made me think of Donald Winnicott's concept of the "false self" and the "true self," the latter of which people are often not consciously aware of. I noted that Winnicott often spoke of therapy as "a piece of work" created by the playful space between the therapist and the patient.

The rest of Andre's monologue cascades through the movie. It explores Andre's experiences with Jerzy Grotowski, experimental theater, William Blake, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Martin Buber, Bertolt Brecht, the life in monasteries, Buddhism, spirituality, and the search for authenticity. He also talks about the Nuremberg Rallies, group hysteria, and

being buried alive and then resurrected with a new name.

Wallace becomes increasingly overwhelmed by all these answers, especially the questions Andre continually raises: Is life meaningful? Are we responsible for ourselves and others? Is asking questions enough? Can we tolerate listening to ourselves and others? Wallace declares that life is frightening. He wonders if he can ever know other people.

As this lopsided conversation continues, the two friends are gently reminded by the elderly waiter that they are the last customers in the restaurant, and it is closing time. Wallace returns home to his wife awash in his feelings concerning his dinner.

---

To my 77-year-old eyes, the movie describes two intelligent men in the midst of ongoing existential crises. Both are overwhelmed by their lives and have more questions than answers. They are friends trying their best to reconnect and discuss what ails them.

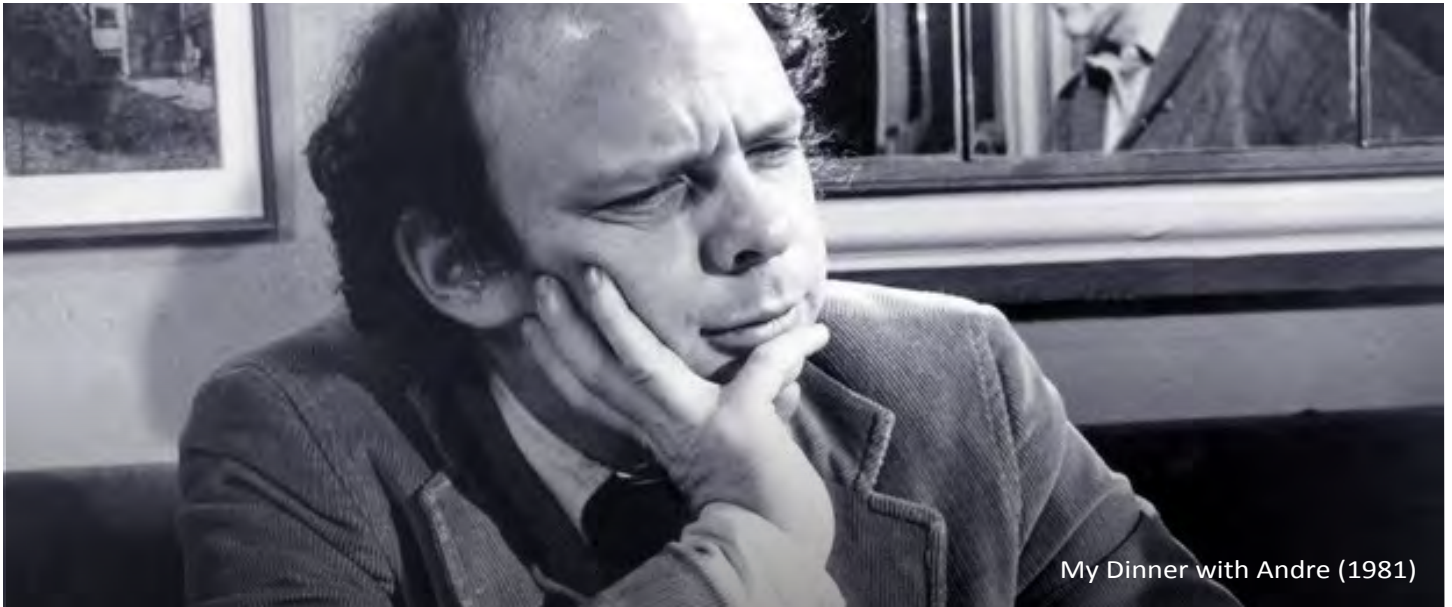
My own recent existential concerns involve slowing down, retirement, anxiety, my purpose in life, and, ultimately, death. As I wrote this piece, I found myself thinking about Irvin Yalom, the celebrated existential psychiatrist, discussing the death of his wife of 65 years. Yalom said that since her death he had not been the same. The young and adoring protégé who was interviewing him asked Yalom, who was in his early 90s and was having short term memory problems, how he handled his wife's death. Yalom answers that he did so by going to his library and rereading all of his books.

