

# THE SELF MONITOR

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

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Editors:

Dr. Phyllis R. Freeman (freemanp@newpaltz.edu)  
Dr. Glenn Geher (geherg@newpaltz.edu)

Dr. Jonathan Rust (rustj@newpaltz.edu)  
Dr. Karla Vermeulen (vermeulk@newpaltz.edu)

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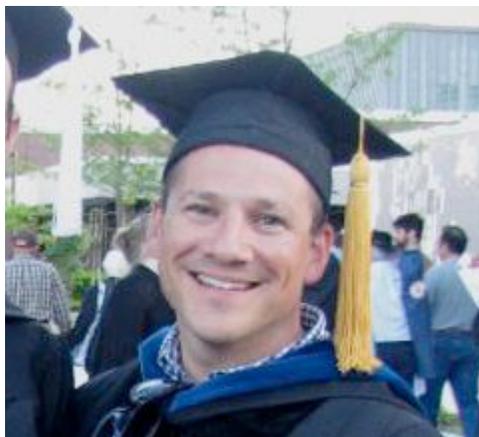
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saw our undergraduate major grow to over 500 – while we continue to see growth in all of our academic programs (such as our minor in psychology, minor in industrial/organizational psychology, psychobiology concentration version of the major, the industrial/organizational concentration version of the major, our MA program in Psychology, and our MS programs in Mental Health and School Counseling). Our students continue to excel in the classroom and beyond, with many students attending and presenting at conferences on a local and global scale at places such as Lebanon Valley, PA, Washington, DC, and Hawaii (yup, THE Hawaii!). Further, many of our students have co-published articles and book chapters in such outlets as the *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology*, *Review of General Psychology*, and many more. And many of our recent alumni have gone on to great things, like Ph.D. programs at places such as Binghamton University, University of North Dakota, Suffolk University, and more.

The departmental faculty continue to strive to provide a rigorous and challenging education that helps cultivate the kinds of knowledge and skills that help our students achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals. And we continue to make sure that our students have a lot of fun along the way!

Glenn Geher (geherg@newpaltz.edu).  
Chair, Psychology Department  
[www.newpaltz.edu/psychology](http://www.newpaltz.edu/psychology)

## Letter from the Chair, Dr. Glenn Geher



Academic Year 2012/2013 was a great one for the Psychology Department at New Paltz. This year

# SUNY New Paltz Responds to Hurricane Sandy

**By Phyllis R. Freeman, Ph.D.**  
**Department of Psychology & Member of the**  
**Institute for Disaster Mental Health Advisory**  
**Board**

As many are aware, in October 2012, Superstorm Sandy devastated parts of the Caribbean before moving up the Northeast coast to overwhelm the mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the U.S. with punishing wind, rain, snow, and tidal surges. It is likely the second-costliest Atlantic hurricane, behind only Katrina.

SUNY New Paltz students, faculty and staff were affected by the storm (although the campus itself was spared, unlike the flooding that happened on campus during Hurricanes Irene and Lee in 2011). Numerous members of the campus community left after the storm to assist their families and communities with cleanup and recovery. My elderly cousin was evacuated to New Orleans from her home in Queens, NY, the same Rockaway home that her family had moved to after their house was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. My cousin's home remained uninhabitable until nearly late in the spring of 2013.

Many in our campus community assisted with relief efforts in the hardest hit areas of Long Island, New York City, and New Jersey. Professor James Halpern, Director of the Institute for Disaster Mental Health (IDMH), offered Red Cross training to interested faculty, staff, and students in November, so that members of our campus community could effectively assist with the recovery. Once trained, these individuals assisted in the Emergency Operations Center at American Red Cross in New York among other places.

There is ample evidence that many people are still struggling in the aftermath of one of the most vicious storms to hit the region. The stories of three New Paltz students who helped amply demonstrate how one well-trained person can make a world of difference in the face of disaster.

