



Leave the boundaries behind (for awhile)

*Take a little
time during
the Spring
Education
Meeting to
experience a
vibrant, world-
class city*

After a day or so of in-depth analysis of the very complex nature of boundary violations in social work practice, there's a good chance that attendees to the 2011 ASWB Spring Education Meeting may find themselves wanting to get past a boundary of their own: namely, the boundary between meeting room and the vibrant city of Vancouver that waits just outside the hotel doors.

Come May 12 -15, Vancouver will play host to ASWB, with "play" being the operative word: frequently cited as one of the world's most "liveable" cities, Vancouver offers visitors an extensive range of activities from the sedate to the wild. Here are a few of the most popular and notable attractions (some of which are also listed on the ASWB website, at www.aswb.org)

- Grouse Mountain Skyride and Park. Ride a gondola to the top of Grouse Mountain, where you can watch a movie, visit an animal refuge, or just take in the view. <http://grousemountain.com>
- Dr Sun Yet Sen Garden. The amazing classical Chinese garden, the first of its kind in North America, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. <http://www.vancouverchinesegarden.com/>
- Vancouver Symphony. The world-famous group will be presenting an all-Russian program on Saturday, May 14, featuring the Rachmaninoff 1st Piano Concerto. <http://bit.ly/i0taAd>
- Yaletown. This is *the* trendy nightspot for eating and dancing. <http://vancouver.about.com/od/neighbourhoodshousing/p/yaletown.htm>
- UBC Museum of Anthropology. An extensive collection that spans the globe. <http://www.moa.ubc.ca/>
- Stanley Park. This 1,000 acre park near downtown offers lush forests as well as a variety of attractions. <http://bit.ly/cqVpMa>

Of course this brief list does not include the many tours (by air, land, and sea—and sometimes a combination) of the area, as well as the varieties of restaurants available throughout the city, and the city's other museums and performance venues. For general information and an extensive list of things to do, check out the TripAdvisor page at <http://bit.ly/rKwMR>.

For an extensive listing of events and restaurants, visit the website of the city's alternative weekly, Straight at <http://www.straight.com/>

What to wear? Be prepared for as much variety in the weather as you find in the city: average highs for Vancouver in May are 65f/18c, with an average rainfall amount of 2.43 inches during the month.



The search of a lifetime

*From St.
Croix to Ft.
Collins to D.C.
to Georgia,
Vicki Williams
just doesn't give
up – or slow
down.*

**By Kathleen Hoffman
Deputy Executive
Director, ASWB**

Vicki Gardine Williams of the Tennessee Social Work Licensure Board may or may not have it all figured out. Her life, that is.

A lot of that life is based on something of a contradiction. “Almost every university position made me feel like I was serving as window dressing,” the social work professor and program director sums up the effect of affirmative action on her career. “But I give myself more credit than that.”

Williams was born into an exceptional family and could have expected to be a pretty exceptional person – which she is. But the contradictions of being a young, well-educated black woman in the racially turbulent 60s stirred something in her nature that may be simply restlessness, although it’s probably better described as a not-quite-defined search.

She was born in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and is presently the Social Work Program Director at Tennessee State University in Nashville, TN; she’s been at other universities, usually in the developmental stages of social work programs, she’s been vice president of the Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors and the TN-NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Board, and she’s now on the Tennessee Social Work Licensure Board.

Other parts of her story include two marriages and two sons mostly raised by herself, a week spent in jail, and periodic episodes of a deep sense of isolation.

The contradictions in her life began when she was a child. Her family was well-to-do and well-known in their community. But many of her young friends were poor, and lived in sub-standard houses, and she felt that something was not right. “I think I felt guilt,” she recalls, “and I decided from the time I was very young to be a social worker and help others.”

Her background is, to say the least, unexpected. Her family had been in St. Croix for several generations; both her paternal great-grandfathers were Caucasian, and her paternal grandmother, a twin, had somehow migrated from Montserrat in the Caribbean. Her mother went to Hunter



College in New York on a scholarship, and graduated with a degree in physics and math (remarkable for an African American woman in 1934); AND sang with the Hunter College choir at Carnegie Hall at graduation AND coached basketball. Williams's father and her paternal and maternal grandfathers were elected Council Members or Senators, as they are called today, to the US Virgin Island's legislature. Her dad was considered a Renaissance man who was a teacher, administrator, lay preacher, politician, businessman, landlord and farmer.

Williams went to elementary school in St. Croix, but then her parents, anxious for her to have a superior education, sent her to a Methodist boarding school in Puerto Rico. Really, it was only 90 miles from home by air, but it was a very different world. She had to learn to speak Spanish to function in the environment outside the school, and the school itself was a disciplined life. There were constant inspections, and the young women were responsible for cleaning and kitchen duty.

Her final two years of high school were spent at a Catholic school, where she talked constantly and spent a lot of time "standing by my desk," a punishment meted out by the European nuns that she was convinced liked her despite their struggle. At 16, she went off to Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. Then came the civil right activism, the week in jail, studies in sociology because it was the closest thing then to a social work degree, and finally an MSW from Howard University. As a payback to the local government, a condition of the graduate education, she spent three years in St. Croix working with the departments of child welfare and health.

