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## The Psychology of Our Social Rituals

Flying the flag for the 4<sup>th</sup>? Inviting friends and family to a backyard barbeque? Shooting off some fireworks?

When we dance at a wedding, blow out candles on a birthday cake, or attend a funeral we are participating in the complex, psychological fabric of social rituals. If we recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of a meeting, or sing the national anthem before an LSU football game, or drink a toast to a friend's promotion, we are transmitting social norms, group identity, and our intentions.

The pervasive evolutionary and psychological meaning of group rituals can range from the conscious and obvious to the subtle to the non-conscious. Citing work by Louisiana's Dr. Matt Rossano, authors of a recent article say that group ritual has been understudied. Watson-Jones and Legare, who recently authored, "The Social Functions of Group Rituals," have started some buzz in science news.

Watson-Jones refers to work by Dr. Rossano, Professor and past Chair

of the Department of Psychology at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, when they say that the "complexity and diversity of ritual" have made rituals difficult to fully understand.

The article they cite is Rossano's, "The essential role of ritual in the transmission and reinforcement of social norms," published in *Psychological Bulletin* in 2012. He writes that ritual and ritualized behavior is essential to the transmission and reinforcement of social norms, and that these norms are morally significant for cooperation and social organization.

"The anthropologist Roy Rappaport argued that rituals—or more accurately, ritualized behaviors—serve an indexical function for humans," Dr. Rossano explained in a recent interview. "That is, they signal a state of mind that the ritual participant is in. So a couple going through a wedding

Cont'd pg 10

*Budget Problems to Be Continued*

## Legislature Finally Goes Home

Despite two special sessions and a regular session where the state's dire financial picture dominated, and tax changes that should raise somewhere in the range of \$1.5 billion, cuts to key public programs are still going to occur.

The compromise budget passed on June 23 maintains

the funding to higher education but cuts the TOPS program to 70 percent. The Edwards administration also believes they have protected public hospitals and doctor training programs, said a report in the *Times Picayune*.

Cuts will however come to K-12 schools, for about \$24 million,

Cont'd pg 3

## Confusing New CE Rules Take Effect

After almost six years of effort and discussion, psychologists are logging in their new categories for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), as they renew their licenses this month.

The new procedures are so confusing to some that the psychology board produced an explainer video and posted it on UTube. (See link at the end of this news story.)

Cont'd pg 6

## Legislative Auditor Gives LSBEP Good Scrubbing in June 8 Report

In a June 8 report by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP) was found to have inadequate controls over financial matters during the 2014–2015 time period. The state Auditor found inadequate segregation of duties and lack of supporting documentation, inadequate controls over employee payroll

and leave, inadequate controls over debit and credit cards, and inadequate controls over travel and meals expenses.

All state boards are reviewed annually. This appears to be the first year that the LSBEP has been reviewed by the Legislative Auditor Office, rather than reviewed by a

Cont'd pg 3

## Times Wins Editorial Honors At Press Assn

The *Psychology Times* won Editorial Sweepstakes and a number of important awards at this year's Louisiana Press Association. See story page 6.



Our Shrink at the  
Flicks, Dr. Al  
Burstein  
Reviews

*The Conjuring 2*

Page 13

### WEBPAGES

Dr. Lacey Seymour's New Website is a beautiful, friendly and functional tool to help patients and to help her manage Live Oak Children's Center.

Page 13 - 14



# Editorial Page – Opinions

## Tips for Writing a “Best Feature Story”

(or How to Pull a Rabbit Out of a Silk Purse) *by J. Nelson*

I’m the last person to give advice about how to write a story worthy of winning a Best Feature award. I’ve never even rated an honorable mention. No one at the paper has either. I’ve said to myself, no problem, not every person is suited to every task. I’m obviously an investigative sort.

And then here comes this year and a first place in Best Feature Story. It was a total surprise for me and a real delight to share the experience with two colleagues, Dr. Susan Andrews and Dr. John Magee.

True to form, I want to investigate this oddity and explore just how it happened. Maybe I can learn something that others could use—because, psychologists, whether we admit it or not, have trouble writing down the bones.

First tip: Choose a really big, worthy topic.

In 2015 Susan (Suzie) Andrews, who writes our column on *Stress Solutions*, attended the Press Association convention with me and Archimedes. The three of us had the honor of hearing a keynote address by Morley Piper. Mr. Piper, a retired executive director of the New England Newspaper Association, is a WWII Veteran. He spoke about his experiences as part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry in the Allied invasion on D-Day in 1944.

It was one of those powerful, pin-drop type addresses, with poignant, specific details that riveted us to our seats. He pulled us back through time and into history, and put us on that beach in 1944. He made us feel events both horrible and beautiful, and when he was finished with us, we were all wiping our eyes and rising out of our chairs to applaud. I don’t know what we were applauding—the heroes on that beach, the lost ghosts, the terrible majesty of war. I think we all knew what Morley wanted from us—he wanted us not to forget.



Suzie, me and John. (Photo by Yael Banai)

And then Suzie turned to me and said, “We have to write about our fathers.” Suzie and I had briefly talked about our WWII fathers and while I was a little doubtful that I could do a good job, when your volunteer columnist in your shoestring budget newspaper tells you she wants to write together, you say, “Absolutely!”

I suggested we ask John Magee because I’d reported on him before and knew he had a story to tell, and Suzie gladly agreed. So we pressed John into service.

Then we were three, with a topic so big and close to our hearts that I wondered how we could possibly write it as well as it deserved to be written. The topic itself caused me the writer’s blue devils: timidity, self-consciousness, and the general idea of not knowing how to approach the topic or why any reader would care what I had to say on the matter.

But the three of us devised a plan, structured it into sections, and gave it a whirl. Tip #2: Give things a whirl.

I was buoyed by my co-authors who were passionate about our topic. We looked at old letters and documents, talked to relatives, read some history, asked and answered our own questions, working separately and together. Tip #3: Collaborate but retain your own voice and style. Be salad, not hash.

Only a fraction of what each of us discovered went into the final drafts. (“It’s too long,” I kept complaining, to which Suzie and John said, “So what!”).

For me, I discovered things I cared about that I never cared about before, things that I didn’t know I cared about, things that seemed to change in the lens of time, the lens of history, the lens of my own maturing years. Some aspects about my father had faded and some came to me in sharp relief, a shifting pattern of perceptions, fascinating in itself. I came away with a gift—of more understanding, acceptance and forgiveness.

The Press Association gave us a first place for the feature. It moved the judges too, “A wonderfully intimate portrayal.” We chose wisely, it was a big topic. And we wrote honestly. I’ve heard it said over and over, all good writing is about telling the truth. Tip #4: Write the truth.

We had a fantastic time at the convention, the rest of the *Psychology Times* staff was happy for us. I will treasure the experience always.

Tip #5: Sometimes it is a real joy to work with other psychologists.

## The Psychology Times

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## Corrections & Clarifications

No corrections or clarifications were received for last month’s issue. Please send corrections or clarifications to the *Times* at  
[psychologytimes@drjulienelson.com](mailto:psychologytimes@drjulienelson.com)



State News

Legislature Finally Goes Home, cont'd

and to prisons and sheriff offices who hold offenders, with shortages of \$25 million. Cuts of \$14.5 million are also forecasted for juvenile detention and rehabilitation services.

While the changes leave Louisiana with the highest average sales tax in the country, even this fix is temporary. The June budget depends on a sales tax that will work for only two years, and then another funding crisis will be teed up.

The *Times Picayune* reported that the reductions will likely cause LSU’s medical school in New Orleans to absorb costs of maintaining the old Charity Hospital.

Reductions to the Department of Corrections threaten the re-entry programs, according to documents provided by the governor’s staff, said the *Times Picayune*.

The sales tax was muscled through while Governor Edwards was unable to achieve any changes to individual income taxes over the three sessions. Likewise there was no significant change in the generous tax breaks to business and industry.

Another crisis could loom at mid-year, as well, because corporate tax collections appear to be coming in well under the estimates, setting up a shortfall of \$200 million, said the report.

The Governor recently signed some bills into law:

Stabilization Units—Act 591 authorizes Human services districts may create intervention and stabilization units, for those with recurrent crises from mental health or substance abuse, and if funded.

Healthcare Background Checks — Act 311 authorizes background checks for healthcare workers including behavioral health services providers and those in certain treatment facilities.

