

NEWS & VIEWS

OF THE

MAINE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2005

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Terry Mitchell

By now just about everyone has heard about, or has seen something related to, the horrible earthquake in Southeast Asia. Tsunami was not a word I had even heard of before December 26th. As we continue to read about, listen to, and see new videos of this unbelievable cataclysmic natural disaster unfolding before our eyes, I continue to be amazed at the total loss of human life. How fortunate we are to have the luck of being halfway around the globe from there. We seem to be living in times of such historic significance where mother nature has and most likely always will have the last word. Even as I write this to you today many in the Southwestern United States are battling severe weather. People from Florida and the Southeast are still putting together their lives after the multiple hurricanes of last fall. These events of nature, plus our current political stance on terrorism has really put things in perspective for me. I have promised myself to try and never again complain about our snowstorms, or even the dreaded black fly season, as long as I have what counts the most, the love of my family and friends around me. So, with this in mind, I want to take this opportunity to share with you a little story that I have kept close to my heart for the past ten years. It is a story about happiness, and no, I did not get this one from Dr. Glasser.

This story starts back when our country belonged to those who cared so much about the earth and the continual circle of life. Long before the white settlers came, there was this small boy who lived with his native tribe. He went to see their tribal medicine man and told him of his worries and how he felt that he had these two dogs that lived within him. One was a beautiful, friendly and happy dog. The other was nasty, mean and full of hate. The boy was very troubled by these two dogs, as it seemed that they were always fighting with each other and he did not know which one would eventually win. The elder man stopped the boy right there and told him that he knew which one would win. The boy seemed surprised at this as he did not get to finish telling all about these two dogs, but with great excitement he asked, "how could you possibly know so soon." The tribal medicine man explained very simply, "The dog you continue to feed will be the one that wins."

As we go about our daily lives, both personal and professional, it is so important to remember to feed our "happy dogs." As simplistic as it may seem, we control this ability and I believe it is our responsibility as counselors to help others see that even in times of despair, we all have this

one small choice to make, one that could make a world of difference over time. Does anyone have any extra doggie biscuits? May this coming year bring you serenity, love, and most importantly happiness.

MAINE CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION Offers Professional Development Opportunities

by Jim Peacock

The Maine Career Development Association (MCDA) held its Fall Workshop on November 19th at Thomas College in Waterville. The presenter was Dr. William Stone, Director of Cornerstone and Counseling at the University of Maine at Augusta. Dr. Stone's presentation was titled *Why You Should Tell Your Clients "You Don't Want to Find a Job" or What Frank Parsons Ever Said that Really Helped*. The presentation gave an overview of career development and decision making theories, along with some practical and humorous "real-life" examples of applications of these theories.

MCDA's next professional development opportunity will be the June Conference, to be held on **Monday, June 20th** at Kennebec Valley Community College in Fairfield. The Call for Programs has been sent out and is due back by February 8, 2005. This information is also available on our website at www.maine-cda.org. Registration information will be sent out and posted on the website in early March, with registrations due by June 10th.

Questions about the association or the upcoming June Conference can be directed to Jim Peacock, MCDA President, at 1-800-528-5882 ext 5082, or jpeacock@kvcc.me.edu. If you are interested in receiving the registration information for the conference, send an e-mail request to Robin Murphy, MCDA Secretary, at Rmurphy@maine.edu, or download the forms from the website at www.maine-cda.org. We hope to see many of you at the conference in June!!

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FROM OUR EDITOR - Deanna Hartel

Please do not hesitate to send articles for our next newsletter. As a counseling organization, I believe it would also be exciting to hear from some of our students of any age. Additionally, if you would like to submit an advertisement, send or email a camera-ready ad. Your advertisement will run in 3 consecutive issues of News and Views. Please send your check for \$100.00 (made payable to MeCA) to: DeAnna Hartel, Dexter High School, 12 Abbott Hill Road, Dexter, Maine 04930. If you have any ideas, articles or questions please contact me as soon as possible. My email address is dhartel@msad46.org.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS MEETING

by Carlena Bean

MeCA Admissions Representative

The Maine Admissions Organization meets twice a year. Here are a few items that were discussed:

It seems that high schools' needs for post-secondary services increase each year. College admissions offices are receiving elevated numbers of requests for college fairs, campus tours, college admissions and financial aid presentations. Jeff Wright from Maine Maritime Academy will serve as a clearinghouse for guidance counselors, teachers and administrators in order to utilize Maine college services optimally. He will be able to determine whether any particular date or program will conflict with other schools. I recommend that you contact him prior to making plans. Springtime is another time to consider for presentations and visits. Fall is our busiest time of the year.

