



# SPPS NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Section on Sociological Practice and  
Public Sociology, American Sociological Association

Winter 2011

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Taking on a newsletter editorship from someone who has done it so well for so long is quite daunting! As you can see from the mast of this newsletter, it takes two people to replace Leora Lawton, who has been the mainstay of this section's newsletter. Thank you Leora for serving us so well and leaving your legacy of a wonderful model to follow!

Carey Sargent and I have partnered in taking over from Leora. I will edit the newsletter while Carey manages the website. If you have articles, essays, news items, or photos of public sociology in action, please send them to me at [Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu](mailto:Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu)

We welcome your contributions to future issues of the newsletter.

## FROM THE CHAIR

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### Reaching Out Beyond Traditional Borders: How Are We Doing?

**Roy Feldman**  
Behavior Analysis in NY, LLC

In our summer, 2009 SPPS Newsletter, Chair Augie Diana reaffirmed the benefits anticipated from the Section's name change – adding Public Sociology – and the Section's commitment to make the change in more than name. Since then, during the term of Jeff Will, and in the Section's programming for 2010 and 2011 we have been able to carry out that commitment, including Section papers in the area of Public Sociology at our annual meetings, and by nominating and electing to our Council superb new members whose work focuses on or includes public sociology. A second objective of the Council was to broaden our reach and connection to the foundation world. At our Atlanta ASA meetings in 2010, we were pleased to have invited presentations by two senior foundation officers. Dr. Karen Davis, President of the Commonwealth Fund, talked about the Foundation's prominent role in the development of the Obama Health Care Law. Dr. Jackie Williams Kaye, senior officer of the Atlantic Philanthropies, and now with Wellspring Advisors, spoke to us about the wide variety of differences among foundations that are committed to exploring different approaches to social change. She also spoke of alternative methods, meanings and funding of social change. Her caution was, "When you know one foundation, you know one foundation." This was more than amusing because foundation grant applicants and recipients often learn this in fits and starts.

Cary Sargent of the University of Virginia, a recent Ph.D., volunteered to become coeditor of this Newsletter, (taking on the technical

production side) and has been appointed an ex-officio member of our Council; thank you Carey. Many thanks also to Council member Johanna Bishop for taking on the major tasks of editing this Newsletter. The membership and the Council are particularly grateful to Leora Lawton of TechSociety Research, who has edited this Newsletter (and been our website manager) for a very substantial term after being Chair of SPPS. She generously agreed to facilitate a smooth transition to the new editors and has been available whenever she was called.

On a personal note, I want to thank the membership and the Council for helping me in my year as Chair-elect and as Chair this year. I felt comfortable taking on the role of SPPS Chair because my career has included twenty years in academia at Hopkins, Harvard and MIT followed by approximately twenty years as president of a small business doing applied sociological or social psychological research. Some of the areas in which I've worked have been health promotion, medical education, nursing education, palliative care, employment training of disadvantaged youth, recidivism of juvenile offenders, juvenile substance abuse prevention, consultation for state courts, and assessing programs which address homelessness. These projects ranged from qualitative work to randomized control trials of various interventions. Projects have been funded by sources ranging from the Department of Labor to the US Public Health Service/CSAP and from a wide range of private foundations. This has given me a good level of comfort with the objectives of SPPS and with the work of our members.

Your Council represents a superb group of practicing sociologists focusing on applied research and educating the world around us

about the knowledge base of sociology and its potential to improve social and structural outcomes. Becky Hsu, our Secretary-treasurer has been helping us develop connections with recent Ph.D.s in our field. Many others guarantee our strong connections with university-based research. Mario Small of the University of Chicago and Phil Nyden of Loyola, are exemplars. Augie Diana and Chair Elect Yonette Thomas represent good connections with government. My personal

view is that *as a Section* we are at our best conducting and promoting the highest quality research in sociological practice and public sociology, teaching our students informing our clients, and educating the public. Members with different views are invited to respond in future issues of this SPPS Newsletter.