Office of Juvenile Justice Schools – – Act 500 requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to create a team to draft and propose a program for children judicially committed to Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

More changes to Medical Board — Act 584 changes board membership and other matters; it adds members from LSUHSC and from Tulane Medical School.

Certified Addiction Counselor – Act 534 amends the current law to allow the certified addiction counselor to work independently when providing services in prisons.

Telemedicine —Act 630 expands options such that patients and physicians can be in any location.



Psychology board Executive Director, Ms. Jaime Monic (R) was praised for her efforts by then Chair, Dr. Marc Zimmermann, at a recent conference. Attendees gave Monic a standing ovation. A June Legislative Audit reveals multiple problems occurred before Monic took her position. Seated are Drs. Jesse Lambert and Darla Burnett.

Legislative Auditor Scrubs Down the LSBEP, cont'd

contract CPA firm, which has been the case in previous years, according to a review of the reports filed on the Legislative Auditor’s website.

The Auditor wrote that a 2013-2014 finding of overpayment of contracted services had been corrected. “However, the prior-year finding related to the lack of adequate written policies and procedures for business and accounting functions of the Board [LSBEP] has not been resolved and is addressed again in each of the current-year findings within this report.”

For the 2014-2015 review, the Auditor found “Inadequate Segregation of Duties and Lack

of Supporting Documentation.” The report said that the Board did not establish policies requiring adequate segregation of duties over cash receipts and cash disbursements. The Board did not have policies and procedures documenting the cash collection process, and was unable to provide supporting documents for deposits made during the fiscal year. In addition, the Auditor’s report noted, “one person prepared, signed, and remitted checks and prepared the bank reconciliation without another person reviewing for appropriateness.”

“As a compensating control, the monthly bank reconciliations were reviewed by an external CPA. However, no evidence of this review was maintained by the Board. Also, the CPA was not in a position to evaluate the appropriateness of Board disbursements. The monthly financial statements and General Ledger detail were also provided to the Board members at each meeting. However, there was no evidence of Board member review or approval of this financial information.”

A second area of concern was, “Inadequate Controls over Employee Payroll and Leave.” The review identified several issues, according to the report.

- These included:
- “• The Board was unable to provide time sheets for four (80%) of the five employees reviewed. Of the time sheets provided, none were signed by either the employee or a supervisor.
  - “• Of the five employees reviewed, only two were eligible to earn leave. For those two employees, the Board was unable to provide written leave records detailing hours earned, hours used, leave request approvals, and available leave balance.
  - “• For one (20%) of the five employees reviewed, the Board was only able to provide a handwritten note on the employee’s resume as support for their pay rate. In contrast, the Board provided Employee Notification Forms from the state’s human resources system for the other four employees supporting their approved rate of pay.
  - “• During January 2015, a Board employee deposited the same paycheck twice. The Board disclosed the error during our procedures in December 2015, at which time the Board contacted the bank and the funds were returned.”

Cont'd next page



# Scrubbing for LSBEP, cont'd

A third area was “Inadequate Controls over Debit and Credit Cards.” The Auditor said that the Board did not maintain adequate supporting documentation including itemized receipts, documentation of the business purpose, and/or proper approval for all debit and credit card transactions. The Board processed approximately \$22,000 in credit card charges during the fiscal year. The Board also failed to establish policies and procedures regarding the use of debit and credit cards and failed to establish adequate internal control over the card transactions.

The Auditor reviewed the debit and credit card statements and noted the following activity that appeared at risk for not having a valid business purpose: Amazon.com purchases totaling \$148; Apple Store purchases totaling \$1,260; Etsy purchases totaling \$196; TJ Maxx purchases totaling \$32; Drug store purchases totaling \$267; Grocery store purchases totaling \$1,212.

A fourth area noted was “Inadequate Controls over Travel and Meal Expenses.”

The Board did not maintain prior travel authorizations, itemized receipts, or proper approval for \$13,594 in travel and meal expenses charged either directly to the Board’s debit cards or reimbursed to Board members and employees during fiscal year 2015.

“Our review of Board travel and meal expenses revealed the following:

• Based on bank statement descriptions, a total of \$3,364 was paid to hotels for conferences held in Palm Springs and Atlanta; however, no supporting documentation was provided.

• Based on information provided by the Board, the former executive director may have improperly charged \$2,343 to the Board for airfare, hotel, baggage, and parking fees related to participation in Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) committee meetings during October and November 2014. ASPPB stated it pays for flights, hotel rooms, and associated travel expenses for committee meeting participants, either directly or through reimbursement. ASPPB provided the Board with documentation of reimbursements to the former executive director totaling \$1,185 in connection with these two meetings; however, the Board does not have sufficient documentation to determine if these reimbursements were subsequently provided to the Board. The remaining charges

were for hotel expenses incurred during the November 2014 committee meeting, for which the former executive director did not request reimbursement.

• Travel reimbursements and per diems to employees and Board members totaling \$3,241 were not supported by approved reimbursement requests or itemized receipts as required by the current Board policy and state travel regulations.”

In a section titled, “Comparison of Activity between Years,” authors reviewed differences in budget and actual revenues and expenditures. They found that actual expenditures exceeded the budget by 16 percent, and the majority of this was due to legal expenses for cases, said the authors of the report.

In a series of letters to the Legislative Auditor, dated May 6, 12, 16 and another on the May 16, from the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, written and signed by the current Executive Director, Ms. Jaime Monic provided responses to the Auditor’s findings.

Explained in each letter she writes, “I was rehired on September 18, 2015 as Executive Director. The former director held this position from July 7, 2015 – September 18, 2015. His predecessor resigned her position as Executive Director with the LSBEP on July 7, 2015. It is worth noting that the Administrative Assistant underwent medical leave in August 2014; and the position was vacated and went through several individuals from April 2015–September 2015. This turnover of the entire staff impacted the LSBEP’s ability to keep records as it has adequately maintained in past fiscal years.”

Monic wrote that she “would concur that the LSBEP does not have written policies that specifically address the cash collection process,” and “A log of receivables was available, however I cannot dispute the lack of documentation for the deposit records or lack of documentation for the review/oversight of the processes during this period.”

She wrote that she concurred with the findings regarding the account payables, control and bank reconciliations, and said, “Since taking this position, I have worked tirelessly to train, implement a proper segregation of duties, and facilitate compliance with all



Dr. Marc Zimmermann completed his five-year service last month. After a Legislative Audit, board members are being helped to improve their policies.

administrative laws and rules.” She then explained more about the new procedures.

In this and other letters, Monic noted she is working to amend the written procedures, segregate duties, and control documentation, and other proper procedures. And, she wrote, “The policies will be provided to all board members, staff and contract employees. Additional controls may also be considered to facilitate board members continued awareness of policies and procedures as the members rotate through their terms.”

In the May 12 letter, Monic wrote, “I do not fully concur with the finding related to leave and rate of pay.” She cites an LSBEP policy that addresses payroll and leave, amended on May 30, 2014, that states that the board employees “may earn leave...” She compared this to excerpts from the State Civil Service Human Resources Handbook and summarizes that the findings in this area are not founded.

In the first May16 letter, Monic responded to issues of Inadequate Controls Over Debit

and Credit Cards, writing that she concurs that the LSBEP did not have written policies and while she notes that many of the transactions were appropriate and budgeted, “I cannot dispute the lack of documentation.”

In the final May 16 response, about Inadequate Controls Over Travel and Meal Expenses, Ms. Monic wrote that “While board member travel and attendance at meetings, is documented in the minutes of the LSBEP, including Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) meetings at the Omni Rancho Las Palmas in Palm Springs, California and Atlanta, GA, current administration is unable to account for the lack of documentation of expense reports, itemized receipts and/or proper approval for all travel and reimbursements in the 2014–2015FY.”

Monic noted that she has reinstated procedures for proper record keeping and that policies to address problems were distributed to the board members.



# No Appointment Yet, Some in Community Wondering

As of publication, there does not seem to be an appointment to the state psychology board. The *Times* spoke with both psychologists whose names are on the “list” and neither reported having been contacted by the Governor’s Office regarding appointment. Also, there was no discussion at the recent psychology board meeting of a selection having been made.

While probably the last thing on Governor Edward’s mind, the delay in the appointment to the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP) leaves some in the community wondering about the possibility of more political maneuvering. For the first time in six years the powerful Louisiana Academy of Medical Psychologists (LAMP) appears to be in line to lose it’s majority membership on the state psychology board.

