A brief HISTORY of the

NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

In the fall of 1985 I was a Penn State school psychology doctoral student doing an internship with Dr. Richard LeVan at Sarah A. Reed Children’s Center. Dr. Joseph French, who was the director of the doctoral program at Penn State wanted me to establish a local professional psychological association in the northwestern PA area as part of my varied internship activities. Previously there had been an NWPPA organization but it had apparently ceased to function a number of years before.

With Dr. LeVan’s assistance we developed a list of local clinical, academic and school psychologists who might be interested in participating and on January 15 of 1986 19 of our local psychologists met to discuss re-establishing a Northwestern Pennsylvania Psychological Association (NWPPA) and the hurdles that needed to be addressed. A sub-committee and I met on January 29 to develop a skeleton of our bylaws.

The first regular meeting of the NWPPA occurred on the following April 16th of 1986 with seventeen of us and Dr. Zita Levin of the PPA to discuss the new PA licensure law for psychologists. We also elected officers including me as president. A second meeting was held in Edinboro with 35 psychologists and students and included a panel discussion of the licensure law and its implications.

The following year Dr. Patrick Hanna, a local clinical psychologist became president and we had a meeting on May 24th, 1987 with guest speakers from PPA including Dr. Sam Knapp and Dr. Jack Porter, the president of PPA at the time. At this NWPPA meeting a variety of topics of interest to clinical and school psychologists were discussed including the collaborative abilities of our local community of psychologists.

As the years followed a great many psychologists participated and meetings occurred yearly at first and then gradually expanded to multiple activities of relevance to a wide variety of clinical, academic and school psychologists. The list of those psychologists who have contributed and have provided leadership to the organization is quite long.

Some of the presidents over the years include psychologists from these three areas of specialty and include Dr. Bruce Kobal (clinical), Dr. Marilyn Livoski (academic) and a couple of times over the years and currently, Dr. Victor Masone (school and clinical). Together with additional NWPPA leaders including Dr. Eric Schwartz (clinical) and currently Dr. Victoria Kazmerski (academic), Dr. Michael Bucell (academic and clinical), Dr. Rebecca Woods (school) and Dr. Melanie Hetzel-Riggin (academic and clinical), who have all worked very closely with NWPPA, PPA, and local training facilities and organizations to provide leadership.

Programs and meetings evolved from areas of general and mutual interest to programs about ethics, suicide prevention, threat assessment, gender related issues and many other areas offered for PPA credit applicable toward PA licensure.

NWPPA has proven, and continues to be, a relevant and very useful organizational resource to our local community of school psychologists for 37 years in northwestern Pennsylvania thanks to the leadership of a wide variety of local psychologist leaders. Let us work together to ensure its continued usefulness to our local community of psychologists as our needs evolve over the coming years.

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Dr. J. Michael Bozman (school psychology, retired)