

## "Psychologist" Defined

### **MPs Who Supervise Must Retain Psych License**

At the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the psychology board, members discussed the definition of "psychologist" and how it applies to those who supervise candidates for licensure in psychology. The board concluded that medical psychologists do not meet the definition of "psychologist" unless they are also licensed under the LSBEP (Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists). The members also concluded that MPs who wish to supervise candidates for licensure should retain their psychology license.

Chair Dr. Joseph Comaty said that the section in the psychology law clearly defines who may deliver supervision to candidates seeking licensure. He said, "In RS 37, 2352, the licensing law for psychologists, it clearly defines what a psychologist is. They [those

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Behavioral Health Working Group at their 9/16 meeting.

### **LPA to Hold Fall Conference, Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Louisiana Psychological Association will host its Fall Conference on Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> in Baton Rouge. Two educational tracks will be presented: CE workshop on ethics, laws, and records retention; and a Science Track with experts from around the state guiding panels and round table discussions. See page 15 for story.

### **Dr. George Hearn Dies**

*Psychologists say goodbye To beloved friend, colleague*

"God, in his infinite wisdom, gave him a special capability," said Gloria Hearn of her husband George— psychologist, professor, minister, father

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### **Behavioral Health Group Meets 9/16**

The "Behavioral Health Professional Working Group," met on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Bienville Building (Department of Health and Hospitals). Members continued a discussion of the similarities and differences in aspects of the participants' professions.

The group was created by a Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR 100) and includes psychologists and counselors. The resolution,

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### **Nominations Open For Psychology Bd**

Self-nomination forms have been sent to licensed psychologists around the state, and are due back by November 5<sup>th</sup>, said Executive Director of LPA, Ms. Gail Lowe. An election will follow. The opening is created because Dr. Joseph Comaty will be completing his five-year term this coming June.

### **Dr. Thorson-Barnett Named Psych Depart Head at NSU**

*by David West, NSU News*

Dr. Susan Thorson-Barnett has been named head of the Department of Psychology at Northwestern State University. She has served as acting department head for the past year.

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Dr. Susan Thorson-Barnett, NSU Psychology Dept Head  
*photo courtesy NSU News*

# Editorial Page

## A Real Psychologist

by Julie Nelson

I first met George Hearn in 1976 when I became a student member of LPA. I was wandering around the convention and Tom Stigall introduced me to George. This was a grand thing for a student but then George made it even better. He sat a few minutes with me, apparently in no particular hurry. He asked me a few questions. He said a few wise words. And in that brief time, he communicated an acceptance that stuck with me. Perhaps it was CBT or Rogerian or maybe it was George being George. In the middle of a busy conference, his message rang in my head like a crystal bell, "You're important to us. We're glad you are here."

George was a real psychologist. He was a licensed professional, a department head, and

classically trained. He was a student of personality and human culture and sought to understand the larger view of time and of history. He fought for his country and loved his family. He stayed in close contact to his higher power and it seems to me that he never forgot that in comparison, he was a lower power.

Nick Cummings gave a talk titled "Getting Away from Professional Psychology's Sado-Masochistic Marriage to Academia," at NAPPP's conference last year. He was highly critical of the scientist-practitioner model (called it scientist-professional), saying that it "... produces mediocre scientists and less than skilled practitioners." He pointed out that we're the only (healthcare) profession with this model and recommended a change to be like all the others. (Presumably the others are doing one bang-up job in comparison, a conclusion I seriously doubt.)

For exploring job design I suggest changing terms a little. Instead of "practitioner" let's use the term "technician," someone skilled in practical applications. (Let's drop "professional" altogether because of its circular definition. It is more of a projective test than anything else.)

And let's also add the word "philosopher" to scientist, since it is philosophy that is the fundamental study of truth and knowledge, the attempt to separate what is real from what our minds can contort into what appears to be real. Science is a subset of philosophy, and this is training in *thinking about thinking*.

Buckminster Fuller categorized behavior into levels related to productivity and quality of contribution. He said there is *doing*, *thinking about doing*, and *thinking about thinking*. As one goes up the levels, the benefits multiply.

The first two are the technicians. The third, *thinking about thinking*, is the job of the philosopher and scientist. As psychologists our job is to apply all three in our work, even at the individual level. The quality of service and productivity we offer because we engage all three levels will always surpass the work of even a good technician. Clients deserve this level of quality.

It's a noble ideal and of course not easily achieved. I over simplify the issue when it is not simple at all. We are always going to be playing catch-up if we're honest with ourselves. But it is still the right job description for real psychologists.

Like Dr. George Hearn, who for certain, and in all ways, was a real psychologist.

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We welcome ideas for news, features, Letters to the Editor, photos, and other material related to psychological community of Louisiana. Editorials and commentary reflect the opinions of this newspaper. Columns and Letters to the Editor express the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of *The Psychology Times*.

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unless otherwise noted.*

## MPs who supervise...

who supervise] have to hold a license from the LSBEP in order to supervise someone for licensure. MPs don't meet this requirement."

In January this year, Act 251 transferred Medical Psychologists (MPs) from the psychology board to the medical board, along with their practice of psychology. Act 251 was legislation designed and promoted by the Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychologists and the state medical board.

During discussion at the September meeting, the LSBEP members also reviewed the meaning of 'psychologist' from "Definition of Terms" in the licensing law. The law indicates that a "Psychologist" is "any person licensed as a psychologist under this chapter." They noted that this definition comes into consideration with wording in both the law and administrative code (rules).

The group's discussion included definitions in the law, issues of "regulatory control," and upholding standards of practice in regard to individuals who do not fall under the psychology board.

Dr. John Courtney pointed out that the board had no regulatory control over those from other states who might

be supervising candidates for licensure and that in this situation the MPs may be considered similar to those individuals.

