

# THE SELF MONITOR

*The Official Alumni Newsletter of the Psychology Department of the State University of New York at New Paltz*

**Volume 4, Summer 2011**

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### Letter from the Chair

The 2010/2011 academic year was an exciting one for the Psychology Department. Our enrollments increased for all our programs – with more undergraduate majors and minors than we've had in years – and significant increases in the number of students in our three Masters programs (Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, and School Counseling). And our affiliated interdisciplinary minors in Disaster Studies and Evolutionary Studies continue to serve large numbers of students as well as the broader community.

Our department continues to lead all academic departments at New Paltz in terms of collaborative

student/faculty research – with more independent study and thesis opportunities provided by Psychology than by any other department. And these experiences have paid off! Faculty and students have presented our work far and wide, building the reputation of our department in places like Binghamton, Manhattan, Turkey, Portugal, France, California, Boston, and Spain – and beyond – and that's just this year!

And our department has continued our traditions of community – hosting such events as the Holiday Party / Trivia Night, a dodgeball tournament, our annual end-of-year Barbecue, and the regionally renowned Research Team Kickball Tournament (Go Dr. Maynard and the Mean Squares!). Our community spirit helps us build connections among the many facets of the department – and helps us make sure that all our students have accessible and fun opportunities to form important connections that will benefit them for years to come.

Successful alumni are the ultimate product of the work of the Psychology Department. Stay in touch – and we hope to see you in September (2011 alumni weekend is Sep. 23-25)!



**Glenn Geher** ([geherg@newpaltz.edu](mailto:geherg@newpaltz.edu)).

**Chair, Psychology Department**

[www.newpaltz.edu/psychology](http://www.newpaltz.edu/psychology)

[www.newpaltz.edu/alumni/reunion/](http://www.newpaltz.edu/alumni/reunion/)

## **FOCUS ON: NEWS and UPDATES**

### **Psi Chi Chapter Celebrates 10 Years**

The Psi Chi Chapter at SUNY New Paltz is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The chapter was formed in May 2001 by a team of undergraduates under the supervision of faculty member Dr. Douglas Maynard. It was installed with the help of Professor Randolph Cornelius at Vassar College. Since its inception, we have inducted over 200 undergraduate and graduate students, as well as many members of Psychology faculty.

The SUNY New Paltz chapter has been the most continuously active psychology organization on campus. Here are just a few of the events that we have hosted or co-sponsored:

- At least one induction ceremony each year
- Bagel socials to meet new and prospective members
- “Facts and Snacks,” where department faculty discuss their current research with students
- Invited talks by faculty from other institutions
- Panel discussions and workshops on applying to graduate school
- Face painting for children at Plattekill (NY) Day

Perhaps the event that we are most proud of is the Mid-Hudson Psychology Research Conference, which just celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> year at Vassar College. Although this is not specifically a Psi Chi event, the SUNY New Paltz Psi Chi chapter created the conference in 2006 and has hosted it on campus twice. It has also been hosted twice by Mount Saint Mary College.

To celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Psi Chi is organizing an event on Alumni Reunion Weekend (September 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>). The tentative plan is to host a picnic/hike at Minnewaska State Park – details will come soon. Please consider coming back to New Paltz to celebrate with us! You may contact incoming chapter President Lauren Burrier at [lburrier86@newpaltz.edu](mailto:lburrier86@newpaltz.edu). We will also update the

Psychology Department website (<http://www.newpaltz.edu/psychology/>) – you can also find our group on Facebook (search SUNY New Paltz Chapter of Psi Chi).

## **PROGRAMS IN THE NEWS:**

### **The Institute for Disaster Mental Health**

The Institute for Disaster Mental Health (IDMH) was featured in the Metro section of the June 10, 2011 edition of The New York Times.

Drs. James Halpern and Karla Vermeulen were both interviewed about SUNY New Paltz's disaster mental health minor along with students Carlene Pinto, Rebecca Rodriguez and Lindsay Yates. Rebecca and Lindsay will enter the MS in Mental Health Counseling Graduate Program this fall. The article noted that the disaster mental health minor at SUNY New Paltz "is unusual both for its location — the Northeast, which has relatively few disaster programs — and for its focus on mental health." Congratulations to everyone at the Institute for having their innovative and exemplary work covered by The Times. Read the complete article:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/10/education/10disaster.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/10/education/10disaster.html?_r=1)



The IDMH Staff- Meredith Johnson, M.S., Coordinator; Karla Vermeulen, Ph.D., Deputy Director; James Halpern, Ph.D., Director Coordinator; Rachael Bisceglie, M.S. former Graduate Assistant and Rebecca Rodriguez, Graduate Assistant

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### **CACREP Accreditation Update**