**Allison Theis**

- B.A. in Psychology;  
Disaster Studies minor, May 2010

- Now the Client Services Coordinator for the  
American Red Cross serving King and Kitsap  
Counties, Seattle, WA



## **Allison's Experience:**

I arrived on the Disaster Relief Operation a week after the storm hit and was assigned as a casework supervisor. Since I work at a local chapter in Seattle as a client services coordinator, I was not new to casework in disaster relief. But I did not know what to expect. I was not fully aware of how large and to what extent the damage was to the NYC area. The first day, I went to Brooklyn with a team to survey the damage and quickly it became clear how difficult casework was going to be in response to this storm. In the beginning of the response, our mission was to gather as much information as possible about those displaced and when we went to various shelters the overwhelming number of displaced clients made it clear that many were not going to be able to return to their homes for a long

time. Our teams tried to assess what other housing options might be available to them. In some instances, we were able to connect clients to their individual case managers at various social service agencies in the City. By taking our services directly into the shelters and into the communities we were able to gather specific information critical to development of the operation. We also assessed individual health and mental health needs and referred Disaster Health Services and Disaster Mental Health Services volunteers to those clients needing additional support.

As the operation approached its second week, the shelters were no longer adequate to accommodate our clients' needs and they were moved to hotels throughout Manhattan. This meant that our clients had to leave their local communities – places familiar to them for food, shopping, and transportation. Placing the client in hotels in

“People need to feel understood and heard in order to start processing their trauma.”

Manhattan was an enormous challenge for multiple reasons. ARC had to find where the City had placed individual families, which took time. Once we found these families we realized that they were struggling with Manhattan food prices as well as with transportation. Families were incurring many expenses that they did not have the ability to cover on their own. Our casework management team worked tirelessly to provide Client Assistance Cards (credit cards) with funds for food as well as Metro Cards for transportation. Families needed to return to their homes to assess and fix the storm damage, get back to work, and transport their children to school. Along with the financial assistance we issued to clients, we also needed to work with clients on identifying their long-term recovery plans and then matched them to those services that could best support their long-term recovery.

I am so proud to have taken what I learned at SUNY New Paltz and at the Institute for Disaster Mental Health first into my work as an AmeriCorps worker with the Red Cross and now as a full time employee. Having a solid foundation in disaster

mental health has been so critical in my everyday work with disaster clients, but especially with disaster relief in New York. As I sat with many clients during the relief operation, I realized that as much as they needed information and resources for their recovery, they also needed someone to hold their hand and listen to their stories. People need to feel understood and heard in order to start processing their trauma. Although I am not a certified mental health professional, the skills that I learned in my undergraduate career have helped me to connect to my clients and to provide them with the support they need in order to take positive steps in their own recovery.

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**Alexandria Jardine**

- B.A. in Psychology;  
Disaster Studies minor, May 2013



*Alex with her Red Cross supervisor, Diane Ryan, LCSW, receiving a New Paltz internship award.  
Photo Copyright Kenneth Gabrielsen*

**Alex’s Experience:**

During my fifteen day deployment (1/3/13-1/17/13) after Hurricane Sandy with the American Red Cross in Greater New York, I was the Administrative Assistant for Disaster Mental Health based in Manhattan. My main role at headquarters was to gather and compile mental health service statistics daily from those on site and out in the field and then to send this information out to those in charge. My supervisors used this information to track major changes and to look for patterns. A critical task I

performed was keeping up on any open cases as well as incoming referrals, and making sure they were taken care of by certified professionals on site. I also oriented deployed and local volunteers, explaining the way the department works, what their role would be and any important information, such as major referrals or open feeding sites. I had the opportunity of attending the Red Cross' 'Winter Wonderland' event on January 12th, designed for those children and their families still being housed in hotels by FEMA. The event took place at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square, and it included an open buffet, games, jugglers, toys, a Knicks player, and gifts for the clients who attended. This day was about fun despite the many struggles these families were going through, and it was wonderful to see the children enjoy themselves so much.

