



### Editor's Note

I'd like to welcome readers to the spring edition of the Massachusetts Neuropsychological Society (MNS) newsletter. This edition finds MNS quite strong in terms of our financial status, the determination, ideas and talents of the MNS Board of Directors and MNS Professional Affairs Committee members, and of course the interest and abilities of you, the MNS membership. To become even stronger and better utilize your skills, we hope you heed our call to service as we seek both new members and additional volunteers to help with our very important advocacy work and other efforts.

A primary theme running through this edition of the MNS newsletter is the intensive advocacy work targeted most recently towards the changes Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA) is making to their neuropsychological testing authorization guidelines. Our current president, Dr. Maxine Krengel, addresses the importance of these activities in her segment and encourages you to support advocacy and other MNS efforts by urging all of your neuropsychology students and colleagues to join MNS. Dr. Joel Rosenbaum and Dr. Kira Armstrong, co-directors of the MNS Professional Affairs Committee (MNS-PAC) summarize their groups' recent efforts to formulate a strong response to the recent BCBSMA changes. Their segment will update you on the progress of the PAC's important work. Perhaps of

even more importance, they provide ways for you to get involved. If you have entertained the idea of becoming more involved in advocacy efforts, the MNS board and the PAC reminds you that now is a critical time to act on those inclinations. If anyone reading this has any interest in assisting in MNS advocacy or other efforts please do not hesitate to contact a board member or an MNS-PAC member (PAC members are listed at the end of the MNS-PAC update).

The current newsletter also includes Dr. Linda Zoe Podbros' report on the annual meeting of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences. Dr. Paul Spiers and I provide a synopsis of the upcoming science symposium, which promises to be a fun and interesting event. As always we have information about previous and upcoming CE talks from Dr. Erin Hill and Dr. Sandra Shaheen and a new membership update from Dr. Jennifer Turek Queally.

The board encourages members to join the listserv if they have not already. This has become the primary tool to update members regarding important MNS activities. Your annual membership renewal welcome information provides the instructions to get on the listserv or you can send an email to [admin@massneuropsychology.org](mailto:admin@massneuropsychology.org) for instructions.

Please enjoy the newsletter and please consider getting more involved in the important work MNS is doing for neuropsychology.

Michael A. Cirillo, Ph.D., ABPP-CN  
MNS Newsletter Editor

### Massachusetts Neuropsychological Society Board of Directors 2009

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.....Paul A. Spiers, Ph.D.

### President's Report

In this time of economic instability you may question why you should continue to support MNS. As current president of MNS, I encourage you to continue your support by not only maintaining your

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own membership, but by encouraging your colleagues and students who are not members to join as soon as possible (and remember to have them give you credit towards your membership dues for next year!). As you will see throughout this Newsletter, board members have been working diligently to provide the members of this society with the most current research in several topic areas through our education and CE programming. We have maintained alliances with other state and national organizations through our Professional Affairs Committee. In addition, we have a direct link to the Federation for Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences through our board member, Dr. Linda Zoe Podbros, who actively participates in Federation activities. In all of these endeavors, MNS has made progress in effecting policy change, increasing MNS exposure locally and nationally, attracting members, and achieving financial strength and stability. These goals have been at the forefront of the society since its inception 20 years ago and we continue to thrive because of a very active board and dedicated members.

Our CE program has been greatly strengthened over the past year under the direction of Dr. Sandra Shaheen and Dr. Erin Hill. We were able to host a WAIS-IV workshop at UMASS Medical in Worcester, the first of what we hope are many lectures in central and western parts of Massachusetts. All of our WAIS-IV workshops were extremely well attended and we plan to hold a WMS-IV workshop in the near future. Our CE offerings for next year include a variety of adult and child neuropsychology talks. If you have any suggestions for future programs, please do not hesitate to send us an email.

As you have seen if you have been following the interaction of our PAC in conjunction with the leadership of MPA in reducing the threats to our profession, we have shown that although our numbers are relatively small, our advocacy efforts are strong. These efforts, in response to the McKesson Criteria set out by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, have strengthened our ties with national neuropsychology organizations and have shown that we are powerful and steadfast in our determination to meet the needs of neuropsychologists.