The current Chair, Dr. Marc Zimmermann, medical psychologist, completed his term on June 30. The election to fill his open position was completed earlier this year, and the list of names sent to the Governor on January 25 from the president of the Louisiana Psychological Association (LPA), Dr. Lacey Seymour.

Neither of the psychologists on the list to the governor, Dr. Amy Henke, who captured 62 percent of the votes, or Dr. Leah Crouch, who obtained 38 percent, report any professional connections to LAMP.

According to the law, the Governor must appoint an individual from the list of names. But the “list” has been the source of conflict.

Last year, the psychology board involved themselves in the “list” and told LPA representative, Ms. Cindy Bishop, to add all names to the list. Bishop complied and this set up conditions for the third candidate, LAMP student member, Dr. Jesse Lambert, to be included on the list and then appointed. There was a three-month delay in that appointment.

Last year the psychology board pushed an effort to remove the wording from the psychology law that gives LPA the control over the list of names. The effort failed because the Senator who authoring the bill said he’d let it die if there were conflicts. Video of Senate meetings showed LAMP lobbyists chatting with board representatives during the debates.

LAMP is known to be a political powerhouse. The group donates more money to legislators than most other political action committees. In 2014, LAMP donated more than the much larger state medical group.

Dr. Crouch is a clinical psychologist with membership in the Divisions for Psychologists in Independent Practice, and also for Trauma Psychology. Dr. Crouch is also a member of the Society of Personality Assessment.

Dr. Amy Henke is a clinical

psychologist with the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center and Children’s Hospital in New Orleans. She is a member of APA Divisions for Pediatric Psychology and Health Psychology, and a member and Director for the Louisiana Psychological Association.

## LSBEP’s 2014 Idea to Govern Speech Ends

A 2014 effort by the state psychology board to add discipline over personal speech has ended. At the June 2016 meeting, Chair Dr. Marc Zimmermann said, “This group has outlived its usefulness. I propose we end it.”

The idea of regulating psychologists’ speech was put forth in November 2014 when board members complained that psychologists had been “inappropriate” to board staff. The new regulation was to control “inappropriate” or “disparaging” or “disrespectful” speech.

Dr. Kim VanGeffen, Chair of Professional Affairs for LPA, participated in the task group.


She told the *Times* recently that the group never confirmed that more standards were “really necessary” and a consensus definition was never reached. Of continued concern by task group members, she noted, were the limitations that might be placed on free speech directed at the public officials on the board, which seemed to have been the impetus for the effort.

## Board Digging Out of Over-Budget Woes

In their May meeting, members of the state psychology reviewed financial statements prepared by Ms. Valerie Dominique, accountant for the board. According to the minutes, Ms. Jaime Monic, Executive Director, explained, “ ... financial status remains steady. We budgeted to have a net loss (Revenue – Expenses) of \$112,351. With two months remaining in this fiscal year you have a net loss of \$54,399.16. Revenue is under budget by \$1,629.66. Total expenses are under budget by \$57,251.84. It appears that you are on track to stay on budget for FY ending June 30,2016.”

In February Monic alerted board members to budget problems, which could have required fee increases. She related that one of the legal contractors, Mr. James Raines, had invoices amounting to \$66,597. Monic told the members she asked Mr. Raines to cease work until further notice, this according to the February minutes.

While legal fees may likely be over \$100,000 for 2015, it is the same year that the board may have confused the time limits for investigations, called “prescription.” (See *Times* Vol 6 No 10, “Board May Have Botched Time Limits on Complaints.”)



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State News

# Confusing New CE Rules Take Effect cont'd

Psychologists with even-numbered licenses have been gathering training activities under the new categories over the last two years, and first pushed for by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards in 2010.

The changes relate to Chapter 8 of the Professional and Occupational Standards, known as Title 46, for psychologists, are now effective for the July license renewals because of an Emergency Rule in June.

Both an Emergency Rule and also a regular Notice of Intent was published in the June 2016 Louisiana *Register*. The Emergency Rule is effective immediately, and the Notice allows comments by 12 p.m. on July 10. Both of these cover the same updates about Continuing Education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The rules apply to all psychologists, provisionally licensed psychologists, and licensed specialists in school psychologists, according to a web announcement prepared by the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP).

The new rules include nine subcategories, such as peer consultation, practice outcome monitoring, conferences/conventions, publications, traditional continuing education, and others, falling into three classes. Licensees must report training in at least two of these nine subcategories.

Even numbered licenses are to report 30 hours of continuing development for this cycle, using the new CPD guidelines and nine categories. For the next two-year cycle, the number of hours increases to 40 hours. Odd-numbered licenses follow this on odd-numbered years on their cycle.

According to the Emergency Rule: “§803. Requirements A. For the reporting periods that begin July 2014 and July 2015, each psychologist is required to complete 30 hours or credits of continuing professional development within the biennial reporting period. The CPD credits must conform to the distribution requirements listed below in Subsection C. For the reporting periods that begin July 2016 and July 2017 and henceforth, 40 credits of continuing professional development will be required in the biennial reporting period and the hours must conform to the distribution listed below in Subsection C.”

The new rules also include a regulation to maintain documentation for six years.

“C. Supporting Documentation. Each licensee shall retain corroborative documentation, such as the CPD Verification Form, of his or her continuing professional development for six years. Although this documentation is not routinely required as part of the licensee’s submission, the board may, at its discretion, request such documentation. Any misrepresentation of continuing professional development will be cause for disciplinary action by the board.”

UTube video by the board is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7D8Su6cWfs&feature=youtu.be>



Staff for the *Psychology Times* at the recent annual convention of the Louisiana Press Association held in Lake Charles. (L to R) Mike Dooley, photographer and business manager; Jake Nelson-Dooley, cartoonist and website; Dr. John Magee, writer; Dr. Marceline Brown, guest; and Dr. Susan Andrews, writer and regular columnist. The *Times* took home the Editorial Sweepstakes award in its division. (Not shown, Dr. Yael Banai, writer and photographer, and Julie Nelson, publisher.)

# Psychology Times Wins Editorial Sweepstakes at Press Association

The *Psychology Times* took home 15 awards from the 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Louisiana Press Association Convention held in Lake Charles, June 17–18. Fifty-eight newspapers, publications, and college/university student newspapers submitted 2,777 entries.

The *Times* won Editorial Sweepstakes in its division for the first time. The honor resulted from six first place awards, including a sentimental favorite by Drs. Susan Andrews, John Magee and Julie Nelson for their Best Feature Article, “Our WWII Fathers.” The judges remarked, “Wonderfully intimate portraits of men who lived through hell and came out the other side. Good, solid writing. A great feature and a beautiful tribute to The Greatest Generation.”

For the third year running publisher Julie Nelson swept 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>d</sup> places for Best Investigative Reporting, earning her the prestigious Gibbs Adams Award, a special honor given to the first place winner in each division. The award is given in memory of long-time *State Times-Morning Advocate* investigative reporter Gibbs Adams. The *Times’* report, “The Secret Life of Board Complaints,” garnered first place, while reporting of “What Boards Can and Can’t Do” and “SB113: What Was Behind Door No. 1,” gained the paper the second and third places.

The *Times* won the coveted first place in Best News Coverage, the judge noting that the publication was “... chock full of interesting stories about interesting people.”

Also in news coverage, the *Times* won first place in Best Continuing Coverage for the story of the psychology board’s efforts to grab power during 2015. The judge commented, “Great job explaining a complicated issue while detailing the lengths taken to control the board.”

For the first time, Nelson won first place award in Best Regular Column, for her editorial page column. This first place also carries a special award, the Sam Hanna Award, given in memory of long-time columnist and publisher of the *Concordia Sentinel*, the *Franklin Sun*, and the *Ouachita Citizen*.

*Times’* cartoonist, animator, and website manager, Jake Nelson-Dooley, won first and second for Best Editorial Cartoon across division C, and first for Best Website.

The *Times* captured second place in Best News Reporting for its article on the Lafayette shooting, a second place in Community Service, a second place in Best Continuing Coverage, and a third place in Best Lifestyle Coverage.

The *Advocate* (Baton Rouge), The *Times* (Houma), the *Daily News* (Bogalusa), The *Plaquemines Gazette* (Belle Chasse) and the *Southwest Daily News* (Sulphur), earned Newspaper of the Year honors in their respective divisions.

