



Maine Counseling Association

Winter 2016 Edition



Sketch by Marty Gallant

From the President

Stan Pelletier, Bucksport Middle School/RSU 25

Winter's late, but it's here now. We got in a nice December hike of Parkman and Gilmore Mountains in Acadia before the snow fell, and skied out on the back 40 three days later. I feel like I'm not "done" with winter yet, but I do look forward to our spring gathering, being with counseling colleagues, and attending our keynote with Peggy Smith, certified Non-violent communication trainer. I'll be going directly from representing MeCA at the annual American Counseling Association conference in Montreal to the Samoset in Rockport, now that we've had to move the dates of our conference. My thanks to the hard-working and nimble team of the conference committee for pulling off the last-minute switch. Many of our members would have been unable to attend the conference otherwise. The team is still working diligently to pull together the quality workshops you've come to expect.

Continued.....

SAVE THE DATE!!
Annual Conference, April 4 & 5, 2016

Our keynote speaker this year is Peggy Smith and her focus will be on "Building Resilience Within Conflict". Peggy Smith is Maine's only trainer certified by the International Center For Nonviolent Communication and her presentation will demonstrate how Nonviolent Communication (NVC) can help us stay connected even during conflict. In addition, a range of workshops will be available for all counseling professionals.

Registration details as well as a full schedule of workshops can be viewed at: www.mainecca.org.

This conference is not one you will want to miss!



From the President *(Continued)*

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we opted to hold our October board meeting at the SMCC campus to "take the show on the road" and be more accessible to folks in the southern region. A number of attendees from the southern part of the state joined our usual cast of conference committee and executive board members. We also extended the invitation to Vermont and New Hampshire counselors who are attempting to strengthen their respective state ACA branches; a New Hampshire representative was able to join us to observe an established ACA branch in action. The board adopted a resolution opposing the use of Native peoples as mascots, and resolved to provide links to educational and support materials on our website. At each of our meetings, and times in between, issues pertaining to legislative advocacy have occupied our attention. As of today, both of Maine's US Senators and 1 of 2 of our US House Representatives are in support of S.1830 and H.R.2759, the Medicare legislation. We have had concerted efforts to communicate with our elected officials and our membership regarding these issues, and have seen them sign on as co-sponsors. Most of our elected officials have maintained an active dialogue with us. The recent signing of the National Defense Authorization Act allows licensed professional counselors to practice independently as TRICARE providers, extending services of professional counselors to approximately 4.8 million military personnel and their dependents, and this owes largely to ACA advocacy. We've recently expanded our website to include direct links to our ethics committee, making it easier for rural counselors to access support with ethical dilemmas. We've added links to the Maine Resiliency Building Network and the Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine, and are working on an Anti-bullying and Violence Prevention resource page. Outreach to other professional communities also continues, as recently 2 MECA representatives manned a booth at a workplace wellness conference in Augusta, making important connections with a variety of providers. Attendees included community mental health agency personnel, hospital staff, insurance company representatives, and local business leaders and activists.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you'll find information on our inaugural MeCA Distinguished Counseling Professional awards, to be presented at this year's conference. We invite you to take a look at the award criteria and nominate a counselor whom you believe embodies the qualities we aspire to as professionals. As always, we need and welcome further involvement in MeCA leadership by our members. If you are interested in serving in a leadership role, at the state or regional level, or want to learn more, let us know. Lastly, we welcome feedback about what MeCA can do to improve your membership experience. Let us know, no need to wait for the conference!

Until spring--stay warm, be well, and wish me luck with my rusty French in Montreal (someone said to me recently, "if you use it, the rust falls off"). Any good visitor's recommendations are welcome!

A Note From Our Newsletter Editor

Jill Bouchard Cairns

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 three consecutive issues of News and Views. Please send your check for \$100.00 (made payable to MeCA) to:

**Jill Bouchard Cairns
U of Maine at Fort Kent
23 University Drive
Fort Kent, ME 04743**

If you have any ideas, articles or questions you can email Jill at jillb@maine.edu

A Note From Our Historian

Kevin O'Reilly

Each year at the conference business meeting, the historian is called upon to read a list of those members who have retired or who will be retiring at the end of the school year. The historian also announces the names of current or past members who have died. Please contact me prior to the conference with any updates so that I might recognize the members at the conference.