The Counseling Graduate Program faculty has been moving forward in the quest to obtain accreditation from CACREP (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs). The Program completed a self-study at the end of the 2011 spring semester, the first step in the accreditation process. CACREP is the leading accreditor of counseling-related graduate programs. As CACREP explains on its website (<http://www.cacrep.org>), "CACREP Accreditation provides recognition that the content and quality of the program has been evaluated and meets standards set by the profession. The student, as a consumer, can be assured that appropriate knowledge and skill areas are included and that the program is stable, professionally and financially." The Counseling Graduate Program faculty look forward to CACREP's response to the self-study and plan to continue the accreditation process in the coming 2011-12 academic year. Should the program receive CACREP accreditation, students not only will be assured of the Program's high quality training and meeting of shared professional standards, but they should also find it easier to obtain licensure in states outside of New York

### **FOCUS ON OUR STAFF**

An interview with Susan Buckbee- Secretary for Counseling and Psychology Graduate Programs



### **What are your main responsibilities for the Graduate Programs?**

As the Graduate Secretary I work with the Director of the Graduate Psychology Programs and the students within the three programs: Masters in Psychology, Mental Health Counseling, and School Counseling. I assist students in navigating their progress through the graduate programs by preparing forms, and answering questions, including technical questions about the program, the department, and the university. In the background I also provide support in the maintenance of student files that are available for use by the graduate program Directors and Faculty members.

### **What changes have you seen in the graduate programs since you've joined the department?**

Since I have been the secretarial support for the Graduate Programs I have helped to implement an electronic filing system for the graduate student files.

### **How do you spend your time when you're not working hard on behalf of the Psychology or Anthropology Departments?**

I've found that when I am not hard at work in either the Psychology or Anthropology Departments, I enjoy drawing and painting. I love the outdoors and spend time planting flowers and herbs. I like a good work -out at the gym or perhaps a long walk, but sometimes just relaxing is a good time.

### **What are three of your favorite things about working at SUNY New Paltz?**

I enjoy working in both the Psychology or Anthropology offices because I love interacting with our students and get satisfaction in assisting them. I truly love everything about working here at the SUNY New Paltz Campus, and especially the beautiful view from Jacobson Faculty Tower looking out to Mohonk Mountain.

## FOCUS ON OUR ALUMS

### Dave Maffei



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Upon graduating from SUNY New Paltz in 2005 with a BA in Psychology I got into the insurance field. After a few months of being completely miserable I decided to go back for my MS Ed. in School Counseling. It was then that I found my calling.

I am currently working as a Crisis Counselor at Dutchess County BOCES. I help at-risk students whose home districts can no longer provide the best educational environment. I truly have a very rewarding job.

My SUNY New Paltz education has given me the background and confidence I need to succeed.

### Justin Krass



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Since 2008 I've been working as a Career Counselor at St. John's University in Queens, NY. While at St. John's University I've had the opportunity to oversee the Career Development for Student Athletes program, assist with the Advantage Academy (a joint program between St. John's University and the Department of Homeless Services), and serve as the primary counselor for the Tobin College of Business. Working at the Career Center and helping students set and achieve

career goals has been a very rewarding experience. In addition, I completed the requirements for my Mental Health Counseling license in March. While it does not seem all that long ago that I was at New Paltz, it has been great to finish the licensing process that I started when I began my Masters. Outside of St. John's University, I've also been involved in a few community theater productions. Over the past two years I've participated in two one-act festivals ("Nice of You to Ask" and "Jumper"), starred in the original play "Cold Harbor," and played Paul Brenner in "Barefoot in the Park" this past winter. The play marked my first full length play in a number of years. It has been great returning to the stage after a long absence.

### Ashley Stauffer



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Already a year has gone by since I graduated from New Paltz with my Bachelor's degree in Psychology, and the first year of my Mental Health Counseling Master's degree has ended. As an undergraduate at New Paltz, I realized that I had a broad array of interests within the field of Psychology and the social sciences. This, as well as my strong relationships with many of the Psychology faculty at New Paltz, helped reinforce my decision to continue my education at New Paltz and earn a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling.

Throughout the past year, I learned a substantial amount about the field of counseling, and about myself. I also had the opportunity to work in the Psychology department as an assistant academic advisor, further my research by working on a research team with Dr. Melanie Hill, work at both the psychological counseling and career resource centers on campus as part of my practicum experience, and continue as a supervisor, and now

as an assistant coordinator at Oasis/Haven, the on-campus peer support hotline and walk-in center.

Currently, I am taking an online summer course entitled Contemporary Gender Issues in Counseling with Dr. Hill. Not only is this course interesting, it is furthering my knowledge as a counselor on appropriate and effective interventions and techniques for both men and women.