Dr. Lee Matthews pointed out that those licensed as a psychologist under another state's psychology board that adhered to policies of the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) could be considered to maintain certain standards and uniformity.

"The board [LSBEP] intends to retain its regulatory authority over the psychologists who are supervising those for licensure," said Dr. Comaty.

Dr. Courtney said that he wanted to bring up all the issues because counterarguments could be expected. "It will harm someone who we already have a practice plan for," he added. The members agreed that they will need to add a disclaimer to the supervised practice plan for those seeking licensure. And, the disclaimer is to indicate that the supervisor must be licensed by the LSBEP or another state psychology board.

"The remedy is to reapply to reinstate their license," said Dr. Comaty. "If you are currently lapsed, we'll consider your re-instatement retroactively." Executive Director Jaime Monic indicated ways that this might be done administratively.

Dr. Courtney remarked, "I guess you can't be hybrid and not hybrid."

## Dr. Matthews Busy as APA Chair of Ed Affairs

Dr. Janet Matthews recently returned from APA's annual Educational Leadership Conference held in September. As chair of APA's Board of Educational Affairs, Janet opened the session, chaired several others, and presented awards. She also made "hill visits" to advocate for increased funding for the Graduate Psychology Education bill.

In other activities, Janet was appointed as one of the four delegates from APA to work on an inter-organizational task force to study and review the "entire training process in professional psychology."

Janet told the *Times*, "APA's Education Directorate is using its convening ability to have an inter-organizational working group meet and consider a range of issues related to professional training in psychology." She mentioned that the limited number of internships relative to applicants is one of the issues being addressed. However, Janet said, "...it was felt that the entire training process should be evaluated. This topic obviously involves more than just APA," she noted. "The other 2 groups who are sending delegates are the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology and the Council of Chairs of Training Councils."



Dr. Lee Matthews (L) and Dr. John Courtney discuss matters at the September board meeting.



## Behavioral Health...

passed in June this year, requested members to work together in a collaborative way to “Develop language for legislation to clarify the licensed professional counselor scope of practice ...” along with other objectives.

Co-chair Mike Gootee, Governmental Relations Chair from the Louisiana Counseling Association, presided over the agenda.

Drs. Joe Comaty and Tony Young, chair and vice chair of the Psychology Board, and Drs. Jessica Brown and Darla Burnett, representing the Louisiana Psychological Association, attended the meeting.

Representing the Louisiana Professional Counselors Board of Examiners were Drs. Gloria Bockrath and June Williams. Cindy Nardini attended, representing the Louisiana Counselors Association. Jacqueline Shellington from the state board for social work and Dr. Robert Marier from the medical board also were in attendance.

The agenda included a review of social work practice regulations by Jacqueline Shellington. She explained “multi-level licensure is generally standard across most states.”

She reviewed the core competencies for those in social work and answered a number of questions from participants.

Dr. Robert Marier explained the requirements for physicians to practice, certification and training, and the movement toward a “maintenance competency model.” He discussed board certification in psychiatry and noted that physicians can treat mental illness. However he said, “We take a dim view of people who practice outside of their competency.”

The meeting continued with a “scope of practice comparison.” Participants provided handouts to help compare and contrast the different disciplines and regulations.

Dr. Comaty gave a history of the psychology licensing law first passed in 1964. He explained that at that time psychologists could not diagnose without consultation with a physician. He noted that it wasn’t until 1976 that this requirement was removed.

Mike Gootee said, “That seems to explain why psychology sees it the way they do.” And, “This is what your profession of psychology has established, and we have two professions here that view it differently.” Dr. Marier stated that it was how the legislature views the matter that would be the deciding factor.



Top: Michael Gootee (L) co-chair of the Working Group, and Dr. Robert Marier, Executive Director of medical board discuss regulations. Bottom: Dr. Jessica Brown (L) and Dr. Joe Comaty listen to Jacqueline Shellington from the social work board describe regulations and standards for her professional group.

Cindy Nardini commented toward the end of the meeting, “We were very close to the meat of the matter a while ago.” She suggested that the group may have avoided the main issue and said, “I hope we can take that up next time.”

In addition to developing certain language, the Senate asked the group to “Identify the common and distinct practice activities of the two professions and develop new collaborative practice methods ...” And also to make recommendations to expand public access to behavioral health services in the state.

### Dr. Susan Thorson-Barnett...

She has been a member of Northwestern's faculty since 1995. She was promoted to assistant professor of psychology in 2001 and associate professor in 2007. Barnett was coordinator of the undergraduate psychology program in 2001-2003 and coordinator of the addiction studies program in 2003-2006.

"I have enjoyed working with our students and faculty and staff in the Department of Psychology for the past year," said Barnett. "Over the past several years, we have developed outstanding programs and have continued to be receptive to the needs of our students and the region."

NSU offers traditional bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology. Northwestern's online Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Psychology/Substance Abuse Prevention Counseling programs are rated among the Best Values in Online Colleges by the website GetEducated.com.

"We know that Northwestern has to reach out to students who need to be able to take classes any time and any place," said Barnett. "Our online programs have been a great success because they are strong academically at a price that is affordable."

Barnett was presented the Northwestern State University Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award for the College of Liberal Arts in 2007. Two years earlier, the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts honored her with the Wellness Icon Award for Academic Leadership and Community Service. In 2002, Barnett received NSU's Outstanding Faculty Advisor of the Year Award. Since 2004, Barnett has served on the University's Academic Advising Council. Barnett has made numerous presentations at local, state, national and international conferences. Her area of research is "student well-being," classroom well being, positive psychology and faculty advising.



Drs. Penny Dralle and Susan Dardard, with their husbands, Bart and Joe, enjoying the cultural traditions of an American Indian powwow. Dr. Dralle will be helping LPA reconcile cultural differences among psychologists through the newly created OD committee.