Recently, I was asked to serve on an Ad Hoc committee for the learning results/diploma issues for the state of Maine. The group is meeting to identify and discuss a range of issues related to the first awarding of diplomas based on student achievement of the Maine Learning Results. The meeting provided *An Overview of LCAS* (Local Comprehensive Assessment System) by Pam Rolfe, *MEDMS* (Maine Education Data Management System) by Bill Hurwitch, *Chapter 127 Guidance/Post-Secondary* issues by Shelley Reed, Kim Johnston and Carlena Bean, *Policy Development* by Charlotte Bates, and *Implementing a Standards Based Diploma at the School Level* by Jeff Valance. We will meet a couple more times before the MeCA conference. I will be able to provide an update at the Guidance/Admissions roundtable scheduled for Monday afternoon.

Meanwhile, I hope everyone has a safe and healthy winter. I will look forward to seeing all of you in March at the Samoset Inn.

UPDATE ON FRAN BERTIAUME

I am not sure that many of you are aware that Fran Bertiaume, past president and historian for MeCA, had a kidney transplant in December. According to a note I received he says that the transplant surgery went better than expected, the pain has been minimal and the doctors are very pleased with his recovery.

If you would like to send a note, the address is: 117 Ferry Road, Chelsea, ME 04330. He is staying with family in the area for a couple of months as he has to make frequent trips to Portland for follow-up with the doctor. I know he would appreciate hearing from his many friends he made during his years of counseling.

WHERE ARE SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN THE COLLEGE READY CONVERSATION?

by Karen Lechner, Past -President

Over a year ago, a regional “think tank” was sponsored by the College Board in the lovely town of Woodstock, Vermont. Invited participants included business leaders, government officials, education commissioners, college administrators, high school administrators, and, yes, a few guidance counselors representing all of the New England states. There were many presentations about the need to raise student aspirations for the sake of a more vibrant economy in our region. Grim statistics were shared about the impact of low academic expectations, inferior secondary curriculum tracks, and low aspirations for a majority of our high school graduates to attend college and complete a degree program. A whole separate problem raised was that of our educated youth leaving the region for better job opportunities elsewhere. One of the few laughs about this serious issue came with conversation about what it means to those who choose to be educated and stay in New England when the term “brain drain” is used for so many leaving. The sense of urgency to improve this condition was overwhelming as workshop participants broke out into discussion groups by state and then reported back to the larger group. It became quite clear by the end of this “think tank” that New England states shared a common and important mission – increase college readiness and college retention for all students.

Since that meeting took place, we have seen a swell rise in Maine to address the college readiness issue through programs such as the MELMAC Education Foundation’s *Connect Aspirations to a Plan* initiative, which includes *College Access School* and *College Access Community* grants to several schools and communities throughout the state. The Mitchell Institute is also funding grants and technical expertise to assist schools in reaching higher goals for college enrollment and retention in the state.

Though the challenges are great and the goal honorable in this movement, it appears that secondary counselors are taking, or being given, a back seat on the bus. Often the frontline people in high schools to provide academic advising for college readiness, we see the many facets of intellectual, emotional, and cultural issues impacting the decision-making of our students and their families that either facilitate or impair college enrollment and retention. Even when all factors are in place for a student who is prepared to make the big transition from high school to college, we see the nuances that can intervene in the process. We note that the term “college ready” as defined by the College Board is often directed to preparation for a bachelor degree program, when in fact college readiness for many of our graduates will mean preparation to enter associate degree community college or technical programs. We understand that until the definition of college is broadened by all participants in this college-ready conversation, many high school graduates will

continue to apologize for not attending bachelor degree programs, as though it is an inferior choice to seek less than that. And, we recognize that until all educators assume the role of academic advisors, even as we face the challenges of local assessments and other mandates, students may not fulfill a greater prophecy for their future and that of the region.