Our student Board of Directors representative, Colleen Casey has assisted us in enlarging our student population and it is a continued goal of our organization to assess the needs of our student members and to increase participation in students in CE offerings.

Dr. Jennifer Turek has been doing an excellent job of integrating new members into the society and even getting new members involved in committee work. To continue to best serve our members, we have continued our Get Connected Membership Drive, Members Only Book Raffle and Members Only portion of our website.

Dr. Sigmund Hough has been busy helping to secure the financial success of our organization by meeting with a financial planner who is providing guidance on how best to allocate our assets during this period of economic turmoil. A current goal of the MNS board has been to maintain financial stability, even during this economic downturn, without increasing membership dues or the cost of CE talks.

Drs. Paul Spiers and Michael Cirillo have been working hard on the 2009 Science Symposium. They have written a brief synopsis of the event for the current newsletter. I look forward to seeing you at the MIT faculty club with our guest speaker Bruce Price, MD. We will again be holding a poster session prior to the lecture with a prize for the best poster.

So as you read through all that MNS has to offer you, remember

to continue to support your organization and encourage students and colleagues to do the same. In addition, we seek input from any and all members. If you would like to work on a committee, get more involved by joining the board, or offer financial contributions, please email any of the board members.

I thank our editor, Dr. Michael Cirillo, and hope you enjoy this edition of the MNS Newsletter. Please join our listserv and make sure that we have your email address as one of our continued goals is to reduce our costs by reducing our mailings.

I have truly enjoyed meeting and interacting with so many of you during my year as the President of the Board. As I turn the "title" over to Dr. Carol Leavell, I look forward to continuing to take part in society initiatives.

Maxine Krengel, Ph.D.  
MNS President

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## Professional Affairs Note

This has been a very busy time for the MNS Professional Affairs Committee (PAC). As most if not all of you know, we have been engaged in a large-scale advocacy effort to influence and modify BCBSMA's upcoming policy changes regarding neuropsychological assessment. MNS and the Massachusetts Psychological Association (MPA) have collaborated in this very important movement leading to an impressively productive relationship. While our efforts have been focused on BCBSMA to date, we are confident this partnership will continue to lead to other positive changes for the practice of neuropsychology.

We continue to work on your behalf in the areas of Advocacy and Membership Education, and are pleased to be able to share with you a summary of our activities over the past several months.

**Advocacy:** Our committee has been meeting with BCBSMA on a frequent basis to share our concerns about their proposed policy changes for neuropsychological assessment. As you know, BCBSMA had originally intended to change the number of hours authorized for neuropsychological assessments from 16 to as few as 6 hours (for geriatric, adult, and adolescent patients). BCBSMA had assured us that they would post their full policy regarding neuropsychological assessment on their website in April, although more recently they have indicated that this date may ultimately be pushed back. We have repeatedly encouraged them to share their criteria sooner rather than later so as to allow the community to respond to their policy, but they have decided to move forward with their original plan. Nonetheless, because of our efforts, BCBSMA has developed a better understanding of our practice, and in the process has agreed to an increase in their proposed number of authorized testing hours; they will now authorize 8-10 hours of testing for adult/geriatric patients and 8 – 12 hours for children and adolescents depending on the patient's medical history. They have also agreed that they would not require preauthorization for neuropsychological assessments conducted with inpatients. Further, they have reported that Medicare replacement and federal BCBS policies will be exempt from the preauthorization procedure. We continue to meet with them to help broaden the number of medical diagnoses for which BCBSMA will authorize neuropsychological assessment, and to suggest ways to

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**PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS NOTE**—continued from page 2

streamline their authorization process. In this way, we continue to advocate for the needs of our patients and referral sources, as well as your ability to practice within the standards of care for our community.