The Baton Rouge Advocate was awarded the top honor, the Freedom of Information Award, for its two-year fight with the Louisiana State University board and its refusal to disclose applicants for a prestigious position.

The coveted Freedom of Information award originally came from an idea that Gordon Nelson, long-time member of the Press Association and publisher of the *Coushatta Citizen*, and Bob Holeman, current *Psychology Times* journalism consultant, presented to the Louisiana Press Association in the 1980s.

The late Gordon and Lynn Nelson owned and operated the *Coushatta Citizen*, and are parents of Julie Nelson. The *Citizen* won the first Freedom of Information (FOI) award more than three decades ago.



# Tulane’s Dr. Hoerger Helps Cancer Patients Understand Palliative Care

Tulane’s Dr. Michael Hoerger is working closely with the authors of a ground-breaking research study, to better understand the benefits that multidiscipline care can bring to those who are struggling with serious and potentially terminal cancer.

Adding “palliative care” to treatment for serious and late-stage cancer, was studied by researchers and results published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2010. “Early Palliative Care for Patients with Metastatic Non–Small-Cell Lung Cancer,” by Jennifer S. Temel, MD, and colleagues.

Tulane’s Dr. Michael Hoerger, has been studying patients’ perceptions about this type of approach, and how to help patients better understand their choices with end-stage cancer. His work is supported by an award from the Louisiana Clinical and Translational Science Center, the LaCaTS.

In many situations with late-stage and serious cancer, Hoerger explained, patients wind up choosing aggressive care that does no good and that dramatically reduces quality of life in the patients’ last months.

Temel and her colleagues found that multidisciplinary care could not only increase quality of life but at times extended life, for terminal patients.

“In my current research I am looking at different ways to explain the medical evidence about palliative care to patients with very serious cancer diagnoses,” said Dr. Hoerger in a recent interview with the Times.

Very aggressive treatments often make patients very sick but without chances of improvement in the course of their illness. But, researchers found that with early palliative care, patients were able to make better choices, and maintain a better quality of life.

Hoerger began in 2014 to study this issue as one of the Roadmap Scholars at LaCaTS, which aims to promote translational research connections and goals across disciplines and communities.

“What I’ve found in my research,” Hoerger said, “is that often patients don’t know about palliative care, which can be for patients who have life-limiting diagnoses or serious side effects,” he said. “It is not the same as hospice,” he explained. “For hospice we understand that the patient has less than six months to live. But for many patients with cancer, we might not know what is going to happen with their illness.”

This care approach can involve multidisciplinary professionals that help the patient and family address quality of life issues, psychosocial support, and decision-making, and has been shown to increase possible outcomes with those patients who eventually require end-of-life care and also those that make some level of recovery.

The model of care can include psychologists, nutritionists, social workers, nurses, and others, who provide a variety

of methods for easing symptoms and helping the patient in psychological and social areas.

Currently, Dr. Hoerger is supported under another award from LaCaTS, this time the Visiting Scholar Award. He is working for two months with authors of the original study on palliative care, authors Dr. Jennifer Temel and psychologist, Dr. Joe Greer.

Dr. Hoerger is training for two months with the palliative care research team at Harvard and Massachusetts General Health.

The training will increase Hoerger’s knowledge and skills in this area and expand his collaborative network. This type of effort aims to accelerate science by building a research infrastructure, the goal of the Visiting Scholar program at LaCaTS.

During this same time, Dr. Hoerger has also completed another degree, a masters in clinical research and biomedical science, to support his interdisciplinary training, he explained.



Tulane’s Dr. Michael Hoerger, a Visiting Scholar Awardee.  
(Photo by Sally Asher. Courtesy of Tulane news services.)

The LA CaTS Center includes LSU's Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, and Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans.

The organization also includes four research partners: LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, Research Institute for Children at Children’s Hospital in New Orleans and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Goals of the Center are to work on prevention of chronic diseases in the underserved populations.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH MS: COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL METHODS IN A GROUP SETTING



### Group treatment

The intention of this group is to foster development of specific strategies and practices that have been shown to reduce fatigue and improve mood in individuals living with multiple sclerosis. Topics that will be addressed include social functioning (communication and assertiveness), fatigue, anxiety, relaxation, pain management, and cognitive impairment.

Women are invited to participate, and it will be led by clinical psychologist, Melissa Dufrene, PsyD. Participants will be asked to practice skills outside of sessions and to monitor their progress.



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# Dr. Staiano Big into Game Playing

Dr. Amanda Staiano, developmental psychologist in pediatric obesity and Assistant Professor of Population & Public Health Science at Pennington, and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the LSU Psychology Department, is making the case that video games could help with children’s health and lower their risks for obesity.

Staiano’s work was covered this past March by *CBS News*, when they reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention point to a doubling of childhood obesity between 1980 and 2012. Dr. Staiano tries to find out how kids can be coaxed into more frequent physical activity, have more fun doing it, and improve their health, with “Exergames,” video games that promote activity.

Staiano has led many scientific studies to look at adolescents’ use of exergames, such as with an “Wii Active” study. One of her efforts was a 20-week school-based exergame intervention for overweight African American adolescents, a project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Staiano’s research targets technology-mediated physical activity interventions. In another of her studies, Staiano investigated the benefits of a 12-week exergaming intervention and “Klub Kinect” for overweight and obese adolescent girls. According to Pennington, Dr. Staiano is working on a 6-month gaming intervention for children ages 10-12 years old, this time funded by the American Heart Association.

Dr. Staiano directs the Pediatric Obesity and Health Behavior Laboratory at Pennington where the mission is to prevent and reduce obesity in children and adolescents. The

efforts are to reach this goal through innovative research and scientific advocacy. At the lab Dr. Staiano and her team test screen-based digital tools that help to promote physical activity, and also develop telehealth counseling approaches.

Staiano’s current projects include: the “GameSquad” study, a 6-month physical activity trial funded by the American Heart Association; the “Pause & Play” study, a 2-year observational trial funded by NIMHD to examine the effects of childcare center policies on preschool children’s physical activity and screen-time. Also, Staiano is working on a prospective study funded by the USDA to understand the effects of fat accumulation on adolescents’ physical activity and sedentary behaviors.

Dr. Staiano is a Roadmap Scholar for the NIH-funded Louisiana Clinical and Translational Science Center where she is working to develop applications to change sedentary behaviors and to try and reduce obesity. She is analyzing data from the InSight study, which was a USDA-funded project conducted in 2008-2011 that aimed to understand the dietary, physiological, genetic and behavioral predictors of weight gain in healthy, young, White and African American populations.

Dr. Staiano serves on the Pediatric Obesity Section of The Obesity Society, as an ad hoc reviewer for the NIH and American Heart Association, and on the Editorial Board of the journal *Games for Health*. This past March, Dr. Staiano delivered a TEDxLSU talk on Exergaming. She has also been recognized as a *Baton Rouge Business Report* Forty Under 40 Honoree.

Dr. Staiano’s website is: <http://labs.pbrc.edu/pediatric-obesity/index.htm>

## Dr. Janet Rusher Acting Dean

Dr. Janet Rusher is now acting Dean for the School of Science and Engineering at Tulane. She will oversee academic programs, attend to faculty hiring and development and coordinate with other deans. She will serve while Dean Nicholas Altiero is interim provost.

