

# MAINE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION NEWS & VIEWS

WWW.MAINECA.ORG

SPRING 2007

## Spring Snows Fail to Dampen 2007 MeCA Spring Conference

By Kay Richmond, President MeCA

The April Fools' snow did not hamper attendance at the MeCA Spring Conference. Evaluations from registrants showed that there was a strong positive reaction to the conference and some brought up great points that we will carefully consider when we meet next July to start the conference planning process all over again!



*John Haney delivers outstanding keynote address*

In all, it seems Dr. John Haney's hot topic, realistic coverage, meaningful and directly applicable information with suggested activities was very well received. He certainly gave an honest portrayal of the problem of teen sexuality in this century. His comments on the impact of the anonymity of the internet, the crippling effects of the idea of "shame," and the whole concept and importance of the "arousal template" were thought-provoking and generated lots of discussions in the halls afterwards.

The evaluations also showed an appreciation for the MeCA website as a great source of information. This is a chance for me to put in a plug for professionals to start making it a habit to go to the website at [www.mainecca.org](http://www.mainecca.org) on a regular basis to see what's going on in our profession.

Having more grad students attending and participating in the conference was another positive move that was brought up. It is important to mentor these new members and we all share in that responsibility. Getting their fresh perspectives on current issues

## Another Perspective on the Conference

By Kevin O'Reilly

As a co-chair of the MeCA Conference, I am happy to report that the 2007 conference was a rousing success! Thanks to the Conference Committee for doing an outstanding job of organizing events and speakers. The Committee works hard to provide something for all the different specialties of our profession and I felt this year there was something for everybody. In particular, the pre-conferences had some interesting topics touching upon grief and loss with children of the military to helicopter parents and admissions to using music in counseling. As always, the schedule was jam-packed with conference sessions and there were many things to choose from, including more vendors than ever before with lots of information and products to hand out.

I was especially impressed with our keynote speaker, Dr. John Haney, who delivered a riveting presentation as well two

helps us seasoned counselors and giving them some solid, practical suggestions on dealing with the daily stress we face is a fair exchange and creates a win/win situation . . . everybody's goal.

On a lighter note, we had resounding support for the Dave Rowe Trio. Thanks to Kevin O'Reilly, our President Elect and their bass player, we had an "in" with them and have already booked them for next year. As a matter of fact, the Samoset folks liked them so well that they want a booking of their own! Also, depending on where you were sitting in the ballroom while the Trio was playing, you would have thought it was karaoke with so many folks singing along.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank the Conference Committee for their hard work and make sure none of them leave as I move into the slot of Committee Chair. If anyone has ideas of speakers or topics they would like to see at our next conference, please get in touch with anyone of us on the committee. Go to the website for contact information ... it's the one-stop shopping place!



*The Dave Rowe Trio - Great Entertainment for all!*

more sessions relating to teen sexuality. I know that his information about internet pornography and its effect on teens sparked a great deal of discussion among colleagues and reinforced for me the need to be aware of technology and how it affects our clients. It also reminded me as a school counselor of how much happens outside the school and how overwhelming that

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### FROM CO-EDITORS - Gene Oakes & Carlena Bean

Please do not hesitate to send articles for our next newsletter. As a counseling organization we 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: Gene Oakes, 685 Kenduskeag Ave, Bangor, Maine 04401. If you have any ideas, articles or questions you can e-mail Gene at: goakes2@verizon.net or Carlena at: beanc@husson.edu.

## MeCA Annual Fun Run/Walk Results

Despite the cold, rainy weather seventeen brave souls participated in our annual MeCA Fun Run/Walk on Monday afternoon.

The results are:

Female Walkers:

Tie for 2<sup>nd</sup>: Kendra Richie  
Susie Davis  
1<sup>st</sup> Beth Doane

Male Walkers:

1<sup>st</sup> Jim Ippolitto

Female Runners:

3<sup>rd</sup> Jeannie McKenney  
2<sup>nd</sup> Alexis Rog  
1<sup>st</sup> Merrily Welch

Male Runners:

3<sup>rd</sup> Dominik Varney  
2<sup>nd</sup> Dale Lolar  
1<sup>st</sup> Stan Pelletier

We appreciate those that helped us with the timing and water stop and we have told the Samoset that next year good weather has to be guaranteed with the contract! We appreciate everyone's participation.

## WANTED

The Maine Counseling Association has an opening for Newsletter Editor. This is a critical position in MeCA as the newsletter is the link to all counselors in the state. The individual who assumes this responsibility serves on the Executive Board - a dynamic group of individuals who care passionately about the counseling profession. If interested or simply want more information, contact either Carlena Bean (beanc@husson.edu) or Gene Oakes (goakes2@verizon.net).

### Career Development Facilitator Course

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## Detroit ACA Conference

By Phyllis Worthley

Detroit is home of General Motors World Headquarters. I have to confess although looking forward to over 400 offerings of the ACA Conference, networking with old friends, and working my way through the proposed 3000 attendees to view the product's displays, I had no desire to go to Detroit. Never having visited I was looking for a dirty, cold and unsafe city. I reviewed the internet sites and colored brochures of the city before departure. They had not convinced me differently. I was pleasantly surprised.