Thank you all for your confidence in our mission and your commitment to SPSS.

## APPLYING SOCIOLOGY ON CAMPUS

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### Sheltering, Servicing, and Applying Sociology on Campus

Kathy Shepherd Stolley, PhD

Batten Associate Professor of Sociology, Virginia Wesleyan College

This week (the second week in January 2011), our students at Virginia Wesleyan College (VWC) have been busy. They've hosted a salsa dance party, bingo, a hair salon, a worship service, an ice cream party, pick-up basketball games, gently-used clothing drives, visited with therapy pets, hung out with veterans and heard their stories, been schooled about life on the streets, and prepared meals for more than 70 homeless individuals every evening. A busy list indeed, but nothing there is especially remarkable or out-of-the-ordinary until I add that they've done all this without ever leaving our college's gymnasium.



For the fifth consecutive year, VWC has hosted an on-campus homeless shelter for one week during our short winter session term. The shelter is conducted through the College Office of Community Service in partnership with a local homeless service and advocacy organization, Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless (PVH). It is one stop on an emergency shelter schedule that rotates weekly between approximately 60 churches and synagogues from November through April. We are the only educational institution on the PVH schedule.

When we do service-learning, the usual model is to send our students to the service, but what if we brought the service to them? Could we get more students involved? Could we expose more of them to applied sociology and the sociological perspective? Could we pull off a bigger service project that serves more people? All good questions.

Our shelter started as a community service project that became tied to a service-learning course, and then became a great example of applied sociology in action. And it became a popular example of combining service and applied sociology as well. Shelter guests average 70+ individuals per night; our shelter management team has the good problem of having to carefully manage the staffing schedule to ensure that we don't have more volunteers than guests. At a small liberal arts school where our average class size is 13, the winter sessions class has to be capped when it hits 60 (after we learned that the 79 students who registered in year three were too many for the available volunteer slots).

At the most basic level, guests are sheltered and well fed, both physically and socially. That is the heart of what the shelter was intended to do, and what it continues to do. Other outcomes are wide ranging. Among them, both qualitative and quantitative data support changing attitudes toward homelessness among the student volunteers and broader understandings of social structures/poverty. Students learn to "see" sociological concepts such as deviance, discrimination, stereotyping, labeling, and the "isms" of race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities with new eyes. They have made presentations to audiences ranging from the campus community to national conferences. Two students have completed internships with PVH. A third student who volunteered with PVH for no academic credit was elected to their Board of Directors and subsequently became director of a summer shelter operated by the city. Alumni return to volunteer and bring donations from their employers. College and local media raise visibility of the issue of homelessness. One student manager received a job offer based on one of these articles.



Yet, at the end of each shelter week, and now even more glaringly at the end of year five, the thing that becomes most apparent to our students is that sheltering is only a band-aid. The complexity of homelessness, and the inadequacies of the systems and structures that are intended to solve the problem, and problematic policies are apparent.

Although the overall picture of homelessness is bleak, as an applied sociologist and professor, I have to be encouraged that at the end of shelter week, there is a new batch of students who are thinking about homelessness in new and creative ways, armed with better-research and

experience based understandings, and with new ideas, energy and initiative.

Most faces in shelter each year are new. The advocacy and support organizations have found assistance for many of our shelter guests who are now housed, although tenuously in many cases. However, a few faces in shelter are familiar; we have seen them for five years now. A few cycle in and out such as a guest from year one who found a job and housing shortly after sheltering with us; we missed our new friend the next years and wished him well. This year, in a harsh economy after having been layoff number 36 out of 36 at his employer, our old friend is back in shelter. So for now, we begin to plan for shelter year six.



Selected information about the VWC shelter follows.

Baker, Leona. 2011, January 20. "Simply to Serve." Virginia Wesleyan College website.