*Photo courtesy of Dr. Susan Dardard*

### Psych Bd Recommends Removing Clause From 2009 MD Rules

At the September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 board meeting the LSBEP (Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists) decided to recommend to the state medical board that they "strike in its entirety" a prohibition in the 2009 rules for physicians. This prohibition is worded in a way that could be viewed to instruct physicians to avoid consulting with psychologists.

The psychology board's concern came after reviewing the rules that had been published in the August 2009 Louisiana Register by the medical board. These rules govern the practice of physicians who consult and collaborate with medical psychologists.

Under "General Prohibitions," number "A.3." the rules note, "A physician shall not consult and collaborate: [...] 3. with a psychologist who is not an MP; [...]." The members of the board

found this could possibly conflict with their past opinion(s).

Members decided to recommend to the medical board that the sentence be removed and to forward this recommendation to the medical board "for their consideration."

These rules—"Consultation and Collaboration with Medical Psychologists"—were previously considered by the psychology board. They are the same rules that some have noted to be an impetus for Act 251.

In the psychology board's minutes from March 2009, Dr. Glen Ally, then the Liaison to Professional Organizations and Boards, reported that the final draft of these rules was acceptable. And, he noted that he had written to the medical board indicating that LSBEP would not oppose the rules.

## **Psych Bd May Review Licensees' Corporate Names**

In their April presentation at the LPA convention, psychology board representatives reminded psychologists that RS 12:1132 requires a phrase to be included in the corporate name of those practicing psychology through a corporation.

The statute about the corporate name ("§1132) was added in 1980 and notes that:

*The name shall end with one of the phrases (which may be in parentheses) "A Professional Psychology Corporation," "A Professional Corporation" or "A Psychology Corporation." The name may include "Limited" or "Ltd." The name need not contain "Incorporated" or "Inc."*

Executive Director, Ms. Jaime Monic, explained to the *Times* that the topic was considered at the board's April Long-Range Planning meeting. She said, "The issue arose from the discovery that some registered corporations were not incorporated by licensed psychologists. However, this led to discussions regarding the requirement for professional psychology corporations to be subject to regulation by the LSBEP."

She continued, "As a result, we will be taking a closer look at this law over the next year to determine the need for and level of rule making in this area. Once the Board has completed its due diligence we will work with licensees to educate them on the requirements of the statute and, if needed, correct any issues which may be discovered as we delve into this area."

## **LAMP PAC Fined \$10,500 in 2009**

According to the Louisiana Board of Ethics of June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, representatives of the Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychologists PAC appeared to request that the Ethics board waive \$10,500 in fines.

Listed as Docket No. 09-563, the report noted that the PAC was fined due to late fees because they failed to file timely reports for the October 4, 2008, November 4, 2008, and April 4, 2009 elections.

Ms. Womack from the Ethics Administration explained to the *Times* that according to records \$5,000 was waived, and \$500 was suspended. If the PAC misses future filing deadlines, Ms. Womack noted, they will have to go back and pay all original fines.

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For some, articles of incorporation may need to be amended to include the additional phrase. A CPA or attorney can draft the amendment and submit to the Secretary of States' office. Guy Knootz, CPA, a Baton Rouge accountant, noted that filing fees to amend articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State's office will be approximately \$60.

Sole proprietorships do not fall under the same requirement.

## **Dr. Pellegrin's Zen Garden in News**

*The Times-Picayune* featured Dr. Alicia Pellegrin's Zen garden in her and her husband Bob's home in downtown Covington in August. The article is titled "Zen garden lends serenity to downtown Covington cottage," and was written by feature writer Kadee Krieger, the home and garden writer.

According to the article, Alicia's Zen escape include "Bamboo, ferns, muscadine canopies, pecan and sycamore trees," all part of the stress lowering setting. And also "...a dry creek bed, a small pond and waterfall..."

The article and photos can still be found online at [www.nola.com](http://www.nola.com)—Search for "Zen garden." (Then beg Alicia for an invitation.)

## **Drs. Culross, Young, Comaty To Attend ASPPB**

Psychology board members Dr. Rita Culross, Dr. Joe Comaty, and Dr. Tony Young will attend the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Board's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Delegates, October 13-17 in Savannah, Georgia.

The theme of this years meeting is "Back to the Future: 50 Years of Psychology Regulation." The conference will offer representatives from state boards around the country and Canada opportunities to learn about important topics such as the licensing exam, assessing competencies, legislative and legal updates, new board member training, and special issues of telepractice and distance education.



## Dr. George Hearn...

and beloved colleague to many in the Louisiana community. Speaking to the *Times*, she was remarking on George's exceptional ability to gently navigate through human problems, respectfully assisting people in resolving conflicts and healing rifts.

Delivering a eulogy at his service, long-time friend and colleague Dr. Darlyne Nemeth called him a "gentle genius." She said, "Dr. Hearn's ability to develop workable, practical solutions in even the most contentious atmosphere was truly amazing." In the midst of turmoil and conflict, "...Dr. Hearn, a gifted organizational psychologist, would gently, and with the fewest of words, suggest a brilliant compromise. Before long, reason prevailed and harmony was restored. Oftentimes, both sides would leave believing that they had solved the problem. Dr. Hearn never sought credit, nor did he seek the limelight. He was content to have facilitated the solution."

Wife Gloria said, "He would know just how to moderate. It was his skill—he was an IO psychologist. He'd say, 'We need to talk about it.' He'd know just how to keep order, keep them focused, letting everyone talk." Gloria said that she believed George might have been led to develop this talent in part because of the loss of a younger brother at a pivotal point in George's life. "He developed a strong dedication to listen to people," she said.

George E. Hearn was born September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1926 and died September 11<sup>th</sup> shortly before his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday. His health had been flagging since he suffered a fall at home last year and complications of recent treatments placed him in



Dr. George Hearn with Madeline Nemeth on left and wife Gloria on right, at the happy occasion of Madeline's engagement party.