**"I feel that this deployment with the Red Cross was one of my most important undergraduate experiences."**

American Red Cross Headquarters was an inspiring environment filled with wonderful people. All of my supervisors as well as other staff were kind, and they were excited to add to my learning experience. During my deployment I worked under several different chiefs, and although each one had his or her own style, all strove toward the common goal of helping others. The walls at Headquarters were also filled with thank you cards from children and inspirational messages. Many volunteers were deployed far from home, but this attitude as well as the physical environment at Headquarters made working a little bit easier.

I learned many things on this deployment including:

- Be flexible: Anything can happen at any time!
- There is more that goes into a Disaster Response Operations than I ever imagined. And every single role is important because it keeps the operation going whether it is helping directly or indirectly (custodial staff, security, lodging, Disaster Services Technology)
- Take advantage opportunities to learn – your supervisors and others are extremely intelligent people who have a lot of experience.

- Listen. Someone may simply want to talk, or there may be a deeper meaning to what someone is saying.
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs is particularly relevant to disaster work! Disaster Mental Health isn't the main concern if physiological and safety needs are the cause of distress.
- Take yourself out of it – focus on the client needs, not on building your own reputation.

Being a part of the American Red Cross relief for Hurricane Sandy was an amazing experience. I appreciated having this unique opportunity as an undergraduate student, and gained so much. I also made great connections and learned how to work with and for many different types of people. An approach that I tried to stick to was working independently, but making use of the available supervision. This is something that a supervisor told me she was glad I was doing, and it is certainly a method I will keep in mind for future internships and other work. I feel that this deployment with the Red Cross was one of my most important undergraduate experiences.

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**Rebecca Rodriguez**

- B.A. in Psychology;  
Disaster Studies minor, May 2011
- M.S. in Mental Health Counseling  
expected in spring 2014
- Graduate Assistant,  
Institute for Disaster Mental Health



## Rebecca's Experience:

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, I was able quickly to register for a 3-credit Graduate Counseling Independent Study to assist at the Greater New York American Red Cross (ARC) chapter in Manhattan. I was primarily responsible for supporting the staffing of the local mental health volunteers, and when Hurricane Sandy became a national disaster, ARC began to deploy volunteers from all over the country, including disaster mental health workers. The American Red Cross spends a lot of time, effort and money to deploy volunteers, and they require a minimum time commitment from their volunteers.

In order to fulfill my ARC assignment, I was commuting back and forth from here to Manhattan on weekends while attending my classes and working at my job at the Institute for Disaster Mental Health during the week. My first weekend on the job was fast-paced, with barely enough time to catch a breath. I spent my time making and receiving a lot of phone calls, organizing schedules and finding the right balance of being helpful and staying out of the way. Our mission was to make sure our local mental health volunteers were able to do the work they wanted to do: to utilize their experience to assist the members of the community affected by Hurricane Sandy. They were like me; they had families, jobs they had to get to, and some of them were even impacted by the storm. These volunteers worked five days a week and then for ARC for the next two. And like them, I had difficulty walking away from this assignment when Monday rolled around.

As I volunteer, I also interacted with disaster survivors and the experience was unforgettable. Three weeks after the storm hit, I walked through Red Hook, one of the largest public housing units in the city. The residents were still without power, and many of them stood in lines that snaked and twisted their way out of sight waiting for packages of water, snacks, and blankets. I met with displaced residents from Breezy Point who were holed up in city hotels, not sure when they would have to leave or where they would go, desperately wanting a place away from the water. I spoke with people who lost pets, who were stuck in their houses as the water rose,

people who were already vulnerable before Hurricane Sandy because they were poor or had pre-existing mental or health conditions that were exacerbated by the storm. Their loss was so astounding that I was struck by the contrasts of the two worlds in which I was living. In my own hometown, people were still upset because they had been without power a few days after Hurricane Sandy. I felt like I existed in a different place than everyone else at home: hurried when everyone was relaxed, relaxed when everyone was hurried.