Our hotel, for the four-day visit, was The Renaissance Center on the riverfront. This five-tower complex is a modern city within a city. Its façade was made of reflective glass and dramatically dominated the Detroit skyline. Across the riverfront was Windsor, Ontario with an equally bright and charming skyline. Motown had an obvious presence. Dianna Ross, The Temptations, The Marvelettes, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder filled the speakers along the river boardwalk. The weather was conducive to the beginnings of spring tulips and crocus.

The fourteen-stop people mover was an enjoyable mode of public transportation for the first timer in Detroit. The people mover travels above the city allowing for a tourists view of downtown Detroit stopping in Greektown, the State Theater, Times Square, Michigan Station, Joe Lewis Arena and other places that the conference did not allow time for me to visit. Having been only 4 blocks from the COBO Center where most conference events took place morning and evening walks provided for pleasant exercise amongst our learning from the variety of conference sessions.

Participants attending the conference from Maine represented the counselor education program, high school counselors and private practitioners. John Parkman of Camden and Terry Mitchell from East Corinth represented as officers of the North Atlantic Region of ACA. They were very busy with meetings and organizational work that speaks well for the Maine representation.

As for me I enjoyed a variety of sessions which will assist with career education curriculum being developed at Gardiner Area High School along with a variety of self-improvement, and technology updates in the field of counseling. A favorite session was keynote speaker Linda Ellerbee. Linda is a respected and outspoken broadcast journalist. She has functioned as correspondent, anchor, writer, and producer. She currently is President of Lucky Duck Productions known for its outstanding children's programming. Linda was definitely literate, funny, and irreverent. She left me feeling proud that my grandchildren will have good choice of TV viewing. I also came away knowing that no matter what mistakes are made in the field of counseling, humans continue to be resilient. Linda gave over 2,000 counselor's permission to forgive themselves for prior mistakes. Linda is a survivor of a variety of mistakes and has forged a most successful career.

A fun and productive conference was the theme of the Maine attendees returning from Detroit.

If you have never attended a national conference now is the time to begin thinking about ACA March 2008 in Hawaii.



Preconference presenters were a hit!



**CONGRATULATIONS TO  
BETH DOANNE -  
MeCA'S NEW  
PRESIDENT-ELECT!!!!**



Vendors were plentiful and popular!



A great turnout!



### Another Perspective on the Conference (continued from page 1)

can be when trying to advocate for students. By the way, for those of you who attended, you can download the picture of the kitty at wikipedia.com by typing the title of the pictureJ.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their supportive comments of the Dave Rowe Trio. I thoroughly enjoyed playing

in front of an appreciative audience and I thank the Conference Committee for giving me that opportunity. Perhaps we will do this again next year! If you could not attend then we hope to see you for next year.

# ASGW Verifies Maine Charter a New Roof is Being Built

By Terry Mitchell

Greetings everyone and welcome to the newest division of MeCA, the Maine Association for Specialists in Group Work (MeASGW). Last March at the Detroit ACA Conference, the national leaders for the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) officially recognized the State of Maine and verified our new charter. This accomplishment completes a two-year effort that opens the door to yet another division of MeCA. It is my hope and lasting wish that this new division will help cross-pollinate counselors from all career paths. Group work is not a practice that belongs to any one field of counseling. It is an exciting professional experience that can enrich your counseling career and help you to reach more clients than ever thought possible. Membership is open to all counselors. The goal of MeASGW is to promote, educate, and support those interested in the process of group work and the powerful dynamics that group counseling offers. I started this special interest adventure because I truly believe we need to have a state division that could unite all counselors from any career fields. This May, I will begin my 14<sup>th</sup> year of membership to both MeCA and ACA. Much of this time has been spent watching and listening to counselors struggle with what I call a professional identity crisis. This proverbial mess which historically has continued to feed the, "who is a member of what organization and why," is hurting us all. Those of you who have watched this psychodrama with

me know what I mean. This professional identity problem has cost us much time and ground. It makes me sad to think counselors can't unite under one roof for the common goal of advancing our profession. For me, that roof

starts with ACA and extends to state branches like MeCA and further to national and state divisions of specialties like MeSCA, MeCDA, and now MeASGW. I strongly encourage all counselors to consider their place in this professional house of counseling and to actively participate. Political climates change as does the direction of the wind and now is the time for us to work together as one profession. MeASGW is new and with your help we will grow. We need membership, future leadership, and your continued support. Look for us on the MeCA website and soon to be included on the unified membership form. Please consider us as an option, especially if your interests include group work. For more information feel free to contact me by phone 924-9711 or Email me at [terrymitchell56@hotmail.com](mailto:terrymitchell56@hotmail.com). I'd really enjoy hearing from you. What's under your roof?