*Photo courtesy of Dr. Darlyne Nemeth*

a critical condition from which he was not able to recover.

A long time member of the psychological community, George had earned his doctorate in industrial psychology from Baylor University in 1965. He was the first industrial-organizational psychologist licensed in Louisiana, with license #150 in 1968. He was a member of the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society.

He was a life member of Louisiana Psychological Association and had received the Distinguished Psychologist Award from the association. Dr. Kelly Pears, friend and colleague said, "It will be strange not seeing George at LPA. It just won't be the same without him."

Dr. Tom Stigall said, "It is a great loss. He was a fine gentleman and a dedicated psychologist."

From 1965 to 2000 George served Louisiana College (Pineville) as Full Professor and Chairman of the Department of Psychology. He also was in independent practice at his firm, Hearn & Hearn, and was known for his skills as mediator in groups and organizations through his work.

His focus in IO had begun while in graduate school, serving as Assistant to the Head of the Industrial Division, Executive Appraisals and Employee Selection at Baylor University. At Baylor George also worked in the research projects supporting the NASA Space Program.

But he blended his technical knowledge with his enduring respect and faith in people and the course of human events. This early interest was portrayed by his choice of an undergraduate in history, a masters in history, and another masters in theology.

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## Dr. George Hearn...

Before he returned for his doctorate, George was an ordained minister, pastor of Laurel Heights and Ford Park Baptist churches in Shreveport from 1948 to 1961.

George's willingness to help and give of himself was also apparent in his extensive community service. He was member and president of the Historical Association of Central Louisiana, member and chairman of Rapides Area Planning Commission, and Alderman for Pineville City Council. He served honorably in the United States Navy during World War II.

George served on the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists from 1982 to 1988, including as chair.

"At that time there was no office, no phone number, just a post office box," said Darlyne Nemeth. "Before long, Dr. Hearn had arranged an office, hired appropriate personnel, and restructured the Board completely," she noted. Wife Gloria said, "They first started on the board and he would start on Friday and come in on Sunday exhausted. He'd say, 'There is a better way to do this.'"

Those who knew him well understood him to be a man of deep faith, wisdom and enduring patience. An excerpt from his obituary written by his family and friends notes:

*"He used his keen analytical mind to consider what was truly important in life and to focus his abilities and energies toward those, being relationships to God, family, others, work and community."*

*He never sought recognition for himself but rather for the group and others. His proudest accomplishments were as father and family man. He spent quality time with his children and family... his main goal in life was to honor God and to encourage others to develop all their innate abilities for service as God directs them individually.*

*He would want his homegoing to be a time and opportunity for folks to think about reconciliation, love and respect as paramount values in life."*

George is survived by his wife Gloria, "who was still his sweetheart after 54 years of marriage."

He and Gloria are the proud parents of daughter Gail Hearn Smith and their late son, George Eugene "Gene" Hearn.



Top: George with NASA Research Group at Baylor. Left, high school football.



Photos courtesy of Mrs. Gloria Hearn.

A touching memorial video with pictures of George, family and friends, and things he loved, can be viewed until the middle of October online at <http://www.hixsonbrothers.com/index.cfm>

The *Times* publisher wishes to thank Mrs. Gloria Hearn, Dr. Darlyne Nemeth and Dr. Kelly Pears for their help with this article.



## The Business of Helping

*Publisher's note: This column is about psychologists who, despite the recession and the double SS tax, are following a spark of entrepreneurship, and making a difference in peoples' lives.*

### Dr. Katherine Robison School Psychologist

Personable, genuine and articulate, Dr. Kathy Robison seems the perfect psychologist. "But," she told the *Times*, "I'm different than many psychologists. I worked for Shell Oil in New Orleans for many years as a geophysicist."

In her previous career path—all math, science and technology—she eventually found that something was missing. "My love for child psychology started when I had kids," she said. She explained that she and her husband now laugh because years ago she would often comment, "My dream job would be a child psychologist."

"Psychology is the perfect mix of science and people," Kathy said. As a geophysicist she honed her critical thinking and analytical talents. "I really love solving problems. It's a gift I have—I can put things together." But she said, "I always knew I wanted to work with kids."

Kathy's husband is a geologist and the dual career couple allowed Kathy the opportunity to return to school. She attended UNO for undergraduate hours and Tulane's APA accredited school psychology doctoral program, graduating in 2002. She found that the scientific approach required for excellence in school psychology suited her natural style and intellectual curiosity.

Kathy completed her internship in the LSU Human Development System (Jefferson Parish), which was APA accredited. Then she went on to the Mercy Family Center where she had the opportunity to work with a multidisciplinary team, uniquely talented clinicians, and with diverse client populations. This experience allowed her to further develop her knowledge and she said, "To learn the fine distinctions between different diagnostic conditions."

While at Mercy Family she also had the opportunity to learn a little bit about business aspects, insurance companies, CPT codes, economic issues, and some exposure to general administration of an office.



Dr. Kathy Robison, licensed school psychologist and one time geophysicist, at her office in Metairie.

Recently Kathy has launched her own private practice in school psychology where she specializes in comprehensive psycho-educational evaluations and consulting with parents and teachers (Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plans). She also provides individual and family therapy primarily for youngsters with ADHD, Asperger's and Anxiety disorders.

And like many other Americans, she is finding that running a small business is different, but very satisfying. "I'm spending more time doing psychology," she said. "At Mercy I was the senior psychologist and had a fair amount of administrative duties."

The greater sense of autonomy is a plus for her, and with it comes awareness that she can choose and direct the case in a positive and satisfying way. "Now I'm seeing more cases where I'm feeling that I can really fix the problem."