A theme developed when she was free to make her own choices. She went to Denver, CO, thinking that the western U.S. would have plenty of opportunity for someone like her, because of affirmative action. With her went the two sons from her failed first marriage, which she had entered at 19. She went to work for the Adams County Department of Social Services, outside of Denver. The work was challenging and in many ways satisfying, but she found the area "very white and very different," and wondered "What am I doing here?"

But what she did was well, possibly because she expected it of herself, affirmative action or not. She took a job at Head Start in Denver, became the director of social services, working with mostly Hispanics, and did more and more of the much-needed training of paraprofessionals. "It was great, and I realized I'd like to teach," she discovered.

She began teaching introduction to social work in a two-year community college, and then went on to Colorado State University. Eventually, she became director of the Community and Social Services degree program which she restructured at the Community College of Denver, Auraria campus, among an interesting population; the school had an open admissions policy, and the students included people who had been in prison, and who often led very stressful lives. "They were people who were given another opportunity to succeed and improve their lives" While she was there, she married again, this time to a Nigerian, a man a decade older than she was. Even though he was supportive, she felt he became very controlling and again she decided to end her marriage.

During her tenure at the Community College of Denver, she was able to work part-time with Lutheran Services in establishing an out-reach adoption program; single parenting demanded working more than one job throughout her career which included staff development training, consultation, program development, federal proposal reviews and outreach services. She also served as a field instructor for the University of Denver for students placed with Head Start and legal services.

Through the interest of social work director and academic author Dr. Bradford Sheafor, she became a visiting professor at Colorado State University. While Dr. Sheafor “brought me into the family” and was very supportive during her time in Ft. Collins, CO, there were only four other African-American faculty or staff in the entire university. There were some African American students and a Black Student Center. Williams launched a Minority Student Committee that brought together all four minority groups (Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans and Asians) on the campus. She was learning about herself, that her strengths or talents were in teaching, service and program and curriculum development.

But still, Ft. Collins continued to leave her feeling alone, a bit alien. Her next move was to Georgia, to Fort Valley State University. “I wanted to be with people in a historically black college,” and it felt right. Earl, her academically-gifted oldest son, began to shine there, after attending schools in Denver and Fort Collins. And then she moved again, this time to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where both sons, Earl and Troy, were able to graduate with bachelors degrees in 1988 and 1989. Earl also attended graduate school, receiving a degree in Library and Information Sciences, and Troy went on to law school at North Carolina Central University.

Williams remained in Knoxville, TN until 1990, when she left to take what turned out to be the best situation she had experienced in terms of growth and opportunities needed for her career – Ferris State University in Big Rapids, MI. It was another isolated environment, but there was an African-American community close by in Idlewild, MI, and her department head had three daughters adopted from Bangladesh in India. This cold, northern state, oddly enough, was startlingly congenial to diversity despite harboring some clashing cultures. “It was where my professional life took off,” Williams said. She created a diversity subcommittee in the faculty senate, and developed a multicultural curriculum in the department of arts and sciences, educating student, faculty and staff to appreciate and learn more about diversity. She attended and presented at conferences around the country, promoting the diversity outlook already thriving at Ferris State University.

“It was exciting,” she recalls. “Ferris was good to me, and there was growth for them and for me.” It was her first experience as director of a major social work program. She was hired initially as the “Martin Luther King, César Chávez, Rosa Parks Professor,” and gloried in it. Wryly, she points out that she was a “two for one” (a member of two under-represented groups-an African American and a women) with a largely white and largely male faculty.

When she left Ferris, after a decade, she went as a full professor, and she went again seeking a community that felt more like home, where she would be less of a “two for one.” That place this time was Tennessee State University in Nashville, as director of the first accredited public undergraduate social work program in Tennessee. Perhaps best of all, the program was struggling, and about to lose accreditation—for that kind of thing, Williams was their woman.

“It took me three years to get it reaccredited, and then after four years to get it reaffirmed for eight years” and it was challenging. Her parents died, several years apart, during the self-studies that she was writing, but “I had to keep going.” Strong memories of her mother in particular supported her— the mother who had been the first woman in the Virgin Islands to have a bachelor’s degree, the mother who went back to school at 75 years old for another master’s degree (she had received her first master’s degree from Columbia University Teachers College) and lived in a residence hall until her husband, Vicki’s father, gave up and moved north to the University of Illinois, Chicago to be with her.

Williams has considered herself a “hands-on” person, interested in research, but more in what she can do to create academic programs and build curricula, engage in university and community service, teaching and administration, and mentor other faculty and social workers. (Plaudits over the years include “favorite professor” in the Ferris State Newsletter Alumnae section from a featured successful alumna).

“I feel like I have contributed to the multi-level licensure legislation in Tennessee as a board member and officer with the Tennessee NASW,” she sums up. “I was fortunate to be nominated by Karen Franklin, executive director of TN-NASW, and appointed by former Governor Phil Bredesen. I came back to Tennessee at the right time. I feel like my life has ‘come full circle.’” After all, she is a Renaissance woman who likes new experiences, demonstrated by a life of searching. And many findings.