## Southern MeCA

By Cathy Lounsbury

I am very excited to begin as the new president of Southern MeCA. I will be working with my husband, Tim, who has been a guidance counselor for the past 15 years, to include topics of interest to counselors in schools and other work settings. We are looking to fill the other positions on the board (secretary and treasurer), so please contact me at the e-mail address below if you are interested. After a productive meeting at the Spring conference, we have decided that our first meeting will be in the Fall and will be sending out an e-mail with details as they are finalized. We are also looking for ideas and suggestions for speakers, meeting locations, topics, etc., and would love to hear from you! Please contact me at [smca@mpti.net](mailto:smca@mpti.net). See you in the fall!

## Central MeCA

Congratulations to Erin Flynn as the new president of Central MeCA. Her experience as MESCA President and the zest she brings to everything she does is a guarantee that Central Maine has a bright future as a regional division of MeCA.

## Admissions

By Carlena Bean, MeCA Admissions Rep

The Maine College Admissions group met at the Samoset at the annual MeCA Conference to plan our summer meeting. The group decided to hold our meeting at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast on August 14, and we hope to have a speaker on retention. We felt it was a timely topic that has an impact on all of us. We will forward further information to you in late June or early July with more specifics. I hope everyone has safe travels for the remainder of the season and a great summer. I look forward to seeing everyone in August.

## A Note from the Maine Clinical Counselors Association

Peter Comstock, LCPC, President - Maine Clinical Counselors Association

I would like to say thank you to all those early risers who came to the Tuesday morning breakfast during the MeCA spring conference. It was great to network with other clinical counselors in the state. I also want to remind people of a couple of upcoming events in the Mid-Coast area. On May 25<sup>th</sup> from 8-930a there is going to be a MCCA mixer at Mae's in Bath

and then on June 8<sup>th</sup> we are having an Ethics workshop along with our annual meeting. For more information and registration you can go to the MCCA web site ([www.mcca-info.org](http://www.mcca-info.org)). The Ethics workshop is being presented by Amy Simonds, LCPC and 4 CEUs will be given to those in attendance.

# Too bad about those Honors and AP Courses; Admissions 101

By Ben Milster, Past MeCA President

If you take the text of LD 1859 literally, Honors and AP courses would most certainly be gone. LD 1859 is the bill currently before the Education Committee that rewrites graduation requirements and revises much of how business will be conducted at high schools in Maine. This bill calls for "Elimination of tracking and ability grouping of students as a means of organizing students for learning". In the text of the bill, it states "A secondary school must provide evidence that it has eliminated tracking and ability grouping of students as means of organizing students for learning or organizing the school's program of studies by the 2009-2010 school year". Additionally, with the literal interpretation of this law, the Maine School of Math and Science, which, by the way, is an ability grouped institution (that's what you get with selective admission), will be gone also.

So, if that is true, we will have high schools with completely heterogeneously grouped students in all classes, which is what the law states. However, my guess is that we will see something different. When I attended a presentation by Great Maine Schools (a group which advocates the elimination of ability grouping) on this very subject at the 2005 College Board New England Forum, I asked the question, "What about those Honors and AP courses"? And, the response was that schools would certainly keep THOSE courses - that the intent of eliminating ability grouping was to assure that everyone was exposed to a "rigorous" curriculum. And my guess is that Education Commissioner Gendron would respond in similar fashion to the same question. And if that is the case, then it could certainly be argued that such a concept could be called "Elitist Ability Grouping".

If anyone would take the time do even the slightest bit of research on this topic, they would find that the preponderance of evidence for and/or against ability grouping is, in a word, inconclusive. In The Tracking Wars, written by Tom Loveless (1999), he states that "The bottom line is this: few, if any, of the questions about tracking's effects are settled, and research is ambiguous on the policy direction that schools should pursue". And in a review of the major studies, (Slavin, Kulik and Kulik), and the studies on those studies, the research is split as to whether ability grouping is helpful or harmful for student learning. Even Ann Wheelock, who wrote the landmark anti-tracking book Crossing the Tracks (1992), states that in untracking schools, certain components are basic to the process, including: School based leadership with teacher and parent support for change, a plan for change grounded in research based practices, ample

time for staff development, and, a phase-in process supported by school organizational arrangements. (my italics)

Now, I need to make the point here that I am neither pro nor con in the debate over ability grouping. I am, however, an advocate for my students, and am extremely concerned that a law may be passed that mandates a system that has great potential to be harmful to student learning. If a school wants to eliminate ability tracking, and teachers, parents, administrators and school board/community members have done their research and made the collective decision that changing their method of curriculum delivery is in the best interest for THEIR students, that is one thing. But to make it LAW that schools must eliminate ability grouping goes against not only the research, but against the concept of local control of curriculum delivery, what is best for all students, and plain common sense.

Another interesting aspect of this law is in how it attempts to address the issue of "college readiness". I don't believe any educator would argue against the concept that graduating high school students need to be "college ready". However, in the text of LD 1859, it states "A secondary school shall provide a comprehensive program of instruction of at least 4 years in length, which must meet the requirements of this chapter, the system of learning results established in section 6209 and the requirements of the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System" (bold and underline added). The literal interpretation of this law then means that high school students need to meet Maine Learning Results standards, the new requirements of this law, and provide that students be able to pass the GED and Accuplacer placement exam (community college requirements), and trigonometry (which is a requirement for the UMaine College of Engineering programs), and four years of college preparatory math (which is a requirement for the UMaine College of Business), and the admission requirements for UMF (no SAT needed, by the way), or any other branch of the UMaine system. That is what the law states. How do we implement that?