Guidance counselors understand that only when an entire community assumes the responsibility for establishing a culture that expects higher aspirations, and then supports the development of higher aspirations, will there be success in this mission. While promoting this concept of broader responsibility, guidance counselors will need to be even greater advocates for the support of a comprehensive school counseling program. It is more imperative that we clearly articulate the depth and breadth of our program and services provided to all students, as outlined in the American School Counselor Association National Model, if the non-counselors participating in this conversation are to understand how we serve all students. Otherwise, we will continue to see decisions made around us about how to address this issue. These decisions will impact our programs and services in a manner similar to when the Department of Education partnered with the College Board to provide the PSAT to all sophomores in the state this past fall. Similarly, our silence may lead to guidance counselors being responsible for the implementation and assessment of all Career Preparation standards in our schools. In other words, our programs will be shaped by other professionals who are not apprised of the comprehensive program framework our profession promotes. These professionals may even include your own principal, superintendent, and school board members.

So, school counselors, you are urged to find your voice in this very important conversation at the local and state level. Advocate for a community focus on the college ready, raising aspirations movement, while clarifying and promoting the professional framework for a comprehensive school counseling program. It has never been as urgent as now!

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ACA/NAR

John Parkman

American Counseling Association
North Atlantic Region representative

As your ACA/NAR (North Atlantic Region) representative I try to pull some interesting facts about our professional roles and status as they compare with counselors in other states. Periodically, I send out through e-mail, data and information that affects us as professionals from the Federal level. Things like laws that touch and impact us, even those of us in small isolated areas of our state, lobbying efforts that ACA's Public Policy Division works on in Congressional committees and individual members of both the House and Senate to protect the mental health needs of our constituents/clients, and finally, to ask for grassroots support from our MeCA and MESCA membership when needed to help push through or kill a move by the national lawmakers that affects us all.

One recent item I saw, as I am sure many of you also learned about, is how Maine stacks up in the all important stat: Student to Counselor Ratio.

Check out below:

Our state, if I am reading this correctly, ranks about 9th out of all the states and D.C. with a 316/1.

Other notables:

Wyoming lowest with 225/1

Vermont and N.H. rank 239/1 and 269/1 respectfully.

The highest (worst) is Calif. with a terrible 951/1

(I am sure that reflects the Tax cap Prop 13 passed many years ago)

So Maine has some improvement—remember that both ACA and ASCA recommend a ratio of 250/1. Read on please...the following came directly from the national office in Virginia.

ACA UPDATE: Updated Student-to-Counselor Ratio Chart

The ratio of students to school counselors in U.S. elementary and secondary schools rose slightly this year. ACA's Office of Public Policy and Legislation has updated its chart showing state and national student-to-school counselor ratios. The chart, based on recently released preliminary information from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, shows the current U.S. student-to-counselor ratio is 478:1, up from 477:1 last year.

The current chart is based on the number of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools (grades K-12) and the number of "guidance counselors" employed in public schools during Fall 2002. While the overall number of students enrolled in grades K-12 grew in size from the year 2001, there were a few states that showed a significant decrease in student population. The number of counselors increased in most states, but not significantly. Eighteen states showed a decrease in the number of counselors.

The chart is available on ACA's webpage at:

http://www.counseling.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PUBLICPOLICY/RESOURCESFORCOUNSELORS/ACA_Ratio_Chart_03-04.pdf

See you at the Samoset in March.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE LAUNCHED

John Parkman

Hot off the wire...

Good news about a very troubling problem, especially among our youth.

The Mental Health Association of New York City, the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), Rutgers University, and Columbia University, have announced the launch of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK).

