



Lussier, at the left, was congratulated by Diana Fellows and President Greg Martin.

Sherry Lussier— Counselor of Year

Sherry Lussier, a school counselor at Orleans Elementary School, was honored at the Fall Conference as this year's recipient for the The James F. Cawley "Outstanding Counselor of the Year Award". Her principal said that she was amazing and remarkable. Amazing because she takes the whole child into consideration. She works not only with the child but also with the family to get each needed services. And remarkable since she has been so proactive in teaching students K-8 about the world of work in an engaging and relavent manner. *More on p. 7*

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A Vision for VTSCA

My vision for the VTSCA is to develop a strategic plan that states our mission and goals and plans for meeting those goals. The board has set a date for January to have a board retreat where we can discuss needs, visions and plans.

My hope is to set in place a strategic plan to guide our association through the years to come. Some of the thoughts that have already been discussed include:

- Membership- growth, benefits
- Early conference planning
- Sponsoring professional development days

- Working with the VTDOE to develop and endorse a State-wide Comprehensive Guidance Counselor Program Advocacy

- VTDOE liaison
- Continued work on the web site
- Continue the newsletter and provide the editor with publishable articles

In her own words, incoming president Cindy Edson outlines her goals for the upcoming year.

Please feel free to contact me with any ideas or concerns you may have that we should
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Meet New President Cindy Edson

How and what in your academic and or professional career led up to you becoming a school counselor?

I started out as a math teacher. I enjoyed working with my students in my classes- engaging their minds and seeing the light bulb go off when they understood a concept. The part I could not find the time for was helping them through all the other difficult things they experienced in and out of school. I found myself drawn to being a student advocate and encouraging collaboration among the adults who worked with a particular student. While still teaching math I went back to school to complete my graduate degree in counseling and consultation. After completing my masters program, I worked as an elementary school

counselor for ten years before taking a position at Hartford High School. I enjoy all levels of education and counseling; they all bring different challenges and pleasures.

As a school counselor I have a very unique opportunity to effect growth in a child. School counselors guide students in their academic, social, emotional, and career choices- all of which make up the essence of who we are. I feel privileged to be invited into a child's life as a support system for him/her. I value my students- their thoughts differing and unique personalities, their outlook on life and their introspective evaluation of their own lives. Perspective is a funny thing. From my students I have learned to look at situations from many different views. I became a school counselor so I could help people-- students, teachers, parents and administrators- to value perspective and to help people find the sunshine or ray of hope in the most difficult of situations. I also encourage students to find their inner strength, listen to the values they know are real to life, and inspire them to be their very best in all that they do.

What is your daily, weekly and monthly routine?

Daily: I meet with students regarding academic, career, and/or emotional concerns. I attend IEP, 504, and EST meetings. I coordinate meetings to address and coordinate

services for social emotional, behavioral, academic or family concerns. I attend administrative guidance meetings and in house meetings to advocate for and gain a better understanding of my students and the systems in which we need to work.

Weekly: One day I may be meeting with a senior regarding graduation and future plans such as college, military or work and the next day I may be working with freshman on transitioning into the high school scene, determining if they are appropriately placed, or figuring out peer relations. I am also the coordinator of our Reach Out Program which couples high school students with 6th grade at risk students in a big brother/ big sister type relationship. Each week I spread my time planning activities and meeting with my co-facilitator from the middle school and students in the program. My colleagues and I have weekly department meetings, seasonal college planning night meetings, monthly district counselor meetings, and mentoring meetings. And in between all the meetings I counsel my students. In my experience coordinated services are the ideal way to student or family. I value the team approach and see the benefits of having meetings to facilitate that help.

Monthly: I do many of the above mentioned activities in addition to time sensitive agendas such as sophomore conferences, freshmen guidance, senior college planning conferences,

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junior college planning nights, career day planning, and other initiatives which make Hartford High School and myself attentive to addressing the needs of its population.

What have been some of the high points and low points in your job?

Some high points include supporting a student as she found help for her depression, encouraging another student to pursue a college education when he thought it was not possible, and having him return and thank me for the encouragement and guidance. Another high point was facilitating a discussion between a tumultuous and exhilarating mother/daughter relationship. Another high point is working with a very knowledgeable and professional staff at Chesterfield Elementary School. I learned how effective caring educators can be when they work together.