As of the date of this writing (4/27/07), the bill is scheduled to be heard on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 pm in Augusta. For more info, look up the bill on the state legislature website (<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/>). Talk with other educators, and if you are concerned, contact your local representative.

## Update and Changes

This section of the newsletter is reserved for news about counselors around the state. Be sure to help us with getting out the word about our colleagues as changes and honors come their way. This issue of the newsletter is testimony to those who have committed so much to their profession and are now entering retirement. We wish all of you a healthy and enriching future.

Joe Corbin at Van Buren High School  
Dr. Marijane Falls at USM  
Steve Munger at Bridgeton Academy  
Dick Perry at Mountain Valley High School  
Joe Guest at Brunswick High School (MESCA's Counselor of the Year)

Roni Delano-Ellis at Brewer High School  
Jackie Hayes at Old Town Elementary School  
Carol Norcross at Winthrop Middle School  
Cindy Libby at Waterville High School

## Mark Your Calendars!!

Fall NEACAC Fairs:

Sunday, Sept. 23, 2007 USM  
Monday, Sept. 24, 2007 UMO  
Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2007 UMO

Following is a guest article. It is not intended to reflect the opinions of the MeCA.

## The Unintended Consequences of Rank in Class

Craig Kesselheim, Ed. D.

**True Story:** A very small K - 8 Maine school holds a proud annual community celebration, called 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation. Fishing boats have come in off the water early on this warm day in June. The community gathers in the school's gym. Banners flutter from rafters. The school's intrepid musicians plink and drum Pomp and Circumstance as three honorees proceed to their seats. Cameras flash. All three graduates will be attending the nearby high school in the fall. They glow from their seats on the school's small stage. Everyone is proud, particularly the graduates and their extended families.

As the ceremony progresses, one other annual tradition is repeated: the Honor Parts. One student is named class Valedictorian. She gives a short prepared speech. The second graduate - and recall, there are only three graduates here - is named Salutatorian. He stands to applause and presents a brief speech, as well. And the third graduate? He is given the opportunity to present the class will.

**True Story:** In the high schools of one Maine county for the past two years, the average number of students enrolling in senior physics is roughly 20%. The figure varies within this regional cohort of high schools, but in no school does the figure ever exceed 50%. While students may offer many reasons for not taking physics, rank in class is clearly a powerful one. Kids report to their guidance counselors and principals a desire to maintain their current class rank. Teachers hear it in the pre-class buzz: "That's a hard class!" Anyone with access to high school students knows this occurs.

Rank in class motivates students regardless how small the senior class may be. In other words, being ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among 20 classmates has more power than knowing that physics (and other rigorous courses) will open doors into college and enhance students' success once there. Standing among peers matters more. It is understandable, but it makes no rational sense.

Let's reflect upon why we calculate and report rank in class:

- Schools wish to acknowledge the academic excellence and drive of their top students.
- Schools hope to support students' candidacy to higher education and/or employment by providing information about their long-term academic performance.
- Many colleges indicate an interest in rank in class as one measure of academic potential.
- Scholarships (both locally- and college-awarded) are at times linked to rank in class.
- We believe, or at least hope, that students' attention to their GPA motivates them to do well in school.

Let us also take stock of some unintended consequences of our ranking tradition.

- Some students avoid rigorous courses, particularly in those final years of high school that receive careful scrutiny from colleges and employers. Counter intuitively, the good intentions from which we report students' rank may actually undermine their chances of getting into college.
- We calculate rank from classroom grades reported over four years, and averaged to the hundredth or thousandth place (to break ties). Virtually all experts on classroom assessment decry the idiosyncratic grading practices extant in public school classrooms. This seems especially troubling when

uncoordinated, even conflicting, grading practices may be found within the same building. Yet we build our ranking system on just this house of cards.

- By celebrating two winners (the top honor parts), we also name the losers. Students who experience very acceptable academic achievement in school are reminded again that their paths through school are not noteworthy. In small schools, the community may subconsciously find itself judging not-honored students. In very large schools, students with 3.9+ GPAs may be eliminated from an honor part by a thousandth of a decimal.
- In smaller class cohorts the unethical nature of our ranking tradition is even more glaring. Imagine for a moment that in the True Story graduating class of three above, "student number three" received special services, or had surmounted the challenges of a seriously disadvantaged home life. Would our professional consciences feel a twinge? Maine still has enough small rural high schools that comparable scenarios are entirely plausible.

Finally, how might we develop alternatives and solutions to existing rank-in-class procedures?

