

# New England Psychological Association Newsletter

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## The President's Column: Berney Beins, Ph.D. Ithaca College

### NEPA's Golden Age

We could have an interesting debate about when the last Golden Age ended. After all, people rarely exclaim that things are better now than they ever have been. In fact, it seems to me that the last Golden Age ended 20 years before we were born, no matter when we were born. Believe it or not, I think that we at NEPA are actually in our own Golden Age.

There is something about collective memory that is fascinating. Do we really believe that life was simpler in bygone eras? Were people any less (or more) human in their behaviors than they are now? And germane to the lives that we lead, our academic forebears did not live in the world of resources that we and our students do.

There are many levels at which we could discuss the state of our lives, but in this column, I will focus on a theme that is close to us all: education. Let's take a brief trip to bygone eras and see what we can discern about the educational world. If we think back on the little red school houses of the time, we might imagine a nurturing environment with caring teachers and motivated students.

However, the founder of the New School for Social Research, Alvin Johnson, attended a rural school in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and offered a different view: "We expected to learn nothing in school and we were not disappointed." At that time, it would not have been outlandish to think that a girl of 15 could be the teacher in such a school. In fact, my grandmother finished the eighth grade only because she wanted to become a teacher.

At the college level, things weren't much better in some cases. We all know that laboratory space is invariably in

short supply in any educational institution at any level. This reflects a point that E. C. Sanford raised as a hurdle in 1893. Sanford recommended that the lab have electric or gas lighting, be heated, and have furniture. Harry Kirke Wolfe was chastised by the University of Nebraska for exceeding his budget by \$75.86, not a trifling sum in that day, but certainly not an extravagance. Fortunately, the privations of that era are not so extreme today.

In addition, when we lament overly large classes, we are not inventing a new complaint. Sanford pointed out in 1910 that college instructors faced inordinately large classes of literally hundreds of students. Psychology was popular then, too.

So in the early decades of our discipline's existence, the landscape didn't resemble Utopia. Classes were large and resources were slim. At least our offices and labs today have furniture, heat, and lighting.

In terms of resources, we have an abundance that would astound academics of a century ago (and even more recently than that). For instance, if you had wanted slides to display in class in the 1940s, you would have had to draw them yourself with India ink on etched glass at a cost of \$6.50 for 25 slides, a considerable amount of work and a considerable sum at the time.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Sanford made a plea for the development of laboratory manuals for teaching students the fundamentals of psychology. Today, we don't have to look far to see a myriad of teaching resources. The American Psychological Association houses the Online Psychology Laboratory (<http://opl.apa.org>) that permits students to act as research participants for classroom or course data collection. The Society for the Teaching of Psychology has numerous teaching resources, too (<http://teachpsych.org/>). The American Psychological Society has devoted a section of its website to teaching and teaching resources: <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

So what does this have to do with NEPA? If you take a look at participation in our annual meeting, you can see that we help avoid the isolation prevalent a century ago when NEPA didn't exist and when communication among psychologists was slow and uncertain.

An even more striking indication of the current Golden Age is the presence and number of students who share their work at our meeting. We are creating junior colleagues and young professionals. The attention that our students get from us certainly surpasses the amount that I experienced as a student.

The addition of NECTOP, our teaching conference, is also testimony to the interest that we have in our instruction. Each year, the speakers bring us ideas about emerging ideas in pedagogy that will serve us and our students well.

So as I look at what we do and what we accomplish, I can only conclude that each year when we congregate, we are creating and extending our own Golden Age of psychology in our research and teaching. We combine the personal and the professional in ways that benefit us as professionals as well as our students.

It won't be all that long before it will be time to submit proposals for the fall meeting. As you make your plans for our convention, keep in mind that you will be part of an energetic and exciting world of research and teaching: Our Golden Age.

**Highlights of the Fall 2015  
55<sup>th</sup> NEPA Annual Meeting  
Elizabeth Harwood, Ph.D.  
NEPA Newsletter Editor  
Rivier University**

The 2015 Annual Conference of NEPA was held at Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, MA. The conference kicked off with the Friday evening talk *“Right Next Door but Worlds Apart: Demographic Diversity and the University Campus”* by Distinguished Presenter, Loreto Prieto, Ph.D, from Iowa State University. He spoke of the specific challenges that first generation and students of color face at college and the responsibility of the University to catch up with its changing demographics. Saturday was filled with equally engaging symposiums, paper sessions, special presentations and five poster sessions, demonstrating the breadth and depth of NEPA's regional conference.