Yalom said that he did not fear death and would not have any problems if he were to die. He said that he wanted to be buried with his wife in the same casket. He was told this would not be possible. He said that he was now going to be buried next to her. When asked about any wisdom concerning death, Yalom remarked that those with regrets over things not done or over things that were done are the ones with problems. He said that he was still seeing patients for several hour consultations as his memory problems made longer term therapy impossible.

In Ingmar Bergman's 1957 movie "The Seventh Seal," a medieval knight challenges Death to a chess match. The knight wants to extend his life just a bit so he can do a good

## Movie Review - "My Dinner with Andre" (1981)

---



My Dinner with Andre (1981)

deed and answer his lingering questions about life and its meaning. I wonder whether my own low-amplitude anxiety and fatigue reflect existential concerns on my part. Have I done enough good deeds and have enough understanding to be able to *go gently into that good night*?

Perhaps I can fill retirement by seeing patients, doing consults, writing columns, and composing existentially influenced film reviews. Perhaps these activities will launch me into a “flow state” that will help me to find surcease from my low-grade worries.

While writing this, I realized that “My Dinner with Andre” did not have the same impact the first time I saw it decades ago because I was dealing with one of Erik Erikson's earlier developmental crises when I was younger, healthier, busier, and in more denial. Meanwhile, as I wrote, I found myself singing Peggy Lee's song “Is That All There Is?” The chorus repeats:

**Is that all there is?  
If that's all there is, my friends  
Then let's keep dancing  
Let's break out the booze and have a ball  
If that's all there is.**

As a Teetotaler who is not much for dancing, I must find my own ways to deal with life's questions, as do most of us, including Andre and Wallace. ■

---

### References:

- Bergman, I. (Director). (1957). The Seventh Seal [Film]. Svensk Filmindustri.
- Bergman, I. (Director). (1978). Autumn Sonata [Film]. Svensk Filmindustri.
- Blake, W. (1988). Songs of Innocence and of Experience. Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1794).
- Brecht, B. (1964). Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic (J. Willett, Ed. & Trans.). Hill and Wang.
- Buber, M. (1937). I and Thou (R. G. Smith, Trans.). T. & T. Clark. (Original work published 1923).
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). Identity: Youth and Crisis. W. W. Norton.
- Grotowski, J. (1968). Towards a Poor Theatre. Simon & Schuster.
- Lee, P. (1969). Is That All There Is? [Recorded by Peggy Lee]. Capitol Records. Written by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller.
- Malle, L. (Director). (1981). My Dinner with Andre [Film]. New Yorker Films.
- Mann, T. (1896/2024). Disillusionment (Enttäuschung). The Yale Review. Original work published 1896.
- Perelman, S. J. (1951). The Most of S. J. Perelman. Simon & Schuster.
- Saint-Exupery, A. de. (1943). The Little Prince (K. Woods, Trans.). Reynal & Hitchcock.
- Shawn, W., & Gregory, A. (1981). My Dinner with Andre: A Screenplay. Grove Press.
- Stanislavski, K. (1936). An Actor Prepares (E. R. Hapgood, Trans.). Theatre Arts Books.
- Thomas, D. (1951). Poem: Do not Go Gently into That Good Night
- Winnicott, D.W. (1965). The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment. Hogarth Press
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971). Playing and Reality. Tavistock Publications.
- Yalom, I. D. (1980). Existential Psychotherapy. Basic Books.



# AACAP 2026

## OCT 26-31 | ATLANTA

On behalf of AACAP's Life Members Committee, we'd like to invite all Life Members to attend AACAP's 2026 Annual Meeting, which will be held October 26 – 31 in Atlanta.

