



Counseling Connections



The American Counseling Association offers a number of benefits to its members, including scholarship opportunities and grants. In the Fall semester they held a nationwide essay contest which gave money or free ACA Conference registration to the winners.

Our own *Chris Farmer* won Honorable Mention and with it a free conference registration. He is a second year graduate student in the Clinical Mental Health program. This is his prize-winning essay.

Essay Question:

"We have seen a startling decrease in civility towards one another. Examples would be the political rhetoric by the leaders of our nation who attack person as well his/her ideas and the media and its proclivity for focusing on the negative.

"They do this while offering little by way of suggestions on how to improve that to which they object. Do you agree with this observation? If so, from your point of view as a counseling professional, what do you predict will be the impact of this trend on society should it continue, and how can we as counselors address this issue?"

Response:

I would agree that society's fuse is shorter than it has been in years past. Our leaders and their public bickering are creating an air of intolerance and a sense of overblown competition. However, our leaders are not entirely at fault. Media sources use the drama and conflict on Capitol Hill to increase their ratings. Due to this presence in American homes, the ideas of stubbornness and intolerance are presented without an opposing viewpoint. With the increasing popularity of reality television programming, what better source of material is there than the squabbling in Washington? The people who consume this material must also share the blame. Demand for this kind of "entertainment" must be present to facilitate its presence. Unfortunately, this "entertainment" is being viewed as objective information, a bygone product that American journalism has left to molder in the days of Walter Cronkite.

Have we as a society become so desensitized that we need to experience the heights of negativity in order to experience anything at all? Society is inadvertently suffering due to its choices of entertainment. The presence of this rule of negativity is creating an individualistic society that is paying less and less attention to the greater good. In this age of instant gratification, people are learning that they deserve to have exactly what they want, exactly when they want it. This kind of mentality leaves little room for tolerance, patience, and understanding. Access to information has become a double-edged sword during this era of technological achievement. In its complacency, America is becoming a country of fast food, fast entertainment, and even faster dissatisfaction. As counselors, how do we fit this new mentality into how we treat our clients? To what degree do we assess new societal norms? How can we predict the challenges to come? In my opinion, the challenges that our profession will face if this trend continues are numerous, but not necessarily beyond affect. I predict future problems with cyber addiction and extensive depersonalization. We will be more used to reading words on a screen than listening to another person's voice. What impact will that have on interpersonal relationships? The ability to communicate with only those who share our own viewpoints and philosophies will eliminate the need for constructive arguing. I predict that people may forget how to debate. Frustration and intolerance may become the rule rather than the exception. It is beyond my ability to assess the damage that this could do to our society.

Counselors have a duty to their clients. This is to do no harm. Preventative intervention is a large piece of this philosophy. I believe that encouraging tolerance and developing perspective could be very effective in preventing societal regression in our clients. Our clients need to understand that maintaining a positive outlook is much harder than wallowing in negativity. The courage that it takes for an individual to help instead of hurt can be a very empowering emotion, one that could aid in multiple areas of a client's life.



The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs



On January 24, 2012, the Counseling Program was notified by CACREP that we passed our mid-cycle accreditation review! We're halfway to re-accreditation time! Next year (2012-2013), the faculty will begin the 2 year re-accreditation self study which will be concluded and submitted to CACREP in June 2014.

Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to make this possible!!



Stressed Eric Burnt out Eric



SEEKING INTERVIEW DAY VOLUNTEERS!

Our program annual admissions interview day is Friday, February 17 (inclement weather date of February 24). We need student volunteers to assist with tours, writing sample, and general question-and-answer with the applicants. It's so important that candidates hear from YOU about the program. We need you for the full time frame of 8:45am to 12:30pm.

Practicum/interns may count this time as direct service on their log sheets.

Please email Lisen (lroberts@wcu.edu) to volunteer. Thank you!

5th Annual Healthy Eating and Living Conference

March 1 and 2 at MAHEC.

The March 1 event is free and includes dinner. The program is "Everybody Knows Somebody: What to do When 'Coping in My Own Way' Includes Disordered Eating. Registration and dinner start at 5:30, reservations required. Find out more at www.mahec.net/calendar keyword Heal.