She explained, "I am often the first mental health professional to see the child, and can give the parents and child a sense of relief that I can help them. It is very rewarding."

### Business of Helping...

Kathy also enjoys the hours. "I like the flexibility over my own schedule. I can do a lot of testing one week, then write all the reports the next. If I want to see someone on a Saturday I can, since my office isn't far from our home."

Some services require a lot of flexibility on her part. She provides a "teacher training program" which is a 12-week, hands-on "coaching" program to assist the teacher in classroom management skills, focusing on positive verbal reinforcement. "I love this work because if I can change one teacher I affect every student she teaches." The hands-on work is very important because "...research shows in-services are relatively ineffective for changing teacher behavior," Kathy noted.

Since she is still getting started, it is too soon to hire a secretary. So, Kathy feels the pinch of having all the clerical and office management. "At Mercy this aspect was different. I realize that I was somewhat sheltered from that by the secretarial staff."

Kathy also is finding the unpredictability of the income to be a bit strange as she transitions from a salaried position to writing her own paychecks. She admits that it may take her a while to get used to that difference.

Regardless of the hiccups in the transition, she enjoys her new business environment. Referrals are coming and she has developed a strong reputation with those familiar with her work. Colleagues help her with the details—she mentioned that Dr. Ron Cambias helped her find her billing company and Dr. Lynn Adams gave her intake and HIPAA forms. But, Kathy said, "I miss having people to collaborate with. I'm not a loner. I like being part of a group." So she may be fine-tuning things someday as she continues to style her work life to match her dreams.

Dr. Katherine A. Robison's office is in Metairie at 3350 Ridgelake Drive. She can be contacted at 504.913.2688 or [krobisonphd@cox.net](mailto:krobisonphd@cox.net).



*photo courtesy of SSRL, Dr. McGahan*

The Social Science Research Lab at University of Louisiana Monroe highlights the theme "Social Entrepreneurship." Dr. Joseph McGahan (psychology) and Dr. John Sutherlin (political science) founded the lab in 2007 to bring together an interdisciplinary team of researchers to promote community economic development and provide students opportunity to build skill sets in applied research. Dr. McGahan will participate in the symposium titled "Science for the Outside World, from Lab to Clinic to Community," on October 23<sup>rd</sup> in Baton Rouge at LPA's Fall Conference. (See page 15 this issue.)

## Nutrition and Health

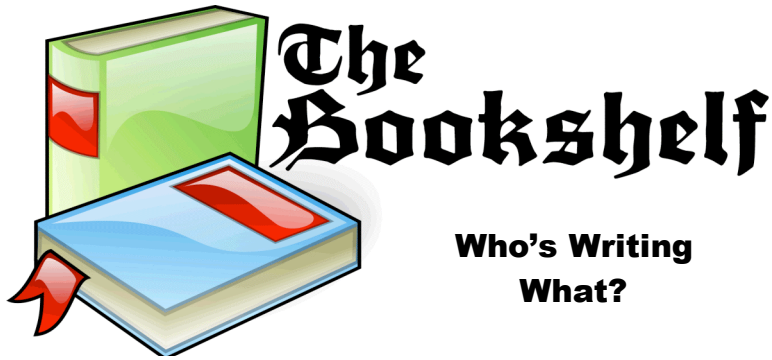
B Vitamins may be important in the management of older patients with depressive symptoms. In a population study of older adults, vitamin B6 and vitamin B12 were found to decrease depressive symptoms. The study stated that an additional 10 mg of vitamin B6 and 10 additional micrograms, per year, of vitamin B12 were associated with 2% lower odds of depressive symptoms. The findings of this study are consistent with the known role of vitamin B6 in neurotransmitter synthesis and with previous studies showing depressive symptoms and cognitive decline with vitamin B12 deficiency.

Skarupski KA, Tangney C, Li H, Ouyang B, Evans DA, Morris MC. Longitudinal association of vitamin B-6, folate, and vitamin B-12 with depressive symptoms among older adults over time. *Am J Clin Nutr*. Aug;92(2):330-335.