In through the outreach door

*ASWB staff
and volunteers
are keeping
busy keeping
the association
connected*

One lesson learned from the surveys of Association of Social Work Boards members conducted last year: newsletters are great, brochures are cool, Facebook this's and Twitter that's and email blasts and website links are helpful, but nothing beats good ol' face-to-face interaction. After all, we're talking (mostly) social workers here. It's something that ASWB already knew, but it's also something that has been taken to heart over the last year or so, as the association continues to increase its outreach.

The importance of ASWB connecting with not only its member boards but a wide range of social work and regulatory interests is high on the association's list of objectives targeted through last year's strategic planning effort. Participants in those planning sessions realized, early on, that effectively pursuing the ASWB mission and vision would require the association to make itself known, to make connections, and to build relationships in a variety of ways. Participants also realized, early on, that this relationship-building couldn't always be accomplished from a distance: the reality is that it takes hands-on work from volunteers and staff.

Most of the in-person outreach work has been taken on by ASWB Director of Board Services Dwight Hymans and Executive Director Donna DeAngelis, who keep up a fairly extensive travel schedule with a focus on individual member board visits. Over the past year or so Hymans has visited boards in Texas, Montana, Nevada, Maryland, Minnesota, and Delaware, and will be visiting Tennessee in early May. A planned trip to the Arkansas board was forced to be cancelled due to weather: twice. In addition, Hymans was an invited guest to the meeting of the Canadian registrars held in September.

Mostly, these meetings involve just Hymans from ASWB staff, but visits to Texas and Minnesota included DeAngelis and ASWB Examination Program Manager Chuck Friedman, respectively.

For her part, DeAngelis has been involved in outreach to other social work and regulatory groups, including participation in the National Association of Social Workers Social Work Congress (with President Amanda Randall, and Hymans), the International Federation of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Doctoral Education Task Force and Leadership Roundtable, and a visit to the Florida board.

Other ASWB staff members have joined the effort from time to time in outreach to even more groups. Late last year, DeAngelis and

Friedman participated in a dialogue with the Touro College social work program in New York, while Communications Director Troy Elliott presented at meetings of the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) Leadership Conference, the National Conference of State Boards of Funeral Directors, and the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards. Friedman also moderated a session at the FARB Forum held in January of this year.

At the same time, the association keeps up its connections with the broader regulatory and testing worlds by participating in meetings of the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Database (HIPDB), FARB, the Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation (CLEAR), the Association of Test Publishers (ATP), the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) and the Citizens Advocacy Center (CAC).

And these efforts don't even include the ASWB exhibit booth (now actually several booths to accommodate overlapping meetings), with which staff and volunteers make themselves visible and available to attendees at various meetings around the country. Over the past year, ASWB has had a presence at meetings of the social work Baccalaureate Program Directors, CSWE, the Child Welfare League of America, National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), and state NASW chapter conventions in Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Texas, and Virginia, with additional exhibit booths planned for the chapter meetings in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. In addition to the booth, presentations were made at the meetings of CSWE, BPD, NABSW-Indiana and NABSW.

In order to meet the challenges of being so many places and doing so many things so often, ASWB relies on a cadre of staff and volunteers that can be called on to respond to a specific need. This year, for example, past ASWB Board of Directors Secretary Sandra Starks (KY) joined ASWB President-Elect Patricia Heard (NC) and current ASWB Secretary Jenise Comer (MO) to conduct a presentation on licensure and the ASWB examinations at the NABSW conference in late April. In late 2010, DeAngelis, Hymans, and volunteer Melinda Pilkinton (MS) presented on the ASWB Practice Analysis to attendees at the CSWE Annual Program Meeting. And earlier this spring, DeAngelis, Hymans, and volunteer Terry Cluse-Tolar (OH) shared practice analysis information with BPD attendees. Association Deputy Director Kathleen Hoffman, Publications and Web Applications Coordinator Bobbie Hartman, Receptionist LaTonya Bannister, Administrative Assistant Amanda Davidsen, and Candidate Registration Representative Pam Hoffman are also part of the group that takes the ASWB show on the road.

Still, as full as the calendar may seem, there's always a possibility that something could get squeezed in. To find out about possible board visits, contact Dwight Hymans at dhymans@aswb.org; to check ASWB availability to attend or present at a conference or meeting, contact the association's general email at info@aswb.org.



Helping out

A new ASWB program will bring board members to Vancouver

The pilot program designed to help member boards send attendees to the The Association of Social Work Boards Spring Education Meeting now has its first sponsored participants. This year, five board members from as many jurisdictions will be attending the May 12-15 meeting in Vancouver, BC with costs paid by ASWB.

Sponsored attendees are Sandra Barlow (FL), Joyce Bell (MD), Susan Egbert (UT), Jackie Johnson (MN), and Sharon Stuewe (KS). The recipients were chosen based on individual needs of member boards as well as the past attendance, with preference being given to jurisdictions who have been unable to regularly send an attendee to a Spring Education Meeting.