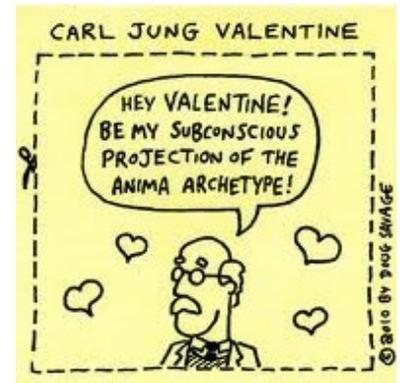


This newsletter is a resource of the WCU counseling program and is edited by me, Rachel Henry, a graduate student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. If you have any questions, suggestions, wishes or needs, please contact me (Rachel) at rahenny2@catamount.wcu.edu. I am happy to answer any and all questions and help in any way I can.

Professional Associations

Our professional organizations offer a number of amazing benefits, including podcasts and webinars to further our education. The American Counseling Association will be offering a webinar with Dr. Gerald Corey on February 15 at 1:00 pm on Developing Your Own Integrative Theory of Counseling. Podcasts are available on a variety of topics from cyber-bullying to weight loss. The American School Counselor Association is offering webinars throughout the semester on LGBTQ youth, empowering girls, and positive psychology, among other subjects.

If you paid for membership, get the benefits!



In the Counseling World

Resources

Licensed Professional Counselors
Association of North Carolina
www.lpcanc.org

American Counseling Association
www.counseling.org

American School Counselor
Association
www.schoolcounselor.org

North Carolina Counseling Association
www.nccounseling.org

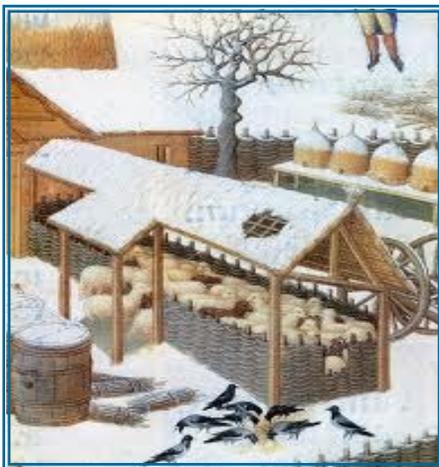
North Carolina School Counselor Assoc.
www.ncschoolcounselor.org

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

National Board for Certified
Counselors
www.nbcc.org/Newsletter

Buncombe County
www.buncombecounty.org

The North Carolina School Counselor Association offers a mentoring program to counselors in their first three years of practice. You can sign up for the program at www.ncschoolcounselor.org. They also offer scholarships and grants.



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The American School Counselor Association is holding their annual conference June 23–26 in beautiful Minneapolis, Minnesota. Speakers will include Dan Savage of “It Gets Better” fame, Andre Norman and Robin Gurwitch. Seminars cover a broad spectrum of topics including disaster counseling, creative counseling and working with difficult parents. You can register at www.schoolcounselor.org—just look for the Annual Conference page.



January 23 marked the beginning of the Chinese New Year. This is the year of the dragon.

Chinese dragons traditionally symbolize auspicious powers. It is a symbol of strength and good luck, heralding a year full of energy and surprises.

North Carolina Counseling Association Annual Conference

February 15—17 at the Grandover Resort in Greensboro

A great chance to meet colleagues, network, and expand your education

Program topics include: Is Technology Addiction an Addiction? Military Sexual Trauma and Female Soldiers, Counselor Role in the Transsexual Journey, Neurofeedback, Eco-wellness, Addictions and Expressive Arts Group, Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy, School-based Family Counseling, Play Therapy in the Elementary Schools, The Male Minority: Navigating the Counseling Profession as a Male Practitioner, Helping Career Women and Counselor Self-Efficacy

Sign up today at nccounseling.org

Spring 2012: Comps on March 24.

NCE on April 21.



Let me do my work each day;
And if the darkened hours of despair overcome me,
May I not forget the strength that comforted me
In the desolation of other times.

May I still remember the bright hours that found me
Walking over the silent hills of my childhood,
Or dreaming on the margin of the quiet river,
When a light glowed within me,
And I promised my early God to have courage
Amid the tempests of the changing years.
Spare me from bitterness
And from the sharp passions of unguarded moments.

May I not forget that poverty and riches are of the
spirit.

Though the world may know me not,
May my thoughts and actions be such
As shall keep me friendly with myself.

Lift my eyes from the earth,
And let me not forget the uses of the stars.
Forbid that I should judge others,
Lest I condemn myself.

Let me not follow the clamor of the world,
But walk calmly in my path.
Give me a few good friends who will love me for
what I am;

And keep ever burning before my vagrant steps
The kindly light of hope.