“Even with training and a support system of very experienced people, it was hard for me to acknowledge how affected I was by the people with whom I spoke.”

When you are volunteering in a disaster situation, it's easy to forget how difficult it is. Everyone you meet has it worse: a survivor who has lost everything or a volunteer who has traveled farther than you and hasn't seen his/her family in weeks. You push your own feelings down because it seems awful to compare them to the experiences of people who you've met. Even with training and a support system of very experienced people, it was hard for me to acknowledge how affected I was by the people with whom I spoke. I think that some of the volunteers with whom I worked might never want to be deployed to another disaster. The work is that hard and challenging. While some might feel that the stress and other feelings experienced by those who respond are trivial or inappropriate when compared to the losses of survivors, I think these responses are incredibly important to acknowledge and to understand. Only by doing so could disaster responders maintain their own well being, so that they can continue to do the work they are motivated to do.

Visit [www.newpaltz.edu/idmh](http://www.newpaltz.edu/idmh) to learn more about the Disaster Studies Minor – and [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to learn how **you** can assist the American Red Cross in future disasters!

## FOCUS ON ALUMNI

**Joseph V. DiPietro (BA, 2008)**  
**jvd28@cornell.edu**



I am a 3rd year Ph.D. student at Cornell University, Department of Neurobiology and Behavior. I use zebrafish as a model for understanding how the nervous system regulates the dynamics of synaptic and dendritic changes (associated with the formation and removal of neuronal connections) throughout the day and across development. I use zebrafish because of the genetic and optical techniques available for this model organism. Studying psychology at SUNY New Paltz gave me exposure to all of the different methods of studying and describing the brain and behavior. Also, the independent research opportunities and the psychobiology concentration in particular provided me the skills and background necessary to pursue neuroscience research from a variety of analytic levels. Most importantly of all though was the skill and dedication of my professors and advisors, some of whom I still stay in touch with to this day!

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**Denis Carmody (BA, 2004)**  
**dcarmody3@gmail.com**

Dennis began his academics at SUNY New Paltz by studying natural and computer sciences. He declared a major in computer science as a sophomore, and while doing well in the course work and finding it very interesting at times, he felt he did not have the passion for it that a career in computer science deserved (but did end up with a minor in computer science). At the end of his junior year, Dennis decided to explore a passion he had for mental health and wellness and decided to switch majors to psychology, finishing all of the required classes during his senior year.



Immediately after graduation in 2004, Dennis moved to North Carolina to be with the rest of his family. After working in a Medical Genetics lab for some time, he was unsure where his career path would lead. He took an 8-week course in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which is a stress reduction program that utilizes mindfulness (insight) meditation practice to cope with stress, at Duke Integrative Medicine and immediately fell in love. He started working in clinical research at world-class clinical research organizations (CROs) in the Research Triangle Park area of North Carolina, but always wanted to explore the evidence based health benefits of MBSR more deeply. After pursuing (and probably annoying) several faculty members at Duke University, Dennis met with one junior faculty member at Duke in 2010, who needed a research coordinator for his study looking at the effects of MBSR in ameliorating cardiovascular disease risk. It was the same year that he met the woman who is now his loving, supporting wife, Stephanie. The rest, as they say, is history. This study will successfully end next month, and Dennis will begin a Masters of Public Health (MPH) program at the UNC Chapel Hill in the fall where he intends to incorporate his passions for mindfulness and physical fitness.

Dennis says “I credit the SUNY New Paltz psychology department with providing me with the necessary tools in research methods, experimental psychology, and statistics - tools that I still use today in my work and will use in one of the best graduate programs in public health in the country! Thank you for providing me with a top rate education!”