Featured speaker, Eric Landrum, Ph.D. of Boise State University spoke of *“Using Storytelling as an Evidence-Based Instructional Practice.”* His presentation was supported by Division 2, the Teaching of Psychology. Distinguished APA speaker Kathy Hirsch-Patek, Ph.D from Temple University presented *“Language for Literacy: Preparing Children for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading.”*

She discussed 6 principles derived from the literature on language development that can encourage language learning at an early age and can lead to later reading success. The NEPA Presidential Address by Michael Amico of Housatonic Community College entitled *“Social Creatures: The Connection between Personal Relationships and their Impact on Functioning”* covered his research on relationships and their importance in day-to-day functioning. Distinguished Contribution Speaker, Bernard Beins, Ph.D of Ithaca College described how the psychology major fosters critical thinking in the talk: *“I Think, Therefore I am a Psychology Major: Psychology and Critical Thinking.”*

Psi Chi, the International Honors Society in Psychology conducted programming on how to run an effective Psi Chi Chapter (*“Psi Chi : The Relationship of Psi Chi Management and Leadership: Pace University”*) as well as on how students can benefit from the opportunities that Psi Chi has to offer (*“What can Psi Chi Do for You? Money and Research Opportunities for Students”*). Of particular interest given recent events was the Psi Chi talk on *“Racial Identity Matters: Understanding Interactions between Police and People of Color”* by Carlton Green, Ph.D. of the University of Maryland. Also popular was Psi Chi's Keynote speaker, Marissa Harrison, Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University, who presented on *“The Means, Motives and Makings of Female Serial Killers”*

Exceptional students were presented with the 2015 Honorary Undergraduate Scholar Awards. These students included Alexis Avery Adams-Clark (Connecticut College), Melody Altschuler (Bates College), Candace Crocker (Stonehill College), Daniel Harris (University of Massachusetts Boston), Benjamin Katz (University of New England), Michael Murgio (Connecticut College), Alexis Smith (Housatonic Community College) and Jordan Thomas (Connecticut College).

Symposiums ranged from discussions on how to get into graduate school to life as a professor to helping community programs succeed. Paper sessions covered such diverse topics as emotions, movement and perception to discrimination and personal control to substance use and addiction and beyond. Thank you everyone for helping make NEPA such a successful conference. We look forward to seeing you at Assumption College next year.

**Secretary's Report of  
NEPA Steering Committee Meeting  
December 2015  
Jacquelyn Alfonso Barry, Ph.D.  
NEPA Secretary  
Emmanuel College**

- Association Coordinator Gary Brosvic was in attendance, as were the following Steering Committee (SC) members: Barney Beins, Michael Amico, Peter Frost, Bryan Auday, Adam Volungis, Ted Bosack, Leonard Doerfler, Kenneth Walters, Angela Kilb, Kristin Dukes, Diana Direiter, Diane Mello-Goldner, Dov Kugelmass, Jeanine Skorinko, Paul Cunningham & Jacqueline Alfonso Barry who took minutes.

Announcements

- Thanking members leaving the Board: Tara Broccoli, Mary Ehmer, Teresa Lyons, Duncan White
- There was a proposal to present members leaving NEPA with a plaque to recognize their service. This proposal needs follow-up.
- Welcoming members re-elected to the Board: Jeanine (moving to Treasurer), Donnah Canavan, Peter Frost
- Welcoming new members: Angela Kilb, Kristin Dukes, Diana Direiter
- Receipt of annual report and thanks to Gary Brosvic
  - Discussion around declining attendance at NEPA since 2012. Several potential factors were highlighted: timing of conference (i.e., around holiday weekend may not be optimal), junior faculty today have a lot of demands placed upon them already and may not have additional time/energy for NEPA, 15% decrease in New England faculty, smaller program/less draw
- Upcoming meeting locations (possibly through 2020): Assumption (2016), Housatonic Community College (2017), William James (2018), Worcester Polytechnic Institute (2019?)—Jeanine will attend to this after her trip return at the end of Spring 2016)

Board activity

- Treasurer appointment
- Report from Jeanine: We have about \$30k—approximately \$20k in investments, we just paid

Gary half of his salary (so deduct \$5k), \$2k in a CD and the rest is in the bank. Although 2015 is just over \$1k in the red, we should not be worried—plenty in reserves. We should not rest on our laurels, however, and need to work on marketing and other strategies to increase attendance at NEPA.