Through our work with BCBSMA, the MNS PAC has also forged stronger ties with our national neuropsychological and psychological associations. We have been in close communication with APA's Division 40 and Practice Directorate, the National Association of Neuropsychology (NAN), and the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN). Each of these associations has promised support in our ongoing advocacy with BCBSMA. Furthermore, through our efforts the national societies have agreed to recognize the need for a national response to the increasingly limiting policies that impact the practice of neuropsychology.

**Member Education:** The PAC has worked diligently to keep you apprised of our advocacy work with BCBSMA. Our primary source of communication has been via the MNS listserv and the MNS website (where we have posted our letters to the membership and to BCBSMA for your reference). For those of you who are not already on the MNS listserv, we strongly encourage you to join; we will continue to rely on this venue to provide important and oftentimes sensitive information to you about BCBSMA as well as updates regarding other timely issues. Any such sensitive information will be posted primarily through the Members Only section of the website.

Although BCBSMA has been a primary area of focus, we recognize the need for continued monitoring and advocacy with other local insurance companies. Consequently, we wish to also remind you about our Insurance Experience Data Collection Form, which can be found on the Members Only section of the MNS website. This form is designed to allow you provide input regarding your experiences with all local insurance companies. This information will allow us to recognize important trends that may warrant closer attention and/or more direct involvement from your MNS representatives. In turn, we will be able to work proactively on these important professional issues.

**How you can help:** We encourage you to educate your referral sources and community patient support groups regarding the upcoming BCBSMA Policy changes; although we will continue our advocacy movement with BCBSMA, the voice of patient advocacy groups and referral sources can play an important role in helping to effect further change. We have posted sample letters on our website that you can use to encourage physicians and advocacy groups to share their concerns. We also ask that you complete the Insurance Experience Data Collection Form should you be experiencing challenges with other payers in the community. Finally, we encourage you to take a more active role in professional affairs by joining the PAC, or by volunteering to work on smaller projects related to our advocacy movements.

**Concluding Remarks:** Many neuropsychologists in the past several years have become worried and even disheartened about the impact of managed care on our ability to provide the standard of care for our patients. We have seen funding slip away from our training programs, found ourselves having to fight harder to secure preauthorizations, and watched insurance companies repeatedly decrease reimbursement even as the role of neuropsychology has expanded to support greater numbers of patients with a wide variety of neurocognitive impairments. Still we all need to remember, we have the capac-

ity to effect positive change. More specifically, we have the resources to demonstrate our cost-utility and the benefits that we can offer to our patients and referral sources. We have the capacity to impact how neuropsychology is seen, understood, and appreciated, and we have the capacity to make a stand both locally and nationally. We urge all of you to consider how the PAC can better meet your needs and the needs of the society but also how you can contribute to the PAC and MNS society as a whole. We have the capacity, we need to recognize this and take advantage of our ability to direct our future.

**Acknowledgments:** Your MNS Professional Affairs Committee consists of the following hard working and dedicated MNS members. We wish to thank each of them personally for all of their efforts over the past year: Roger Cohen, Ph.D., Murdo Dowds, Ph.D., Richard Fisher, Ph.D., Michelle Imber, Ph.D., ABPP-CN, Margaret Lanca, Ph.D., Clare O'Callaghan, Ph.D., NP, Dana Penney, Ph.D., Andrea Piatt, Ph.D., Linda Podbros, Ph.D., and Jeff Sheer, Ph.D.

Kira Armstrong, Ph.D., ABPP-CN  
Joel Rosenbaum, PhD  
Co-Directors MNS-PAC

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## Science Symposium 2009

### *Come One, Come All!*

On Tuesday June 9<sup>th</sup>, the MNS will host its annual science symposium with a poster session, a plated dinner, and an invited speaker. Based on last year's success, and feedback, the Science Symposium will again be held at the MIT Faculty Club on Memorial Drive in Cambridge.

The Poster Session will begin at 5:00 pm, and, as last year, will be accompanied by hot and cold appetizers, with an available cash bar. The Butters Award for the Best Student Poster will be presented at about 6:30 pm, followed by dinner. At approximately 8:00 pm, the Cermak and Kaplan Awards will be presented, and our guest speaker will be introduced.