One low point include feeling helpless when 3 younger students reported problems at home which mandates a reports to SRS; they found it unsubstantiated. A few months later, after I left that school, I read in the paper how the father had held his family hostage at gun point. The report said the mother got out leaving her three young children alone with their father and his gun. It is times like these when I feel like I should have done more to help those kids and/or I wish the system could do more to help.

Has the job of school counseling changed any since you started?

The field of school counseling has evolved significantly in the last ten years. I think many of the changes that have been set into place are for the better. I think bringing a comprehensive National Model to the forefront of education and the profession has brought a more professional and prestigious outlook on the field school counseling. Although currently the job itself varies greatly from state to state, district to district and even school to school. I anticipate that our profession will continue to identify itself and set standards of competencies that will bring a more unified approach to how school counselors are regarded and what is expected from the profession.

What is something that you did that worked really well?

One thing I have learned over 14 years as an educator in three districts is school counselors need to gain an understanding of the system and their functioning within that system. Also to learn protocols and procedures, make connections with the people who are in position to help them help their clients. Even though I believe in collaboration and working with the systems it can be very frustrating at times. One person can not move mountains; however one person can begin the process of figuring out how.

VTSCA Vision

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discuss at the retreat. **Also, if you are interested in being a member of the Comprehensive Guidance Counselor Program committee, please email me at Edsonc@hartfordsd.com.**

I would like to take a moment to thank all of you for your vote and support in my taking on the presidency this year. I regret that I was pulled aside by the staff at Ascutney Mountain Inn just at the moment the voting was taking place so did not have the chance to enjoy the moment nor did I even realize it had been accomplished until we had already moved on. Please accept my apologies for not giving a proper address or thank you at the conference. This incident was only one of the many concerns I had during the conference. I feel the day was good and bad in so many ways. I am proud to have been a part of the presentation I attended; I think the presenters did a wonderful job all around. However, I am embarrassed by the facility and catering services we received. When I visited the inn months before to reserve our space, I wasn't told about the impending renovations. Please accept my apologies and my gratitude for your patience and cooperation throughout the day.

-Cindy Edson



Judy Bowers, the past president of the American School Counselor Association, gave the keynote address at the Fall Conference. Her talk on the National Model of School Counseling was well received and in her follow up workshops she gave many practical tips for implementing the model in Vermont schools.

Conference Notes

Our October Annual Conference in Ascutney Mountain Resort was not only a chance to learn new strategies and network with old /"new" friends, it was a chance to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our colleagues. A successful conference is the result of work by many people. The Board of Directors wants to applaud Cindy Edson for her leadership of this year's conference committee. The Board also wants to publicly thank the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for its support. We are particularly want to recognize June Keenan at VSAC for her help in maintaining our membership list and providing us with mailing labels for the conference registration materials and the newsletter.

We also had the honor of recognizing a man who has continually championed our profession throughout the years. Bob Bates of Essex Junction High School has announced his retirement. Goodbye tension, hello pension! Bob has committed countless hours advocating on behalf of the VTSCA. As our Government Relations Chairperson, Bob's developed in-roads and relationships with our Department of Education and representatives in Montpelier. His work has been invaluable as he's often asked to "come to the table" to present the school counselor perspective on issues of import that effect us all. We want to publicly acknowledge and say a heartfelt "thank you" for your inspiring work throughout your tenure.



Bob Bates, a counselor at Essex Junction High School and long time government relations leader for the VTSCA, announced his retirement at the fall conference.

Good luck to you Bob! Enjoy your time and we appreciate all you've done for Vermont students, families, co-workers, and counselors.

Senior Portfolios

A senior portfolio is a way for a student to portray his or her best qualities in an organized package to potential employers, scholarship agencies, and colleges. It is a professional way of packaging a student's secondary school career assets. Students start early in their high school or middle school careers to collect important documents such as work records, certificates of achievement, samples of their best work, test scores, volunteer service hours, and unofficial transcripts. These documents are then compiled and placed into a formal portfolio binder.