**Sharing Paths to Health  
with Functional Testing**  
<http://www.metamatrixinstitute.org/>



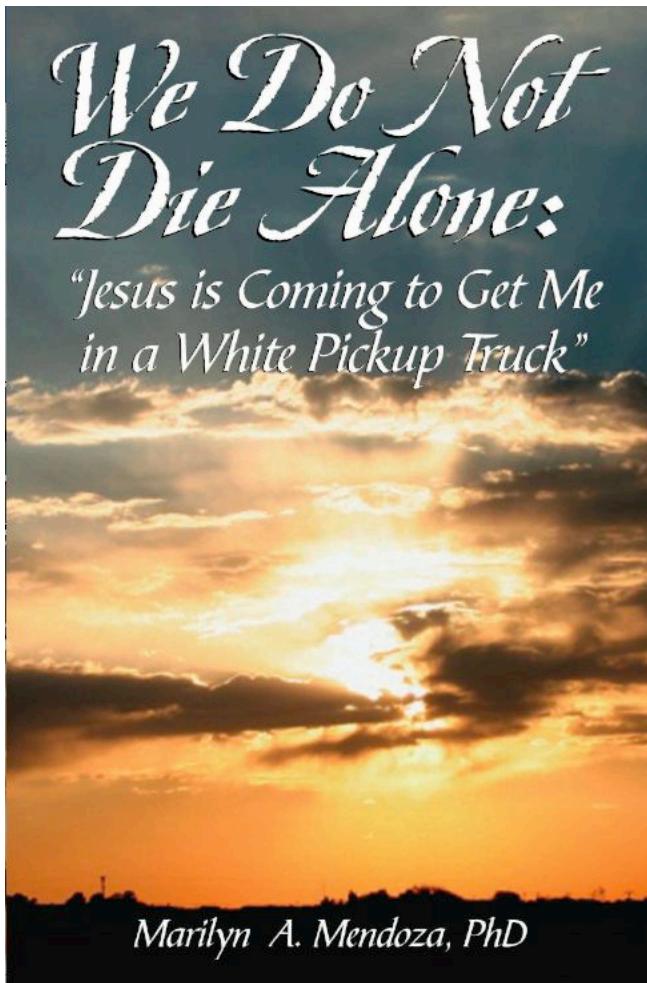


**Who's Writing  
What?**

## **We Do Not Die Alone: “Jesus in Coming to Get Me in a White Pickup Truck”**

*By Marilyn A. Mendoza, Ph.D.*

ICAN Publishing  
September 2008



*“A male hospice patient in his 60s with cancer was minimally responsive and nearing transition when he sat up and began to call for his mother. He was smiling joyfully and described his mother as coming to get him in a white pickup truck. She was sitting in the passenger seat next to Jesus who was driving the truck. His little pet bird was sitting on Jesus’ shoulder. The man died shortly after this. On his wife’s return home, she found the little pet bird was dead in its cage.”*

*“A 98 year old female told me the night before she died that it would be her last night on earth. She spoke with many of her dead relatives. She said they were waiting for her.”*

*“A 63 year old female several days before she died was talking to her deceased father and other dead relatives she had never met before. It had a very calming effect on her.”*

-- From survey respondents  
in *We Do Not Die Alone*

*We Do Not Die Alone* is a fascinating little book based on Dr. Marilyn Mendoza’s review of the research in death-related experiences and her own study of nurses’ observations as they attend their dying patients. The book is written for nurses, hospice workers, counselors, psychologists, and anyone who may work with those encountering the unusual but well-documented experience of deathbed visions.

Dr. Marilyn Medoza received her doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology from Loyola University of Chicago and for the past 24 years has been in private practice in New Orleans. She has obtained advanced training as a bereavement and spiritual facilitator and has lectured frequently, including at Tulane University School of Medicine. Her practice focus is trauma, bereavement and women’s issues.

In a concise but complete 126 pages, Marilyn explains various types of death-related phenomena that might be encountered by those caring for the dying. The mix of experiential reports, research findings, and supportive instructions to caregivers, helps place these phenomena in a meaningful and sensitive context.

The book chronicles and places into theoretical context the personal accounts of 234 nursing professionals. Marilyn conducted this study in pre-Katrina Louisiana and Maryland through 2005 and 2006, asking nurses from hospices, hospitals, nursing conferences, nursing homes and home health facilities to complete a survey about their perceptions and some of their more memorable observations.

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Dr. Marilyn Mendoza presenting in Baton Rouge at the National Association of Social Workers Annual Conference earlier this year.

*Photo by Jessica Mendoza*

The first ten chapters of *We Do Not Die Alone* describe nurses' accounts of death-related phenomena beginning with the most common—visual accounts of deceased relatives.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents in the survey indicated that they had witnessed a patient having a deathbed vision (DBV) and 57 percent of these have to do with deceased relatives. Often the vision includes awareness that the relative is present to help the patient, sometimes to help in a “journey.” The book explains the comforting affect these visions have on the dying person.

Marilyn notes that DBV have been overshadowed in the research by near-death experiences, and so she focuses the major part of the text on these experiences.

Other chapters describe common DBVs such as visions of angels, “beautiful” scenes, bright lights, and music. Distressing deathbed visions are reviewed in Chapter 8, visions which accounted for 3 percent of those reported in her sample.

Guidelines for dealing with these occurrences in a non-judgmental way to support family members are offered.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 complete the spectrum of death-related phenomena. The author explains the connection between DBV and near-death experiences, popularized by Kubler-Ross, summarizing worldwide research efforts and findings. Near-death experiences, pre-death visions that come in dreams, and after-death communications are described for readers, along with scientific reviews. History and theory about DBVs is the subject of Chapter 12.

The last three chapters comprise a section of guidance for those giving care to the dying and their families. “Nursing, Individuals and Spirituality,” and “Caring for the Caretaker” address the emotional reactions and needs of nurses and hospice. Ideas from the American Academy of Bereavement are included in Chapter 15, “Direction for the Caretaker,” and help to address the rights and needs of the dying.

About the writing process, Marilyn told the *Times*, “I totally immersed myself in researching and writing the book. It was quite intense. It would have been great to just work on the book and not see patients. I used to look forward to a cancellation so I could write.”

“I found the topic so interesting and thought provoking that the learning process was very enjoyable,” she said. “Of course, getting a contract to publish the book was also very enjoyable. The least enjoyable part of the process was getting my first—of many—rejection letters. Even though you know it is coming, it still hurts when it happens.”

For later projects, Marilyn noted, “I am hoping that my research at Angola with the prisoner caretakers in the hospice will turn into a book.”

Dr. Mendoza’s private practice is located in New Orleans and she consults with Serenity Hospice. She is a frequent lecturer at various facilities in the New Orleans area regarding her work about deathbed visions, and other matters of grief work and counseling.

“It is not known if these visions prove the existence of an afterlife,” writes Marilyn in her concluding thoughts, “but what a gift of comfort we receive as we leave this world. In our final moments, is that not what we all want?”

*We Do Not Die Alone* is available on Amazon.

## LSU's Specialty Clinic Sets Standards for Treatment/Research

At LSU's Anxiety & Addictive Behaviors Clinic (AABC), Dr. Julia (Julie) Buckner and her team integrate state-of-the-art assessments and treatments, with cutting edge research. The AABC was founded by Dr. Buckner, and is a specialty clinic within the LSU Psychology Services Center on the Baton Rouge campus.

Dr. Buckner will chair the symposium, "Laboratory Research Applications: Science for the Outside World, from Lab to Clinic to Community," at the Fall Meeting of the Louisiana Psychological Association Scientific Program, October 23<sup>rd</sup> in Baton Rouge.