- Some schools report rank in class by deciles (10ths of the cohort) or by quartile. This slight modification may discourage the distracting fixation on rank order, yet will still supply colleges with the relative ability information they may seek.
- Calculate but do not publish rank in class. Schools that have chosen this route have an easier time refocusing students on taking classes for the right reasons - their interests, their needs and their aspirations.
- End the tradition completely where it no longer makes any sense. For high schools with very small class cohorts, rank in class has diminishing, sometimes misleading, value. Where communities practice the rank in class tradition in elementary schools (or earlier), they should stop. There are other ways to celebrate academic achievement.
- On the transcripts of juniors and seniors, add the average grade earned by the class as a whole alongside the student's earned grade. This provides a rough index of course difficulty, thus gives some index of student-selected rigor.
- Acknowledge and celebrate academic growth and improvement over time. Schools may see this as a parallel tradition, one that does not necessarily eliminate honor parts.
- Some school leaders and their faculties, often working as Professional Learning Communities, have broken through the "nondiscussable" taboo on individual grading habits and begun to adopt detailed and academically-focused grading policies.

When long-standing school traditions spawn unintended consequences, we owe it to ourselves and to our students to give those traditions another look. When methods of reporting students' accomplishments no longer serve those same students (and may do harm), it is time to plant the seeds of alternative traditions.

*Craig Kesselheim, Ed. D., is a Senior Consultant at the Great Maine Schools Project, and assists high schools in eastern and northern Maine with their reform initiatives. He has also led a three-year seminar on school reform for school counselors in the Penobscot River Educational Partnership region. He may be reached at [ckesselheim@mitchellinstitute.org](mailto:ckesselheim@mitchellinstitute.org)*

# Career Development Facilitator

## Get Certified!

I am so glad my friend convinced me to enroll in the Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) course this year. This 120-hour hybrid online course offered by Peak-Careers has been an inspiring, educational experience. I look forward to each face-to face class where I gain so much from shared best practices with colleagues, including guidance counselors and directors, career counselors and consultants, academic advisors, adult education providers, and coop coordinators. As a seasoned, educated professional, I was well versed in career theory, assessments, labor resources, etc. and initially questioned the benefit of the training for the National Career Development Association's GCDF certification. Since the first class, however, I have been impressed by the breadth and depth of content, challenging curriculum and useful resources presented. I have gained conceptual knowledge and practical applications to effectively enhance my practice. My interest in career development has been noticeably revitalized and my goals have been raised. I highly recommend this course.

You'll enjoy learning from instructors Cathy VanDyke and Jim Peacock. Together they apply a variety of teaching strategies to promote learning and stimulate rich discussions. Both are nationally certified in the GCDF curriculum and bring over 40 years of experience in career development to the training. Their complementary styles will have you laughing and learning in a casual, supportive environment. They will stretch you to reach new goals and develop into more dynamic facilitators with both care and humor. They model professionalism, inspire, energize, and mentor. They didn't pay me to say any of this either.

The online portion of the course provides a convenient, technologically advanced component. You'll save on commuting time (particularly great for Cape Codders, like myself) and can adapt the course to fit your schedule. Only minimal computer skills are required. If you've never taken an online course before, you'll be a pro in no time.

The GCDF training course is a great way to upgrade your skills, earn an internationally recognized credential, and enhance your effectiveness to help others aspire. School counselors, academic advisors, career counselors, adult education providers, employment specialists, career coaches, new professionals and others can earn the GCDF certification after mastering all twelve competencies identified by the National Career Development Association as important to providing quality services to clients/students. Whether you are a novice or an experienced professional, you will learn new material and gain proficiency in all of the following areas through this GCDF course:

- |                               |                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| –Helping Skills               | –Working with Diverse Populations   | –Consultation         |
| –Ethical and Legal Issues     | –Career Development Models          | –Assessment           |
| –Promotion & Public Relations | –Labor Market Information/Resources | –Employability Skills |
| –Training Clients and Peers   | –Program Management/Implementation  | –Technology           |

For the fifth time, Peak-Careers will be offering the next Global Career Development Facilitator course in the hybrid format combining online and face-to-face instruction beginning September 2007 and running through March 2008 at the Kennebec Valley Community College campus in Fairfield, ME. Visit the Peak-Careers web site at [www.MaineGCDF.com](http://www.MaineGCDF.com) to learn more about the course and to register.

Feel free to contact instructors Cathy VanDyke or Jim Peacock with an inquiry about the course or contact me for a more detailed course review:

Kristina Ierardi (Participant in the 2006-07 GCDF class)  
 Coordinator, Career Planning & Placement  
 Cape Cod Community College  
[kierardi@capecod.edu](mailto:kierardi@capecod.edu)

The following is a copy of the letter I authored to the Commissioner of Education, Ms. Susan Gendron sent on April 13, 2007.

**MAINE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION**  
**MAINE SCHOOL COUNSELING ASSOCIATION**  
 (Division of MeCA)

Dear Commissioner Gendron,

April 13, 2007

Almost one year ago the Maine State Legislature passed Bill LD 1968, pg.190, CA (H-878), Item 2 to LD 1968, Part AAAA-1. 20-A MRSA & 13013-A

"Salary Supplement for National Board-Certified Teachers" which brought about a salary supplement for teacher's base pay if they held national board certification in the discipline for which they were hired. Nationally Board Certified School Counselors were not included in this salary supplement.