Registration is open, so book your hotel and start making your plans!

**REGISTER NOW!**

### Have Questions?

Contact the Registrar's Office at [registrar@aacap.org](mailto:registrar@aacap.org) or 202.966.7300, ext. 2005.

As you plan your week, please be sure that these events are on your schedule:

**27 TUESDAY**  
4:45 PM - 6:15 PM

Medical Students, Residents, and Fellows Meet Life Member Mentors at the 2026 AACAP Meeting

Life Members, to sign up to be a mentor for this event, please complete this form by September 20.

**28 WEDNESDAY**  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mid- and Experienced Career Psychiatrist (MECAP) Mentorship and Networking Event

**29 THURSDAY**  
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Clinical Perspectives 71: Life Members Wisdom Clinical Perspectives: Unplug and Recharge: Factors Affecting Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists Stepping Away From Professional Activities

**30 FRIDAY**  
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Ripples in the Water: The Impact of Innovation on the Practice of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Life Members Luncheon

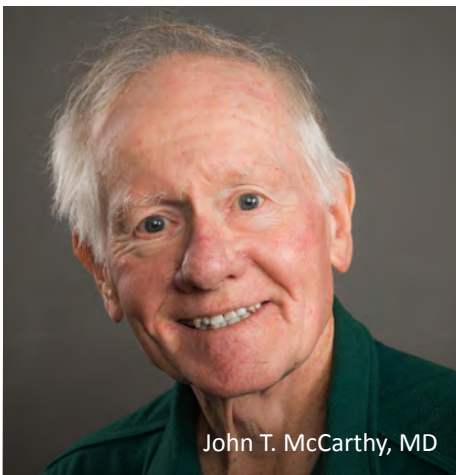
Join us for this memorable event for Life Members to enjoy the company of friends and colleagues, while mentoring our young award winners as they start their careers in child and adolescent psychiatry. Tickets are required and available through meeting registration.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN ATLANTA!**

# Watch of the Owl

By John T. McCarthy, MD

---



John T. McCarthy, MD

**With my recent induction into AACAP's Owl-hood,** I've been reflecting on its meaning (beyond that I'm now officially as old as Methuselah and have been an active AACAP member since before most members were born.) So I rewarded myself by purchasing an original watercolor by

Donald Vann, entitled "Watch of the Owls". It now hangs/perches on a strategic wall in our bedroom close to a giant potted Norfolk Pine that probably dates back to the Hoover administration. Jane and I feel comforted by its presence. Donald, an extremely talented artist, is a treasured friend and a member of the Cherokee Nation. Humble with a self-deprecating sense of humor, he oozes wisdom personally and through this wonderful painting.

*For Cherokees and other Native Americans, the owl symbolizes wisdom, patience, and death. In nature, owls have keen vision and hearing especially at night, which helps them to patiently track prey and fly quietly in capturing their victims.*

I view my role as a certified AACAP Owl serious and important. Donald Vann's

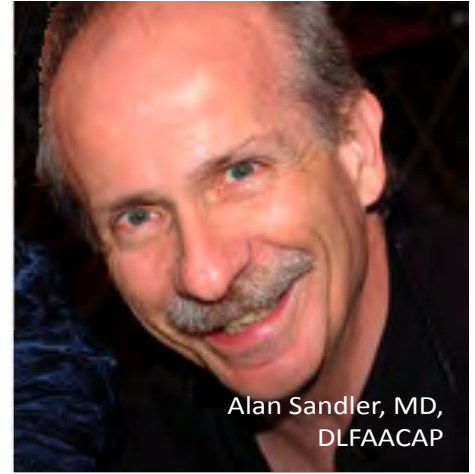
portrait of the great horned owl has helped to clarify my role as a senior member as I navigate through Erikson's Stage 9: "Life Cycle Completed" and beyond. I hope to mentor younger "up-and-coming" AACAP members by using my powers of observation to quietly and patiently listen to them in facilitating their personal and professional growth and development, careful to NOT dispense unwanted advice or expect acknowledgment. This to me is the gist of wisdom.