The Lifeline is made up of a network of local suicide prevention centers across the country. Callers will receive emergency suicide prevention counseling from mental health professionals in the closest available crisis center, regardless of whether the center is based in their home state.

The project is federally funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at \$6.6 million over three years. The program is significant because many of those at risk for suicide do not live close enough to a suicide crisis center to receive emergency intervention. The goal is to reach underserved areas and ease access to the mental health system for those at risk.

For more information, visit the Lifeline's website at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

FROM THE DESK OF SHELLEY REED,

Maine Department of Education

Contact: shelley.reed@maine.gov or phone: 207-624-6637

Implementation of the Maine Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model K-12

The model is coming, the model is coming! The model is soon to be out of draft form and on a web site linked to the Maine Department of Education's website. Once on the web you will be able to electronically manipulate the information to use as fits the need of your program. The model is exciting because it brings together so much information for counselors all in one place.

To help with the implementation process I have begun to work with counselors around the state and would like to extend an offer to hold an information session explaining the model and outlining steps to implementation to groups of counselors. The best way to do this is through regional meetings so please call me if you would like to establish a date and time for a session.

Continued on page 6

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To learn more about NVC:

CNVC.org

Gina Cenciose works full time teaching NVC . She teaches in a variety of settings including a program for teen parents, schools, prisons, community centers, hospitals and houses of worship. She has been Marshall Rosenberg's interpreter for French.

What is Nonviolent Communication?

NVC is a unique approach to communicating which guides us in transforming painful patterns of relating into new compassionate ways. It is founded on simple skills which step outside of judgment, criticism, and fear, enabling people to connect with the needs in themselves and others in ways that inspire a compassionate response.

NVC's basic premise is that underlying all human actions are needs that people are seeking to meet, and that understanding and acknowledging these needs can create a shared basis for connection, cooperation, harmony and peace. Marshall Rosenberg, developed the NVC model during the 1960's civil rights era, seeking to provide a means of healing based on empathy.

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Level 1 *March 11, 12, & 13*

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FROM THE DESK OF SHELLEY REED, (Continued)

Keeping Maine's Children Connected Initiative

We have also finished initial training for the Keeping Maine's Children Connected Initiative. Some of you are the liaison for the school district and attended these trainings. For those of you who may not have heard of this project— it is a Children's Cabinet initiative to establish a system of communication to reduce school disruption for students who are homeless, incarcerated, in foster care, or in-patients in psychiatric facilities. There is a data base of liaisons who represent schools, the youth development centers, hospitals, the courts, child protective and behavioral health services. Find out who is the person in your school district as they will be relaying messages to you when counselor input or notification is warranted. This system should maximize human resources and reduce the frustration of not knowing who to call on behalf of students. In April regional meetings will be held with the KMCC liaisons and homeless \liaisons to network and discuss youth issues.

Maine Learning Results Review Committee

The Maine Learning Results review committee has begun its work and will be meeting monthly. Counselors are represented on that committee.

Mr. Dean Collins
Madison Area High School
486 Main Street
Madison, ME 04950

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

There is an ad-hoc committee on Diplomas co-chaired by myself and Norm Higgins which will analyze Chapter 127 regarding what the law addresses and doesn't address regarding the awarding of diplomas. The group will identify areas that need clarification . The work of this group will be forwarded to a larger Chapter 127 Committee by March. Several groups will be feeding their information into a group that will study NCLB, Maine Learning Results and the implications for Maine students. You are represented by Ronnie Ellis, Carlena Bean, Kim Johnson and Tom McNeal on the Ad-hoc Committee.

PHYLLIS WORTHLEY LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

Phyllis Worthley, Counselor at Brunswick High School has been selected to represent the MeCA as the Legislative Representative. She will be going to Alexandria, Virginia and Washington D.C. on February 27 - March 1st for training. Phyllis is most pleased to serve on the Executive Board of the Maine Counseling Association. If you have any concerns please contact her at pworthley@brunswick.k12.me.us or (207) 319-1912. Phyllis has been in education in the State of Maine for the past 30 years. She will do her best to keep you informed of the decisions being made on our behalf at both the state and national level.

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