## Dr. Romero Presents Plenary Address at PA Brain Injury Assn

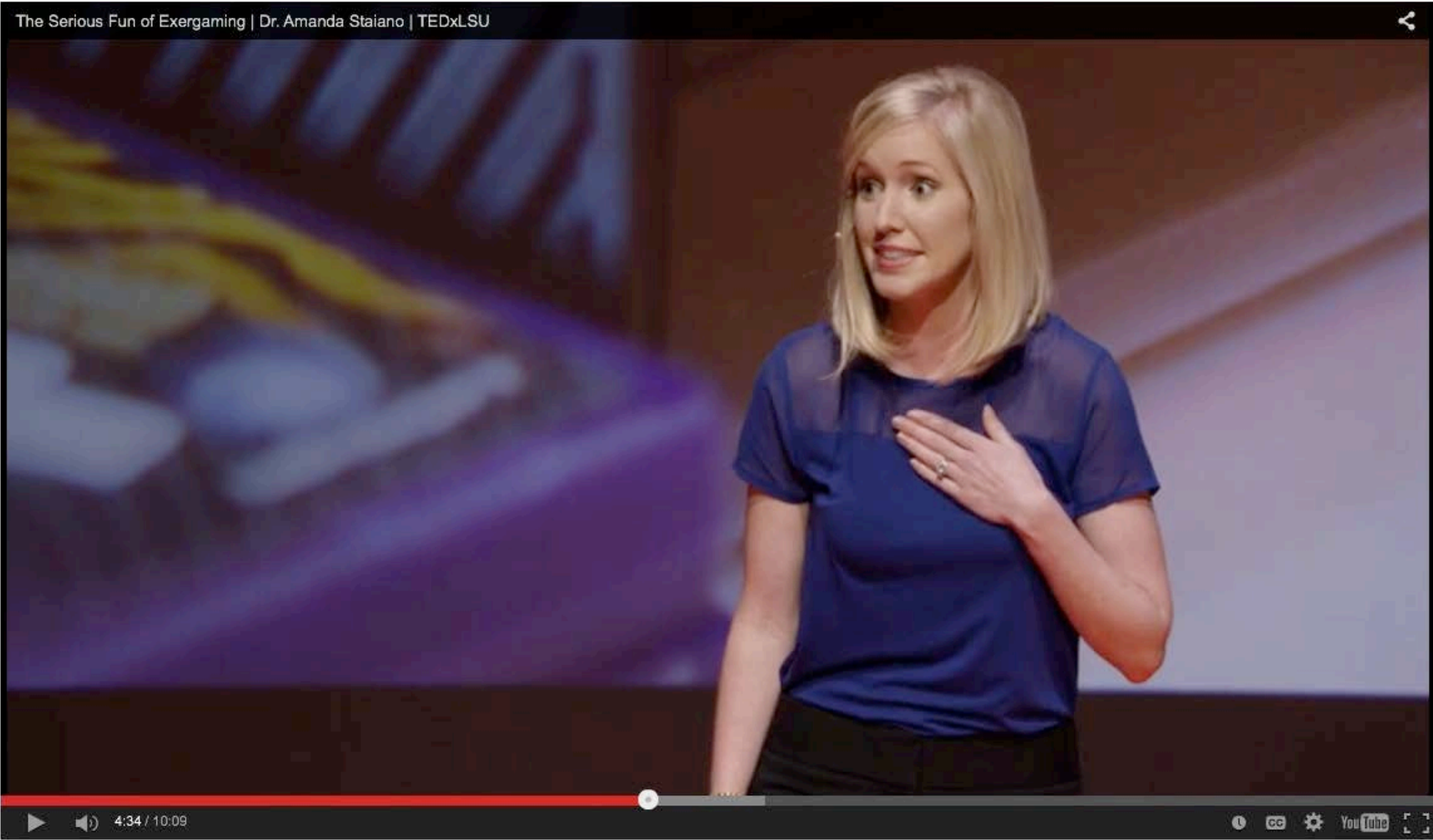
Dr. Maryellen Romero was the invited speaker to deliver the plenary talk to the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania Annual Meeting, held June 26–28 at the Lancaster Marriot and Convention Center in Lancaster, PA.

Dr. Romero spoke on "Mind over Matter: The Neuroscience of Mindfulness Mediation and its Role in Brain Injury Recovery". Her workshop was titled: "Bringing Mindfulness into Daily Life: Practical Applications."

Romero is a Clinical Neuropsychologist and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans. She is also a certified yoga instructor.

“I was very honored to be asked,” Dr. Romero told the *Times*. She’ll be giving the talk again this September, for Grand Rounds in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Tulane, Romero said.

The Serious Fun of Exergaming | Dr. Amanda Staiano | TEDxLSU  
May 23, 2016



Dr. Amanda Staiano speaking on TEDxLSU about her research for “Exergaming.” She is working to help children to be more active.



# Dr. Garner Founding Rorschach Institute for Louisiana in July

Dr. Christopher (Chris) Garner, licensed clinical psychologist in Baton Rouge, is founding the Rorschach Institute, to be established on July 4, 2016. Dr. Garner noted that this is the “first ever” institute of its kind in Louisiana and at least four Professional Level Charter Members (psychologists) have already committed to the effort.

“A few psychology students and psychiatry residents are showing interest,” said Dr. Garner. He explained that the purpose of the Rorschach Institute will be to “promote visibility, excellence, and training in personality assessment, particularly with the Rorschach-Technique.”

The only other time the name “Rorschach Institute” was used was when the famous Rorschacher, Bruno Klopfer, MD, started an organization under the same name in the mid-1900s, Garner said. “He is also the Herr Doctor who later sponsored our own renowned Doctor Susanne Jensen to come to the USA, if I am not mistaken.”

Dr. Garner said, “There are very few psychologists in Baton Rouge who understand how to use the instrument and who understand its empirical validity and clinical utility. Those few in Baton Rouge who do know the craft and science of this kind of clinical and integrative personality assessment are moving towards retirement,” Garner said, “and I feel like making a contribution and passing on the craft to competent hands.”

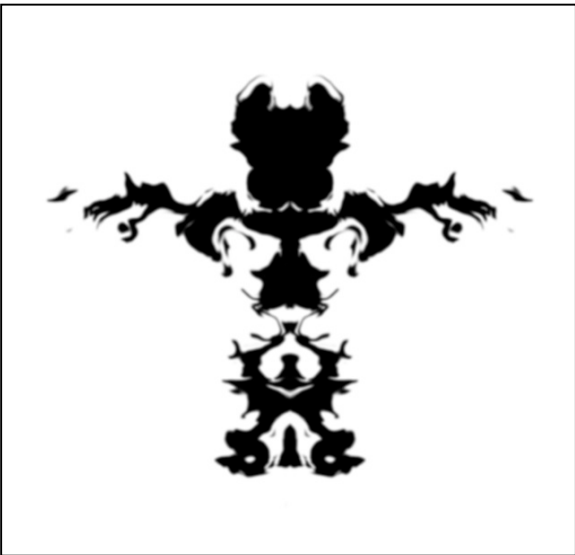
Dr. Garner has served as the training director of the psychology internship program at the mental health service, Louisiana State University. He noted that helping to teach others the art and craft of this instrument and also of integrative assessment, is important.

“In general, there is now a gross training void in this clinical area,” Dr. Garner said. “The Rorschach Institute will endeavor to promote skills in what it first meant to be a clinical psychologist, going back to Rapport, Gill, and Schaffer at the original Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, a virtual mecca of mental health in its time,” he said. “Our roots are important for more than mere historical reasons.”

Many think the Rorschach is a “projective” test, said Dr. Garner. “It can be. But, primarily, if used right, it is a perceptual-performance test. It is a standardized sample of behavior, a work sample.”

While the subjective tests like the MMP2 and the PAI provide an organized and valuable view of the patient’s view of themselves and correlate well with DSM diagnosis type (like an good interview will), explained Garner, the Rorschach data get at how well the person will perform in life. It gets at judgment, reality testing, thinking problems, affective regulation, coping deficits, etc.

The Rorschach can also get at more therapy-relevant data. The combination of the two kinds of instruments is powerful, he said. Dr. Garner said that the main goal of



the Rorschach Institute is to promote competence with the Rorschach itself. However, integration of measures is the key and to use one measure alone is ill-advised, he said.

Those interested in joining this effort are invited to contact Dr. Garner at [cdgarner69@gmail.com](mailto:cdgarner69@gmail.com) for more information.

## Openings for Participants in Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Study

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Persistent Post-Concussion Syndrome

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# Rituals and Psychology, continued

ceremony is signally to each other and to the gathered witnesses that they are ‘in love,’ and ‘want to commit’ to each other,” he said.

“Maori warriors doing a Haka dance are signaling something very different, they are in a ‘fighting’ state of mind,” said Rossano. “This is an extension of what we see in animal rituals. A dog doing the ‘play bow’ is in a playful state of mind and wants his/her play partner to realize that so that their encounter does not descend into a real fight. A chimpanzee doing the ‘begging gesture’ is in submissive state of mind and wants to gain sympathy or help.”

Dr. Rossano, expert in evolutionary psychology, and author of *Evolutionary Psychology: The Science of Human Behavior and Evolution*, and also *Supernatural Selection: How Religion Evolved*, looks at rituals through this perspective.

“So what has happened,” Rossano said, “is that certain gestures have evolved into species-specific displays that effectively communicate a state of mind and intentions associated with that state of mind. This makes

communication more effective and helps to regulate social encounters so that the risk and potential danger of those encounters can be minimized—as in the dog-play bow example.