"We specialize in the assessment and treatment of adult anxiety disorders," Julie explained to the *Times*, "with a particular emphasis on the co-occurrence of anxiety and substance-related problems."

Julie, an assistant professor, recently joined the LSU faculty after a series of career steps that led her to specialize in the combination of anxiety and substance use.

After working at New York State Psychiatric Institute's Anxiety Clinic, she went on to study maternal substance use and children's mental health, and then cognitive variables related to drinking in a "bar lab" at Yale University. She told the *Times*, "Given the high rate of co-occurring anxiety and substance use, merging these two interests was a natural next step. My research and clinical work concerns understanding the nature and treatment of adult anxiety disorders, especially when they co-occur with substance use problems."

She explained that substance use continues to be one of the most



Dr. Julia Buckner (center) during Anxiety and Addictive Behaviors Team clinical supervision with LSU graduate student therapists (L to R) Jose Silgado, Megan Apperson, Magda Kulesza, & Melissa Munson. Dr. Buckner will chair one of the symposiums at the LPA Fall Conference.

prevalent psychiatric disorders, with alcohol use the most prevalent and marijuana the most common illicit substance use disorder. A recent survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicated that there is a nationwide increase in substance use that is being driven by an eight percent increase in marijuana use.

In light of growing recognition of the impact of anxiety on substance-related behaviors, SAMHSA asked Julie to chair their expert consensus panel for the "Treatment Improvement Protocol" on *Managing Anxiety Symptoms in Early Recovery* [working title]. Since May Julie has worked closely with SAMHSA and panel members to write recommendations for best practice assessment and treatment of elevated, subclinical anxiety symptoms among individuals in substance abuse treatment.

At AABC adult clients are assisted with time-limited,



Photos courtesy of AABC

cognitive-behavioral treatment in both individual and group formats to help them with the interplay of the two conditions. "Many of our clients have struggled with anxiety and/or substance-related problems for many years," Julie noted, "and often enter therapy very hopeless about whether they will ever experience symptom relief. One of the most rewarding outcomes for me then, is watching these clients experience symptom relief and improved functioning as a result of treatment."

Improvements come in many forms Julie explained. "Individuals with social anxiety who have avoided social activities not only experience improvements in their social support systems—they start dating, make new friends, achieve closer relationships with existing support networks—but oftentimes will start engaging in more physical activities, as their fear of



### LSU Clinic...

negative evaluation decreases.”

“We see similar improvements in health among our clients with substance use disorders who often begin to exercise more as a result of symptom relief.” She added, “Similarly, we know there is a strong relationship between sleep and anxiety and substance use, and we explicitly attend to problematic sleeping behaviors when clients report difficulties with sleep.”

In addition to providing clinical services the AABC is also committed to research that refines existing treatments, discovers risk and resilience factors, and helps clients avoid relapse and improve faster. Clients of the AABC are asked to participate in a confidential research study to better understand mechanisms of treatment and outcomes.

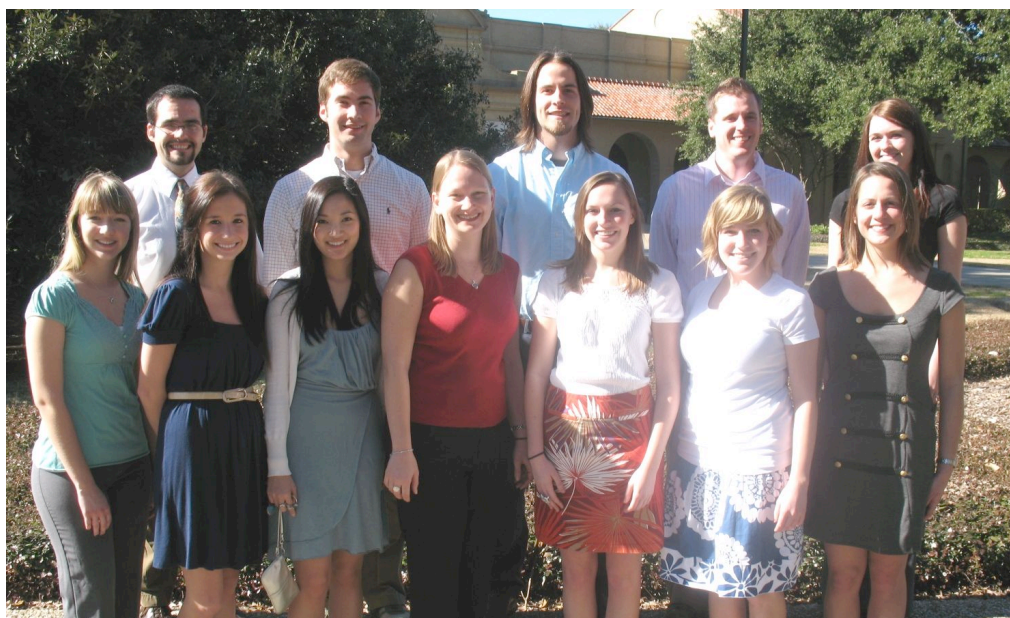
For example, Julie’s team is examining how laboratory induced anxiety affects physiological reactivity and craving for marijuana. Part of this study involves examining how those adults with and those without social anxiety disorder respond differently.

“We are also currently testing the utility of a one session MI [motivational interviewing] intervention to explore and resolve ambivalence about seeking treatment for social anxiety among non-treatment seekers with social anxiety disorder,” she said. “In a separate study we are striving to identify the optimal dose of MI for LSU students that have been referred to our clinic for marijuana treatment by the Dean of Academic Affairs.”