I have been duly authorized by the Maine Counseling Association's (MeCA) Executive Board in action taken January 5, 2007 to pursue this matter with you.

According to Ms. Shelley Reed, you were quoted as having said this was an "oversight" and that you would look into resolution. This letter contains a list of National Board Certified School Counselors from throughout the state that have allowed me to include their names as signators to this missive. This issue has brought about intense interest in all school communities where counselors work side-by-side with teachers, and has inspired great concern about its perceived unfairness. Another side result has been to spark great positive interest among school counselors who are seeking more information about how to become nationally board certified.

The following is some information about national certification for professional counselors:

The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. (NBCC), an independent not-for-profit credentialing body, was incorporated in 1982 to establish and monitor a national certification system, to identify for professionals and the public those counselors who have voluntarily sought and obtained certification, and to maintain a register of those counselors. This process recognizes counselors who have met pre-determined NBCC standards in their training, experience, and examination. NBCC currently has more than 39,000 certified counselors to date. Forty-eight states, Puerto-Rico, and the District of Columbia have adopted NBCC exams as part of their statutory credentialing processes. Created by the American Counseling Association (ACA), NBCC is an independent credentialing body. NBCC focuses on promoting quality counseling through certification. In October 1985, NBCC became accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NCCA is an independent national regulatory organization that monitors the credentialing processes of its member agencies. Accreditation by the commission represents the foremost organizational recognition in national certification. NBCC's National Certified Counselor (NCC) and Masters Addiction Counselor (MAC) credentials are currently NCCA accredited. NBCC offers specialty certification in school counseling [the National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) credential], clinical mental health counseling [the Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor (CCMHC) credential], and addictions counseling [the Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) credential]. The NCC credential is a prerequisite for the NCSC, CCMHC, and the MAC.

The following is the School Counselor Certification (NCSC) credential, which came into existence a few years ago. The NCC and the NCSC should both be recognized by DOE and should carry the same designation as the National Board Certified Teacher designation.

The National Certified School Counselor (NCSC) credential was created as a result of the joint efforts of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The NCSC specialty credential which follows the NCC attests to the educational background, knowledge, skills, and competencies of the specialist in PreK-12 school counseling. The purposes of national school counselor certification are to: Recognize the master's-level PreK-12 school counselor practitioner who is part of a program that promotes and enhances the learning process. Promote the school counselor's professional identity, visibility, and accountability on a national level. Identify to the counseling profession and to the public those counselors who have met national professional school counseling standards. Advance cooperation among school systems, professional organizations, and other credentialing and professional development agencies. Encourage the professional growth of school counselors.

It is with grave concern that this issue be resolved immediately. The American Counseling Association's Monthly Newsletter Counseling Today from December 2006 alluded to this discrepancy in equitable treatment included in a front-page article entitled:

"Use of SAT lands Maine in hot water" 12.01.06 By Angela Kennedy

"To add to the disappointment and frustration of many Maine school counselors, those working under teacher contracts with a National Board Counseling Certification were passed over for a \$3,000 state-funded salary increase – an increase the Maine Legislature awarded to all teachers who hold a national board certification...

Parkman took immediate action and posted messages about school counselors being denied the raise on various counseling and

education listservs. He was contacted via e-mail by Shelley Reed, a guidance consultant with the state DOE, who stated that the denial could be interpreted as an error. "The commissioner has said that she feels that counselors not receiving a stipend for their national certification is an oversight and that she wants to do something about this next year," Reed wrote."

With your reported response from last fall, the assumption is that you will rectify this error and allow Superintendents from around the state to report school counselors in their systems that hold NCC and/or NCSC certification status and thus receive the \$3000.00 supplement retroactive to last September, 2006, when teachers received their increment. This is only fair and ethical.

By not recognizing counselors, the state seems to be saying that it is only an educator who teaches in a "discipline" that is entitled to the \$3000.00, Is School Guidance Counseling not recognized as a viable "discipline"? We have to earn a Masters Degree of between 46 or 48 credit hours at U Maine and 54 at USM...requirements that are more than administrators, and certainly more than teachers. National Board Counselor Certification (NBCC) is a long and demanding undertaking. It requires Masters Degree or above, we counselors to spend dozens of hours of work, often utilizing a refresher tutorial course of anywhere up to 30 hours using a massive study guide, and an expensive daylong exam at the USM testing center in Portland. And it is costly financially not just to take the exam but also maintaining annual fees, and a renewal charge every 5 years. It also recommends strongly that candidates graduate from a CACREP Approved Masters Degree program, requires having 5 references, background checks, and show 100 or more hours of continuing education credits during the time of active certification in order to renew. I am a NCC and I know of only 415 more Board Certified Counselors in the entire state of Maine, and most of those work in settings outside of schools. The listing of names at the end of this letter is only those NCCs I have been able to contact since January of this current year...there are more.