- Discussion around funding: APA provides some funding for things like Science and Society Symposium (\$500), we get most of our money from the conference, graduate programs who pay to exhibit at the conference, perhaps pharmaceutical company to distribute their promotional items?
- Financial authorizations
- We should have a second person authorized to be on the bank account; maybe three individuals would be better. Perhaps President-Elect is the most logical suggestion—Dov accepted. The Secretary is another logical suggestion, but we need to elect a new one at present to replace Melissa Sue-John. Michael volunteered to be the third person on the bank account and Jackie agreed to stay on as Secretary for the duration of this year.
- Cross training regarding Board functions (with training sequences)
  - It was agreed that there should be cross-training. TBD how that proceeds.
- Meeting schedule for Board members
- In the April meeting it was agreed that the December meeting was required for all SC members, the April meeting requires the Executive Board and any SC who wish to join, and the elimination of the October meeting that precedes the conference.
- There was disagreement from some SC members about this decision due to concerns that a SC member, and new ones in particular, could theoretically only be involved in one meeting a year, for a total of three meetings throughout the duration of their tenure.
- We need to finalize whether or not all SC members need to attend the April meeting. It was suggested off-line that all SC should attend the April meeting given very little planning was done at this current December meeting for the actual upcoming conference in 2016.
- Focus of the Board

- Bryan led the discussion of the Strategic Planning Committee's questions to guide us.
- What is our central mission?
- Reviewed some of our prior documents (e.g., brochure, website) and we have a few bullet points that we referred to on those.
- How can we best serve all of our members?
- The point was made that if we look at where our SC come from, it is mainly teaching-focused institutions. How can we offer solid opportunities given that this is the case? Idea proposed that more networking/research collaboration opportunities for junior faculty in particular would be helpful. Perhaps adding a checklist of topic areas in which a registrant practices, teaches, conducts research, etc. along with a question as to whether they would be interested in being "matched" to intentional events to meet with like colleagues could add value to the conference and result in other program elements (e.g., networking lunches around particular topics). Also possibly adding specialties on the program or website of members/attendees (also accomplished by asking for this on a checklist during submission and/or registration).
- The idea of offering CEUs came up. Perhaps partnering with a high-quality company that offers CEUs and having them offer programs on the Friday of our conferences would be ideal. Not sure that CEUs are the way to go given financial investment and saturation of the market.
- Proactive outreach by Board members for membership and attendance at the convention

Idea proposed that SC members collaborate around areas of expertise to curate topic-specific sessions by reaching out to colleagues in their area to submit. Plan: move forward with piloting this idea and see if it increases attendance next year. A sheet was circulated with SC member info and interests to facilitate this. Strategic planning committee work

- Number of Steering Committee meetings each year
  - One in December and one in April.
- Outreach and marketing
  - See bullet point above on this issue.
- Continuing Education Units
  - See bullet point above on this issue.

#### DCA and HUS award planning

- Duncan has left so DCA needs a leader to replace him. Dov volunteered to replace Duncan as the Chair. Peter volunteered to join the committee and Paul and Michael will continue to serve.
- Donnah, Paul, Bryan and Michael will serve on the HUS award committee.

#### NEPA recognition of members

- Presidential citation
- Fellow status & Emeritus status for NEPA members
- Recognize prior members who have served NEPA meaningfully for an extended amount of time.

#### Other business

- Speakers
- Len proposed a Friday night speaker, Robin Morgan, Ph.D. who has already agreed to speak at the conference. Will look into others as well and get back to Gary.
- Len also proposed having a concurrent session at NECTOP about conducting research at liberal arts colleges. This was agreeable to SC members as a topic that would be popular.

#### Adjournment

### **Highlights of the Fall 2015 NECTOP Annual Meeting Ted Bosak Providence College Chair, NECTOP Committee**

The 21<sup>st</sup> running of the Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology took place, as it has for the last 15 years, on Friday before the full NEPA Convention began on October 9. The 2015 program had two themes that focused the attention of the presenters and participants.

