



# Southeast Evaluation Association Newsletter

P.O. Box 10125 ❖ Tallahassee, FL 32302

March 2004

President: Gary VanLandingham

Secretary: Fely Curva

Treasurer: Nancy Copa

## SEA Annual Conference for 2004 A Success for All In Attendance

The 2004 Southeast Evaluation Association Annual Conference was attended by 172 people representing seven states, over fifty organizations, and eleven universities. The conference was highlighted by the keynote speaker, Dr. Hallie Preskill, who spoke on the possibilities and passion for evaluation. Dr. Preskill is a Professor of Organizational Learning and Instructional Technologies (OLIT) in the College of Education at the University of New Mexico.

The conference also featured plenary sessions on working with the media and planning SEA's activities for the next year. The conference also offered numerous sessions that focused on different policy areas and methodology topics, with presenters from all over the country. This year's conference also included roundtable discussions in different policy areas, which proved to be very popular among attendees.

On the final day of the conference attendees gathered for a luncheon and member meeting. Current president Dr. Carolyn Herrington presented Dr. Robert Crew, Associate Dean of the College of Social Sciences for Florida State University, a \$250 scholarship donation by the Southeast Evaluation Association in the name of William J. Serow, late husband of Betty Serow.

Following the presentation, Gary VanLandingham, President-Elect, officially took office and presented his 2004 SEA plan of action. Overall, both days of the conference provided attendees the opportunity to meet other program evaluators from all over the country and learn new skills to enhance their profession.

For more information on Dr Hallie Preskill visit her website at: <http://www.unm.edu/~olit/Facstaff/hallie.html>

## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### Ambitious Goals in the Coming Year for President VanLandingham and the SEA



I'd like to thank everyone who worked to make the 2004 SEA conference so successful. As shown by the conference attendance and the number and breadth of concurrent presentations that were given, program evaluation is a vibrant, diverse, and growing field. I also want to thank those members who have agreed to serve on the SEA board and its committees over the next year. The officer list appears later in this newsletter.

As discussed in the Business Meeting, SEA has ambitious goals for the coming year. These include increased communication within our membership through regular (hopefully monthly) newsletters,

substantially increased training opportunities that will include monthly brownbag lunch sessions as well as some half-day seminars, and enhanced outreach to university training programs, graduate students, and evaluation professionals working outside of Tallahassee.

We have created a graduate intern position to help carry these ideas to fruition, but we also need your help. We need folks to volunteer to provide occasional pieces for the newsletter, including profiles of your offices and upcoming events, as well as people to help plan training programs. If you would like to help out, please let one of the SEA board members know and we will put you to work! Given the talent and energy that exists within our membership, SEA can do great things.

Finally, if you have suggestions for how SEA can improve our services or this newsletter, please let us know. We are a member-driven organization, and we need your ideas as well as your help to move forward.

## REVIEW OF RECENT JOURNAL ARTICLES

### "Where We've Been and Where We're Going: Experts Reflect and Look Ahead"

*Evaluation Exchange*, Carol Hirschon Weiss, Saumitra SenGupta, et al. Vol. 9 no.4, Winter/Spring 2004, p2-6;20.

This article looks at the field of evaluation and what has changed over the last ten years. Six experts examine trends in areas such as theory based research, methodology, evaluation use, evaluation utilization, community-based evaluation, and evaluation and philanthropy.

Available online: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue24/theory.html>

### "Utilizing Collaboration Theory to Evaluate Strategic Alliances"

*American Journal of Evaluation*, Rebecca Gajda, Vol. 25 Issue 1, Spring 2004, p65-77.

With more organizations working together to achieve long term goals, collaboration has become a common strategy in many different policy fields. This article examines the principles of collaboration theory and its application to the field of evaluation.

Available online: doi:10.1016/j.ameval.2003.11.002

### "The Role of Work Context in Work Motivation: A Public Sector Application of Goal and Social Cognitive Theories"

*Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Bradley Wright, Vol. 14 no.1, January 2004, p59-78.

This article considers factors influencing work motivation of employees in the public sector. These factors could possibly influence the performance and productivity of an organization.

Abstract available online: <http://jpart.oupjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/14/1/59>

Full text is available by subscription.

## ELECTRONIC EVALUATION RESOURCES

### Basic Guide to Program Evaluation

Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD

[www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl\\_eval.htm#anchor1575679](http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1575679)

This document provides nonprofit or for-profit programs guidance for planning and implementing an evaluation process. The guide reviews the many different kinds of evaluations that can be applied to programs, including goals-based, process-based, and outcomes-based approaches. Also, see **Checklist for Program Evaluation Planning**, Carter McNamara, PhD, [www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/chklist.htm](http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/chklist.htm).