Next year I will be interning at the career resource center on campus. I am excited about my new internship, and I hope that this experience will broaden my knowledge and skills within the realm of career counseling. I have to say that my position as an advisor within the Psychology department has greatly influenced my future career plans. Although I still see myself someday returning to school to obtain a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology, I believe that career counseling is an exciting, and rewarding career path

### **Katherine Savod**



Katherine Savod graduated from SUNY New Paltz in 2005 with her Bachelor's degree in Psychology, with a concentration in Social Psychology. She is currently a contributing writer at [examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com), where she writes about healthy recipes and wholesome foods in Westchester County. Katherine owes her interest in nutrition and healthy behavior to her psychology background, which has enabled her to more thoroughly understand how different people choose to eat, and why. Katherine enjoys meshing her knowledge of human behavior with her love of nutrition, wellness, and real, wholesome foods, and hopes to earn her Master's degree in Nutrition in the near future. To read Katherine's articles, visit <http://www.examiner.com/dairyfree-food-in-new-york/katherine-savod>

## **FOCUS ON THE FACULTY:**

### **Dr. Tabitha Holmes**



#### **Please tell us a little about your academic background.**

My undergraduate story is a circuitous journey through several different colleges and several different majors. Once I discovered psychology, however, I never looked back. I earned my Bachelor's degree from a small liberal arts college outside of Buffalo. After graduating, I began graduate school at New Paltz with a strong interest in counseling. That interest disappeared when I started doing research in developmental psychology and working as a TA in an experimental psychology class. I was immediately drawn to understanding how and why people develop in different ways; drawn to crafting research questions and methods that systematically examine human thought and behavior. After New Paltz, I went to the University of Vermont where I earned my doctorate in developmental psychology. It is there that I fine-tuned my interests as I focused on epistemological development (how people think about knowledge and themselves as knower's), qualitative methods, and ecological models of development.

**What courses do you teach for the Psychology Department?**

I regularly teach courses on Adolescence and Adulthood, Cultural Psychology, and Research Methods at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This summer I am developing a seminar course on the psychology of families and I hope to propose a course on qualitative methods this coming fall.

**What are your goals for these courses?**

While each course I teach has unique goals, all of my courses focus on the ecological context in which individuals develop. With this in mind, I push students to go beyond defining the “environment” as simply the nuclear family. I want them to think about how more distal contexts—policies, neighborhoods, organizations, and cultures—affect people throughout the lifespan. I also want them to be very tuned into historical time and place and how ecologies change over time.

**How do you like working with New Paltz students?**

I wouldn't teach at New Paltz if I didn't love the students. So many of them are interesting, edgy, and really, really smart. They always make me look at things from different perspectives.

**What current research projects are you working on?**

I have several projects underway, but the one I'm working on right now has to do with how studying abroad affects students' ways of knowing, their identities, and how they think of themselves and the world. I am also working with a graduate student on a study that examines how bisexual and lesbian women develop within diverse ecologies.

**I know based on the fact that I sign travel forms for faculty that you travel a lot! Tell us about some of your recent travel adventures!**

This has been a great year for seeing the world! Last summer I went to Southern India to visit my husband's family and to start a research project on the parenting beliefs of married couples. In the middle of the trip I went to a conference in Sweden to present some of my work on migration. The next

trip took me to Portugal where I presented some research on mothers' epistemological development and in two weeks I leave for Istanbul to present research with a student (and gorge on meze and baklava).

**What do you like to do when you're not working - all professors have another life - what do you do in yours!?**

Well, as you may have guessed, I travel wherever and whenever possible. I have an insatiable drive to see and understand the world—an interest that influences how I spend my free time.

When I'm not off gallivanting somewhere, I love spending time with friends and family (and my over-indulged yellow lab, Indie). I'm also a complete bibliophile, obsessed with literature of all kinds, so I spend a lot of time reading and meandering through bookstores. And I'm a foodie, so I love cooking and hunting for new and interesting places to eat.

**A Report on the 2011 NEEPS Conference**



NEEPS 2011: Glenn Geher, Andrew Gallup, Rachael Carmen, Haley Moss Dillon Ben Crosier Tia Walters, Steven Platek , Rose Sokol Chang, Leslie Heywood, David Sloan Wilson, Ryan Porter, Maryanne Fisher, Justin Garcia, Daniel Kruger

The Fifth Annual North Eastern Evolutionary Psychology Society (NEEPS) conference was held in Binghamton, New York on April 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year – and more than 10 students, faculty, and alumni from the New Paltz Psychology Department actively participated. Binghamton served as the perfect backdrop for the event, as Binghamton University is the birthplace of the first-ever