The program was established by the ASWB Board of Directors in response to ever-shrinking board budgets and tighter restrictions on money spent on travel. Although ASWB cannot provide funding for states that have instituted across-the-board travel bans, the association has been able to provide some relief to boards that simply don't have much money to spare.

Unlike the ASWB Annual Meetings, in which the association funds attendance for one delegate from every member board, travel, meals and lodging for the ASWB Spring Education meeting are at the cost of the individual attendee/board. The association does provide some meals and a reception, and does not charge a registration fee for the meeting.

The program launched this year is similar to an earlier funding project that allows up to five ASWB-funded member board administrators to attend the Administrators Forum meetings held just before each spring and fall association gathering. This year, administrators from Manitoba, Virginia, Oklahoma, the District of Columbia, and Indiana will be joining the Forum through ASWB funding.



Exceeding meeting expectations

With well more than half a year to go, ASWB's volunteers have already logged plenty of miles and hours

Ah, spring: the bloom of the crocus, the song of the robin, the tiny buds breaking on the branches of trees...and the flocks of ASWB volunteers and attendees boarding airplanes to crank up another year of committee meetings and trainings. Hope and promise is in the air; because after all, when the Finance Committee returns to Culpeper, can summer be far behind?

The work of ASWB's volunteers remains the backbone of the organization. From developing test questions and examination forms to reviewing ASWB's financial practices, the association's committees ensure that ASWB continues to provide the quality and range of services expected by its members. And as the association's services have increased, so have the demands placed on these volunteers – these days, committee service starts early in the year, and can stretch on to each Annual Meeting in late fall.

To date, ASWB has sponsored no less than three major committee meetings and one New Board Member Training session—and this does not count additional conference calls and email-based work. In all, well over 80 volunteers and staff had already attended one (or more) ASWB

meetings before the end of the first four months of 2011.

The first official gathering of the year (besides a January ASWB Board of Directors meeting) was for an ASWB New Board Member Training program, held March 4-6 in Reston, VA, which included 20 attendees from 14 jurisdictions. The two and a half day session covers legal and ethical aspects of regulatory board service, and introduces attendees



It didn't feel much like Spring – in fact, it got downright chilly at times – but the first ASWB New Board Member Training of 2011 was a well-attended, highly-rated event. Seated from left, are attendees Sarah MacDonald (NB), Scott Stephens (SC), and Nancy Pearson (TX); behind them, from left, Todd Herrboldt (SD), Irene Comfort (ON), Renée Cardone (PA), Melody Ellis (PEI), Dianne Lauritzen (SK), Training Coordinator Robin Jenkins (DC), Michael Whitlock (PEI), Training Coordinator Richard Silver (QC), Sarah Schulz (OK), Sharon Adams (MS), Rita Wiltzie (ON), Kelly Stratford (AB), Jim Mulvale (SK), and Paula Sacks (MA).

to the programs offered by ASWB. The training, hosted by co-coordinators Richard Silver (QC) and Robin Jenkins (DC), features interactive sessions facilitated by ASWB legal counsel and Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) Executive Director Dale Atkinson.

The ASWB New Board Member Training program continues to be one of the association's most highly-rated programs, and this year's first installment was no exception: out of 19 evaluations received, 18 participants rated the event as "excellent," with one attendee calling the program "spectacular." Two more training sessions are scheduled for 2011: June 24-26, in Virginia (this session is now full), and August 26-28 in Seattle, WA. As in the past, ASWB fully funds one attendees to the sessions, up to one per member board. For more information on participating in the Seattle session, visit the ASWB website at www.aswb.org.

The board training program occurred concurrently with the first meeting of the association's Approved Continuing Education Committee, which gathered for its first of two meetings this year. The committee's



The ASWB Approved Continuing Education Committee met for the first of two scheduled in-person meetings this year. Seated, from left, are Elaine Halsall, chair (BC), and Teresa Young (AL); standing from left, Anwar Najor Durack (MI), Kathy Outland (OR), Nadine Bean (PA), Alison MacDonald, Board of Directors liaison (AB), Micki Lilly (NC), and Mel Harrington (SD). Not pictured: Michael Hickerson (LA).

primary task involves the reviewing applicants to the ASWB continuing education provider program known as ACE, but the group is also responsible for addressing the host of policy issues that accompany such a responsibility. This year, topics addressed by the committee included whether and how to evaluate poster sessions as continuing education, methods for online review of application documents, and needs around the development of a new ACE database (see [related story](#) in this issue of association news).

About three weeks later, staff and volunteers were in Reston once again for the first meeting of the ASWB Examination Committee.

The ASWB Examination Committee meeting—really more of a multi-group “event”—has experienced significant growth, with 42 volunteers and staff gathering to not only evaluate potential test questions, but to review entire test “forms” before they are released for administration to candidates. The “form review” process has been a regular part of Examination Committee meetings, but this year, ASWB took a more direct role in the process as a part of the association's

move to its new testing vendor, Pearson VUE. In addition, the first Examination Committee meeting of the year now includes a structured orientation session for new members as well as a mini-training for the emeritus examination committee members returning to take on the form review duties. The extra time spent on orientation and training may have already paid off: ASWB met all of its form review goals, and in some instances exceeded goals for Examination Committee item review. That's one meeting down, three more to go for most of the Committee, which will meet again in June, August, and late September.