Keynote speakers Eric Landrum and Stacy Spencer addressed matters related to preparing undergraduate psychology majors for work after college. Both speakers acknowledged that most psychology majors do not plan to attend graduate school and focused on how the major can prepare students for careers not typically considered subfields of psychology. In different ways, Landrum and Spencer identified skills that psychology majors acquire in their studies; skills that students may not realize are important to employers and that should be identified in job applications. Landrum stressed the importance of developing assessments such as exit assessments that reflect these skills that psychology students bring to the workplace. Unless programs develop such assessments, they may not provide optimal opportunities for graduates

to recognize their accomplishments and they may fail in meeting the standards of accountability that are being set by boards of directors and legislators.

Spencer stressed the importance of involving students in self-reflection early in the major so that they can see their developing skills and recognize how they may be applied after graduation. Rather than simply providing a listing of occupations and careers that utilize skills developed in the psychology major, Spencer also advocated a system of guided career exploration that explicitly identifies the connections between psychology and other careers, encourages experiential learning and participation in internships, is connected to resources available within the institution and online, and includes alumni. Both keynoters provided rich examples of the methods that they proposed.

The second basic theme of the conference demonstrated a variety of ways to provide hands-on, experiential learning opportunities for students to maximize engagement, encourage long-term retention, and stress the relevance of course content and skill development to the broader environments in which they live. Alicia Nordstrom did this by stressing integration of sociocultural learning throughout the curriculum and using community resources to involve students. Bill Altman conducted a workshop on preparing assessment rubrics that focus on important skills in language, writing, scientific reasoning, and employability. John Minahan discussed how he whets student appetites with engaging and creative short stories and then uses their enthusiasm in relating the stories to the principles of psychology. Karen Meteyer and Elizabeth Harwood focused on a developmental approach to teaching students about research that instills an appreciation for its value. The satisfaction that students experience upon successful completion of research projects can help them to apply scientific reasoning to other elements of their lives.

It is too early to have a completed program for the 2016 NECTOP that will occur on October 14 at Assumption College in Worcester, MA. At this point we do know that one of the keynoters will be Sangeeta Panicker, who is the Director of the Research Ethics Office in the Science Directorate of the American Psychological Association. Her presentation will focus on ethics as it relates to teaching, and she will be able to discuss the Hoffman Report and its potential use in teaching. In addition, Peter Frost will conduct a workshop on his evidenced-based application of interteaching, and Natalie J. Ciarocco, David B. Strohmets, and Gary W. Lewandowski, Jr., will do a very effective and entertaining presentation of "Research Methods: An Employer's Dream Course."

The call for presentation for NECTOP is now open at <http://www.newenglandpsychological.org/>. Please consider proposing a one-hour concurrent session, poster, participant, idea exchange or a short demonstration for inclusion in the program.

**Announcement of the Recipient of the  
Distinguished Contributions Award for  
2016  
Dov Kugelmass, Ph.D  
Three Rivers Community College**

David Kenney is a distinguished Social Psychologist. He has had a career of prolific research and publishing in the area of person perception. His research has contributed a great deal of knowledge to how people think about each other. His analytic models have allowed others to explore social perceptions in real live interactions. While the reach of his ideas has been far, his career has been centered in New England, first in Massachusetts at Harvard University and then in Connecticut at the University of Connecticut. He has trained and mentored many doctoral students in Social Psychology and related fields and has contributed to the effectiveness of other researchers through the popular Summer Data Analysis Training Institutes. Since 2011 Dr. Kenny has been Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the University of Connecticut. Even in "retirement" he continues to publish and conduct research. Dr. Kenny has received numerous awards including the Society of Personality and Social Psychology's Award for Methodological Innovation describing him as "a giant among methodologists in psychology. His record of methodological innovation within social and personality psychology is unparalleled" (<http://www.spsp.org/?MethoInnovatAward#Pastr>).