<http://ww2.vwc.edu/news-a-events/recent-news/1216-simply-to-serve>

Messina, Debbie. 2007. "For Wesleyan Students, A Life Lesson." *The Virginian-Pilot*. January 12.

PilotOnline.com. Retrieved January 2007.

<http://hamptonroads.com/node/206901>.

Stolley, Kathy S. Forthcoming. "An On-Campus Homeless Shelter: The Sociological Imagination, Service-Learning, and Applied Sociology." *Theory in Action*.

Stolley, Kathy S., Diane E. Hotaling, and Felecia Kiser. 2008. "An On-Campus Homeless Shelter: A Case Study in Applied Sociology and Service-Learning." *Journal of Applied Social Science*. 2 (2/Fall): 29-38.

Virginia Wesleyan College News Release. 2009. "Wesleyan's Winter Homeless Shelter Returns for Fourth Year." VWC website. Retrieved November 2010. <http://ww2.vwc.edu/news-a-events/e-news/325-wesleyans-winter-homeless-shelter-returns-for-fourth-year>

## **Sociology in Practice: Applying the "Honor" in Honor Society; Developing "Community" in a Non-Residential Campus**

Johanna P. Bishop. MS, MEd

Director, Behavioral Science Programs, Wilmington University

How does one develop "community" among a highly diverse student population spanning 3 states and 10 campus locations? How can members of an honor society, who have worked so hard to earn their academic honors while still maintaining fulltime jobs and managing their families, actively participate in a student organization? These are the challenges faced with setting up an honor society for Behavioral Science, Organizational Dynamics, and Psychology majors in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Wilmington University four years ago.

Our students are very proud to have attained academic honors that invite them to join as members of the honor society. It allows them to wear honor chords at graduation and provide additional distinction that marks their academic achievement.

However, in order to impress upon them the role and responsibility they now have in society, this group needed to create a visible effort and “live” their roles.

One way we developed the social responsibility our students have to others was to include a food drive at the time of the induction banquet. Because we induct new members in November, the timing is also good to help replenish the local food closets. Therefore, besides being recognized for individual academic honors, each annual induction ceremony also becomes an opportunity to help others, as new inductees and guests bring non-perishable food items to the induction ceremony banquet.



Other group-level service projects have included collecting used children’s books which were donated to community centers, used eye glasses for the Lion’s Club, and used cell phones for the coalition against domestic violence.

Because many of our students live near, and attend classes at campus, two hours away from the main campus, it has been a challenge to get group-wide involvement or have meetings. We rely heavily on using

Black Board Discussion Board postings and are in the process of developing a blog to keep our students involved. Last year we added a component of having students complete an individual service project with an organization or cause of their choice. The response was tremendous as students organized fun fairs for church summer camps, participated in the Easter Seals volleyball tournament, served in food kitchens, visited the elderly, and participated in rebuilding homes in Mississippi. One student even involved her whole family as they all chose to forego gifts and gave their gift money to the Red Cross!



Student testimonials have been positive, as many have said the satisfaction gained from helping others far exceeded the efforts they expended in service. The concept of service has now become so ingrained in the organization that new members begin by posting their service projects on Black Board.

## 2010 ELECTION RESULTS

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We'd like to thank all outgoing officers for their dedicated service to the section. Your hard work on the section's behalf is much appreciated!

We are especially indebted to Jeff Will, for his work as section chair over the last year. Thank you Jeff for keeping everyone organized during the conference calls!

Please welcome the following new officers and council members who were elected to the section in 2010:

*Chair-elect*

**Yonette Thomas**, Howard University

*Council:*

**Jennifer Nargang Chernega**, Winona State University

**Deirdre A. Oakley**, Georgia State University

**Mario Small**, University of Chicago

## SECTION NEWS

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### Membership

As of Fall 2010, we have 306 members in the section. If we can increase our membership to 400 members then we will be eligible for having another session at the annual meeting. The benefits of joining this section are numerous:

- Opportunities to network with practitioners and scholars with similar interests,
- Stay "in the know" of cutting edge information,
- Enjoy discussions with colleagues in the field, and
- Develop a "home base" when you attend the annual meeting!