Most recently, the ASWB Finance Committee paid its annual visit to the association offices in Culpeper, VA. Members of this committee not only reviewed the current state of financial affairs at ASWB, but discussed how best to maintain the fiscal health of the association in the future. Among the decisions made at the meeting was a recommendation to increase the goals for reserve funding dedicated to legal and exam defense. Because no insurance exists for licensing examinations, the association must essentially "self-insure" by establishing reserve funds that are to be used only in the event of a legal challenge or exam security breach.

And that was just the beginning of ASWB's meeting year. Still up: the Spring Education Meeting, an ASWB Item Writer Training session, meetings of the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee, the Program and Education Committee, and the Regulations and Standards Committee, as well as two more New Board Member Training Sessions, three more Examination Committee meetings, and another ACE Committee meeting—all scheduled to wrap up just in time for the ASWB Annual Meeting, set November 3-5 in Oklahoma City. The up-side, if there is one, is that ASWB volunteers don't have to worry about getting lonely for each other—apparently, they just don't get the chance.



ASWB Finance Committee members met at the ASWB offices in Culpeper, Virginia in early April. Pictured from left, Tim Brown, ASWB Treasurer and committee chair (TX), Carole Bryant (SK), Patricia O'Reilly (WV), and ASWB President Elect Patricia Heard (NC). Not pictured: James Mellow (MD) and Michon Sax (ND).



All a-Twitter

ASWB has entered the world of social media. What about you?

If you tweet your likes to your friend requests, will your hashtags be posted on their walls, or do you need to poke their newsfeed?

If the pronouns and prepositions were the only understandable words in the previous sentence, don't worry: the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is now ready to help you take those first steps into social networking, that seemingly impenetrable world of tweeting, friend-requesting, posting, sharing, and liking.

Your first lesson? Social media is no longer just for the Bieber-obsessed. Grownups use it too. And your second lesson is, remember that sentence at the very beginning of this story? Turns out, even if you know what the words mean, it doesn't really make much sense. So relax.

Last month, ASWB launched both its Facebook and Twitter pages, two of the world's most popular methods for staying in touch with friends, family, interest groups, organizations, and even government agencies. The social media platforms allow for the easy and quick dissemination of information directly to whoever wants it, and can keep a network of people with shared interests in touch constantly. The systems can be used not only to reduce the need for group emails, mass mailings, press releases and the like, but also as a way to create a new level of information-sharing—quick, bite-sized postings that arrive in users' inboxes or on their phones to connect them with information on an ongoing basis.

Facebook is a free networking system that requires users to create an individual "page." Once created, this page allows participants to establish a network of "friends"—essentially, people with whom information will be shared automatically. Users can post messages on their individual pages, and these messages are disseminated to everyone else on the network of friends. Likewise, the postings from "friends" can be seen on the homepage of the Facebook user, and the whole system can be adapted to feed directly into handheld devices like smartphones and PDAs.

As an organization, ASWB uses Facebook primarily as a way to provide information quickly. To date, the ASWB's Facebook postings have shared meeting information and registration deadlines, and provided a "question of the week," in which ASWB answers a common question about social work licensing and the examinations. Facebook users who "like" (in other words, subscribe to) ASWB's Facebook page receive these announcements and updates automatically on their Facebook pages.

Twitter is an even more streamlined system, designed to deliver limited text messages to a user's twitter site (also free to create) or directly to a cell phone. Twitter users "follow" other Twitter accounts, which allows them to receive short messages, called "tweets," from everyone they're following. For ASWB, Twitter serves as a way to provide quick, timely notices of upcoming events, or changes at the ASWB website, or to point followers to recent publications or developments elsewhere.

The value of social media like Twitter and Facebook comes not only through the immediacy of the delivery method, but the ease with which information can be shared beyond the network of subscribed followers and friends. Both platforms make it simple for users to repost or "retweet" messages to their own followers and friends, which open up the possibility for a message to be spread exponentially—and very quickly.

Finding ASWB on Facebook and Twitter is easy—visitors to www.twitter.com can search for @ASWB to become followers of the association's Twitter posts, and can connect with the association via Facebook at www.facebook.com/ASWBonline.

Still a little hesitant? Still don't quite get it? Check out another great media site—YouTube—for informative videos that not only explain the systems, but provide tutorials on how to set up an account. A good basic explanation of Twitter can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o>. A good basic explanation of social networking (including Facebook) can be found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7TYKVc. Search for "tutorials" of both Facebook and Twitter to learn how to set up accounts.

See you online.



Pass rates remain stable

The 2010 pass rates for ASWB's biggest exams show little variance from 2009 stats

Recently-released 2010 pass rates for the Association of Social Work Boards examination program once again show stability from year to year, even as the number of administrations increases. The percentage of test-takers who pass on their first attempt continues to remain at the mid-to-high 70 percent range for the Bachelors, Masters, and Clinical examinations.

Over 34,000 social work licensing examinations were administered in 2010, an all-time high for ASWB.