**I recognize that my time here on earth is very limited**

—all the more reason to follow an owl's quiet example. ■

# Adolescence: A Big Busy Boulevard

By Alan Sandler, MD, MPH, DLFAACAP



Alan Sandler, MD,  
DLFAACAP

**“I so wanted to be there when her boyfriend came to pick her up,”**

lamented a fellow grandparent at our regular Sunday brunch gathering after our usual lamenting about politics and the states of our health.

Her granddaughter had placed her off-limits for any involvement in her upcoming high school junior prom festivities. Having been left out in the cold, grandmother proceeded to describe how she undertook to vet the boyfriend, sharing her concerns about what might happen “after the party was over.”

“He’s a very good athlete,” is what a friend of the father told her who then repeated that comment when grandmother pressed him for more details.

Sharing her concerns and disappointments with her son, she discovered he had about the same level of information about the boy as she had, leaving them with some “after party” uncertainties, but none that would prevent the two from going to the prom.

“Is he worried about her?” I asked.

“All parents worry about their children,” was grandmother’s response.

“Maybe so,” I replied, but wondered how to best allay those worries and allow those children to safely and comfortably explore a first romance, a first break-up, a world beyond family boundaries—in effect, their adolescence.

Despite the headlines, most teens do navigate with safety and comfort to young adulthood as the parts of their brain that control emotion and behavior mature and provide the fuel for self-regulation, separation, and adulthood.

For others, there is pain. If they’re fortunate, someone recognizes the pain and tries to help.

“When you were little, how did you get across the street?” I ask kids in my care who have somehow entangled themselves behaviorally.

If they skip ahead to “my parents holding my hand,” I gently remind

them that “your parents carried you or pushed you in a stroller.”

“Then, yes,” I continue, “They held your hand when you could walk. Then they let go but walked beside you. Next, they stood on the curb and watched you cross, and soon they saw enough to know they no longer needed to be watching; you could get across all on your own.”

## “You were able to make it safely across,”

I tell them, “Because you felt the trust they had in you. So here we are now, on a corner of the ‘big busy boulevard’ of adolescence, with your parents watching over you, unable to let you cross on your own. Your words say: ‘I can take care of myself,’ but your behavior is saying: ‘Don’t let me out of your sight.’”

“You can venture off the curb once what your folks begin to see from you gives them pleasure and even pride.

## Adolescence: A Big Busy Boulevard

---

They can then begin to trust what you choose to do on your own time and know you will navigate that boulevard safely without ‘playing in traffic.’ And if that ‘traffic’ does seem troubling, that you will get to a safe center island and call for help.”

---

Adolescence is, from one perspective, a period of deal-making. Responsibly managing one’s obligations, (i.e., taking good care of life’s business) is the teenager’s currency. The “license” for privileges with increasing responsibility, and any needed capital, is parental payment.

I ask the kids: “How are your folks going to know you can be trusted enough to drive a car—in essence, when you ask permission to do something you’ve never done before?”

