

VACES FALL 2007

Virginia Association for Counselor Education & Supervision

Thoughts from the President

Gerard Lawson Ph.D., Virginia Tech

Writing my first president's column for the VACES newsletter is something of a surreal experience. I have been involved with VACES for about 8 years, and I can remember clearly being a graduate student and thinking that the VACES leadership were the best and the brightest in the business. Although that has been true over the years (until the current administration) I also have come to understand that the real reason VACES has been as successful as it has, is because of a group of people who care about counselors and counseling and are willing to work to make both better. VACES has always had a core of committed and active members, with long memories of what has

worked, what has not, and how we have arrived where we are. But VACES has also been open to new ideas, energy, and direction, and that continues to be the case.

You really only need to look as far as the things we do as a group to recognize the values of our association. The VACES Graduate Student Conference was among the first in the country and other states have emulated our program. The conference has been an incredibly successful effort, growing year to year and this coming conference will be held in Roanoke, in an effort to draw more participation from the central and western

part of the state. More on that later... Last year we piloted the first Graduate Student Research and Innovative Practice Grants, which was another effort to help students extend their current professional work, and prepare for the next step in their careers as counselors, supervisors or counselor educators. Across the board you can see that one of the primary efforts of our association is towards supporting students and developing the future leaders of our association



See President on pg. 2

A Note From Virginia Tech

It has been nearly six months since the tragedy at Virginia Tech, and we would like to take this opportunity to sat thank you to everyone who has supported our community during that time. Before we even knew the magnitude

of the tragedy, our students and faculty were flooded with cards, calls, and e-mails of support and condolence. I stopped counting when I had received over 700 notes, but they kept coming. In the immediate aftermath our friends and

colleagues helped by preparing materials for how to talk with school children about the shootings, by providing books on trauma and recovery to our campus, by sending donations

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President, *Cont. from pg. 1*

and of our profession. In fact ACES is holding an Emerging Leaders training at the national conference in October, and Virginia will be well represented by Melodie Frick and Shannon Trice-Black. The Southern region has held emerging leader workshops at the SACES conference for many years, but this is the first time one is being held at the national level, and we are fortunate to have two exceptional students represent VACES.

I would be remiss not to mention another of the major undertakings with which VACES has been involved; revising and clarifying the Licensed Professional Counselor supervision regulations. Many of you already know that the current standards are fairly vague with regard to what sort of training an LPC resident's supervisor must have. Because of the vague language, attending a one hour workshop at a conference was viewed as sufficient training for providing supervision. VACES has been working on clarifying this issues for over six years, because we know that there is much more involved in understanding how to support counselors as they develop as licensed professionals than can be covered in an hour. The proposed regulations would require a three credit hour graduate level course, or 20 contact hours of continuing edu-

cation in supervision to be qualified as an LPC residency supervisor. That is a vast improvement and will better serve the counselors who are prepared under this law and the clients with whom they work. I want to extend our appreciation to Steve Nielson, Kathleen May, Victoria Foster, Tammy Davis and Rip McAdams for their work on this important undertaking. Just as an interesting historical note, I have heard that the last time Virginia tried to set a standard for approved supervisors only two or three counselors across the state were qualified! That is why the board looks to us to guide these revisions, and why it is important for our association to have a long institutional memory.

So there is VACES in a 613 word nutshell. We are an association committed to advancing counseling, supervision and counselor education, and devoted to helping develop students and future professionals. Wherever you are in your career please know that you are not only welcome in VACES as a member, but that we need you in VACES as a leader. Finally, I want to thank Kathleen May for her leadership and guidance over the past two years and for her support as I prepared to begin my term as VACES president. She has led too many efforts for VACES to recount them all, and there are probably more

that we don't even know about, but we sincerely appreciate all that she has done to support our group.



Dr. Gerard Lawson,
VACES President



Professors Supporting the Newlywed Graduate Student

Tiffany Swink and Dr. Agatha Parks-Savage

The honeymooning period is a time typically thought of as being filled with marital bliss. It seems words that might better describe this time period would be utter chaos or complete disorganization. Entering back into the "real" world after a honeymoon, however, is full of inevitable changes that are not automatic. Address changes, name changes, new driver's license, and bank accounts all need to be changed or

modified in some way.