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2016 Distinguished Counseling Professional Awards

The Maine Counseling Association is accepting nominations for our inaugural 2016 Distinguished Counseling Professional awards. The award honors Maine Counseling Association members working in a variety of settings across the profession including K-12 schools, colleges and universities, community-based agencies, clinical facilities, and private practice. Counselors considered for the award are ethical, effective, and diligent advocates for clients or students. They are leaders, mentors, and positive examples of professionalism within the counseling community, with consistent accomplishment throughout their careers. They exemplify integrity, patience, and compassion in their empowering work with students, clients, families, or colleagues. They advance the reputation of our profession by their work and example.

To nominate a member for this award, please contact the Maine Counseling Association President, Stan Pelletier at stan.pelletier@rsu25.org or at (207)469-6647



From the Past President & Conference Co-Chair

Dean Collins, Madison Area High School

As I sit here waiting for the snow, I wonder where time has gone. It just seems like yesterday that we were starting to plan for the conference, and now we are approaching it fast, finishing the schedule and doing the final preparations. First, I want to thank the conference committee for gathering so quickly to discuss the change that was brought forth by the mandating of high school students being tested on April 11th, which would have forced the majority of our attendees along with yours truly to miss the conference. With people making phone calls, emails and then following-up with all of us, we were able to move the conference to the week prior with minimal interruption of workshops. I appreciate all of those that were involved in making this a smooth transition.

This will be one of my last newsletter articles and I would like to say thanks to the conference committee members, executive board members and all of our membership in making the Maine Counseling Association what it is today. We have been in existence for over 50 years due to the dedication of all, in reaching out to support each other in times of need, to support the organization by taking leadership roles and attending our conference. When I look to our neighboring states, you will not find an organization in place that support the counseling professions like we do. We have worked closely with the Maine School Counseling Association on various initiatives that affect all of us, lobbying the state and national congressional members to support our organizations on various bills.

Our membership is strong and it is due to your support. I hope to see you all at our Annual Conference on April 4th and 5th at the Samoset Resort!

Service Opportunities are Available!!

Thinking about getting involved? Or "nudging" someone else?

The Maine Counseling Association is looking for members to step up and claim positions of service and leadership in our professional organization for the coming year. "What would I have to do?" MeCA officers are happy to discuss leadership positions and responsibilities with any who are considering them.

Open positions currently include the MeCA President-Elect, Southern Region President and College Admissions Representative.

Nominations will be accepted up to and including the annual conference. Advance nominations should be forwarded to the Maine Counseling Association Nominating Chair, Dean Collins.



Public Policy Update

Ben Milster, Mount Blue High School

Bills of Interest carried over from 1st session

LD 215 - An Act To Improve Student Retention in Maine's Postsecondary Institutions

SUMMARY

This bill directs Jobs for Maine's Graduates, a state-authorized nonprofit corporation, to provide mentoring and counseling services, course guidance and graduation planning, peer support services and financial guidance to up to 200 students and at up to 4 postsecondary institutions in the State for the purpose of significantly increasing the percentage of eligible students who obtain a postsecondary degree. Eligible students must have previously been enrolled in a Jobs for Maine's Graduates high school program, been in or currently be in foster care or have earned a high school equivalency diploma within the 5 years prior to obtaining these services.

LD 440 - An Act To Create a Secure, Therapeutic Mental Health Unit

SUMMARY

This bill provides for the establishment of a secure, therapeutic mental health unit for defendants undergoing court-ordered assessments to determine their competency to stand trial or their criminal culpability and to provide therapeutic care for forensic patients. The bill establishes the unit as follows.