Evolutionary Studies program, a curriculum designed to examine evolution from a plethora of vantage points beyond the traditional biological view. NEEPS, which was started by SUNY New Paltz's own, Glenn Geher, boasted record numbers of attendees, including individuals from more than 20 states and 5 different countries. In fact, submissions were so numerous that concurrent speaker sessions had to be established for the first time in the history of the conference to accommodate the large number of fascinating speakers. The continuing growth of this conference is a true testament to the expansion of evolutionary thinking in psychology and in related disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, literary studies, and biology. SUNY New Paltz is at the forefront of that movement. SUNY New Paltz students Rachael Carmen, Mary Finn, Amanda Guitar, Daniel Glass, Laura Johnson, and Ashley Peterson presented posters at this year's conference, and MA student Haley Moss Dillon and undergraduate Laura Johnson gave talks about their current research. Past NEEPS President Glenn Geher gave an invited plenary address in which he updated the society about recent and upcoming research on mating intelligence, a construct that he created (along with University of New Mexico's Geoffrey Miller). Overall, SUNY New Paltz was well-represented by the Evolutionary Psychology Lab at this year's conference. The three-day event was overseen by NEEPS President and New Paltz adjunct professor of psychology: Rosemarie Sokol Chang – who clearly has the president thing down! Between Dr. Chang's hard work and the extraordinary organization of our Binghamton hosts (Justin Garcia, Christine Reiber, and David Sloan Wilson), NEEPS 2011 ran like a well-oiled machine.

Things began on Friday with pre-conference meetings of the Feminist Evolutionary Psychology Society (FEPS) and the Applied Evolutionary Psychology Society (AEPS), before officially kicking off with a paper session devoted to the burgeoning discipline of applied evolutionary psychology. The paper session was followed by renowned anthropologist and primatologist Sarah Hrdy's keynote address on cooperative breeding on Friday evening, bringing the first day of fifth annual meeting of NEEPS to an exciting close.

Saturday's events featured themed paper sessions on topics including morality, mating, parenting, and vocalizations. Glenn Geher gave his

plenary address, and the first of two poster sessions finished the afternoon. In the evening, the NEEPS banquet was held at the illustrious Binghamton Club. The night opened with cocktails and a musical performance by Leslie Heywood, an English professor at Binghamton University, and her band. After a sumptuous meal, Newcastle University's Daniel Nettle delivered the evening keynote on socioeconomic class differences in life history strategy. Sunday The conference ended on Sunday with the second poster session and paper presentations on a diverse range of disciplines, ranging from social behavior and competition to psychopathology and physiology. After the obligatory rounds of group photographs, NEEPSers bade each other goodbye until next year's conference at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire. The official phrase of 2012's conference: *Evolution Lives Free or Dies!* (coined by Megan Geher). Rumors are that the conference will include NEEPS' first-ever snowboard competition. Don't miss it!

By Daniel Glass, Amanda Guitar, Ashley Peterson,  
and Glenn Geher

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## **New Paltz Masters Students Heading on to Doctoral Programs**

Congratulations!!!

### **M.A. in General Psychology Students:**

- Mian Wang, U. of Kansas, Quantitative Psychology
- Kim Belmonte, CUNY, Social Psychology
- Hidetoshi Hama, U. of Buffalo, Counseling Psychology

### **M.S. in Mental Health Counseling Students:**

- Anjuli Chitkara: U. Oregon, Ph.D. in counseling psychology  
Jill Calderon: U. North Dakota, Ph.D. in counseling psychology  
Melissa Cline: Antioch U., Psy.D. in clinical psychology

### **SPOTLIGHT ON YOU!**

Would you like to be featured in an upcoming newsletter? Do you have any news you'd like to share? We want to hear from you! Please contact one of the editors:

Dr. Freeman ([freemanp@newpaltz.edu](mailto:freemanp@newpaltz.edu)),  
Dr. Geher ([geherg@newpaltz.edu](mailto:geherg@newpaltz.edu)), or

- or contact the Psychology Department:  
Tel: (845) 257-3470  
Web: [www.newpaltz.edu/psychology](http://www.newpaltz.edu/psychology)

### **A Note from Co Editor Phyllis Freeman**

Stay in touch with us. We want to know what you are doing and how the New Paltz psychology department has impacted your life. Have a new degree, a new job, a new family, or a new aspiration? Let us know.

**Come back to the beautiful Hudson Valley this fall. Join us for Alumni Weekend:**

**Sep. 28/29, 2011**

<http://www.newpaltz.edu/alumni/reunion/>

**or Join us on Facebook:**

[http://www.facebook.com/#!/home.php?sk=group\\_29569222443](http://www.facebook.com/#!/home.php?sk=group_29569222443)