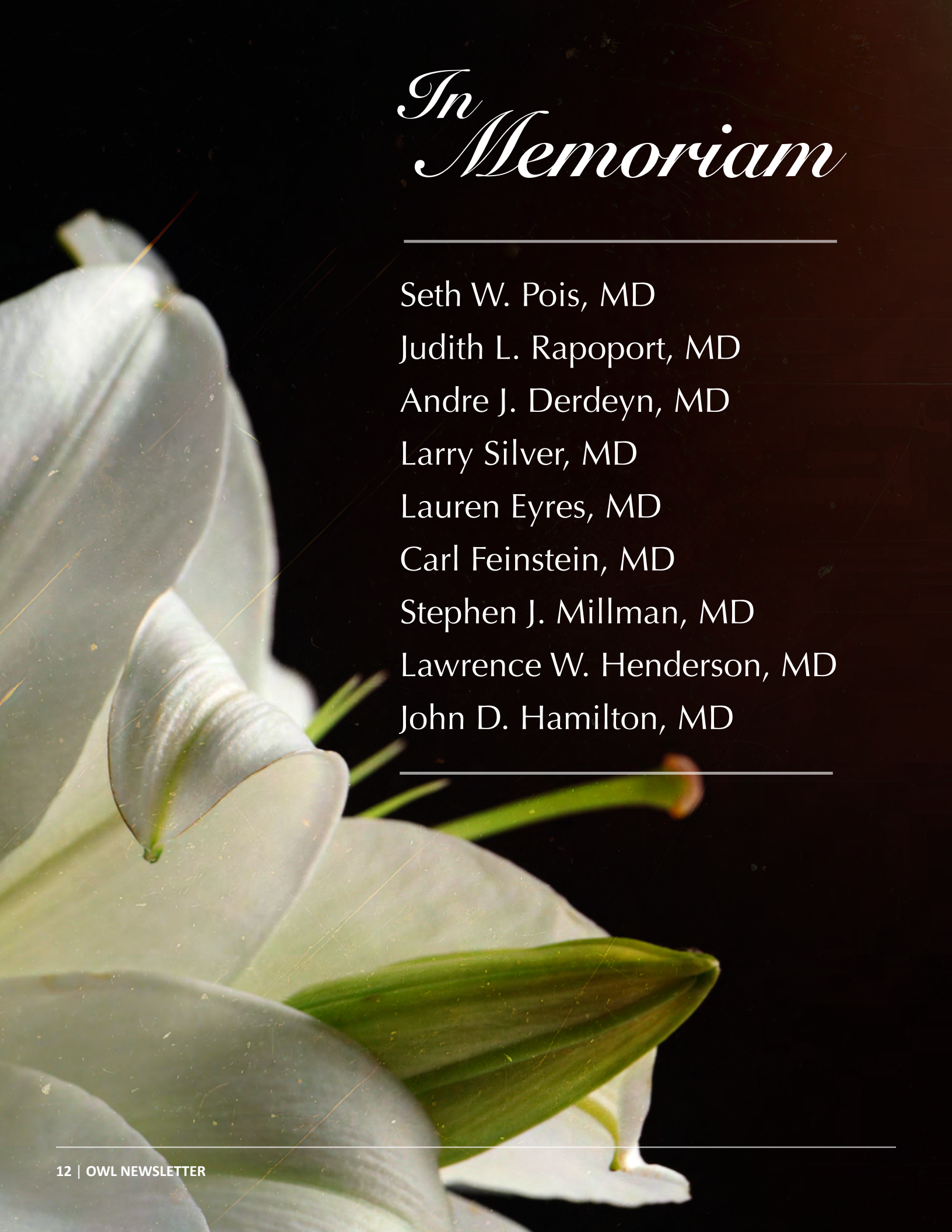
“Your behavior up to that moment” is the answer. Doing the

best you can in school, being where you are supposed to be, having good friends and friendships, being a good “citizen” at home, seeking comfort with healthy soothing all place deposits into a “trust” account, and when you ask permission to do that (maybe somewhat) risky thing, if your account balance allows, permission is yours.

It would seem my friend’s granddaughter does have sufficient trust on account with her immediate family to have this “good athlete” boy escort her to the prom. Her family recognizes she is equipped to protect herself if his game plan gets excessive.

Adopting that trust may be grandmother’s wished-for “front row ticket of admission” to the joys to come in her granddaughter’s life. ■





# *In Memoriam*

---

Seth W. Pois, MD

Judith L. Rapoport, MD

Andre J. Derdeyn, MD

Larry Silver, MD

Lauren Eyres, MD

Carl Feinstein, MD

Stephen J. Millman, MD

Lawrence W. Henderson, MD

John D. Hamilton, MD

---

# Donors to AACAP's Life Members Fund

---

AACAP is committed to the promotion of mentally healthy children, adolescents, and families through research, training, prevention, comprehensive diagnosis and treatment, peer support, and collaboration. We are deeply grateful to the following donors for their generous financial support of our mission. **Gifts Received from February 6, 2026, to August 1, 2026.**