## FOCUS ON ALUMNI



**Wendy Baur (BA, 1990)**  
**wbaur@verison.net**

I graduated SUNY New Paltz in 1990 with my BS in Communication and a minor in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. The economy was in a recession and graduates were having a tough time securing employment. I took a civil service test for a case manager position with Dutchess County and began my career in Adult Protective Services helping people 18 years and over who were impaired and at risk. That same year, I started graduate school part-time at SUNY Albany and continued working full-time. I obtained my Master of Social Work in 1997. My two internships were at Ulster County Mental Health and the following year in child protective services providing intensive home-based services to at risk children. During that time, I was promoted to a senior case management position with child protective services where I investigated child abuse and neglect.

My personal life was also lively as I married and began having children. An opportunity presented itself to return back to adult protective services part-time in 2000 which I was grateful to get while my children were young. My interests continued to expand and I enrolled in weekend classes and graduated from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in NYC in 2006. Then, I pursued my interest in Ayurveda, ancient Indian complimentary alternative medicine, at the University of Connecticut. Continuing my education, via my employment, I began taking classes through Dutchess County Government and Dutchess Community College earning my Management and Leadership certificate.

I was promoted to a supervisor position in adult services in the housing unit working with the homeless population. Two years later, I transferred to a case supervisor for the intake unit in adult protective services. This entails investigating abuse and neglect for people 18 years of age and over who are impaired mentally and or physically, are unable to meet their needs and have nobody else willing and able to assist them responsibly. I also work independently doing home studies for adoptions. It's a psychosocial assessment of the family which helps the judge make decisions on adoption cases. And I've taught classes at Dutchess Community College - Human Behavior in the Social Environment.

I look back on my SUNY New Paltz days when I volunteered at the Oasis Crisis Center Hotline under Maurey Levitz' supervision and realize what an impact that must have had on me as that's the type of work I do now. Each and every day at work, I try to help people to get to a better place in their lives whether it's on the telephone, in person, through supervising my staff or my interns, speaking at community events, participating on boards, collaborating with colleagues, involvement in volunteering, or just walking the streets of Poughkeepsie on my lunch hour when clients from the past and present come up to me to ask for my assistance. I feel really lucky to be able to help people and use my diverse educational skills to do so.

## FOCUS ON ALUMNI



**Jason Diffenderfer**  
(MA, 2007)  
jasondiffenderfer@gmail.com

I began attending the MA in Psychology program at SUNY New Paltz in 2004, after completing my BA in Psychology at SUNY Geneseo. During my first year in the program, I served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for Dr. Glenn Geher's and Dr. Doug Maynard's Experimental

Psychology courses. This was an invaluable experience, as assisting with those courses allowed me to reinforce and expand my knowledge of research methods and statistics, which I have used throughout my career. After completing my coursework, I continued to work on my thesis and began working for the SUNY New Paltz School of Education as an Educational Data Analyst. In 2007, I graduated from the MA program and went to work for the Westchester County Department of Health in the Division of Disease Control, where I created new systems to track data on diseases and analyzed this data for use in reports and grants. For the past five years I have worked at Pace University, first as the Coordinator of Assessment and Planning, and more recently as the Institutional Reporting

Analyst in the University's Office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research. In these roles, I have constantly used a lot of the knowledge and experience I gained from the MA program, in specific areas such as statistical analysis, research methodology, and survey design, as well as in more general areas such as writing, public speaking, and critical thinking. Additionally, I have continued my education, as I completed an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Information Systems in 2012, and recently completed my first year in the MBA in Finance program at Pace University. I was probably the only person in the MBA program that was eager to take the statistics course, as I knew that it would be easy after the education I received from the MA in Psychology program at SUNY New Paltz.

