

New England Psychological Association Newsletter

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Winter 2014



President's Column Jeanine Skorinko, Ph.D Worcester Polytechnic Institute NEPA President

It is New Year's Eve and the last thing on my to-do list for 2013 is to write my President's Column for the New England Psychological Associations Winter Newsletter. While this may say too much about me—I work too much, I should have done this sooner—whichever angle you want to take, it provides me with a unique opportunity—as this day is notorious for reflecting on the past and looking forward to another year that we hope will be even better than the last. And, I have certainly spent time today reflecting on 2013 and thinking about 2014. I have even reached out to former students to wish them a Happy New Year and encouraged them to continue telling me about their adventures in 2014. (I love getting random messages and postcards from former students).

As I sit here thinking about NEPA, I'm excited to see what is in store during 2014, and I am impressed with what we have done since I have joined the steering committee in 2007. My "ticket" onto the steering committee came, ironically enough, from Anne O'Dwyer at Bard College at Simon's Rock. Anne was my undergraduate Psychology Professor (and one of my first inspirational role models in Psychology) during the two years that I spent at Simon's Rock. I wasn't sure what I was getting into, but, over time and with Anne's mentorship, I have come to love NEPA and what it stands for. And, I am proud to be currently serving as President. The steering committee is comprised of psychologists, in all stages of their careers and from schools throughout New England. These are some of the most spirited, intelligent, and good-hearted individuals I have been fortunate enough to meet. As with most committees, we will talk circles around agenda topics,

but the underlying goal is always to advance NEPA with its best interests in mind. And, it has been simply wonderful to get to know each of these individuals, see them semi-regularly, and ultimately develop a little New England Psychology family.

During my time in NEPA, things have changed, and for the better. When I joined, NEPA was very small, had no real website, and all things were done via paper and pencil (e.g., writing checks and mailing them!). But, over the last six years we have grown exponentially, our website is a work in progress but it exists, and we have entered the technological age of submitting and paying online! Much of this is due to the devotion and work of the steering committee and the hard, invaluable work of our Association Coordinator, Gary Brosvic. So, as I reflect on NEPA, I would like us all to express our thanks to the hard work that Gary Brosvic and the steering committee has done since my time on NEPA. And, I can attest that I would not have survived hosting the NEPA conference at WPI in 2012 without Gary and the steering committee members who had done it before me. We also need to thank and show our appreciation to all the hard work Michael Amico did to host such a successful and highly attended conference at Housatonic Community College!

As I reflect, it would be remiss of me not to mention the very unfortunate and sad passing of our dear colleague Joan Bombace at Quinnipiac University. Joan was a devoted member of the steering committee and her presence is greatly missed. I am happy that we came together to have a session of memorial and celebration for Joan's life and impressive career. We send our sincerest condolences to her family.

As I look forward to my year in reign as President, I am honestly excited. Our membership has grown, the quality of our speakers and submitted symposia, papers, and posters has improved, and we just welcomed 4 new people onto our Steering Committee. We even started a mentorship program for our new members to help them get the swing of things and feel welcomed and engaged. In 2014, we are looking forward to our annual conference that will be hosted at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. If you have not been to Bates College, I encourage you to use this as an opportunity to visit. It is a beautiful campus with a wonderful psychology

faculty. With the conference happening October 18th, I'm excited for the opportunity to see Maine in the height of the fall and foliage. I hope you all will consider making the trek to Maine (it is only 2.5 hours from Worcester!) and join us for what is shaping up to be another impressive conference at yet another beautiful campus.

I guess I should wrap things up—it is getting late and if I keep at it, I'll still be writing this as the ball drops. As I think about where I'd like NEPA to go, my mission is simple. I want to increase visibility and excitement about NEPA. Most importantly, I want to increase engagement. So, I encourage you in 2014 to get involved in NEPA in whatever way you can. Submit a proposal for a symposia, paper, or poster for the 2014 conference. Nominate a student for our Honorary Undergraduate Scholars (HUS) Award. Nominate a colleague for our Distinguished Contribution Award (DCA). Nominate yourself to join us on the steering committee. Encourage your colleagues to think about attending or submitting to NEPA. Support your students in submitting their quality work to our conference and give them the opportunity of a lifetime to present or attend a professional conference. And, spread the word about our great, little but growing, organization. Please don't hesitate to contact me with ideas on how to increase visibility, excitement, and engagement. And, Happy New Year to everyone. I hope 2014 is a great year for everyone!