School Counselors are governed by the same rules as teachers in earning our re-certification units and we fall under the contract as equals with teachers when setting Step Levels and all other benefits required in Teacher contractual agreements with School Boards throughout the state of Maine. The Maine State Board of Education required that all school guidance & counseling programs in the state have an approved K-12 Guidance Curriculum back in the 1986 to 1989 period under the "Nation At Risk" legislation. More than a few times, I was asked to testify in front of legislative committees who recognized the crucial role counselors play in our schools and approved a K-12 Curriculum that was deemed just as important and equal as any academic "discipline". Even the Learning Results recognize the unique role we play in Career Development Education and in the areas of Academic Advising Education (including post-secondary) and Personal/Social/Wellness Education. The state has always included school counselors as necessary employees in any "Approval" requirement for schools (public or private) if they want the status of "State Approved Institution".

It is with great anticipation that this issue be resolved in a favorable manner to school counselors, and that all supplements of \$3000.00 be honored from September 1, 2006 forward.

Thank you,

John F. Parkman

## **The Media and Virginia Tech**

**By Patrick VerSchneider**

As a school counselor I am very concerned about the impact that media coverage of the tragic events at Virginia Tech and the replay of scenes from the Columbine tragedy may have on the safety of our students. I think that the absolute worst of this coverage was the replay of the video made by the shooter in Virginia. In many of our schools we have students with various types of personality disorders and mental/emotional problems and I fear that this coverage may validate the behavior of the shooters in both Virginia and Columbine and encourage like performance elsewhere. I think as school counselors we have a responsibility to point out to the media the results that the amount and type of coverage in violent incidents such as the two mentioned may have in terms of the safety of our students and appeal to their conscience. Obviously we can't ask them to undo the harm already done but we can ask for the future.

If you have not done so recently, be sure to visit the MeCA web site at [www.maine.ca](http://www.maine.ca)

You can see more pictures from the conference.

You can also find a wealth of information about MeCA as well as tons of useful links.

**[www.maine.ca](http://www.maine.ca)**

## University of Maine SUMMER 2007 Special Courses Counselor Education

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Human Behavior Under Extreme Conditions: Crisis Intervention**

June 25 through June 29

This course is designed for graduate students preparing to become professional counselors and practicing counselors interested in the topic, as well. A background for understanding biological and psychological mechanisms involved in human responses to extreme conditions will be provided. Crisis intervention and management principles and techniques will be studied. Cr. 3. Instructor is Inna Bezborodko.

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Fundamentals of Counseling Practice**

June 25 through June 29

This course will provide an overview of the intake interview process and current documentation procedures including: diagnosis, assessment and formulation, treatment plan, progress notes, and discharge summary. Will obtain an understanding of legal issues including: confidentiality, mandated reporting and ethical considerations. Cr. 3. Instructor is Donna Seppy

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Ethical Issues in the Counseling Profession**

July 9 through July 13

This course will include a discussion of the meaning of ethical practice as it relates to the counseling profession. It will review ethical codes and standards of practice as they relate to: the counseling relationship; confidentiality; professional responsibility; evaluation, assessment and interpretation; teaching, training and supervision; research and publication; and resolving ethical issues. This course will be based on the codes of ethics set forth by the American Counseling Association, the American School Counselors Association, and the American Mental Health Counselors Association. Issues and dilemmas faced by professional counselors in practice will be discussed. Case studies will be presented. Students will learn and practice a model of ethical decision-making to apply to the practice of counseling. Cr. 3. Instructors are Deborah Drew and Jeri Stevens.

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Introduction to Eating Disorders**

July 9 through July 13

This introductory course will explore anorexia, bulimia and binge eating and the etiological factors contributing to this disruptive and often fatal phenomenon. The socio-cultural, psychological, biological, political and familial factors contributing to the onset of these disorders will also be examined. Assessment, treatment philosophy and approaches, and referral sources will prepare students to identify these disorders in schools or clinical settings. The course will also include discussions based on a case study. Cr.3. Instructor is Tamara Hunt

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Clinical Counseling with Adventure Therapy**

July 16 through July 20

This course will introduce students to adventure therapy programs that deal with people with psychological disorders. Students will learn the characteristics of certain disorders and will examine therapeutic adventure strategies that have been designed to work with specific identified populations including children, adolescents, and adults. A section dealing with professional ethics will be included. Didactic as well as experiential activities will require comfortable clothing and a limited amount of outside-the-classroom activities. Instructor is Don Lynch

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Communicative Aspects of Counseling**

July 23 through July 27

This course is designed for graduate students in counselor education. In this course, the perspective on theories of communication will be provided; the idea of feedback will be analyzed; the role of feedback in counseling will be explored. Different kinds of communication will be presented with the emphasis on non-verbal and verbal interactions in counseling. The disorders of communication and ideas for establishing contact under conditions of limited communicative resources will be explored in theory and in the role-playing. Practical training for enhancing communicative skills will be provided. Cr.3. Instructor is Inna Bezborodko.

### **CEC 580 Educational Institute: Alcohol Dependence/Abuse**

July 30 through August 3

For mental health and substance abuse professionals this one-week intensive course examines models of diagnosis and assessment, and behavior techniques in the treatment of alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence. Additionally, etiology and epidemiology of addictive behaviors will be addressed and the class will also examine, in depth, the addictive behaviors treatment outcome literature. Given the short time-frame and intense nature of this educational experience, students will be expected to form small groups, be involved at all class levels and have ongoing interactions with the class and instruction after the class experience ends. Cr. 3. Instructor is Robert Dana.