## Psychology Department Joins China Program

In the Fall of 2012, the Psychology Department began offering a section of Introductory Psychology to Chinese high school students through a partnership with the International Academic Alliance (<http://www.iaaprograms.com>). The University in High School (UHS) students who aspire to attend college in the United States an opportunity to experience an introductory college course (taught in English) their work. For our first semester, Molly Blasco (MS, Experimental Psychology, Brooklyn College) taught in the city of Jinan, which is in Shandong Province in eastern China. She is shown with her students in the photograph here. In the Spring of 2013, Janelle Simmons (MA, Forensic Psychology, John Jay College) taught in the city of Wuxi, near Shanghai.



The Psychology Department plans to continue our involvement in the UHS-China program for the coming academic year. We are regularly looking for potential instructors for this program so if you are interested in learning more, please contact our departmental liaison and mentor for the program, Doug Maynard, at [maynardd@newpaltz.edu](mailto:maynardd@newpaltz.edu). Candidates for this program should have a master's degree in psychology or a related area and two years of teaching experience of some kind (not necessarily college-level psychology courses).

## FOCUS ON ALUMNI: **Students Who Stay**

Psychology Department faculty members are always proud to see our seniors graduate and move out into the world – but some make us proud by choosing to stay at New Paltz for graduate school. We asked three current MA and MS students what made them decide to continue their education here.

**Lauren Burrier**, Class of 2012, just finished her first year of the MS in in Mental Health Counseling program:

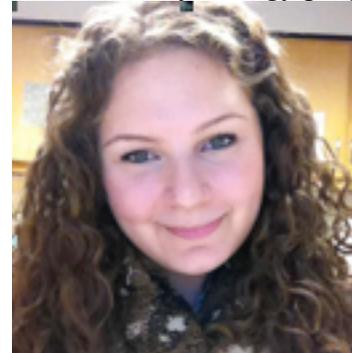


I could not imagine pursuing my master's degree at any other institution than the college at which I had such an amazing undergraduate experience. While working toward my bachelor's degree in psychology at SUNY New Paltz, I had several opportunities and involvements which I jumped at the chance to continue. In applying for and being accepted into the Mental Health Counseling program, I was able to accept the position of Coordinator of Oasis/Haven, the peer crisis counseling center on campus. I had worked as a volunteer staff member for the organization for several semesters during my undergraduate career and was thrilled to be able to stay and assume a leadership position. My work with Oasis/Haven has proved invaluable, as the counseling and services we provide for our peers has provided practical application of the skills and theories I am learning in my graduate courses.

As I continue to learn and grow as a professional counselor, I take my knowledge and apply it in as many ways as I can to the work I do as a peer crisis counselor. Additionally, in my undergraduate career, I had the pleasure of conducting research with Dr. Kathleen Tillman. We were knee deep in our study when my undergraduate studies were ending, and being able to remain working on the research I had helped cultivate from the beginning

was a remarkable opportunity. This proved fateful, as our research has been submitted for journal publication and we will be presenting our work at the American Psychological Association national conference in Honolulu, Hawaii in July 2013. I hope to find as many prospects and as much success in my pursuit of a doctorate after graduating with my master's degree in May 2014. I am appreciative for the opportunities presented to me during my time at SUNY New Paltz; with a share of struggles and achievements, it has been nothing less than gratifying here for the last five years.

**Briana Tauber**, Class of 2012, just completed her first year of the MA in Psychology program:



Determining which college or graduate school to attend is a seemingly daunting decision. I remember going through the process and juggling a handful of prospective colleges - weighing the costs and benefits of each school. In the end, SUNY New Paltz was the place for me. Having graduated from undergrad a year ago, I feel I made the right choice. So much so that I decided to stay an extra two years for graduate school.

As an undergraduate student at New Paltz, I majored in Psychology. During my junior year, as part of my coursework, I took a course titled Evolutionary Psychology (EP) with Dr. Glenn Geher. It was the first time I ever heard of the topic. I began to find evolutionary psychology to be extremely compelling and eye-opening, and soon realized that this was exactly the subject matter with which I'd like to be involved. I picked up a minor in evolutionary studies (EvoS) and finished the remainder of my undergraduate career as a research assistant in Dr. Geher's EP lab.