First-time candidate pass rates for 2010 were: Bachelors – 78 percent; Masters – 74.3 percent; Clinical – 74.6 percent. The association's smaller-volume examinations featured pass rates of 74.4 percent for the Associate examination, and 57.9 percent for the Advanced Generalist examination.

For the Bachelors, Masters, and Clinical examinations, the 2010 numbers vary little from the pass rates in 2009, which featured a Bachelors pass rate of 79.3 percent (1.3 percentage points higher than 2010), a Masters pass rate of 74.5 percent (.2 percentage points higher than 2010), and a Clinical pass rate of 74.6 percent (the same percentage as 2010). Candidate volume at the Associate and Advanced Generalist levels is relatively low, making it difficult to establish any definitive conclusions about how pass rates relate from one year to the next.

Year-to-year comparisons such as these may be more difficult to make when rates are calculated for this year, because ASWB implemented new test blueprints as a result of the most recent practice analysis at the beginning of 2011. These kinds of blueprint changes can be expected to create more noticeable differences in pass rates from year to year—an unsurprising result of instituting new content distributions.

The association relies on the statistics from first-time candidates as the most meaningful passing rates of the examinations. Pass rates for 2010 can be found on the ASWB website, www.aswb.org.



Making life a little easier for social workers

Changes to the ASWB ACE database will connect social workers with the CE they need

By Jennifer Ward
Approved Continuing
Education Program
Coordinator

The Association of Social Work Boards Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program will soon be launching a new interactive continuing education database that will make it easy for social workers to find relevant, accessible courses from CE providers that have ASWB approval. The change will be one of the most significant—and visible—for the ACE program since I began my work as program coordinator 10 years ago.

Although ASWB has offered a CE course search feature on its website for several years, upkeep of the system was cumbersome. Navigation was difficult for social workers, with the search results limited to only links to approved provider websites, with yet more research required. The new system will allow approved ACE providers to input information directly to the database, and the search features have been streamlined to give users what they really need when looking for appropriate CE—including direct connection to individual course information.

In the new search system, social workers will be able to search under two broad headings: by course, or by provider. Under each broad heading, users can refine their searches by delivery methods (in-person, distance learning, or both) and location, with the course search page including an additional option to search by specific course topics (up to three of six possible areas: Individuals, Couples, Families, Children; Human Development, Diversity and Behavior in the Environment; Communities and Groups; Professional Relationships, Values and Ethics; Public Administration and Policy; Practice Administration).

The CE search feature is the most publicly-visible part of a custom-designed overhaul of the entire ASWB ACE database. Our new system will allow ASWB staff to more efficiently monitor provider information, and will create a more direct interface between these providers and the ACE program itself. I believe that the change will be much-appreciated by our ACE providers, and I am certain that the new search system will be a great service to licensees and boards.

I am happy to report that 38 jurisdictions now recognize the ACE program, which includes 151 providers. Here at ASWB, we are always happy to explain how ACE can help ease some of the administrative burdens placed on boards while helping to ensure that licensees have access to providers capable of supplying high-quality social work continuing education in a variety of formats. For more information on the ACE program in general, or the database changes in particular, please contact me at jward@aswb.org

*from the
staff*



Building up immunities

By Dale Atkinson,
Partner, Atkinson
& Atkinson

In order to effectively regulate a profession, a regulatory board must have appropriate legislation to base its important public protection decisions on. A carefully crafted scope of practice must be imbedded within this necessary legislation to provide practitioners and the consuming public with the parameters of what is and is not practice as defined. Individuals engaged in the practice as defined must be licensed in order to lawfully practice the profession.

Defining the scope of practice in law can be difficult, especially in a politically charged environment. Indeed, removing a licensee from the practice for “pushing the envelope” related to scope of practice may stimulate legal challenges to board determinations. Defenses of board determinations may in turn involve a consideration of the role of immunity. Consider the following:

A physician was licensed by the Oregon Medical Board in 1975. He practiced from 1975 until 1994, at which time his license was revoked by the board for “repeatedly demonstrate[ing] a willingness to move into uncharted waters in his practice without regard to the scientific merits of the proposed modality.” Apparently, the suspect modalities leading to his licensure revocation involved treatment of thyroid conditions.

In 1996, the Oregon legislature amended its medical practice act to provide that the use of an alternative medical treatment “shall not by itself constitute unprofessional conduct.” After this enactment, the disciplined licensee petitioned for and was granted reinstatement of his license to practice medicine. The reinstatement was conditioned on a Stipulated Order. The Stipulated Order was modified by order of the board in 2004 to require certain blood tests when diagnosing and treating patients potentially suffering from hypothyroidism. In January 2010, the board began investigating the licensee for violations of the 2004 modified order. On Sept. 2, 2010, the board notified the licensee that his medical license was suspended, effective immediately, and on Sept. 8, 2010, the board issued its order of emergency suspension (OES).