## \$1,000 to \$5,000

Maya Bhatia, MD  
James Granger, MD  
Ledro R. Justice, MD  
Richard H. Smith, MD  
*Made in Honor of S. Weinstein, MD & in Memory of Nancy A. Durant, MD*

## \$500 to \$999

Marilyn B. Benoit, MD  
*Made in Memory of Carl Feinstein, MD & Judith L. Rapoport, MD*  
Jerry H. Fletcher, MD  
Norma Green, MD  
Bernard Hoffman, MD  
*Made in Memory of Benjamin Hoffman*  
Margery R. Johnson, MD  
Jerome H. Liebowitz, MD

## \$100 to \$499

Thomas F. Anders, MD  
Alan A. Axelson, MD  
Eileen Bazelon, MD  
Hector R. Bird, MD  
Lawrence Brain, MD  
Gabrielle A. Carlson, MD  
Richard Deamer, MD  
*Made in Honor of & in Memory of Zena Deamer & Glenn H. Griff*  
Louise Desgranges, MD  
Alexander Dowling

Martin J. Drell, MD  
David W. Dunn, MD  
*Made in Memory of Mosla Warren, MD*  
Ralph Gemelli, MD  
Rama Rao Gogineni, MD  
Richard L. Gross, MD  
*Made in Memory of Carol W. Gross*  
Sarah Elisabeth Herbert  
Jose M. Hernandez, MD  
*Made in Honor of Beverly Sutton, MD & in Memory of Carl Pfiffer, MD*  
Bruce R. Holzman, MD  
David Gerald Inwood, MD  
Brian P. Jacks, MD  
Michael B. Karluk, MD  
*Made in Honor of Carrie Sylvester, MD & in Memory of John Schowalter, MD*  
Clarice J. Kestenbaum, MD  
*Made in Honor of Virginia Q. Anthony*  
William M. Klyklo, MD  
Joey Lerner, MD, MPH  
Owen W. Lewis, MD  
D. Richard Martini, MD  
John T. McCarthy, MD  
Julia H. Murray, MD  
*Made in Memory of Dorothy Carlson, MD*  
Kathleen Myers, MD, MPH  
Nirmalam Nagulendran, MD  
*Made in Honor of my patients*  
Indiradevi Nimmagadda, MD  
*Made in Honor of my husband and in Memory of my parents*  
Mark Reber, MD

Howard Rudominer, MD  
Alberto C. Serrano, MD  
*Made in Memory of my mother, Regina R. Serrano*  
Ibis Dalia Sigas, MD  
Quentin Ted Smith, MD  
Frederick J. Stoddard, Jr., MD  
Jeffrey Sverd, MD  
Arden L. Weintraub, MD

## Up to \$99

Frances Burger, MD  
Michelle Hirsch, MD  
Charles R. Korrol, DO  
Christel E. Lembke, MD  
*Made in Memory of Helen Beiser, MD*  
Mali A. Mann, MD  
Judith Hood McKelvey, MD  
W. Peter Metz, MD  
Steven L. Nickman, MD  
Panom Phoungcherdchoo, MD  
Mark G. Rosato, MD

---

Every effort was made to list names correctly. If you find an error, please accept our apologies and contact the Development Department at [development@aacap.org](mailto:development@aacap.org) or 202.966.7300.

---

# Thank you for supporting AACAP!

---



# Life Members Luncheon



**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30**  
**11:30 AM TO 1:00 PM**

**Celebrate the heart of our community.** Join fellow Life Members for a warm, lively lunch where you'll reconnect with longtime colleagues and welcome this year's award winners as they launch their careers in child and adolescent psychiatry. Share your wisdom, swap stories, and help shape the next generation of leaders in our field.



**Tickets are required and available through meeting registration.**

Seating is limited, so reserve early.



## Questions?

Contact the Registrar's Office at  
[registrar@aacap.org](mailto:registrar@aacap.org) or 202.966.7300, ext, 2005.



# Mental Health Awareness Month 2026

## AACAP Urges Immediate Action to Address the Youth Mental Health Crisis

---

**Washington, DC, May 2026** - As the nation recognizes Mental Health Awareness Month, and during Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, May 3 to May 9, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) is calling for timely, sustained action to address the ongoing crisis in children's mental health.