*Please encourage your colleagues to join this section.*

Student members are also welcomed. Student membership is *only* \$7.00 and scholarship funds are available to cover this cost for the

student. However, the student must be a member of ASA in order to be eligible.

### 2010 Award Winners

The 2010 winners for ASA's Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology were Jan Fritz and Ross Koppel.

### Reaching Out to Practitioners

How can we better reach out to Sociological Practitioners?

If you have ideas about how the section can better reach out to practitioners, please share them with any of the officers or council members.

It is important to get more practitioners in the fold.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

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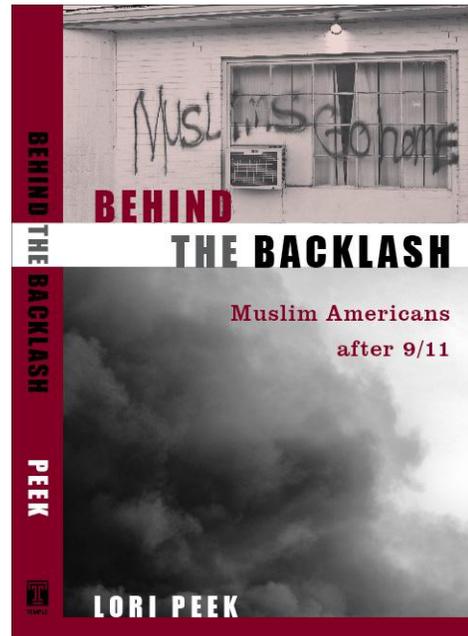
### Lori Peek Publishes Book

As the nation tried to absorb the shock of the 9/11 attacks, Muslim Americans were caught up in an unprecedented wave of backlash violence. Public discussion revealed that widespread misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islam persisted, despite the striking diversity of the Muslim community.

Letting the voices of 140 ordinary Muslim American men and women describe their experiences, Lori Peek's path-breaking book, *Behind the Backlash* presents moving accounts of prejudice and exclusion. Muslims speak of being subjected to harassment before the attacks, and recount the discrimination they encountered afterwards. Peek also explains the struggles of young Muslim adults to solidify their community and define their identity during a time of national crisis. *Behind the Backlash* seeks to explain why blame and scapegoating occur after a

catastrophe. Peek sets the twenty-first century experience of Muslim Americans, who were vilified and victimized, in the context of larger sociological and psychological processes. Peek's book will be of interest to those in disaster research studies, sociology of religion, and race and ethnic relations.

More Information: [http://www.temple.edu/tempresstitles/2016\\_reg.html](http://www.temple.edu/tempresstitles/2016_reg.html)



## INTERESTING WEBLINKS

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### Blogs Related to Sociology

Do you Blog? Do you tweet? Do you have favorites to share? Listed below are blogs links that may be of interest to you:

- Interesting for students:  
<http://nortonbooks.typepad.com/everydaysociology/2010/07/good-meetings.html>
- From the research department at ASA:  
<http://asaresearch.wordpress.com/2011/02/01/sociology-phds-and-non-academic-careers/>
- Interesting blog about teaching and ‘practicing with babies:’  
<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/01/17/collegiate-practice-babies-changing-ideas-of-parenting/>
- Being sociologically mindful:  
<http://kjangela.blogspot.com/2011/01/being-sociologically-mindful.html>
- What is Public Sociology?  
<http://www.thepublicsociologist.com/2011/01/what-is-public-sociology.html>

Send your blog or twitter picks to [Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu](mailto:Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu) for inclusion in the next newsletter

## MEETING NEWS

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### Annual Meeting Location Change

The annual meeting location change and moving from Chicago to Las Vegas meant that the section has to make new arrangements for the section reception. Section Chair Roy Feldman expressed the sections appreciation to Phil Nyden, who had so generously offered to host the reception in Chicago.