1. It directs the Commissioner of Corrections and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to enter into an agreement to establish the unit with the sheriff of either Cumberland County or Somerset County.
2. It directs the Department of Corrections to provide security for the unit. Security staff must be dedicated to the unit and trained to provide security in a mental health hospital environment.
3. It directs the Department of Corrections to provide therapeutic mental health care for the unit. The therapeutic mental health care must meet standards established by a national organization on correctional facilities mental health standards. The Department of Health and Human Services may also provide mental health services to the unit upon agreement with the Department of Corrections and the county jail.

Continued.....

Public Policy Update *(Continued)*

4. It requires that the population in a secure, therapeutic mental health unit be separated by sight and sound from the general jail population.
5. It specifies that a person under a court order to undergo a mental evaluation by the State Forensic Service must be admitted to the unit unless the Department of Health and Human Services determines that the person's mental health condition contraindicates admittance to the unit, the person is an inmate at a state correctional facility or there is not a suitable bed available.

LD 898 - An Act To Reduce Student Loan Debt through an Expansion of the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit

SUMMARY

This bill allows students who are pursuing or have pursued a course of study available only at a public institution outside the State as part of the New England regional student program offered by the New England Board of Higher Education to be eligible for the educational opportunity tax credit, starting with the tax year beginning January 1, 2016.

New Bills of Interest

LD - 1531 - An Act To Protect Victims of Human Trafficking

SUMMARY

This bill provides that victims of aggravated sex trafficking are eligible to file for protection from abuse orders and protection from harassment orders.

LD 1537 - An Act To Combat Drug Addiction through Enforcement, Prevention, Treatment and Recovery

SUMMARY

The purpose of this bill is to address drug addiction by increasing the number of drug enforcement agents and by increasing the availability of prevention, treatment and recovery programs.

1. Part A provides ongoing funding for 10 investigative agents in the Department of Public Safety, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Continued.....

Congratulations to Deb Drew!!!

Dr. Deborah L. Drew, Associate Professor, and Director of Graduate Counseling and Human Relations Programs at Husson University has been selected as the 2015 Marjane Fall Counselor Educator of the Year. This award recognizes a creative, generous, charitable counselor educator who has reached out to others in spirit, scholarship, and deed and thereby made a profound difference in the lives of those so touched. In addition, Dr. Drew was selected in recognition of her significant contribution to her profession through scholarship, leadership, warmth, empathy, and service. Dr. Drew was presented with this award at the NARACES (North Atlantic Region Association of Counselor Education and Supervision) regional business meeting during the ACES (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision) Conference on Friday, October 9th in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Public Policy Update *(Continued)*

2. Part B directs the Department of the Attorney General to administer grants to local law enforcement agencies and county jails located in geographically diverse communities throughout the State to fund projects designed solely to facilitate pathways to community-based treatment, recovery and support services.

3. Part C directs the Department of Health and Human Services to provide grants to a substance abuse treatment entity to develop and operate a 10-bed social detoxification center located in the greater Bangor area.

4. Part D provides ongoing funding for annual grants to the Maine Association of Substance Abuse Programs for the establishment and expansion of peer support recovery centers and the coordination and provision of substance abuse prevention and education in schools and communities.

5. Part E provides funding to increase substance abuse residential treatment and substance abuse outpatient services for the uninsured.

6. Part F transfers \$725,000 in fiscal year 2015-16 and \$1,775,000 in fiscal year 2016-17 from the funds received pursuant to the court order in State of Maine v. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. and Standard & Poor's Financial Services, LLC, Kennebec County Superior Court Docket No. BCD-CV-14-49, to the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund.

LD 1540 - An Act To Protect All Students in Elementary or Secondary Schools from Sexual Assault by School Officials

SUMMARY

This bill removes the age limit on the victim of the crime of unlawful sexual contact, unlawful sexual touching or gross sexual assault when the victim is a student at an elementary, secondary or special education school and the actor is a person at the school who has authority over the student. The bill also specifies that a parent convicted of the crime of unlawful sexual contact, unlawful sexual touching or gross sexual assault is subject to stricter scrutiny by the court when it determines residence for and contact with a child of the parent when the victim was a student at an elementary, secondary or special education school and the parent was a person at the school who had authority over the student

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