Across the United States, growing numbers of children and teens are experiencing anxiety, depression, and other serious mental health conditions. Nearly half of the estimated 8 million U.S. children with a treatable mental health condition do not receive care from a qualified mental health professional. Others struggle to access effective and safe psychiatric medications. Stigma and other systemic barriers to care put young people at increased risk of substance use and suicide. Timely diagnosis, evidence-based treatments, and strong systems of support are essential to reversing this trajectory.

"Children's mental health is at a critical inflection point," said John T. Walkup, MD, President, AACAP. "We are seeing the consequences of unmet need in real time. Too many children and families are unable to access care when and where they need it. We must act with urgency to strengthen the systems that support them."

AACAP is bringing that urgency directly to policymakers during its **2026 Legislative Conference**, where more than 250 members, patients, and advocates are meeting with legislative offices in Washington, DC to demand action. These conversations focus on protecting access to lifesaving medications, strengthening the mental health workforce, and ensuring that children's mental health remains a clear national priority at a time when federal agencies and programs face uncertainty and shifting priorities.

"Mental Health Awareness Month must be more than recognition. It must drive action," said Heidi B. Ford, CAE, Executive Director and CEO, AACAP. "AACAP is advancing policies that expand access to high-quality care, support our physician workforce, and reduce stigma and other barriers that prevent children and families from getting help."



Mental health conditions in youth are common, serious, and treatable. AACAP calls on policymakers, health systems, and communities to prioritize children's mental health by investing in evidence-based care, expanding the workforce, and preserving the programs that shield and protect the mental health of our nation's youth.

---

*The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry promotes the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families through advocacy, education, and research. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are the leading physician authority on children's mental health. For more information, please visit [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)*

#### **Media Contact:**

Rob Grant, Communications Director  
202.966.7300  
[rgrant@aacap.org](mailto:rgrant@aacap.org)  
[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

# Presidential Statement on Recent MAHA Actions Related to Psychiatric Medications

---

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) is monitoring recent actions and public statements from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the *Make America Healthy Again* (MAHA) initiative related to prescribing psychiatric medications. While AACAP supports thoughtful discussions about improving children's health, public messaging that broadly and imprecisely challenges established psychiatric diagnoses and evidence-based treatments poses real risks to children and families.



Untreated mental illness puts children at risk of a variety of negative outcomes including worsening symptoms, excessive suffering, academic failure, social isolation, impaired functioning, and premature death by suicide and other causes. As child and adolescent psychiatrists, we are uniquely trained to evaluate, diagnose, and treat psychiatric disorders in youth. We provide individualized, evidence-based care that prioritizes science driven treatment, shared-decision making, routine monitoring, and recovery as the primary outcome.

Psychiatric medications, including SSRIs, are sometimes part of a broader holistic treatment plan that may include talk therapy, lifestyle and school changes, and family support. When clinically appropriate and properly monitored,

these medications are safe, effective, and, for many, lifesaving. Decisions about initiating, adjusting, tapering, or discontinuing medication should remain grounded in medical evidence, sound clinical judgment, and patient-family choice.

At a time when youth mental health needs remain high, AACAP urges policymakers to ensure that decisions affecting access to psychiatric medications and mental health services are grounded in evidence and informed by child and adolescent psychiatrists and other qualified clinicians. AACAP will continue to advocate for high-quality, evidence-based support for children, adolescents, and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Walkup'.

John Walkup, MD  
President, AACAP

## Reference

### **HHS Press Release:**

*HHS Launches MAHA Action Plan to Curb Psychiatric Over prescribing*

---

*The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry promotes the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families through advocacy, education, and research. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are the leading physician authority on children's mental health. For more information, please visit [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)*

## Media Contact:

Rob Grant, Communications Director  
202.966.7300  
[rgrant@aacap.org](mailto:rgrant@aacap.org)  
[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
CHILD & ADOLESCENT  
PSYCHIATRY

W W W . A A C A P . O R G

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20016-3007

Phone: 202.966.7300  
Fax: 202.464.0131

[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)