**A Look Forward: NEPA's 56<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Meeting  
October 15, 2016  
Assumption College  
Worcester, MA  
Leonard Doerfler, Ph.D.  
Assumption College**

Assumption College was founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, a religious congregation founded in France in 1850. Initially, the students were sons of immigrants from French Canada who had settled in New England. Until the early 1950's, all classes were taught in French. The original

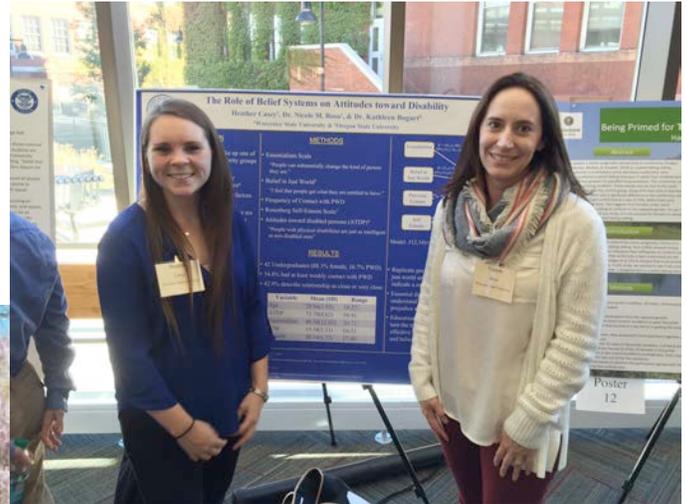
Assumption College campus was damaged extensively by a tornado in 1953 (that took 3 lives), and the college moved to its current campus in 1956. Today the college has 2,100 undergraduate (over 90% live on campus) and more than 700 graduate and continuing education students. Assumption College offers several graduate programs leading to a master's degree.

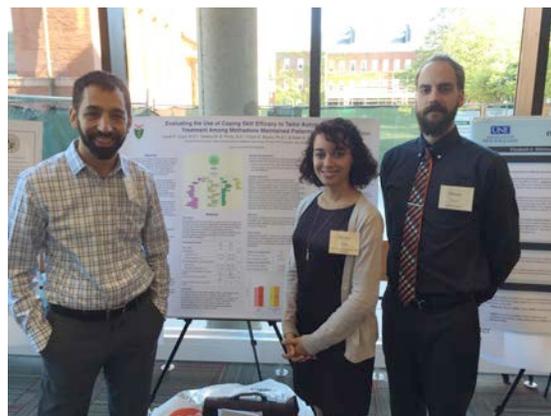
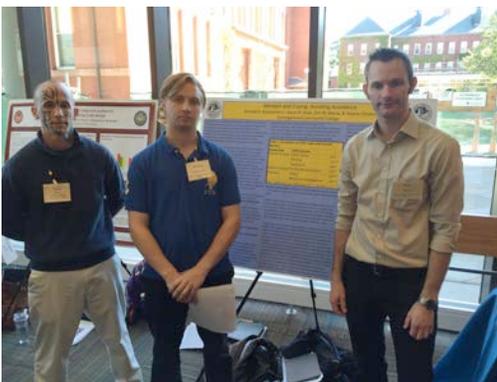
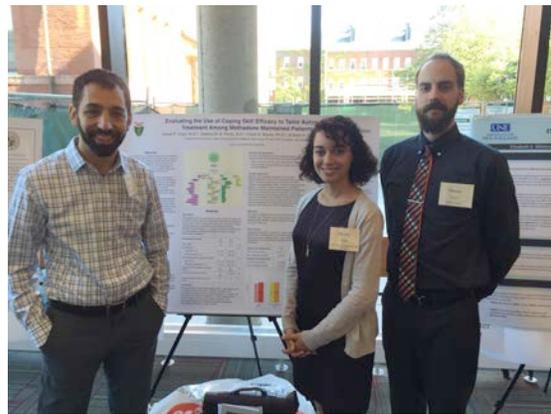
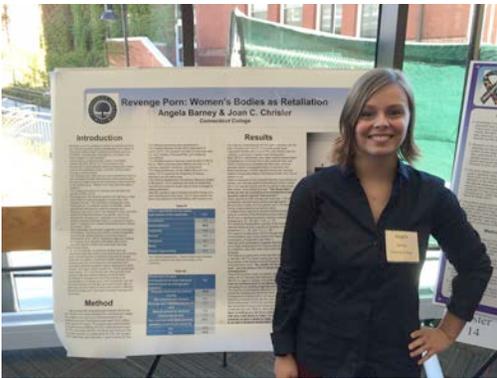
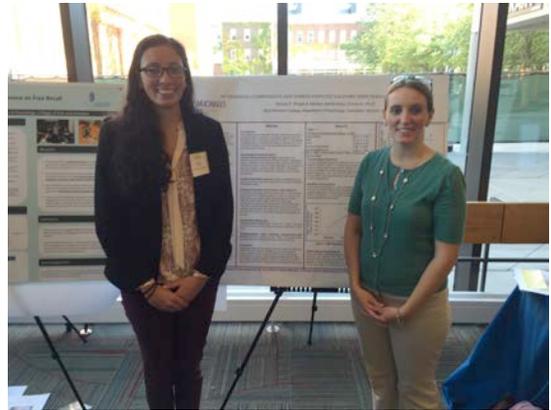
Assumption College is located in Worcester, Massachusetts, New England's second largest city. Worcester is home to 12 colleges and more than 30,000 students. Listed on Forbes.com as one of the top-10 most livable cities in the country, metro-Worcester has a population of 800,000. Fine dining to exotic foods, an eclectic music scene and a vibrant art community are part of the diverse culture of the city. Boston, Providence, and Hartford are about 45 miles away.