The theme for the annual meeting in Las Vegas is “Social Conflicts: Multiple Dimensions and Arenas.” The topic is present in everyday life. For more information about the theme, please click on [http://www.asanet.org/AM2011/2011\\_Annual\\_Meeting\\_Theme.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/AM2011/2011_Annual_Meeting_Theme.cfm)

### Upcoming Annual Meetings

ESS: The **Easter Sociological Society** will be holding its annual meeting on February 24-27, 2011 at the Sheraton on Society Hill in Philadelphia. The theme is “Intersectionalities and Complex Inequalities.” See the ESS website for more information: <http://www.essnet.org/>

MSS: The **Midwest Sociological Society** will be holding its annual meeting on March 24-27, 2011 at the Hilton at the Ballpark in St. Louis, Missouri. The theme is “The Dynamics of Inequality.” See the MSS website for more information: <http://www.themss.org/>

PSS: The **Pacific Sociological Society** will be holding its annual meeting on March 10-13, 2011 at the Downtown Sheraton in Seattle. The theme is “Sociologists As Claims Makers: Turning Theory Into Action.” See the website for more information: <http://www.pacificsoc.org/>

SSS: The **Southern Sociological Society** will be holding its annual meeting on April 6-9, 2011 at the Hilton at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront Hotel in Jacksonville, Florida. The theme is “Power, Revisted.” See the SSS website for more information: <http://www.southernsociologicalsociety.org/annual.html>

The **Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology** will be holding its annual meeting on October 13-15, 2011 at the Le Pavillion Hotel in New Orleans. See the website for more information <http://www.aacsnet.org/wp/>

Before you know it the next newsletter will need your thoughts, articles, news, essays, etc. If you have something you'd like to share, please send your contributions to newsletter editor Johanna Bishop at

[Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu](mailto:Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu)

*Please send your contributions in Word docs and not puff files. Thank you!*

We're all electronic! In addition to being emailed in the listserv with a link and as an attachment, this and previous newsletters are archived at [www.techsociety.com/asa/communications.html](http://www.techsociety.com/asa/communications.html).

## **AWARDS – Call for Nominations** \_\_\_\_\_

If you are aware of another sociologist who has exhibited work worthy of being recognized, please consider nominating him/her for one of the awards described below. If you know of someone who has made the world a better place, please consider nominating this person for the **William Foote Whyte Award**.

If you know of a student whose work is exemplary and makes a contribution to the field of sociological practice/ public sociology, please consider nominating the student for the **Robert Dentler award**.

### **William Foote Whyte Distinguished Career Award**

The William Foote Whyte Award is for up to two individuals who have made notable contributions to sociological practice and public sociology, which can include several of the following elements: outstanding clinical, applied or public sociological work, exceptional service to the section, publications that advance both the theory and methods of sociological practice or public sociology, or mentoring and training of students for careers in sociological practice or public sociology. Nominations should consist of a letter detailing the nominee's contributions and supporting materials such as a curriculum vitae or resume, and/or additional letters of support. Please send nominations by March 15, 2011 to Roy Feldman, the Section Chair ([royfeldman@bainy.org](mailto:royfeldman@bainy.org)). Self-nominations are welcome.

### **Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement**

The Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement is for up to two graduate students who have made a promising contribution to the field, such as a project or paper in the areas of sociological practice and public sociology. Work done within the three years prior to the conferral of the award will be considered. Products of graduate- level classes, internships, or independent projects are eligible. An award recipient who attends the 2011 ASA Annual Meeting in Las Vegas will receive a cash award of \$200 to offset travel expenses. Nominations should consist of a letter detailing the nominee's contributions, a copy of the paper or other project, and supporting materials such as curriculum vitae or resume, and/or other additional letters of support. Please send nominations by May 15, 2011 to Roy Feldman, the Section Chair ([royfeldman@bainy.org](mailto:royfeldman@bainy.org)). Self-nominations are welcome.