And though age and infirmity overtake me,
And I come not within sight of the castle of my
dreams,

Teach me still to be thankful for life,
And for times olden memories that are good and
sweet;

And may the evening's twilight find me gentle still.

- Max Ehrmann

NCSCA West Region Drive In Workshop 2012 - March 9 8:00 a.m.

Highsmith University Union - UNC Asheville Campus

Topics include Incorporating Technology, ACT News and Diversity

Cost to NCSCA Members: \$20, Non NCSCA Members: \$25—register at www.ncschoolcounseling.org

Read to Succeed needs you! You can help break the cycle of poverty by keeping children reading at grade level. Read to Succeed Asheville needs volunteers to become reading coaches for children living in public housing—grades 1 through 3. Training in phonics begins February 21. To sign up, or to get additional information, call Julie Sherman at 251-4949.



Congratulations to Trish Byers and Hanna Woody, who will attend the North Carolina College Access conference in Durham on February 22. Trish and Hanna were awarded monies to attend the conference by the WCU Teacher Recruitment, Advising, and Career Support (TRACS) office and the University of North Carolina General Administration Education College Access Challenge Grant.



GATE DAY ~ FEBRUARY 21, 2012 9:00 A.M.

If you are a graduate student who wants a career with a teaching or training component – this is for you. The theme is Making a Career and the workshops cover information about whether you should get a PhD and how to write a curriculum vitae.

The workshops take place in the Blue Ridge Conference Room C

Register at <http://http://www.wcu.edu/25221.asp>

20th Annual Graduate Research Symposium and Graduate Research Competition

Graduate students are encouraged to submit a research or creative works paper for blind review and ranking. They will then present their work at the Graduate Research Symposium on March 22, 2012.

Students may also present the results of graduate research at the Symposium including creative works, applied research, artistic presentations and written papers.

Abstract Submission Deadline: February 21, 2012

Research Competition Paper Submission Deadline: March 5, 2012

Participation and Competition Registration Form and Guidelines: www.wcu.edu/1149.asp

Last year two counseling students, Autumn Rumfelt and Megan Coaplen, had the opportunity to assist professors in their presentations at the North Carolina Counseling Association. They would like to share their experience here.

Autumn Rumfelt

Last November, I presented on *Youth "Coming Out" in the School House* with Dr. Phyllis Robertson at the NC School Counseling Association Conference in Greensboro, NC. The focus was on the developmental needs, models of sexual identity development, and resiliency of LGBTQ youth. Through this experience, I gained greater insight about myself, including my strengths and areas for growth. I learned that flexibility while presenting is a key component to connecting with the audience. The preparation process was intensive; however, it was highly gratifying to be viewed as a knowledgeable beginning counseling professional. It was definitely worth it! It was also great to make connections with other counselors throughout the state. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to contribute to a field about which I am passionate and to be involved in the professional development of both myself and others. I highly recommend this experience to everyone in the program.

Megan Coaplen

I had the pleasure of working with Lisen Roberts on *"Promising Practices in Transition to Kindergarten Activities"*. We presented some of the current trends and ideas related to kindergarten transition including ideas and activities that elementary school counselors could easily implement into their existing counseling programs. This was a wonderful opportunity to push myself to try something new and professionally contribute to the counseling field. I learned new things about myself and to succeed in spite of my fears. I would encourage other students to step out of their comfort zone and present at local and national conferences. I would definitely do it again!

Summer 2012 courses! Exact days and times are still getting WCU approval, but here's a course offering and date preview. Any/all combinations of courses listed can be "mixed and matched":

COUN 617: Addictions Counseling with Dr. Valerie Schwiebert, May minimester (May 7-May 22) in Cullowhee

COUN 650: Career Development with Dr. Lisen Roberts, June term (May 31-July 2) in Asheville

COUN 637: Creative & Expressive Arts in Counseling with Dr. Phyllis Robertson, 2-week session (July 9-20) in Asheville

COUN 677: Spirituality in Counseling with (adjunct) Dr. Mary Deck, 1-week session (June 18-22) in Asheville

EDPY 693: Positive Psychotherapy in Integrated Care with Dr. Russ Curtis, July term (July 5-Aug 3) online, with 2 face-to-face sessions in Asheville

EDPY 693: Supervision in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with Dr. Valerie Schwiebert, June term (May 31-July 2) in Cullowhee (and some online) – note that this course will be available on a limited basis; COUN 686: Practicum is a pre-req; COUN 687: Internship completion strongly encouraged.