**Highlights of the Fall 2013
53rd NEPA Annual Meeting
Michael Amico, Ph.D.
Housatonic Community College
President-Elect**

October 18th and 19th, 2013 Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, CT was pleased to host the New England Psychological Association Annual Meeting. The weather was a perfect fall weekend to welcome some of the best and brightest minds in the psychological sciences to the largest city in Connecticut. Friday began with the Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology. Michele DiPietro, Ph.D., and Janie Wilson, Ph.D., gave the keynotes of the afternoon sessions and they were both well attended and both speakers enthusiastically discussed their work with colleagues after the sessions. Many breakout sessions throughout the day were standing room only and focused on textbook writing, undergraduate mentoring, and writing APA style. During the day, Channel 12 in Connecticut got word of the conference and they came to the school and videotaped part of a session and interviewed some of the conference attendees which

highlighted the importance of the meeting and many of the topics being presented to society. The afternoon sessions wound down giving meeting goers the chance to sit down and catch up on old friendships and form new relationships both professional and personal. Many of the attendees from the afternoon decided to stay for the dinner and the evening keynote address and they were joined by many other colleagues and students as well. After a wonderful dinner the evening presentation kicked off. President of Housatonic Community College Anita Gliniecki and Dean Elizabeth Roop welcomed attendees to Housatonic Community College and to the city and to the meeting. Afterwards, Dov Kugelmass, Ph.D., NEPA Steering Committee member, welcomed guests and introduced Dr. Daniel Schachter to the packed room of attendees. Dr. Schachter gave an hour talk discussing an update to his research on the seven sins of memory and what his findings are most recently. Throughout the talk Dr. Schachter held the audiences' attention and was expansive in his responses to questions after his presentation was complete. Then, many students and professionals had their pictures taken with Dr. Schachter as he graciously agreed to take his time to meet these many requests and engage in discussions with interested parties.

Saturday began with registration that was lined with many eager students and professionals waiting to make their mark with presentations to be made or speakers to attend. The day was highlighted by speaker Ken Keith, Ph.D., giving the Harry Kirk Wolfe Address connecting the history of psychology and the psychology of teaching. Leadership from the offices of Psi Chi and Psi Beta gave terrific presentations to students on the benefits and opportunities of membership in these honor societies. Kelly Brownell, Ph.D., gave the Distinguished Contribution Address that examined the role of diets and lifestyle in many of the health related problems that exist in society today. Lewis Lipsitt, Ph.D., gave an exciting Presidential Address examining child behavior and development. Dr. Toni Crespi led a wonderful panel discussion examining graduate school and career options in psychology that gave many of the students answers to the questions they needed for their careers. Dr. Kevin Pelphry gave an interesting discussion presenting some of his lab's latest research looking at the potential causes of Autism. Each of these talks were attended by many of the over 700 meeting goers and they were successfully interspersed with poster sessions that were filled by students and professionals examining varied topics related to the psychological sciences.

**Secretary's Report of
NEPA Steering Committee Meetings
Melissa-Sue John, Ph.D.
Worcester State University
NEPA Secretary**

The NEPA Steering Committee (SC) and the Business meeting were held on October 18, 2013 at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, MA. The steering committee later met on December 7, 2013 at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, MA.

At the October meeting, the meeting was called to order by President Lewis Lipsitt, Ph.D. of Brown University. NEPA SC members had a moment of silence in honor of Joan Bombace (deceased 9-3-13), a past steering committee member.

Melissa-Sue John, Ph.D., of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, gave the secretary report on behalf of Emily Soltano, Ph.D., of Worcester State University. The steering committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Treasurer, John Broida, PhD of University of Southern Maine, gave the treasure's report and was unanimously approved.

President Lewis Lipsitt, Ph.D. announced the election results and new members were introduced.

President Elect: Michael Amico

Secretary: Melissa-Sue John

Steering Committee:

- a. Jackie Alfonso Barry
- b. Tara Broccoli
- c. Peter Hogan
- d. John Hulig
- e. Anne O'Dwyer
- f. Kenneth Walters
- g. Dov Kugelmass

A mentorship program for new steering members was launched. The roles of officers were discussed. Plans to change the usability and effectiveness of the website were also discussed.

At the December meeting, past president Lewis Lipsitt, Ph.D. symbolically transferred his duties to current President Jeanine Skorinko.