The licensee began litigation in Federal District Court for the District of Oregon, seeking non-economic and economic damages, punitive damages, and attorney’s fees. His complaint was filed against



the individual members of the board. He alleged that the defendants violated his due process and equal protection rights as provided for by the United States Constitution. Specifically, the licensee alleged that the defendants violated his constitutional rights by:

- restricting his right to practice alternative medicine as authorized by Oregon law
- failing to provide him with a hearing before the Sept. 2 immediate suspension
- suspending his license on Sept. 2 without first issuing an emergency suspension order
- failing to include in the OES the acts or omissions that violated the law, as well as
- failing to cite the statutes and/or regulations which constituted the grounds for the decision
- using the emergency suspension to impair the licensee's ability to prepare for the impending hearing

As part of its defense, the board filed a motion to dismiss the case based on the theory of absolute immunity. The court first addressed the standard of its review on a motion to dismiss. In short, the court asked whether the non-conclusory factual allegations of the complaint plausibly suggest that the plaintiff is entitled to relief.

Moving to the discussion of the defendants' legal arguments, the court outlined the absolute immunity principles that the federal courts have consistently accorded to state officials, including judges and regulatory board members. It held that absolute immunity is extended to regulatory board members if the functions in question are similar to those performed by judges or prosecutors. The court identified the six factors to be reviewed in making such a determination. They include:

- the need for performance of functions without harassment or intimidation
- the presence of safeguards that reduce the need for private damages actions as a means to control unconstitutional conduct
- an agency's insulation from political influence
- the importance of precedence
- the adversary nature of the process
- the correctability of error on appeal

In addressing each factor, the court found in favor of the board members. Importantly, it held that the board is a state agency charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the residents by regulating the profession. Regulating the profession includes the licensure and discipline of practitioners and all activities related to the administrative processes associated with such procedures. Because the acts of the board will likely stimulate litigation and requests for damages, recognition of immunity to protect this essential public protection process from harassment and intimidation is vital.

The court also held that procedural safeguards through the Administrative Procedures Act are in place, reducing the need for private damages actions. It held that the board is empowered to issue emergency suspensions and, so long as it simultaneously initiates the

contested hearing procedures, immediate suspension orders by the board under threat of imminent harm to the public are appropriate.

Regarding insulation from political influence, the court referenced the fact that the board has two public members whose presence lessens the risk that the board will make decisions based upon financial self-interest. Finally, the court reviewed the importance of precedence, the adversarial nature of the proceedings, and the correctability of error. It held that appellate court recognition of precedent coupled with the fact that administrative proceedings are adversarial in nature—that they subject the process to representation by counsel, presentation of evidence, witnesses, cross examination, rebuttal evidence and so forth—adequately protects persons subjected to the administrative process.

Having found for immunity for the defendants, the court turned to the scope of immunity. It held that the actions undertaken by the board in this circumstance mirrored that of the judiciary. It also noted that arguments by the licensee that the defendants may have “skipped steps in the process or omitted information from documents” are not relevant to the absolute immunity inquiry. “The acts of the Board in their exercise of statutory authority ‘are no less judicial or prosecutorial because they may have been committed in error.’” Thus, the court held that the defendants are entitled to absolute immunity. Based upon these findings, the court granted the defendants’ motion to dismiss the litigation under the defense of absolute immunity.

It is important for social work board members to understand the principle and scope of immunity protections in order to allow for the important board responsibilities to be undertaken free of influence and intimidation. This case presents an excellent example of absolute immunity protections afforded to members of the medical board.

Gambee v. Cornelius, 2011 U.S. District LEXIS 35944 (U.S. Dist. Ct. OR 2011)

Dale Atkinson is a partner with the Illinois law firm that is counsel to ASWB. He is also executive director of the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB).



Regulatory happenings

What's Happening in Social Work Regulation

By Dwight Hymans, LCSW
ASWB Director of Board
Services

Here is a brief synopsis of some of the current happenings in social work regulation. If you would like an item added to a future newsletter please contact Dwight Hymans, Director of Board Services, at dhymans@aswb.org.

Colorado, the Centennial State, has implemented [House Bill 09-1086](#) that establishes continuing professional development requirements for Licensed Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers who apply to renew, reinstate or reactivate their license or certificate on or after January 1, 2011. The new requirements call for all licensees to participate in reflective practice by completing the Professional Practice Survey or Professional Practice Rubric. The results must be used to draft a personal learning plan. For more information go to <http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cc/index.htm>.

Kentucky, the Bluegrass State, implemented several changes in regulations beginning March 2011. The changes include requiring continuing education hours in supervision for board approved supervisors, requiring that CE hours in ethics be completed in person, not through home study, distance learning or teleconference courses, and allowing for penalties if a licensee renews after the license has expired. For the full regulations go to <http://bsw.ky.gov/>.

Maryland, the Free State, created a new and accelerated mechanism for licensure by which highly experienced and qualified licensees from other states could become licensed in Maryland at the LCSW and LCSW-C levels. The regulations went into effect on October 1, 2010. For more information go to the board's website at <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/bswe/>.

Nevada, the Silver State, is considering several bills in the legislature that would impact regulatory boards and social work education programs in the state. One bill, if enacted, would eliminate the only two masters social work programs in the state. Other legislation being considered calls for increased scrutiny of and reporting from all quasi-public organizations that receive money from the state (see <http://leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/AB/AB242.pdf>).