## Maine Career Development Annual Conference

Be sure to sign up soon for the Maine Career Development Association's annual conference. This year's theme is "Career Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." This year's conference will be held at Kennebec Valley Community College on Monday, June 18. Go to [www.maine-cda.org](http://www.maine-cda.org) and click on the ANNUAL CONFERENCE for registration and additional information.

## Maine Counseling Association 2007-2008 Unified Membership Application

This unified membership form enables you to make dues payments to not only MeCA, but also other related divisions and councils with one payment. Please complete the form, make your check payable to "MeCA" and mail to the address below. Membership covers ONE year (July 1 to June 30) per MeCA bylaws. (I am available to answer your questions at Bangor High School at 992-5521.)

### Membership Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address you want mailings sent to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment (please include address if different from mailing address):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Educational Background:

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

University/College: \_\_\_\_\_

# Years in Professional Field: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation (check primary one):

- ( ) Career Counselor (CAR)  
 ( ) College Admissions Counselor (ADM)  
 ( ) College Counselor (PSC)  
 ( ) Counselor Educator (CED)  
 ( ) Emeritus Member (EMS)  
 ( ) Employment Counselor (EMP)  
 ( ) Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT)  
 ( ) Mental Health Counselor (MHC)  
 ( ) Pastoral Counselor (PAS)  
 ( ) School Counselor (SC) Check level:  
   \_\_\_ K-5 (A)  
   \_\_\_ 6-8 (B)  
   \_\_\_ 9-12 (C)  
   \_\_\_ K-9 (D)  
   \_\_\_ K-12 (E)  
 ( ) Student (STD)  
 ( ) Substance Abuse Counselor (SAC)  
 ( ) Vocational Counselor (VOC)  
 ( ) Other (OTH) Please specify:

Be sure to check below the dues covered by your check or purchase order. **If paying by purchase order, please be sure to indicate the name(s) of the member(s) on the PO.**

#### MeCA Membership

- \_\_\_ \$30 Regular Membership  
 \_\_\_ No Fee Student Membership  
 \_\_\_ No Fee Emeritus Membership

#### Divisional Membership

- \_\_\_ \$10 Maine Career Development  
 \_\_\_ \$10 MeASGW

#### Regional Council Membership

- \_\_\_ \$5 Central Maine Counseling  
 \_\_\_ \$5 Downeast Maine Counseling  
 \_\_\_ \$10 Eastern Maine Counseling  
 \_\_\_ \$10 Northern Maine Counseling  
 \_\_\_ \$10 Southern Maine Counseling

\_\_\_ **TOTAL** (Check payable to MeCA)

Mail to: Gene Oakes  
 685 Kenduskeag Avenue  
 Bangor, Maine 04401

*ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY:*

*Date received:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Check or PO #:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Amount:* \_\_\_\_\_

### RETIRING??

If you are retiring this year, the Maine Counseling Association wants to keep you in the family as an emeritus member (no membership fee). All you have to do is make sure that we have your mailing address and we'll automatically renew your membership each year. Just send your address to Gene Oakes, Membership Chair, at [goakes2@adelphia.net](mailto:goakes2@adelphia.net).

# MEMBERSHIP

## TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP



### Members

**\$30.00**

To be eligible, an individual's primary responsibilities must be in the area of counseling and his/her preparation or position is such to qualify him/her for membership in one of the Divisions of the American Counseling Association.



### Emeritus Members

Upon retirement from participation in the professional activity that enabled regular membership in the Association, any member who has been in good standing in the Association for 5 years shall be transferred to emeritus status with the full rights and privileges of membership status, and shall thereupon be exempt from further dues and special assessments. Emeritus members are encouraged to notify the Membership Chair of address changes.



### Student Members

Student Members shall be, at the time of application, students who are currently matriculated in a graduate program of study leading to an advanced degree in the field of counseling.

*Note: All members admitted are required to 1) subscribe to the purposes of the Association, 2) reside or work in the State of Maine, 3) maintain ethical standards of professional conduct and 4) be approved by the Executive Board by recommendation of the Membership Chair. In exceptional cases the status of member associate may be granted by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Board to persons not possessing the above qualifications but seeming significantly qualified in other respects.*

The MeCA Membership Application can also be found on the MeCA Web Site at [www.mainecca.org](http://www.mainecca.org).  
Check out [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org) to see the benefits to joining the American Counseling Association.

## FAQs about Membership

**How do I tell what the last membership year was that I paid my dues?** Your address label indicates the most current year that you paid your dues. "06-07" for this last year.

**What if I believe I have paid my dues for this year but my label does not indicate this?** Contact the Membership Chair by e-mail ([goakes2@verizon.net](mailto:goakes2@verizon.net)) and you will receive a response ASAP.

**How do I get a membership card?** Membership cards are mailed to individuals after the membership fee has been received.

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

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