“People who ‘ritual’ together emotionally bond together,” Rossano said. “There have been a number of studies over the past decade or so that have taken complete strangers and had them engage in group synchronized ritual-like behaviors—singing, dancing, marching together. Folks who do that later show greater mutual cooperation and trust compared to those who do not move together in synchrony or who do not move together at all,” he said. “People who move together have also been found to—believe they—share more values in common and are more similar to each other in personality traits and they empathize more with each other.”

“This helps to explain a number of common observations such as why do soldiers still march together—nobody marches into battle anymore, so there is no practical military reason to do so. But there is an important social bonding reason for it.”



Fotolia

Dr. Rossano explained that it is almost impossible to find a traditional society that does not dance, sign, or chant together, on a fairly regular basis. Why? Because of social bonding. “Rituals bond people together, especially those rituals that involve group synchronization,” said Rossano. Physiological studies show that when people dance and sing together their autonomic functions become synchronized and this very likely is part of the mechanism for emotional bonding.

What are some of the applications for using rituals? “There’s lots of evidence that ritual activity in the form of meditation and prayer has a host of positive mental and emotional effects,” said Rossano. “Of course, ritual has a long history as a coping mechanism – funerary rituals, rituals of remembrance and healing have been used for nearly as long as people have had to deal with these issues.”

Dr. Judith G. Miranti, licensed marriage and family therapist and a Professor of counselor education at Xavier University of Louisiana, also sees this aspect of social rituals. She is Co-Clinical Director of the Graduate Counseling Program at Xavier and has served as the President of the National Association for Spirituality, Ethics, and Religious Values in Counseling.

“As a licensed marriage and family therapist working with couples and families,” said Dr. Miranti, “I have found that rituals are important

reminders of the connection which they share. Couples and families create them together to symbolize their love and they help build their family identity and solidarity. It also provides a sense of security that couples and families have with each other.”

“Even simple rituals such sharing your day’s activities at an evening meal together can be extremely effective,” Miranti said. “Rituals performed after experiencing losses, such as death, help to alleviate grief, and rituals performed before high-pressure tasks – like public speaking or playing for a championship, can help to reduce anxiety and increase people’s confidence.

“Some may call these rituals being scrupulous, however they provide meaning and purpose in an individual’s life,” she explained.

“I remember working with a blending family and having them build a mobile together with pieces and parts that described each individual’s identity and assembling the mobile until balance was achieved. The mobile was hung in a prominent place to remind the family that every member was important to achieve balance. This proved to be a powerful activity and a daily reminder of the developing identity of this family,” DR. Miranti said.

“I have also seen families in transition, such as those about to experience the empty nest, talk about placing symbols in the empty nest to remind the family that although separated, they still held the same bonds.”

What connections to larger group norms and values, does Dr.



Dr. Matt Rossano has published on the popular topic of social rituals and group norms. He is an author, Professor, and the previous Chair of Psychology at Southeastern Louisiana University. (Courtesy photo.)



# Rituals and Psychology, continued

Miranti see? “One of the main purposes of rituals, whether religious or secular, is to impart and reinforce values,” she said.

“Nationalism is fostered through a country’s traditions and rituals such as celebrating Thanksgiving or the concert on the mall in Washington, D.C.”

“The same goes with family traditions,” she said.

“Through daily family prayer and nightly bedtime stories, the family’s values regarding education, reading, and life-long learning is inculcated; and through regular family dinners or activities, familial solidarity is instilled.”

“There is also a time to let go of rituals when they no longer serve a purpose or if they have become burdensome,” she explained.

Rituals are also part of subgroup identity, for increasing cohesion and communication for who is and who isn’t in a group, Dr.

Rossano explained. “Rituals that are shared exclusively by group members can serve as identifiers for other group members. So if I see someone stop their car by the side of the road, get out a prayer rug, face deliberately in a particular direction and begin a very clear set of prayerful activities (palms up, bowing, prostrating, etc.), I can be pretty sure that he is a Muslim and if I’m one too already we have a shared connection though a set of common beliefs and behaviors.”

The psychology of rituals seems to be drawing interest in the science news lately, could this perhaps be due to a heightened awareness of the issues of subgroups and diversity? “Increased diversity means that we are more regularly interacting with people who are very different from us. This is very strange, historically,” said Dr. Rossano.

“In the past, tribes, villages, regions, even entire countries very often had a set of beliefs, rituals, and customs that

where widely shared by all or nearly all. Today we are far more likely to be among people with whom we do not share a deep history or a common set of beliefs and rituals. In this context, ‘ritual marking’ becomes even more important as a means of finding similar ‘others.’”

“In the past we could assume that someone local was like ourselves,” he said. “Today we can’t. So if we are interested in finding similar others, we need clear signs of what those others believe, what their values are, and whether we can regard them as reliable, trustworthy or not. Ritual signals can serve that purpose of identifying reliable others, but in a very diverse, ‘noisy’ environment the signal must be loud and clear.”

Has Dr. Rossano noticed any changes in our society and its rituals? “Rituals can be costly in time, energy, and resources. Increasingly, people are unwilling to pay those costs because the

perceived benefits are harder to recognize,” he said.

“My sense is that ritual has become increasingly marginalized and more shallow for many people, which leads to it becoming more concentrated and intensified amongst a smaller proportion of people.”

“The lack of widespread ritual participation and increasing ritual diversity and intensity, I think, contributes to a general fragmentation and ‘individualization’ of society. We have less and less that we share in common across the board so we either drop out of community ritual activity entirely or we cling tighter and tighter to a more purified, intensified form of ritual in smaller more localized communities.”

“Ritual has long been our means of social bonding, healing, memorializing, coping and transitioning. We abandon it at our own peril,” Dr. Rossano said.



Special care is taken in folding the flag after Memorial Day ceremony at the Task Force Leatherneck headquarters, May 28, 2012. Photo by Master Sgt. Grady Fontana of 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division.



# A Shrink at the Flicks

## Ghosties and Ghoulies: A Review of *The Conjuring 2*

by Alvin G. Burstein

Though not a great film, *The Conjuring 2* is artful in several ways. It shares with other spook flicks the ability to stir widely shared but often half-buried dreads. In addition, it seasons the expected eerie and unsettling components with a huge dollop of saccharine. That second element works by drawing on the psychological element that self-psychologists call mirroring. Finally, the movie dances along the boundary between history and invention in an interesting way.

The film's central characters are real-life demonologists Lorraine and Ed Warren whose website you can explore at <http://www.warrens.net/>. *The Conjuring 2*, as its title indicates, is a sequel to one which also centered on them, and in which they were portrayed by the same actors, Vera Famiga and Patrick Wilson. The Warrens achieved some notoriety because of their involvement investigating the haunting of a house in Harrisville, Rhode Island, chronicled in the 2013 original of the present film.

In that predecessor, the Warrens explore the site of a gruesome multiple slaying in a house in Amityville, New York in 1974. A year after the crime, the house was rented by a family who reported supernatural harassment that led them to flee the house, events alluded to in well-known 2005 shocker, *The Amityville Horror*.

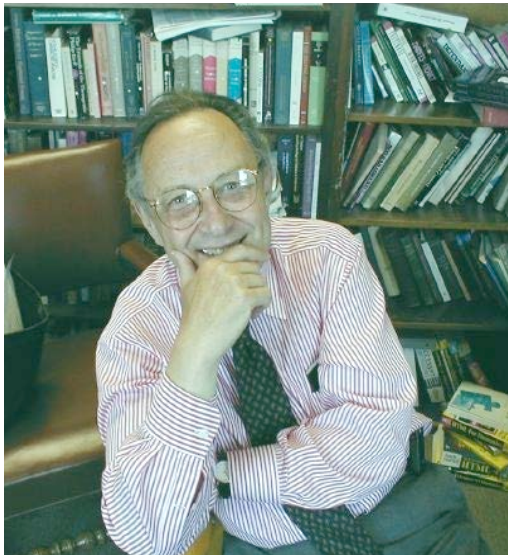
*The Conjuring 2* opens with a flash-back to a televised panel discussion in which the Warren's claim of supernatural realities including demonic attacks are contested by the interviewer and a scientific skeptic. The flash-back continues with the Warrens' exchanging descriptions of their fatigue and hurt by the attacks on their veracity and, perhaps, sanity.