MNS is very fortunate to have as our speaker this year, Dr. Bruce H. Price, Chief of the Department of Neurology at McLean Hospital. Trained in internal medicine, general neurology, and cognitive/behavioral neurology, including with Norm Geschwind and Marsel Mesulam at the Beth Israel Behavioral Neurology Unit, Bruce became Chief at McLean in 1994. He is driven by his interest in the intersections between neurology, psychiatry, neurosurgery, neuropsychology, and cognitive neuroscience. In 1996, he co-founded a fellowship program in neuropsychology, and in 1999 established a fellowship in behavioral neurology/neuropsychiatry, both at McLean. Bruce routinely supervises more than 20 psychiatry, neuropsychology, geriatric, and neurology residents and fellows every year.

Dr. Price lectures regularly at regional, national, and international conferences, and has numerous book chapters and original peer reviewed journal publications on the cutting edge of behavioral neurology. He is an Associate Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and an Associate Neurologist at Massachusetts General Hospital. He is drawn to the complexities of the mind/brain interface and their intersection with other social forces. At the Science Symposium he will discuss the historic importance of wisdom

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and characterize some attributes of wise people in his talk entitled *Measuring Wisdom* – sounds interesting! Please all plan to join us again at the MIT Faculty Club and look for full details of the Science Symposium including cost and registration information in an upcoming MNS mailing. In addition, information and registration using PayPal will be available at the MNS website: [www.massneuropsychology.org](http://www.massneuropsychology.org)

Paul Spiers, Ph.D.  
Michael A. Cirillo, Ph.D., ABPP-CN  
Co-Directors Science Symposium Planning Committee

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## Continuing Education Update: The Brain and Environment, Epilepsy, and Wisdom: Topics for Spring 2009

### Upcoming CE Lectures

William Barr, Ph.D. visits Boston in May from NYU where he is the Chief of Neuropsychology at the NYU Comprehensive Epilepsy Center and Associate Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry. Dr. Barr will be honored for his contributions in neuropsychology as recipient of the Edith Kaplan award. Dr. Barr's perspectives were appreciated in his piece, "Epilepsy and neuropsychology: past, present, and future", which appeared in *Neuropsychology* review in 2007. In May, Dr. Barr will speak to us on the topic "Searching for Nonverbal Memory: Neuropsychological Studies of Right Temporal Lobe Epilepsy" (5/5/09).

MNS Board Members Paul Spiers and Mike Cirillo have taken the lead on arranging this year's Science Symposium that will welcome Dr. Bruce Price's presentation, "Measuring Wisdom"—sounds intriguing! (6/9/09).

### Review of CE Lectures

Since our last Newsletter Update, the Continuing Education Committee welcomed Dr. Nouchine Hadjikhari, who gave us a fascinating talk on the variability seen in autism spectrum disorders, in her talk, "The Many Faces of Autism". Her commitment to improving the science of autism for her patients and research subjects is an indication of the value of clinical training perspective in neurophysiological research.

The CE series took an unintended extended break as we enjoyed the East Coast winter weather. Unfortunately Dr. Tony Giuliano's talk on "Neurocognition in Bipolar Disorder" was postponed. In March we highlighted the important work of a relatively new MNS member, by inviting Dr. Edward Pace-Schott to share a review of, "The Neurobiology of Sleep". Dr. Pace-Schott's well-informed talk prompted considerable audience discussion and questions about the clinical significance of his sleep findings.

In April, we enjoyed Margaret Sheridan, Ph.D.'s talk, "Environmental Variables in the Development of the Brain" (4/7/09). Dr. Sheridan is a Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholar and post-doctoral researcher in the Laboratories of Cognitive Neuroscience at Children's Hospital. Dr. Sheridan discussed her research which involves indentifying changes in neurobiology that mediate relationships between social variables, stress, and healthy outcomes. This is an important application of neurodevelopmental science to practice in the individual case and for public policy.

## Planned Activities

The speaker series for next Fall is expected to include a September kick-off relevant to neuropsychological practices in the current climate. Many members will be pleased to learn that we are hoping to reschedule Tony Giuliano's important work on cognition in bipolar disorder early in the fall. We are investigating interest in a forensic workshop in November.