Melissa- Sue John, Ph.D., of Worcester Polytechnic Institute gave the secretary's report which was unanimously accepted.

John Broida, Ph.D. of University of Southern Maine gave the Treasurer's Report and it was unanimously accepted. The SC discussed the budget for the

upcoming year and the issue of credit cards.

Gary Brosvic, Ph.D. of Rider University provided the Association coordination report

The SC asked the mentors and mentees how the mentor program was going and they indicated that the launch had been successful. The SC discussed Distinguished Contribution awards, honorary undergraduate scholar award and future meeting sites. The 2014 Annual NEPA meeting will be Oct 17 -18 at Bates in Maine. For 2015, the Annual NEPA meeting will be Oct 9-10 at Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg MA.

For more information about 2014 Annual meeting, please feel free to contact me at mjoh@wpi.edu.

**Announcement of the 2014 Recipient of NEPA's
Distinguished Contribution Award
Duncan White, Ph.D.
Rhode Island College**

Dr. Joan C. Bombace is the recipient of the 2014 NEPA Distinguished Contribution Award which she received posthumously at the NEPA Annual Meeting on October 18, 2013.

Dr. Bombace held many leadership positions during her tenure at Quinnipiac University. She was both the Chair of the Psychology Department and the Director of the Behavioral Neuroscience Program. In addition, Dr. Bombace was the founder and leader of the highly success Quinnipiac University Interdisciplinary Program for Research and Scholarship. Beyond her university campus, Dr. Bombace was a Mellon Faculty Fellow at Yale University, an Eastern Regional Consultant to Psi Chi, a President of the New England Psychological Association, and a revered member of the NEPA Steering Committee for thirty years.

Professor Bombace's research, which was characteristically conducted with student co-authors, spans the areas of Pavlovian conditioning, the motivational bases of learning, and the behavioral effects of psychoactive drugs. Much of her noteworthy research can be found in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes* and *Brain Research*.

As indicated in her leadership and research activities, Professor Bombace was also an unflinching contributor to the advancement of psychological science as an engaged mentor to students in the classroom and the laboratory, on campus and at professional meetings. She cherished the opportunity to do her part in the development of every student with whom she interacted,

whether in passing acquaintance or in professional collaboration.

Dr. Bombace did not allow her protracted illness to curtail her professional efforts. She remained good-natured, actively engaged, productive, influential, and inspiring until her death on September 3, 2013.

**Dr. Kelly Brownell's
Distinguished Contribution Award Address
"Does Psychology Have a Role in Changing the
American Diet?"
Duncan A. White, Ph.D.
Rhode Island College**

Dr. Brownell's DCA Address is most memorable for its timely, prescient, and interdisciplinary characteristics. Its title is rhetorical and its message is that every area of psychology is relevant when addressing a particular problem. Everything we have learned to date as psychologists can be and, more to the point, should be brought to bear on every aspect of a problem. The problem, in this address, is the establishment of proper nutrition practices. Psychology, the scientific study of humankind and its reciprocally causal relationship with the rest of the environment, is relevant and should be applied at all levels: from agriculture, to food processing, to marketing, to health, to society and culture, to advocating for policy reform and legislation promoting and maintaining a high quality of life on a sustainably healthy planet.

Using nutrition and the law of interdependence as context, Dr. Brownell emphasized the need to replace our current focus on the individual with a strategic science that targets the entire environment in our efforts to change the status quo for global improvement. Instead of addressing one issue at a time, he encouraged us to envision those issues as components of a dynamic network of interaction. As psychologists we need to go beyond research and publication; we need to speak out against predatory practices in the food industry and to educate the public. We should be more actively applying what we know, for example, about learning theory and human nature in the general teaching of good behavioral practices elicited by both producers and the consumers.

My guess is that the mean age of those attending the talk and engaging in the active discussion that followed was twenty-something. I was heartened by this observation. Dr. Brownell's talk was not the usual preaching to the choir but the presentation of an unexpected perspective that was titillating, educational, instructive, and inspiring.

**Highlights of the Fall 2013
NECTOP Annual Meeting
Ted Bosak
Providence College
Chair, NECTOP Committee**

The 19th Annual Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology again ran on the Friday before the NEPA Convention, October 12, 2013. Nearly 90 registrants attended a program featuring two keynote addresses, three pairs of concurrent sessions, 16 posters, and 8 participant idea exchanges. Details of the extensive program may be found at <http://nepa.cloverpad.org/Resources/Documents/2013%20NECTOP%20Program%20Book.pdf>.