## A Look Back: NEPA's 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Photos of Poster Presentations

*A special thank you to Kenneth Walters, Ph.D of Southern Connecticut State University for taking these pictures*

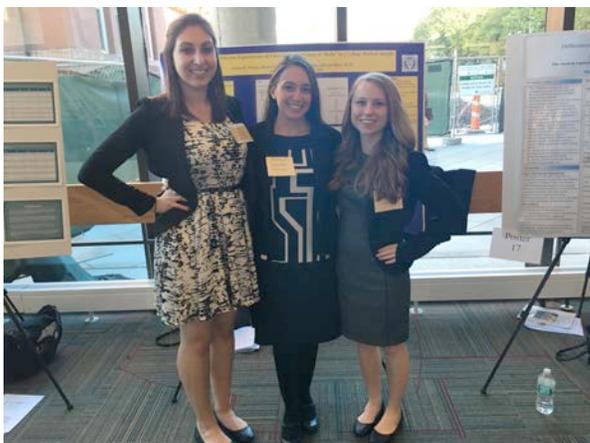
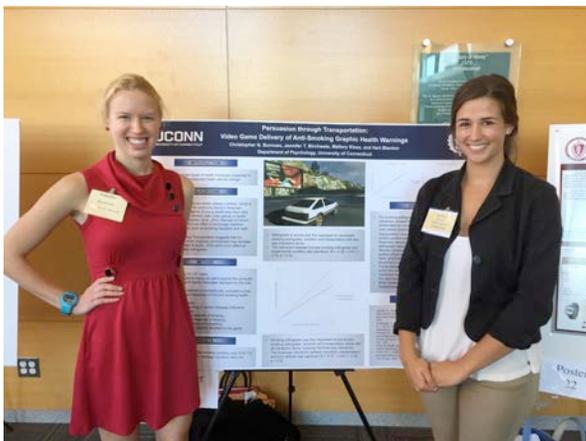






Cunningham, P. (2015). Empirical rationalism and transpersonal empiricism: Bridging the two epistemic cultures of transpersonal psychology. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 47(1), 83-120.

Frost, P.J., Casey, B., Griffin, K., Raymundo, L., Farrell, C., & Carrigan, R. (2015). The influence of confirmation bias on memory and source monitoring. *The Journal of General Psychology*, 142(4), 238-252, DOI: 10.1080/00221309.2015.1084987



## NEPA Member Publications

Alfonso, J. (2015). The role of social norms in personalized alcohol feedback: A dismantling study with emerging adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse*. DOI: 10.1080/1067828X.2013.872064

Auday, B. C., & Rossi, M. (In press). Menopause and cancer. In *Salem Health: Cancer 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, Hackensack, NJ: Grey House Publishing.



#### ATTENTION NEPA MEMBERS

Send news of your recent grants, awards, publications, presentations, and accomplishments to us so we can include them in the NEPA Newsletter. Send news items to Elizabeth Harwood, Ph.D., NEPA Newsletter Editor, via e-mail at [eharwood@rivier.edu](mailto:eharwood@rivier.edu) or by mail at the address below. News sent by May 15, 2016 will be included in the Summer 2016 newsletter.

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