The portfolio should have a minimum of the following items;

- Cover page
- Resume
- Autobiographical essay
- Unofficial transcript
- Copies of test scores
- Extra curricular activities
- Letters of recommendation
- Employment record, if applicable

The portfolio should be completed by the end of the student's junior year, so that the student will begin the senior year knowing that he or she is ready to begin the post-secondary application process. They will already have all the items necessary to complete the applications without scrambling at the last minute to get things together in a disorganized and less professional manner. Having a portfolio allows the

students to duplicate the same information repetitively for various applications. This can be helpful in being competitive for scholarship opportunities, getting into the student's first choice of college, and reducing the stress caused by not being prepared and being forced to get things together at the last minute.

Depending on the school the counselor's role can be quite different in the managing and development of senior portfolios. Some school counselors teach and maintain the portfolios as part of their guidance curriculum. Some schools teach in conjunction with the English department at their school. Some schools have an online file for each child and print it out at the beginning of senior year, some have a paper version that gets updated as the student progresses. Counselors who are using the portfolio process report that they have noticed that the portfolio process builds student confidence.

-Jean Edwards

Elementary Counselors' Networking Notes

At the conference, elementary counselors generated the following list of ideas for next time.

- Open listserv to support new counselors
- State mentoring programs
- Gifted kids - particular issues and ways to support them
- More outreach to support graduate students
- Curriculum share
- Animals as guidance partners
- Two conferences a year

Using Movies in Counseling

In a recent post on the ASCA listserv a NYC counselor asked if anyone could suggest a "coming of age film" for freshmen and sophomores that addresses issues they could relate to.

Here are the responses she received so far: You should check the ratings for each to see if they are appropriate.

Raising Victor Vargas

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants

Whale Rider

Real Women Have Curves

Breakfast Club

Thirteen

Bend it Like Beckham

Odd Girl Out

For a broader range of films to use with students of different ages, check out this web site: <http://members.tripod.com/cinematherapy/discussion2.html>

- Behavioral architecture, ie creating an atmosphere and counseling friendly setting through color, aquariums, plants to create a therapeutic environment
- Grief and trauma work with children

If you have information on any of these ideas, please submit them to the newsletter, and share them with everyone.

What? So What? What's Next?

On the Big Island of Hawaii is a national park called Pu'uhonua or the Place of Refuge. The story of this fascinating place in the early history of the Hawaiian people is that a person who committed a crime could go to this place and undergo a ritual ceremony that would allow the person to return unharmed to the community. Walking the grounds of this park forces the visitor to contemplate our current system of laws and punishment and think about the alternatives.

At the fall conference, Carl Roof took workshop participants through the history of the Restorative Justice movement. The roots for the modern system are in New Zealand. The Maori people's way of dealing with offenders formed the basis of the Family Group Conference and the Safer Schools justice conference in the schools. Another root of this movement is the Circle Sentencing procedure used by the Intuit people of Canada. Some communities in this country are using similar procedures. A judge is present to make sure the law is followed, but the participants in the circle work with the offender to create the sentence. It is a collaborative approach versus our traditional adversarial legal approach. The change in philosophy is based on the Mennonite and Quaker view that relationships in the community must be rebuilt or repaired. To do this we must change the way we look at

resolving conflict. Instead of the current sequence of asking, "What law was broken?, Who did it?, and What sanctions or punishment is called for? the focus is on What harm was done?, Who is involved?, and What steps need to be taken to repair the harm?. The restorative approach is voluntary. The offender must be willing to participate, and the victim or affected party decides if the conference was effective.

Using a restorative justice approach in schools does mean making a shift in the time involved to resolve a problem. Instead of making a quick referral to the administrator and the student given a detention or suspension, the student would participate go before a panel, and go through a process to make things right. The hope is that the time spent in this way might prevent future repeat offenses.

Community members are directly involved, and the group explores what things could be done to rebuild relations. Mr. Roof told the story of a group of boys were caught bashing mailboxes. Some of the boys simply pleaded guilty and were fined, but one boy agreed to participate in Restorative Justice. A woman whose mailbox was destroyed agreed to participate in the group. The boy got a much deeper understanding of the affect his actions had had on the woman

when she described that her husband had build the mailbox by hand to look like a covered bridge. She was very upset by the incident because her husband had passed away and she lived in her home alone. After the incident she no longer felt safe walking to her mailbox, and now had another relative pick up her mail. Simply making an apology or replacing the mailbox could not restore the woman's piece of mind.