In Dr. Geher's EP class and lab I had an amazing experience participating with other students who shared my enthusiasm for this subject. When

applying to graduate schools, I searched for professors who expressed the same interests as I in evolutionary studies. I applied to New Paltz in the hopes of being able to conduct research in evolutionary psychology and continue working with Dr. Geher. Not only was I accepted into the Masters Psychology program at New Paltz, but I was also offered a Graduate Assistantship as the Evolutionary Studies Assistant.

I am grateful for all the opportunities New Paltz offered me as an undergrad. The courses and professors have inspired me and have afforded me a vast number of opportunities that I am trying to take full advantage of. While I do not yet have any plans for what I'd like to do once I graduate, in the year that I have left at New Paltz, I plan to continue working with other students in the EP lab (both undergraduate and graduate students) and conducting research of my own.

SUNY New Paltz is a great school for any student whether they have a predetermined goal or enter with an undecided major. The trick is to recognize opportunities and take them by the horn. New Paltz is there and ready for the challenge.

**Gillian Hammond**, Class of 2013, will enter the MS in Mental Health Counseling program this fall:



I decided to stay at New Paltz for a few different reasons. Obviously it is a relatively affordable school compared to others, and it's in a great location, but I also felt that it provided me with a better undergraduate education than other schools potentially would have. The psychology faculty members that I've known are all passionate about the subjects they teach, and are open to answering questions and providing guidance outside of scheduled class time.

I've also chosen to stay at New Paltz to continue working with OASIS [peer crisis counseling], which has granted me real life hands-on experience that solidified my desire to enter the mental health counseling field. I hope to work more closely with the Institute for Disaster Mental Health this coming year to explore more in depth a field that I hope to specialize in. When I graduate, I'll continue working towards obtaining a license to practice mental health counseling.

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While these students' interests and career goals vary, the common thread is that their undergraduate experiences at New Paltz gave them all early opportunities to apply the skills they were learning in class, whether that was in research, in peer counseling, or a combination. Faculty members appreciate having the chance to extend our work with the students who stick around, and we hope those same opportunities have benefited our undergrads who go elsewhere to continue their educations, or who take other paths. In our next issue we'll profile some alumni who have completed both bachelors and masters degrees at SUNY New Paltz, and we invite you to share your own stories of what your education here has led to.

**Congratulations to New Paltz Students Heading on to Doctoral Programs:**

- Daniel Glass (MA, 2012): Ph.D. program in clinical psychology at Suffolk University
- Amanda Guitar (MA, 2013): Ph.D. program in biological anthropology at Binghamton University
- Lindsay Ruckel (MA, 2012): Ph.D. program in social psychology at New Mexico State University

Are you in a doctoral program? Contact us and we'll be more than glad to feature you in the next issue of the Self Monitor!

## NP EP Lab Takes NEEPS by Storm!



*Members of the New Paltz EP lab at NEEPS (Top, Middle, and Bottom rows; from l to r): Morgan Gleason, Daniel Glass, Jessica Fell Williams, Briana Tauber, Melvin Philip, Rebecca Newmark, Amanda Guitar, Rachael Carmen, Elan Abreu, Raina Haffka, Glenn Geher, Megan Geher, Luke Grandis, Grant Trouton*

The 7th annual NorthEastern Evolutionary Psychology Society (NEEPS) conference took place at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pennsylvania from May 30th to June 2nd of this year. The three-day conference, preceded by the Feminist Evolutionary Psychology Society (FEPS) meeting, the Applied Evolutionary Psychology Society (AEPS) meeting, and a trip to Hershey Park, was filled with talks and poster presentations from both academics and students alike. This year, we had over 10 New Paltz students, faculty, and alumni partake in conference activities - presenting posters and/or giving talks. The keynote speakers included Professor Paul Bingham and Professor Joanne Souza of Stony Brook University and Professor John McNeil of Georgetown University.