Julie and her research team produce a steady flow of scholarly contributions. When the *Times* requested a recent in-press article, Julie asked, “...which one?” She has 12 in-press at this time, with over 50 publications, including peer-reviewed manuscripts, book chapters, and a book. Her team includes doctoral students who work in both the treatment and the research areas. For example, Julie and Anthony Ecker, an LSU doctoral student, have authored, “Mental health problems and interest in marijuana treatment among marijuana-using college students,” in *Addictive Behaviors*. LSU graduate student Jose Silgado and Julie have in press “Marijuana craving during a public speaking challenge: understanding marijuana use vulnerability among women and those with social anxiety disorder” in *J. of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*. Julie and LSU graduate student Steve Proctor have in press “Cocaine dependence and anxiety sensitivity among patients presenting for residential drug use treatment” in *J. of Cognitive Psychotherapy*.

Dr. Buckner received her doctoral degree from Florida State University, where she served as the assistant director of the Anxiety and Behavioral Health Research Laboratory. She completed her clinical internship in the Division of Substance Abuse at the Yale University School of Medicine.

Dr. Buckner can be reached at [jbuckner@lsu.edu](mailto:jbuckner@lsu.edu). Go to Anxiety & Addictive Behaviors Laboratory website go to [www.lsu.edu/psychology/aabc/](http://www.lsu.edu/psychology/aabc/).



The AABC and research team members left to right: (top) Jose Silgado, Anthony Ecker, Steven Proctor, Joe Deschamps, Katelyn Gros, (bottom) Rebecca Graham, Rachel Chatham, Tina Hoang, Dr. Julia Buckner, Emily Carlson, Emily Wilson, and Brittany Melvin.

Photo courtesy of AABC



# Up-Coming Events

## LA Psych Association Fall Conference

Louisiana Psychological Association will host its Fall Conference on Saturday, October 23, 2010, at the Baton Rouge Marriott. Two educational tracks will be offered in the daylong conference.

The Continuing Education Track will provide participants five hours of CEs for ethics in a workshop with a panel of distinguished experts covering a spectrum of issues on record retention policy, new HIPAA rules, regulations under HITECH, mental health law, APA guidelines, confidentiality and more.

The Science Track offers a slate of scientific and research topics of interest to professors and students, with panels and round



Dr. Phil Griffin will moderate the panel of experts in the CE Track.

tables of top professors from around the state. Topics will include issues of human subjects research, challenges of laboratory research, issues about teaching difficult topics, and guidance for students in presenting research.

The CE Track is titled, "Want to Know More About Ethics, Privacy, Confidentiality, Keeping Records, HIPAA/HITECH? Have We Got A Deal for You!" Phil Griffin, Ph.D., ABPP, will moderate the panel covering the spectrum of ethical and records retention issues. Attendees will have an opportunity to review and learn essential information in critical practice topics.

Four distinguished panelists will participate.

Joseph Comaty, Ph.D., MP, Chair of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists will provide information on the Board's regulations, opinions, and ethics.

Alan Nessman is Senior Special Counsel, Legal and Regulatory Affairs, from the American Psychological Association. He will review "HITECH," the extension of the recent laws that relate to financial incentives and grant programs for psychologists. Alan will also cover other topics, test materials and data.

Attorney Greg Frost from Baton Rouge will speak on LA mental health law and HIPAA.

And Carri Fager from Louisiana



Dr. Buckner will lead a symposium on research methods. Above, graduate student Joe Deschamps demonstrates equipment used at the LSU lab.

*Photo by Hazel Augustin*

Secretary of State's Office will provide information about state statutes and record retention.

The Science Track begins with a student workshop on Convention Success Training, titled "Navigating Meetings, Giving Talks, Preparing Posters, and More." The workshop will be chaired by Theresa Wozencraft, Ph.D, associate professor at University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Julia Buckner, Ph.D., LSU BR assistant professor and co-founder of the Substance Abuse and Anxiety Clinic will chair a symposium on laboratory research applications, "Science for the Outside World, from Lab to Clinic to Community."

After lunch a panel discussion on human subjects research dilemmas will convene,

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"Following Rules, Protecting People, and Getting Results," chaired by Mary Margaret Livingston, Ph.D. professor from Louisiana Tech University.

Marva Lewis, Ph.D., associate professor at the Tulane School of Social Work, will facilitate the round table discussion on Teaching Difficult Topics—Pull up a Chair and Join the Conversation.

The Science Track was coordinated by Susan Dardard, Ph.D.

Visit [www.louisianapsychologist.org](http://www.louisianapsychologist.org) for registration.



Tulane's Dr. Marva Lewis.

## LPA Launches Membership Drive

Louisiana Psychological Association (LPA) is inviting new members to join for 2011 and enjoy the fourth quarter of 2010 free, as well as receive certain discounts in conference fees at the Fall Meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, according to Executive Director Ms. Gail Lowe.

Membership chair Dr. Brandon Romano, told the *Times*, "The Louisiana Psychological Association affords all of its members the opportunity to establish lasting professional relationships and provides ample opportunity for networking and career development."

He noted that one of the benefits is the educational opportunity "...emphasizing the most current practices applicable to the field of psychology."

Executive Director Gail Lowe said that new members could complete applications on the website (<http://www.louisianapsychologist.org>) or reach her at 225-766-0185 or more information.

## Other UpComing Events

### Professional Training Resources--

"Mental Health Professionals in Court." October 8<sup>th</sup>, Lafayette, LA. – The Holiday Inn, 2032 NE Evangeline Thru.

"Conduct Disorders: Destruction, Violence, and Bullying."

October 22<sup>nd</sup> – Monroe, LA, - The Atrium 2001 Louisville Ave.

[www.professionaltrainingresourcesinc.com](http://www.professionaltrainingresourcesinc.com)

### National Alliance of Professional Psychology Providers

Second Annual NAPPP Conference, October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas.

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Send us your community news and ideas.

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