Schools who use the restorative justice model train panels of students. Each person is an equal participant in the circle. Models and scripts help to facilitate the conference and ground rules are established. As a

question or issue goes around the group, people are willing to go deeper and discuss how they were affected. In this way the discussion moves away from focusing on the person who caused the problem, and toward how people were affected by the person's actions. Then, the focus is on how the person can make amends. The outcome should be closely tied to the original incident. Schools that use the Responsive Classroom are an example of this type of model to resolve problems.

Several schools in the state are using the Restorative Justice model to deal with discipline issues. While it's not the perfect solution to all problems, the model is being used successfully and is a useful alternative to a strictly punitive model of discipline.

Sousa Named New Counselor of the Year

Tanya Sousa was named the New Counselor of the Year at the VTSCA fall conference. Tanya works full time at Barton Graded School in grades K-8. She began her tenure three years ago following a stint in the district as an SAP counselor.

Tanya's programs are innovative and her rapport with students is wonderful. She has brought her expertise to form a very strong Peer Helper program, with students being well trained to help individual students and adults in the building. Her principal has high praises for Tanya: Her Peer Helper "gives our students a chance to be involved in service learning. Additionally, she does all (that) guidance counselors do, and she does it very well."

Her latest accomplishment is the publication of her manual "Can Dogs Read?" This is a How-To, for other educational professionals to implement the wonderful Literacy Dog program she has brought to Barton. Not only can this type of project help students gain confidence in their reading abilities, but as Tanya might point out, any chance for a student to learn respect and empathy for an animal might translate to better respect and empathy for people.

Congratulations Tanya.



Tanya Sousa, left, is congratulated by President Greg Martin and colleague Sherry Lussier.

Sherry Lussier — Outstanding Counselor of the Year

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Sherry Lussier is a counselor at Orleans Elementary School. She is an exceptional counselor, friendly, energetic and a good problem solver. Sherry previously worked at Randolph Technical School and Bill Sugarman, the Director of the Technical school had nothing but good things to say about her as a person and a counselor. Bill shared that Sherry was "student centered, creative and a pleasure to work with."

Sherry has been on the Northeast Kingdom Career Fair Committee for the past three years planning and preparing students for the yearly event at Lyndon State College. This is a big event for 30 schools and over 1300 students. Sherry worked to obtain presenter for

a particular cluster and participated in the needs discussion on an ongoing basis.

Sherry is also an active member of the Career Development Task Force which includes the Department of Education, the Department of Employment and Training and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The purpose of this committee is to meet the career needs of teachers and students all over the state.

Sherry goes out of her way to help students not only in her school but all over the state through her extra committee work. Sherry is deservedly the Vermont School Counselor Association 2005 recipient for the James F. Cawley "Outstanding Counselor of the Year Award". 7

Please Renew Your Membership in VTSCA

All memberships in the Vermont School Counselor Association need to be renewed in October. Many people renewed their membership when they attended the fall conference at Mt Ascutney. If you didn't attend the fall conference, you may have forgotten to renew your membership. Won't you do so today?

Also, the Board discovered that some people attended the conference and paid a "member rate" to attend the conference but didn't renew their membership.

Remember, there are no paid employees of VTSCA. All of the people working for the organization are school counselors just like you who volunteer their time to plan conferences, create a newslet-

ter, represent you in legislative matters, and support a web site. However, there are expenses with all these activities. Your membership dues support the work of the organization which results in better services for you.



Membership in VTSCA is only \$45. Go to the web site, www.vtsc.org, and download the form for the fall conference to renew your membership. Or simply mail your check with your name and contact information to the address below. Greg Martin is also working diligently on a plan to allow

members to renew their membership directly on the web site using PayPal. More details will be available in next month's newsletter.

Please renew your membership today. Your support is important to the success of school counseling in Vermont.

Everyone needs to renew their membership in October. If you already did it, thank you. If you haven't sent in your membership dues yet, please do so today. The dues are \$45 per year, and can be mailed to the address below.

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