With the Conference just a short drive down the highway from Newtown, CT, the site of the tragic school shooting of 2012, the NECTOP Committee incorporated a pair of presentations into the program that dealt with ways in which teachers might approach class meetings in days immediately following such events. Michele DiPietro's keynote (Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Kennesaw State) and the concurrent session by Mary O'Keeffe (Providence College) and Randi Kim (Rhode Island College) both presented data on student and faculty response to such events and identified classroom approaches that students did or did not value. According to student reports, most psychology professors did use at least some class time to discuss violent attacks either relating them to behavioral principles or offering opportunities for discussion. A large majority of students found the classroom activities to be helpful and were pleased that the tragic events were acknowledged and discussed.

Janie Wilson's keynote (Georgia Southern University) reported her and others' empirical data on effective strategies for developing rapport with students. Among the findings reported was a study by Wilson that showed a single, up-beat opening class session resulted in higher student test scores than an opening session that was flat and impersonal. The experimental-manipulative study employed appropriate controls, seeming to suggest that the early student-teacher interaction could have a lasting effect on student performance.

Data from a post-conference email survey indicated that responders believed that this NECTOP offered programming that they could use effectively in their teaching and that they would benefit from having attended.

Plans are underway for the next NECTOP program that

will be at Bates College on October 17, 2014. The NECTOP Committee plans to offer a mini-theme again, providing a keynote and some follow-up on implementation of the “Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major” that has been approved by APA. The Committee has also arranged a keynote by Victor Benassi (University of New Hampshire) that will discuss student beliefs in paranormal and other non-scientific claims, exploring why they may adopt such beliefs and how the beliefs may be challenged so that students will employ critical thinking to their academic and non-academic lives. Keep an eye on the NEPA website as the summer comes to see the particulars of the fall programming.

**The 54th Annual Meeting of the New England Psychological Association
October 17-18, 2014
Bates College
Lewiston, Maine
Kathy Low**



The 2014 Annual Meeting of the New England Psychological Association will be held at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. Bates is a residential liberal arts college of 1700 students founded by abolitionists in 1855, and was the first coeducational undergraduate college in New England. Bates offers a rigorous residential academic experience, while also honoring its traditional values of dignity, inclusion and civic engagement. The college offers majors in 35 departments and/or interdisciplinary programs, and has particularly strong enrollments in the social sciences. Alumni include Benjamin Mays and Senator Edmund Muskie, and the college is the home of the Muskie archives. The hallmark of a Bates education is a senior thesis—each student completes a capstone experience, most often a senior research thesis, as the culmination of their undergraduate education.

Bates is located on a 109 acre campus in Lewiston, a twin-city of 65,000 divided by the Androscoggin River, about two hours north of Boston. Lewiston-Auburn was

once a thriving center for textile and shoe mills, and home to a large number of French-Canadian immigrants. A Bates education is profoundly connected to the Lewiston-Auburn community. The college has many reciprocal partnerships with local agencies and initiatives, and a substantial number of our students work in the community or are involved in community-engaged research. There are two regional hospitals within a few blocks of the campus, which is a ten minute walk from the heart of the downtown. There is a vibrant local food movement in Lewiston, with a “lots to gardens” program in the downtown and a regular farmer’s market. Lewiston is also home to a large Somali and Togolese population, which has helped revitalize the downtown.