The CE Committee anticipates board and non-board volunteer opportunities. We hope to put together a program that shares the diverse clinical and research interests of our members. Any member is eligible to help, and associate and student members can always volunteer. Contact Sandie Shaheen or Erin Hill with any questions.

## APA Accreditation for the Continuing Education Program

After last year's completion of the 10 year review application to APA, we have received notification of Five Year Full Approval. The Continuing Education committee collects data and submits it to APA annually, in order to maintain standards for continuing education for participating psychologists. Sandra Shaheen completed last year's application as CE Coordinator and Chairperson.

Announcements and updates regarding our Continuing Education series are always available on [massneuropsychology.org](http://massneuropsychology.org). Contact Sandie, Erin and Linda with recommendations for speakers in the coming year, suggestions for workshops, and in order to volunteer. Please remember to join us for refreshments prior to the talks from 7-7:30. Thank you for your support!

Sandra Shaheen, Ph.D.  
Erin Hill, Psy.D., ABPP-CN  
MNS Continuing Education Program Committee

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## Report on the Annual Meeting of The Federation of Behavioral, Psychological & Cognitive Sciences

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008, I again represented MNS at The Federation's annual meeting in Washington, DC. The day long meeting included talks and discussions held in the conference room of the APA building, a beautiful building right in the midst of Capitol Hill. Participants included reps from the 22 societies and also officers and staff of the Federation and the Foundation.

Highlights of this meeting included a presentation followed by a question and answer session by three invited guests. The first guest was Jeremy Berg, Ph.D., Director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, NIH. Dr. Berg oversees a \$1.9 billion budget that funds basic research in the areas of cell biology, biophysics, genetics, developmental biology, pharmacology, physiology, biological chemistry, bioinformatics, and computational biology. The Institute supports more than 4,500 research grants, as well as a substantial amount of research training and programs designed to increase the number of minority biomedical scientists. Also invited were Christine Bachrach, Ph.D., Acting Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences

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Research at NIH and Acting Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at the NIH, and David Lightfoot, Ph.D., Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation, heading the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences. Both Dr. Bachrach and Dr. Lightfoot invited discussion from the society reps regarding specific issues and needs.

Once again, it was instructive to see how The Federation/FABBS goes about meeting various needs of behavioral scientists and behavioral research. Problems are often identified by constituent societies; The Federation/FABBS has the know-how and the political connections to address these issues, and are doing a very good job influencing people who make decisions.

Attending this meeting allows me the opportunity to view up close effective advocacy strategies at work, and to contemplate how these strategies might help MNS. MNS is a small society with a limited budget. Through the work of volunteers, MNS has done an incredible job over the years influencing policy decisions, decisions which affect Massachusetts neuropsychologists. However, we are a small organization of volunteers. One possible future direction is to reach out and utilize the assistance of additional volunteers, asking them to take on a role that does not require a large amount of time. This would allow us to strengthen our society while not overly burdening the relatively few volunteers who sit on the BOD and the PAC. Another possibility is to establish regional representatives, neuropsychologists who are most familiar with the issues within their own region, and the practice of other neuropsychologists near them. The regional representatives could help identify issues/topics of concern to neuropsychologists, bring those concerns to MNS and be involved in finding solutions for those issues. Having a mechanism in place that allows for some consistency and also a greater distribution of involvement may put MNS in a more secure place in the future, not only to take on emerging issues in a timely and cost-effective manner, but also better meet the needs of members throughout the State.

Linda Zoe Podbros, Ph.D.  
MNS Federation Representative

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## Membership Director Update

Our membership continues to grow and we are excited to welcome new members the past several months. For additional information on membership or a membership application, please see the MNS webpage.

- We are requesting that members join the **MNS list serve** to receive regular updates about advocacy efforts and upcoming programs. You can join the list serve through the “members only” portion of the webpage.
- **Get Connected 2009 MNS Membership Drive** We will continue with our “Get Connected” drive throughout the membership year. Please see the membership page of the website or the Information Box in the current newsletter for additional information and rules.