### Evaluation Handbook

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

<http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf>

This handbook provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a relevant and useful program tool. It was written primarily for project directors who have direct responsibility for the ongoing evaluation of W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded projects, but provides information that is useful to evaluators from any field.

### User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations

National Science Foundation Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication

[http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/CHAP\\_1.HTM](http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/REC/pubs/NSF97-153/CHAP_1.HTM)

Aimed at users who need practical rather than technically sophisticated advice about evaluation methodology, this handbook was initiated to provide in-depth information on qualitative techniques and to discuss how these methods can be combined effectively with quantitative measures. The main objective is to make users "evaluationsmart" and to provide the knowledge needed for planning and managing useful evaluations.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### Process Evaluation for Public Health Interventions and Research

Allan Steckler, Laura Linnan (Eds.); Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2002, 400 pages.

*Evaluation and Program Planning*, William White, Vol. 27 Issue 1, February 2004, p118-119.

The authors of this book examine the idea of process evaluation in evaluating public health intervention programs. Allan Steckler and Laura Linnan examine methods and results from twelve process evaluation studies across

the country. While the book specifically deals with issues in public health interventions, evaluators in other areas will be able appreciate the methods and analysis discussed by the authors. William White reviews the piece and concludes the authors have added valuable research to the field of process evaluation.

Available Online: doi:10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2003.09.006

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**SEA NEWSLETTER SPOTLIGHT - MGT OF AMERICA, INC.**

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By Sara Steyer Hamon, Ph.D.

MGT of America, Inc. is a national management research and consulting firm specializing in providing services to public and private sector clients. Founded in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1974, MGT also maintains regional offices in Texas, Washington, California, and South Carolina.

MGT's corporate headquarters, located in Tallahassee, employs more than 75 professional staff in a variety of disciplines. MGT has worked with governments from the White House to the school board to city hall, including more than 2,300 public agencies in 48 states and a number of foreign countries. Over the years, MGT has developed a wide range of specialties, including

- program evaluations
- management reviews and performance auditing
- organizational and operational assessments
- strategic planning
- public policy research
- staffing and human resource studies
- strategic communications and marketing
- cost-benefit and financial feasibility analysis
- stakeholder input research.

MGT staff includes individuals who have worked in various public sector roles, including positions as city and county managers, legislative directors, state agency heads, university and community college administrators, and school district administrators. This direct experience in the public sector means that MGT recommendations

have credibility, realism, and pragmatism. Additionally, staff recognize how unique programs fit into the big picture at the local, state, regional, or national level. Public administrators quickly recognize that staff have a detailed understanding of their operations and can be confident with their skills and performance.

MGT hires employees with a range of educational backgrounds and professional experiences for positions such as research assistant, analyst, and consultant. In general, the abilities required for a position with MGT include strong analytical, quantitative, and/or qualitative research skills; well-developed communication and writing skills; and proficiency with software programs (e.g., Excel, Access, SPSS, PowerPoint) for data management, analysis, and reporting.

In addition to its national reputation, MGT frequently serves the state and the local Tallahassee area, not only through consulting engagements but also through employee leadership and community involvement. MGT has been active in philanthropy projects with United Way, Red Cross, Elder Care Services, and FAVACA – just to name a few. In recognition of ongoing professional achievements and service to the community, the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce recognized MGT with its 1999 Small Business of the Year award.

For more information about MGT or to learn about employment opportunities, visit [www.mgtamer.com](http://www.mgtamer.com) – or contact one of the many SEA members who work for MGT.

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**UPCOMING DATES OF TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS IN THE SOUTHEAST REGION**

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**March 3-4, 2004**

Grant Writing Workshop  
Cost: \$240  
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL  
<http://learningforlife.fsu.edu>  
Contact: [mmciver@cpd.fsu.edu](mailto:mmciver@cpd.fsu.edu)

**March 8-11, 2004**

R & D Evaluation for 2004  
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA  
<http://www.pe.gatech.edu/conted/servlet/CEHome>

**March 11, 2004 - 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m.**

SPSS for Health Research  
Cost \$175  
Rollins School of Public Health  
Emory University, Atlanta, GA  
[http://www.sph.emory.edu/SITE/calendar\\_month.html](http://www.sph.emory.edu/SITE/calendar_month.html)