Let me add one more struggle into the mix. Being a graduate student! All college students experience struggles, but the identity as a newlywed graduate student adds more stress into the adjustment period. Here I was not just coming back to a job, but to papers, exams, reading assignments, classes, school functions, and a large amount of

pressure from all ends. I returned from my honeymoon to a professor requiring a 10 page paper by the end of next week and my new husband wanting to "hang-out" with me once I got home from work and classes. Can you get the picture?

I know what some of you are thinking.

See Newlywed on Pg. 3

Virginia Tech, *Cont. from pg. 1*

and supplies, by covering our responsibilities when we were called to other tasks, by responding to reporters, and by coming to campus to help support our students and faculty. It has been humbling and gratifying to know that counselors have set the standard for how to respond when there is a need. Please know that your support was palpable on our campus.

Many of you have heard the stories about the mental health response that was needed and that turned out. Counselors worked with students, families of the victims, the faculty and staff, and folks in our broader community. We know that on the first two days when classes resumed on campus that there were over 300 volunteers on campus, in the classrooms with our faculty and students, and serving as a visible presence of support and compassion for our community. Over the summer

ACA arranged for pro bono counseling services for ANY Virginia Tech student, anywhere in the country while they were away from campus. Even now counselors are involved in coordinating trainings and workshops for the helpers involved, to try to find the positive growth opportunities in the wake of the tragedy. Over and over I have seen examples of counselors responding to the call and serving in whatever capacity was needed. Our needs were tremendous and your response was remarkable. It makes me incredibly proud to be associated with you.

I have been asked repeatedly how the recovery is going and if things are back to normal yet. Once I figure out what normal is I will be better prepared to answer the second part, but as for the first the recovery is well underway and in no small part that is thanks to all of you. We do not expect that this recov-

ery process will be a straight line, rather we anticipate some peaks and valleys, but we are in a better place today because of the gifts that you have shared with us and for that we are forever grateful. Thank you.

The Counselor Education Program at Virginia Tech

Gerard Lawson

Nancy Bodenhorn

Pamelia Brott

Norma Day-Vines

Simone Lambert

Laura Welfare



Newlywed, *Cont. from pg. 2*

Getting married after finishing graduate school would have been the better choice. The reality is, there is not a "perfect" time to get married. As a couple, we decided this time was the right time for us.

College professors can make such a difference in this adjustment period for a newlywed student. Demonstrating *empathy* to a student can make a difference. Believe it or not, it's been very helpful for me to hear a professor tell me that they recognize this is an adjustment period in my life and they understand what I am going through. Hearing this lets me know they care. Providing *flexibility* can make a difference. I understand that I may not always get

what I want from a professor and I do not expect them to bend "due dates" just for my personal needs. What is helpful is when professors do understand unique situations and provide some reasonable flexibility when it comes to assignment due dates. I am not just thinking about newlyweds but for any student experiencing a significant event in their lives. Another difference a professor can make is to demonstrate *patience*. Being a newlywed is transitional event in a person's life. As counselors we know to expect some bumps along the way when a person is experiencing a new life event. Sometimes just being reasonably patient with a newlywed student can ease some of the stress.

I hope this article can be helpful to professors when they experience not only a newlywed student but any student experiencing a significant life event. Whether it is a spouse returning from overseas deployment, a birth of a baby or experiencing a trip of a lifetime, showing your empathy, flexibility and patience could be a major support to a stressed-out graduate student.



Tiffany Swink is a Counseling Graduate Student at Regent University .

Married
9/2007

A Counselor's Multicultural Encounter,

Lennis Echterling Ph.D., James Madison University

On the first day of our vacation in Ireland, my wife and I checked into a charming little Bed and Breakfast along the Ring of Kerry. The scenery was ruggedly beautiful and, after being cramped on a trans-Atlantic flight for so long, I decided to go for a run.