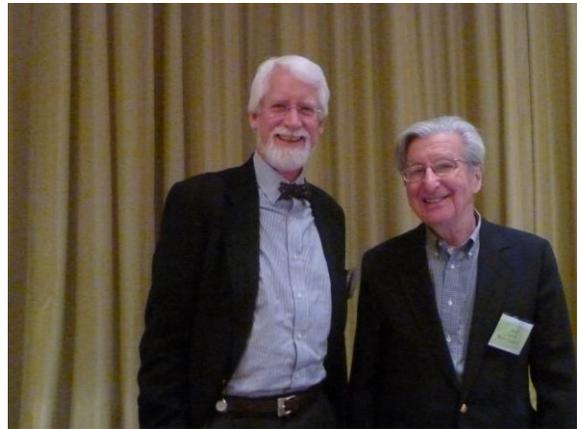
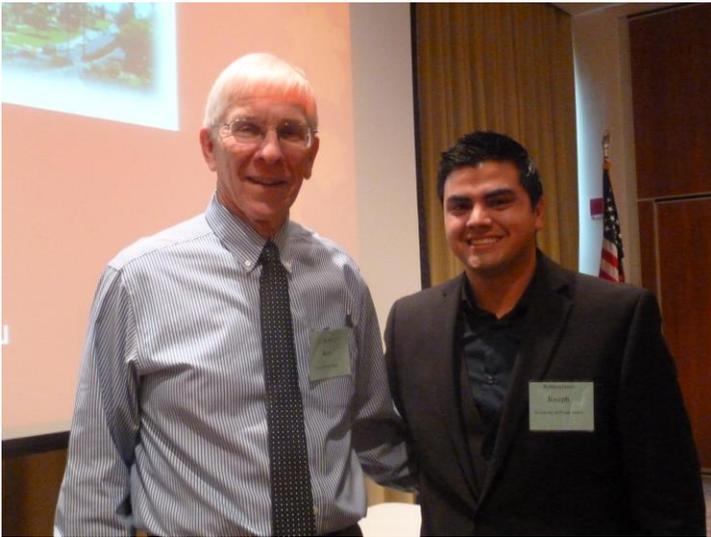
L-A affords easy access to the coast (30 minutes to Freeport) and to the mountains (an hour from Sunday River and the mountains of western Maine). The downtown is now experiencing redevelopment from businesses to arts, and includes a thriving restaurant scene and two new hotels. The city has a variety of attractions, including the Bates College Museum of Art, Museum L-A, St. Peters and Paul Basalica, the Franco-American Center, the Lyceum Art Gallery, and the Baxter Brewery, all situated in the downtown. In fair weather, kayaks and canoes can be rented to explore the waterfront just below the falls that divide the two cities. Mid-October is also peak foliage season, and there are a variety of walks and hikes within a short distance from the campus.

The Bates community looks forward to hosting the 54th annual meeting of NEPA in the fall. Come to Maine—the way life should be!

**A Look Back: NEPA’s 53rd Annual Meeting
Photos**

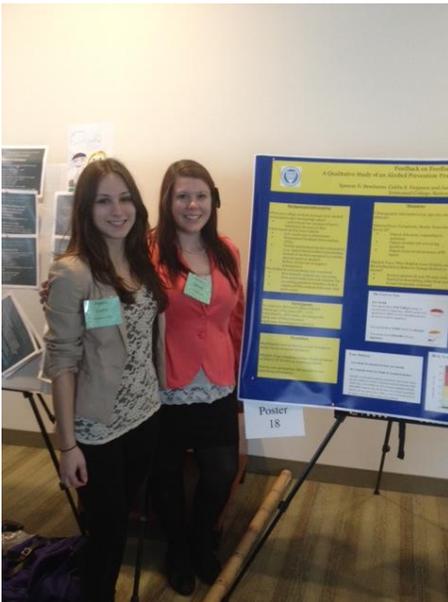








Mehta, C.M., Alfonso, J., *Delaney, R.K., & Ayotte, B.J. (2013). Associations between mixed-sex friendships, gender identity and substance use in college students. *Sex Roles*. doi: 10.1007/s11199-013-0334-8



NEPA Member News, Awards, and Publications

News:

Melissa-Sue John, Ph.D. of Worcester Polytechnic Institute received the Spring 2013 Grant-in-Aid.

Presentations and Articles:

Alfonso, J. (in press). The role of social norms in personalized alcohol feedback: A dismantling study with emerging adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse*.

John, M.S., Arroyo, I., Blake, P., & Gornisiewicz, A. (2013, October). *A qualitative and quantitative analysis of college immigrant's experiences: Identity, friendship formation, and ethnic conflict*. Paper at the New England Psychological Association, Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, CT.



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 or by mail at the address below. News sent by May 15, 2013 will be included in the Summer 2013 newsletter.

NEPA NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING POLICY

We accept advertising of psychologically related events in our Newsletter. *Materials submitted must conform to the APA Ethical Code for Psychologists.* The charges are: 1/4 page = \$75; 1/2 page = \$125; full page = \$200. Materials should be submitted in digital form. Please include payment in your submission, with checks made out to NEPA. Copy and payment should be submitted to Elizabeth Harwood via email: eharwood@rivier.edu or mailed to the address listed on the cover of this newsletter.

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