Pennsylvania, the Keystone State, has introduced legislation to begin regulating social work practice for bachelor educated social workers. The bill SB922 is currently in committee. For full text of the bill go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?syear=2011&sind=0&body=S&type=B&BN=0922>.



Association Asides

Educators with strong ties to ASWB were, as always, much in evidence at the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. Among those who came by the association's exhibit were **CAROL BOYD** of the University of Mississippi, co-chair of the current Examination Committee; **STEVE MARSON** of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, former exam committee co-chair (who was presenting in four different sessions); **SAUNDRA STARKS** of the Western Kentucky University; **JEANNIE FALKNER** of Delta State, a member of the Supervision Task Force from several years ago; **CONNIE KLEDARAS** of Campbell University, former exam committee member; and **EMMA LUCAS-DARBY** of Carlow University and the Pennsylvania board, chair of the 2011 Bylaws and Resolutions Committee.

About a month later, **STEVE** received the Dial Community Service Award for faculty service in North Carolina. He heard on March 29, right after having a root canal.

Notice a thank-you card in your mailbox lately? The mailing was part of a project by ASWB staff to, well, say "thank you" to regulators, and to remind them of all the ways ASWB can keep them connected to the association and each other. But it took some after-hours work to get the envelopes addressed, stamped and sent—luckily the association office has plenty of willing folks on hand to chip in when it's needed.



Here, from left, staffers **PAM HOFFMAN, JENNIFER WARD, CHANDA ANDES, BETTY RANDALL, BRITTANY HANEY, SUBRENA BREEDEN, BOBBIE HARTMAN,** and **LATONYA BANNISTER** get 'er done. Also there, but somehow able to escape having her picture taken, was **KATHRYN CARSWELL**.

JENISE COMER, Director at Large for the ASWB Board of Directors and professor at the University of Central Missouri, helped staff the booth, and had a visit there from some of her own students—

ALLISON QUINT, ESTHER GREAR, ALICE HANS and SARA BELL.

TERRY CLUSE-TOLAR of the University of Toledo joined Executive Director **DONNA DEANGELIS** and Director of Board Services **DWIGHT HYMANS** in doing a very well-attended presentation on the practice analysis and the new content outlines at BPD.

Also at BPD was **DEANA MORROW**, who is completing her second and final term on the North Carolina Board. **DEANA** teaches at Winthrop University; she was regretful that she had served as long as the law allows. "It was one of the best professional experiences I ever had," she said of the board.

GLENN ABRAHAM, long-time member of the Ohio board, was also at the BPD conference. He retired after 30 years working in corrections, but is now teaching at Glennville State College in West Virginia.

Another retiree, or someone who is almost there, is **DALE SMITH** of Kentucky, a member of that board until recently as well as an ASWB committee chair. **DALE** is retiring from Western Kentucky University after 37 years in education. He recently drew attention by carrying a sign in a student social work club protest, a group indicating "Will work for change."

AMANDA DAVIDSEN of the ASWB staff has again been named to "Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges" for 2010-2011. She was one of only 145 students selected from Germanna Community College near Culpeper for the honor.

On her visit to scope out hotels for the 2012 spring meeting in Lexington, KY, Meeting Planner **JENNIFER HOFFMAN** was welcomed not only by hotel reps but by Kentucky board member and former ASWB president **JANICE JAMES** and board executive director **MARGARET HAZLETTE**.

Exam Committee veteran and item writer **MAESTRO EVANS** of Georgia emailed to say he is relocating on June 1 to Kigali, Rwanda.

A front-page article in USA Today in early March was on the topic of cheating in K-12 testing. Three psychometricians were quoted: **TOM HALADYNA, GREG CIZEK, and JOHN FREMER**. All of them have done studies or evaluations of the ASWB testing program.

ACE chair **ELAINE HALSALL** of British Columbia again presided over her committee's meeting in Northern Virginia in March just after getting off the red-eye flight into Dulles.

TRICIA BRESLIN of the Massachusetts board office and husband **SEAN** are the new parents of a baby girl. Board executive director **ERIN LEBEL** passed the big news along, saying the whole department is very excited and happy for them.

Moving on from new babies to grandbabies – exam committee co-chair **JANE MATHESON** is a proud new grandmother. Of course, you couldn't tell by the email announcement, which went "I am a gramma! **CLARABEL RUTH** - born March 12th in New Westminster BC . . . Isn't she beautiful? All doing well."

Less than a week later, March 18, **BRUCE BUCHANAN** of Iowa achieved the grandparent status for the second time. **LIAM COLE BUCHANAN** is the son of **BRUCE**'s son **MATT** and his wife **SARAH**. **BRUCE** is a former president and long-time exam committee stalwart.

ASWB's booth went to the Child Welfare League of America conference in Washington, D.C., with **AMANDA DAVIDSEN**, **LATONYA BANNISTER** and **PAM HOFFMAN** from the Culpeper office staffing it. Among their visitors was **AMELIA FRANCK-MEYER** of Minnesota, a member of the recent Practice Analysis Task Force.