Barry, the owner of the B & B, suggested a route that included spectacular sights, steep hills, and a little beach nestled among the rocky terrain. The run proved to be wonderful, but dangerous. The narrow road could barely accommodate two cars, let alone a runner, and the traffic included mammoth-sized tour buses. The stone walls that bordered the road were quaint and picturesque, but they left no escape for a hapless runner who may have to share the road with large vehicles. Maybe the most troubling was the fact that the traffic rode on the left side, so I had to constantly remind myself to run on the right so that I would face the traffic.

I was in this slightly disoriented, vigilant state of mind when I finally made it to the steep descending path that would take me to an isolated cove. Ahead and below, I could see large rocks, a bit of sand, the water...and a very large dog looking up straight at me.

Over years of running, I have learned to be very wary of strange dogs. Even little ones can be very territorial and try to take a nip out of an unsuspecting jogger. And big ones – well, let's just say that I have had some teeth marks as souvenirs of those encounters. So, I slowed my pace, warily eyeing the dog. I noticed that he was still staring at me, but now he was crouching, lowering his head slightly, and bending his forelegs in readiness. My first impulse was to turn and run away, but I could never outrun this dog.

My only choice, it seemed to me, was to stop running, assume a non-threatening posture, and offer a friendly greeting in my most soothing tone of voice. The dog, still eyeing me, moved even closer. Hoping that he understood more than Gaelic, I added an Irish accent to my patter. "Top of the morning to you, pooch!" I said in my best impersonation of Barry Fitzgerald, which, I'm afraid, sounded more like the Swedish Chef. "'Tis a fine morning, indeed! And would you now be havin' a wee bit of a stroll?"

It seemed to me that the dog wasn't buying any of this – he just kept coming closer and closer. Then, when he couldn't get any nearer to me, the big dog dropped a stick at my feet and

looked up into my eyes imploringly. As we made eye-contact, I suddenly understood. This was not a threat – it was an invitation to play! I picked up the stick, threw it out into the ocean, and savored the sight of the dog galloping off in hot pursuit. He retrieved the stick, ran back joyfully, dropped it at my feet once again, and looked up at me expectantly.

That nameless dog and I had a wonderful time playing together that afternoon. When I reluctantly began my run back, my new Irish friend was playing with a girl and her father. As I ran the words of Teddy Roosevelt came to me – "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." Of course, Teddy was referring to the need for acting with diplomacy, but being well-armed. However, in counseling, as well as any other relationship, sometimes a stick can help us to encounter one another in ways that enrich our lives – and what seems at first to be a threat turns out to be an invitation.

Dr. Lennis Echterling is the Director of the Counseling Psychology Department at JMU



HEADS UP!! ACES 2007 CONFERENCE IS COMING

Vanguards for Change: ACES and Social Justice

Columbus, Ohio

Mark Your Calendar for October 10-14, 2007

Access Information About the Conference at <http://www.aces2007.net>

Virginia Association for
Counselor Education
and Supervision

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VACES MISSION
Fostering the growth,
development and competence of
counselor educators,
supervisors, and students across
the Commonwealth



SAVE THE DATE

The 2008 VACES Graduate Student Conference will be held on Friday February 15th, at the Roanoke Higher Education Center. A block of rooms has been reserved at the government rate at the historic Hotel Roanoke (across the street from the Higher Education Center) and there will be a reception at the hotel on the evening of the 14th for those arriving that evening.

The call for proposals will go out in time for VCA conference.

From the Editor's Desk

Agatha Parks-Savage Ed.D, LPC,RN Regent University

I just want to thank everyone who contributed to the newsletter. I know it gets busy and asking for your writing submission is typically not the first thing on your "to-do" list. Thank you for your time and energy. Just to remind you, the newsletter is not just for faculty submissions and reading. Contributions

from students, clinicians and supervisors are welcomed! There might be times when we have a newsletter "theme" and I'll request for articles related to the topic. Otherwise, feel free to send me your writing ideas and I would be happy to work with you on getting into the newsletter. There are a lot of folks doing won-

derful things related to counselor education and supervision so consider the VACES newsletter as an avenue to keep people informed.



Dr. Agatha Parks-Savage
VACES Newsletter Editor