The movie then fast forwards to Enfield, England, where a working class family is bombarded by poltergeist intrusions that escalate into physical attacks on the children and their mother. The family, terrorized and unable to convince others of their plight, appeals to their priest. The church, in turn, sends a

Guest Columnist,  
Dr. Alvin Burstein

Burstein, a psychologist and psychoanalyst, is a professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee and a former faculty member of the New Orleans-Birmingham Psychoanalytic Center with numerous scholarly works to his credit. He is also a member of Inklings, a Mandeville critique group that meets weekly to review its members' imaginative writings.

Burstein has published flash fiction and autobiographical pieces in e-zines; *The Owl*, his first novelette, is available at Amazon. He is, in addition to being a movie fan, a committed Francophile, unsurprisingly a lover of fine cheese and wine, and an unrepentant cruciverbalist.



courtesy photo



representative to the Warrens. The institution is unwilling to intervene with religious rites such as exorcism, without objective documentation of demonic involvement, but is willing to pay the Warrens to investigate. Despite Lorraine's feeling of unease, the Warrens reluctantly agree and journey to England, where they quickly get deeply involved in direct confrontations with the evil forces at work.

The Warrens find it difficult to earn the trust of the younger daughter, who has been the focus of much of the supernatural assault. Lorraine wins the child over by recounting her own feelings of deep hurt at not being believed, and her healing when she found someone who did believe her. The child asks what Lorraine did when she found that person, and Lorraine responds, "I married him." She goes on to say "one person can change everything."

The Warrens cement this effort to heal the family's feeling of helplessness and abandonment by Ed's calling a meeting to insist that they should stand together and not be bullied. He reveals his own struggles at not being believed, and the importance to him of finding someone who did believe him—his wife. His pep talk is well received, and he winds up playing one of the children's guitar, singing Elvis's *I Can't Help Loving You*.

The homespun adjurations, buttressed by the Warrens' acceptance of the family accounts, help the family reconstitute psychologically, evidence of the importance of what a Kohutian psychologist would call mirroring selfobjects.

The Warrens' investigations provoke a crescendo of supernatural assaults, culminating in a materialization of the responsible demon. Its demonic attempt to kill Ed and the youngest daughter is foiled by Lorraine's discovery of the demon's name and her consequent ability to consign it back to hell.

The film ends with the exhausted but happy Warrens back home. Lorraine puts on a phonograph record and they dance together to Elvis Presley singing *I Can't Help Loving You*.

Spook flicks re-evolve childhood dreads of the dangerous and inexplicable, intimations of fears and feelings that adulthood walls off. They remain, buried, renounced or repressed, but still present, still powerful. Halloween is one institutional representation of their existence; the horror genre in books and film is another. Both offer an opportunity to play with this threatening material, keeping it at a safe distance.

Director James Wan's frosting the macabre and morbid with sugar works well enough that we can, with reasonable confidence, look forward to *The Conjuring 3*.



# --WEBPAGES--

(Editor's note: "Webpages" is a feature that highlights the web presence of those in the Louisiana psychology community.)

When we reviewed the website for Dr. Lacey Seymour's Live Oak Behavioral Psychology in 2012, we were impressed by the theme, art, and ease for visitors. Seymour's previous site was a delight to the eye with a heart-warming tone for child services.

Her new website, put in place in 2015 retains all the sparkle, fun, and useful information, but builds in a lot more value for this thriving practice that has moved to a multidisciplinary focus. Dr. Seymour's new website expresses the new focus, characterized by the name change to Live Oak Children's Center. The Center hosts an array of professionals who address concerns for both "typically developing children as well as children with special needs."

Why the change? "My practice has grown significantly over the last five years," said Dr. Seymour, "and I wanted a website that was informative to patients as well as functional. I decided to rebrand as 'Live Oak Children's Center' to showcase the fact that we are now a

multidisciplinary practice, and not just a psychology clinic," she said. "It was important to me that each discipline have it's own section of the website and I also wanted the capability to blog online via the website," Seymour said. "The older version was not compatible with current technology, and needed a 'facelift.'"

Live Oak Children's Center is located in Covington, and Dr. Seymour, the CEO and Clinical Director, is both a licensed Psychologist and a licensed Behavior Analyst.

The clinical team at the Center includes Dr. Abby Lambert, also both a licensed Psychologist and Behavior Analyst, and a team of other professionals. Elizabeth Hughes and Laurel Jenkins are Pediatric Occupational Therapists; Katherine Crosby is the Art Therapist; Courtney Harrison and Kelsey Schultz are Pediatric Speech Language Pathologists; and the Office Manager is Tameka Gordan.

Biographical information about all the staff, including photos, is offered in a pleasing, elegant, but approachable style and format. Visitors are even treated to some interesting facts—Dr. Seymour likes coffee, Dr. Lambert's dog is named Bailey, and almost everyone on staff is either an LSU or Saints' fan, or both.

While the name changed to Live Oak Children's Center, keeping the subtitle, "Building Roots to Reach the Sky," the elements of the previous logo are all still beautifully captured in a tree with little handprints as the foliage. The image is a winning one, with many levels of meaning.

The multidisciplinary practice is laid out for site visitors on the landing page, and potential clients are likely to be drawn to the clickable and colorful boxes in the middle of the landing page for quick information on major questions they might have.

These boxes include Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Applied Behavior Analysis, Feeding Therapy, Speech &



We reviewed Dr. Seymour's website in 2012 and thought it was spectacular. But her new one is beautiful and works even harder for the Center.

Language Pathology, Early Intervention Program, and Art Therapy. Hover over any box and you get a transparent photo and short title, and option to jump to more description—very cool.

Important information for potential clients is also presented about the firm's services, appointments, insurance, forms.

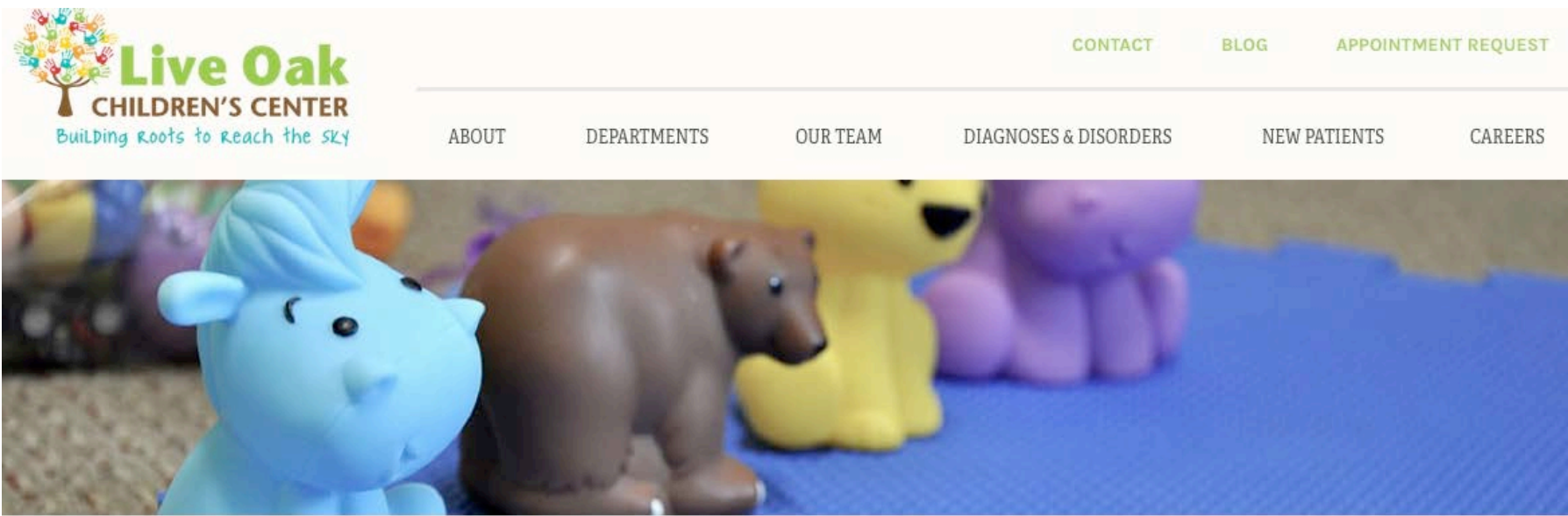
The "About Us" option gives a brief but complete description of the Center's approach and value: "Live Oak Children's Center addresses a unique need in our community by providing a place where families can come to receive a variety of services that address the emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of children all under one roof. The clinicians at Live Oak believe in a whole-child approach to treatment and work together to ensure that all of the needs of each child are being continually met."