**Free CEUs:** Invite a lapsed MNS member to re-connect with MNS and receive a coupon good for *Free CEUs for any 1 regular lecture in January, February or March 2010*, when the lapsed member is reinstated as a Full Member and names you as their “MNS Connection”.  
**Membership renewal discount:** Invite a friend to start a connection

with MNS and receive a coupon good for \$20 off your 2009-2010 membership renewal when your friend is accepted as a Full Member and names you as their “MNS Connection”.

The Board of MNS would like to welcome the following new members. We look forward to seeing you are the upcoming MNS events.

### Regular Members

Joseph Moldover, PsyD  
Elizabeth Bernstein, PhD  
Maureen O'Connor, PsyD  
Margaret Witecki, PhD  
Mitchell Clionsky, PhD  
Malissa Kraft, PsyD

### Student Members

Colleen Casey, MS  
Daniel Libby, MA  
Marie McCabe, PhD  
Jason Osher, MS  
Christopher Spofford, MS  
Lauren Spoon, PsyD  
Iris Weber, MS  
Michelle Wickham, MA

### Associate Members

Nikki Meribela, BA  
Alyssa Orinstein, BS  
Laura Rubin, PhD

Jennifer Turek Queally, Ph.D.  
MNS Membership Director

## Membership Benefits

- Dual MNS/APA Membership Discount - Reduce your APA membership cost by up to \$70. Check your APA dues statement for dual membership details
- Receive information on national grants and other research funding opportunities through newsletters available exclusive through our association with The Federation for Behavioral Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences
- Professional Affairs Advocacy
- Online Membership Directory
- MNS Listserv
  - Up-to-date practice advisory notices
  - Stay in touch with current issues
  - Connect with colleagues
  - Get referrals
- Membership Discount at Monthly CE lectures, and select reciprocity discounts with other organizations' events
- Online book raffle
  - Try your luck at winning a new book each month!
- MNS Website
  - Information on MNS happenings and other local events
  - Website resources
  - Simple dues payments
  - One-click access to Board Members
  - Members-Only Section
- Free parking at Monthly lectures - just show your membership card to waive parking fees
- MNS newsletter ~ Issued twice yearly

## *Get Connected 2009 MNS Membership Drive*

### **FREE CEs**

Invite a lapsed MNS member to re-connect with MNS and receive a coupon good for *Free CEs for any 1 regular lecture in January, February, or March 2010*, when the lapsed member is reinstated as a Full Member and names you as their "MNS Connection."

### **THE RULES**

- Both the current member and the lapsed member need to complete the brief entry form at the [www.massneuropsychology.org](http://www.massneuropsychology.org) membership page so we know who recommended whom.
- To receive Free CEs you have to be listed in the MNS database as a paid 2009 member.
- The lapsed member needs to be listed in the MNS database archive or be able to verify prior membership, for example via dues payment record.
- Entries need to be completed by December 15, 2009.
- Coupons will be e-mailed to members before the January 2010 lecture.
- Only one entry per member please

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DISCOUNT**

Invite a friend to start a connection with MNS and receive a coupon good for \$20 off your 2010 membership renewal when your friend is accepted as a Full Member and names you as their "MNS Connection."

### **THE RULES**

- The MNS Applicant needs to complete the regular membership application found at the [www.massneuropsychology.org](http://www.massneuropsychology.org) membership page and needs to name a current member as their connection.
- The current MNS member needs to complete the brief entry form found on the membership page and name the applicant as their connection.
- The member needs to be listed in the MNS database as a paid 2009 member to receive the discount coupon.
- Entries need to be completed before January 1, 2010.
- Only one entry per member please

### **CONNECT WITH COLLEAGUES THROUGH THE LISTSERV**

The MNS Listserv is a vibrant discussion group in which you can learn the latest news, pose professional questions to colleagues, and stay connected with the society. Email [admin@massneuropsychology.org](mailto:admin@massneuropsychology.org) for instructions to join the listserv. Be sure to include your full name in the email so the administrator can verify your membership in MNS.