**March 22, 2004 - 8:30a.m.-4:30p.m.**

Program Evaluation  
Cost: \$175  
Rollins School of Public Health  
Emory University, Atlanta, GA  
[http://www.sph.emory.edu/SITE/calendar\\_month.html](http://www.sph.emory.edu/SITE/calendar_month.html)

**March 28, 2004**

Citizens not Spectators: Fulfilling the Promise of Democracy (15th Annual National Service Learning Conference)  
\$475 for Full Conference, \$295 for Two Day  
Caribe Royale Resort, Orlando, FL  
Contact: Libby Ethridge at 813-974-1029 or [Ethridge@tempest.coedu.usf.edu](mailto:Ethridge@tempest.coedu.usf.edu)

**Brief Description:** This conference will give individuals the opportunity to participate in professional development with K-H educators, administrators, pre-service teacher education faculty, researchers and others. Participants will explore and learn together through interactive discussions, sharing of methods, research and learning models.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF INNOVATIVE EVALUATION MODELS: ADMINISTRATIVE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT

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*This section of the SEA Newsletter will highlight evaluation models that use innovative methodologies to address complex subjects. If you would like to submit your methodology for consideration, please send a short abstract to [SEAnews@bitbrothers.com](mailto:SEAnews@bitbrothers.com)*

**Title:** *Special Examination: Administrative Establishment of Child Support Is Efficient for Uncontested Cases; Compliance Is Better for Orders Established Judicially*

Available at: <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/monitor/reports/govt/r03-36s.html>

**Evaluators:** Chuck Hefren and Steve Harkreader, OPPAGA  
Lizette Kelly, Department of Revenue

**Purpose:** To conduct a pilot study to determine whether incorporating an administrative method to establish child support orders (as an alternative to the judicial process) would improve Florida's child support order establishment process.

**Methodology:** The methodology used for this study was unlike those used for most OPPAGA program evaluations. For example, the research design was an experimental design that used randomly assigned control and experimental groups. This type of design is not used very often in policy studies. Also, a weighting technique was necessary because the random selection process did not assign equivalent groups to the administrative process and the judicial process. There was a disproportionate percentage of cases that were assigned to the judicial process where the custodial parent was actually a relative (i.e., a grandmother) instead of the child's parent. These types of cases take longer to establish and have poorer compliance rates.

The weighted analysis revealed that compliance for support orders established through the administrative process was worse than for orders established via the judicial process. Upon further analysis, OPPAGA analysts found that non-custodial parents (NCP) were less likely to be involved in the establishment process when the administrative process was used.

The analysts speculated that, regardless of whether an administrative or judicial process was used, compliance would be significantly better in those cases where the NCP participated in the process. To test this hypothesis, the entire population was separated into two different groups: one where the NCP was involved in the process, and one where the NCP was not involved. A regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis.

**Results:** Pilot study results show that the administrative process was more efficient for establishing uncontested child support orders. However, compliance with support orders was higher for orders established through the judicial process. A contributing factor to the lower collection rates for administrative support orders was the lack of involvement of non-custodial parents during the establishment process.

**Conclusion:** The effectiveness of the Florida's Child Support Enforcement Program can be improved by assigning contested cases to the judicial establishment process and scheduling informal discussions with the noncustodial parent and offering mediation services as part of the administrative support order establishment process.

For more information on this methodological approach, contact Steve Harkreader at (850) 487-9225 or [harkreader.steve@oppaga.fl.gov](mailto:harkreader.steve@oppaga.fl.gov).

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### SEA Board Meeting

The next SEA board meeting is March 8th at 11:30am at the Radisson Hotel on Monroe Street.

### Employment Opportunities:

The SEA Job Board highlights evaluation job opportunities in Florida state government and the private sector. Evaluation job opportunities in other states are also included, as are requests for proposals and grant opportunities.

Visit the job board at: [www.bitbrothers.com/sea/jobs.htm](http://www.bitbrothers.com/sea/jobs.htm).

### Brown Bag Lunch for March

Write down Wednesday, March 31 in your calendars as the date of the first brown bag lunch.

Topic and location to be announced.

### Contribute to the SEA Newsletter:

Would you like to contribute an article, book review, or electronic resource to the newsletter? Do you know of something newsworthy to share with your SEA colleagues?

Contact the SEA Newsletter editors: [seanews@bitbrothers.com](mailto:seanews@bitbrothers.com) or (850) 487-9228. The editors of the newsletter reserve the final right to determine its content.

### Thanks to Everyone Who Helped with the Newsletter:

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