Cont'd next pg





# --WEBPAGES--



A listing of diagnoses and disorders helps visitors understand what concerns can be addressed. These include, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Learning Disorders, Anxiety Disorders, Depressive Disorders, Developmental Disorders, Feeding Disorders, Apraxia of Speech, Auditory Processing Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cochlear Implants, Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury, Hearing Loss, and others.

Descriptions of services are expanded throughout various elements of the site. For example, in Psychoeducational Evaluations, the service is described: "At Live Oak, we offer comprehensive multidisciplinary assessments for children with a variety of concerns including developmental, attention, learning, emotional and behavioral difficulties. Assessments typically include direct observation of the child across a variety of environments in addition to testing in the clinic.

Common referral reasons include testing for: – Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – Autism Spectrum Disorders – Disruptive Behavior Problems – Social Skills – Learning Difficulties including Dyslexia – Giftedness.

Visitors are provided straightforward information about what to expect. Examples include, "Intellectual Testing (1–2 hours)" and "Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders (if appropriate) (1 hour)" or "Feedback session with Parents to discuss report and treatment recommendations (1 hour)."

Other descriptions include "Individual Therapy" and "Social Skills Group." And in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), areas for "ABA Services for School Aged Children" and "Early Intervention ABA Services" are included. Another example for Occupational Therapy includes "Individual Therapy," "Group Handwriting," and "School Based Services." Each area has its own description and explanation.

An addition to the new website is the Blog. The landing page lays out three engaging topics right from the start, titled "FROM OUR BLOG."

Currently displayed are posts on "The Power of the Mandala," by Katherine Crosby, "Our Favorite Books for Late Talkers," by Courtney Harrison, and "Games to Improve Visual Perceptual Skills," by Elizabeth Hughs. Other blog posts are included in the sections for staff members.

Throughout, the graphics are delightful, pleasing, yet elegant. The information is appropriate and complete. It is difficult to see what more a visitor would need that has not been provided. But if they do need more, contact information is easily available.

Visitors to the new website experience the vision for the Center, letting them experience what level of

professionalism is likely associated with the Center, and all navigated without a glitch.

The webpage does some heavy lifting to inform and educate its visitors, and also for the clinic.

"Patients are now able to get information online as well as request appointments from the website," explained Dr. Seymour. "I am also able to track how many clients request information, which is a very helpful marketing tool."

"I am currently working on incorporating a feature on the website so that patients can make payments and pay any outstanding balances online," she explained. "Finding a practice management and accounting software that aligns with online billing payments has been quite a challenge but it's definitely something we are working on."

It took about six months for the revision, which was created by Gatorworks Web Design, but Dr. Seymour felt it was all worthwhile and necessary.

"I think it's essential that practitioners invest in online marketing strategies," she said. "The internet is a powerful tool and a good website and online presence is essential in order to be successful and competitive in today's world," said Dr. Seymour.

Experience it at <http://liveoakchildrens.net>

## FROM OUR BLOG



### The Power of the Mandala

June 11, 2016

Mandalas have a long history of therapeutic benefits in both children and adults[...]

**FULL POST**



# The Psychology Times

## Winner of 15 Louisiana Press Association Awards

### This Year's Winner, Editorial Sweepstakes, Division 6

#### Best News Coverage – 1<sup>st</sup> Place

*“... chock full of interesting stories about interesting people.” – Judge*

#### Best Investigative Reporting – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and Winner of the Gibbs Adams Award

#### Best Feature Story 1<sup>st</sup> Place

*Our WWII Fathers* by Susan Andrews, Julie Nelson, and John Magee

*“Wonderfully intimate portraits of men who lived through hell and came out on the other side. Good, solid writing. A great feature and a beautiful tribute to The Greatest Generation.” – Judge*

#### Best Regular Column –1<sup>st</sup> Place and Winner of the Sam Hanna Award

#### Best Continuing News Coverage –1<sup>st</sup> Place

#### Best Editorial Cartoon, Division C – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Places

*and others including*

2<sup>nd</sup> in Best News Story, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Best Lifestyle Coverage,  
2<sup>nd</sup> in Community Service, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Best Continuing News Coverage



Front L to R: Dr. Julie Nelson, publisher and reporter, Dr. Susan Andrews, columnist and feature writer; Dr. Yael Banai, feature writer and photographer; (Back L to R): Mike Dooley, photographer and business manager, Jake Nelson-Dooley, cartoonist and animator, and Dr. John Magee, feature writer.



# Up-Coming Events

## PTR Summer Symposium In Marksville, July 27 – 29



Dr. John Simoneaux at conference of judges and attorney.

The Summer Symposium, a training event hosted by Professional Training Resources and owner Dr. John Simoneaux, will be held on July 27 through 28, at the Paragon Casino Resorts at 711 Paragon Place in Marksville, Louisiana.

Presenters this year include Dr. Simoneaux, Misty Wainwright, MA, LPC, Dr. Byron Simoneaux, Dr. Rafael Salcedo and Beth Salcedo, MA.

Attendees can earn up to 23 CE hours.

## “Doctors in AA” to Hold August Conference in New Orleans

The International Doctors in Alcoholics Anonymous will hold it's annual meeting in New Orleans, August 3–7, at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside.

“We are not saints,” is the theme of this year's convention and will emphasize the spiritual elements of recovery. Registration is available online at [www.idaa.org](http://www.idaa.org).

International Doctors in Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of doctors and their families whose primary purpose

is to support one another in recovery from additions, according to the association. “IDAA now numbers 6500 women and men worldwide who have, or are in preparation for, doctorate degrees in health care professions, including fields such as dentistry, psychology, pharmacy and veterinary science, as well as medicine.”

Membership is strictly confidential and held by the Executive Director, Michael Metcalf, MD, who can be contacted at [executive@idaa.org](mailto:executive@idaa.org) for more information.

## Cummings to Give Keynote at NAPPP in San Antonio, Texas

Nicholas Cummings, PhD, ScD, will present the Keynote Address at the upcoming conference of the National Alliance of Professional Psychology Providers. Dr. Cummings will speak on “The History of Psychotherapy in America, 1945 to 2016: The Golden Era, the Faltering Age, and the Stalled Present.”

The conference will be September 23–25, at the Drury Plaza Hotel–RiverWalk in San Antonio, Texas. The Theme of the conference is “Psychological Interventions: Past, Present & Future.”

Among those presenting are Joan Biever, PhD, and Bernadette Solorzano, PhD, on “Using Client Feedback to Improve Therapy Outcomes.”

John Caccavale, PhD, ABMP, will speak on “Ethical & Cultural Issues for the Future of Psychotherapy.” Susana Galle, PhD., MSCP, ABMP, will present on “Gut Microbes and the Psyche? A bridge needed for best practices.”

Ward Lawson, PhD, ABMP, will speak on “Neuroplasticity, Psychological Disorders and Comprehensive Treatment.” Nori Mora, EdD, will provide, “Social Skills as Psychological Intervention.” And Jerry Morris, PsyD, ABMP, will speak on “The Opiate Epidemic: The State of the Data & National Plan/Reaction, New Guidelines, Enhancement of Addiction Services.”

See more at [www.nappp.org](http://www.nappp.org).

## Five Years Ago

From *The Psychology Times*, Vol 2, No 11  
July 2011

Psychology Board reverses decision and approves medical psychologists without state psychology board license, to supervise psychology interns.

SB 268, a bill to clarify scope of practice for Licensed Professional Counselors, is signed by Governor.

Tulane researchers received \$50 million for scholarships in community service.

Dr. Paul Frick named Distinguished Professor at UNO.

Louisiana researchers present at APS.

Dr. Hannie, as incoming president of the local chapter for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, helps lobby against a bill to place Ten Commandments on capital grounds.

Ms. Kelly Parker takes on Executive Director position at the LSBEP, and Ms. Jaime Monic retires.

## APA Convention August 4–7, 2016 Denver, Colorado

The American Psychological Association will hold its Convention in Denver in August. The Keynote Presentation will feature a thought-provoking topic by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, PhD, whose research focuses on the emotional foundations and variations in morality. He authored *The Righteous Mind*.

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