Overseen by NEEPS President (and adjunct faculty member of the New Paltz Psychology Department) Rosemarie Sokol Chang, along with the help of this year's host, Professor John Hinshaw of Lebanon Valley College, the conference was a huge success. Attendees travelled from various parts of the USA, Canada, Europe and Africa. The various topics examined by past and current members of the SUNY New Paltz evolutionary Psychology Lab at this year's NEEPS conference included female

competition, hormonal contraception, perceptions of romantic partners, the female orgasm, mating intelligence, tattoos and piercings, parental investment in homosexual offspring and polygamy and punishment. In work presented at NEEPS, the SUNY New Paltz EP Lab collaborated with people from various universities across the country- including Juniata College, the Kinsey Institute, Binghamton University, Grand Valley State University and the State University of New York at Albany. NEEPS was well represented by the New Paltz EP lab.

We are all looking forward to attending next year's conference which will be organized by incoming NEEPS President Dan Kruger and hosted by Professor Sarah Strout of Dominican College. Inside sneak peek: next year's NEEPS' Banquet will be held on a boat with the beautiful Hudson River as a backdrop!



*New Paltz EP Lab Members (from l to r): Raina Haffka, Rebecca Newmark, Jessical Fell Williams, Briana Tauber, Chris Farrington*

## FACULTY NEWS

Two members of the Psychology Department faculty were recognized last year by the SUNY New Paltz administration for their extraordinary work. **Dr. James Halpern** was the recipient of the new Provost Award for Excellence in Professional Service for his work in the department and with the Institute for Disaster Mental Health, and **Dr. Giordana Grossi** received the 2012 Liberal Arts and Sciences Excellence in Faculty Scholarship award for her empirical work on the cognitive and neural systems important to reading, and for her theoretical program in which she provides a scientific critique of research on inherent sex difference in cognition and brain organization. Congratulations to Drs. Grossi and Halpern!

**Dr. Glenn Geher** scored a publishing hat trick, completing three new books: *Mating Intelligence Unleashed: The Role of the Mind in Sex, Dating, and Love*, co-written with Scott Barry Kaufman; *Evolutionary Psychology 101* (available in October 2013), and *Statistics: A No-Frills Approach*, co-authored with Sara Hall (in production). Go, Dr. Geher!

In Summer 2013 **Dr. Phyllis Freeman** traveled to Paris and then on to Strasbourg, France for the Lyme Sans Frontieres Conference, an event for physicians and patients on the epidemic of Lyme disease in Western Europe.

### Keynote Address at Personal Construct Congress by Professor Jonathan Raskin



I will be giving a keynote address at the 20th International Congress on Personal Construct Psychology in Sydney, Australia. The title of the address is “Beyond Relativism and ‘Anything Goes’: A PCP-based Constructivist Model of Ethical Meaning-Making.”

Summary: Critics say that constructivism embraces an “anything goes” ethics that permits any position. I disagree. In my understanding of constructivism, ethics is unavoidable because people are always embedded in ethical perspectives that infuse everything they do. “Anything goes” is never an option, even if what goes varies by person. This talk is divided into three parts. First, I’ll distinguish three versions of constructivism and distinguish epistemological versus ontological modes of construing. Second, I’ll summarize and counter criticisms that portray constructivism as endorsing “anything goes” relativism. Third, I’ll outline a constructivist model of ethical meaning-making.

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Miss New Paltz? Come back in the Fall for **Alumni Weekend!**

Sep. 20-22, 2013

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

See you there! (and let us know you’re coming so we can plan some Department reunion activities!)

### 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))
- Dr. Rust ([rustj@newpaltz.edu](mailto:rustj@newpaltz.edu))
- Dr. Vermeulen ([vermeulk@newpaltz.edu](mailto:vermeulk@newpaltz.edu))

Or contact the Psychology Department:

Tel: (845) 257-3470

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