

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

Prepared for the American Sociological Association
Section on Sociological Practice

Summer 2003

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Honors to Clinical Sociologists

Drs **Judith A Cook** and **C. Margaret Hall** have been honored recently for their outstanding contributions to our community. We wish to highlight their work and commend them for their ongoing devotion to the profession.

The **William Foote Whyte Award for 2003** is presented to Dr. **Judith A. Cook**, University of Illinois at Chicago. Those supporting her emphasized her methodological innovation, her commitment to inclusive research that affirms the dignity of people with disabilities and the value of drawing on multiple perspectives, and her inspirational influence on students in sociology and a variety of other disciplines.

The William Foote Whyte Award is presented to an individual who has made notable contributions to sociological practice which can include several of the following elements: outstanding clinical or applied work, exceptional service to the section, publications that advance both the theory and methods of sociological practice, or mentoring an training of student for careers in sociological practice.

Judith Cook received her Ph.D. in Sociology in 1982 from The Ohio State University. Since 1995, she has been Professor of Sociology in Psychiatry and Director of the Mental Health Services Research Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Earlier, she was an N.I.M.H. Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Chicago (1982-84) and Director of the Thresholds Research Institute, Thresholds, Inc., Chicago (1984-95). She has held faculty appointments at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

She has attracted major funding to support her work. Currently, she heads the National Research and Training Center on Psychiatric Disability and Self-Determination, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the

Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

She is the author or co-author of numerous articles and other publications involving mental health and HIV. Articles in press will soon appear in *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *AIDS Care*, and *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. Her eight 2002 articles appeared in such outlets as *New Directions for Evaluation* and *American Journal of Public Health*. She currently serves as an Expert Consultant to the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, a member of the National Task Force on Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities, and an Advisory Committee Member of the Schizophrenia Patient Outcome Research Team at the University of Maryland at Baltimore. She has been honored with the Armin Loeb Award for Excellence in Psychosocial Rehabilitation Research, presented by the International Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (1995), the 2002 Mentor of the Year Award, presented by the Chancellor's Office, University of Illinois at Chicago, and the 2003 Researcher Award, presented by the Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Greater Chicago.

Professor **C. Margaret Hall**, Sociology and Anthropology Department, Georgetown University has been awarded the District of Columbia Sociological Society 2003 Stuart A. Rice Award for Career Achievement.

KGS: Of all that you've done, what was most personally rewarding for you? What feels like the most significant accomplishment?

CMH: The most personally rewarding aspect of my career as a clinical sociologist is my long term effort in theory construction. My identity empowerment theory has transformed how I relate to others, and my concept of social intelligence is a vital aspect of my everyday life. My biggest accomplishment is to be able to communicate to others how to make use of these tools.

KGS: Would you describe for us the highlights of your career?

CMH: The earliest highlight was being accepted into Dr. Murray Bowen's postgraduate program in family theory and family therapy in the Department of Psychiatry, Georgetown University Medical Center. I was the first sociologist to be included in the "holy trinity" of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Another highlight was being employed as a "clinical sociologist" (described as such in brochures) at Frederick County Community Mental Health Services in 1971, seven years before the Clinical Sociology Association was founded. My challenge was to work as a family therapist, and to coordinate community services for a wide variety of clients. The director of the clinic, where I worked only one day a week, was very enthusiastic about the possibilities of clinical sociology, especially when I earned a reputation for making progress with "difficult" clients. A last highlight was having a consulting office constructed at my home, where I developed my practice in clinical sociology. Somehow having this physical space added legitimacy to my serious professional pursuit of being a clinical sociologist.

KGS: What would you like those considering joining the field to think about in making the decision?

CMH: Consider the creative potential of sociological thinking to solve problems and improve the quality of life in society. Building a career in clinical sociology is a remarkable way to bring about constructive changes, and to create a more just world.

**Training for Accreditation Review Committee:
Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology**

The Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (CACS) will conduct training for individuals who are interested in serving as a member of a CACS Accreditation Review Committee (ARC). An ARC conducts the accreditation review process for any applicant program seeking accreditation from the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology.

This training is set for **Mon Aug 18, 2003** from 12:00 - 4:00 pm in Atlanta at the Wyndam Atlanta Downtown during the ASA and SPA annual meetings. Anyone interested should contact Joyce Iutcovich <Joycei@kurc.org>

Congratulations to Newly Elected Section Officers

The Section welcomes its newly elected officers. The Chair-Elect for 2003-04 is **Jay Weinstein**. Jay is the President of the Society for Applied Sociology and is a Professor at Eastern Michigan University.

The new Secretary-Treasurer is Judith K. Little, who is an Associate Professor of Sociology, Humboldt State University and has been active in the ASA in many ways.

Three new Council members will take office in 2003 and will serve through 2006. They are:

Ann Marie Charvat, InService, Inc, and certification Chair of the SPA.

Theodore A. Lamb, Evaluator, Biological Sciences Curriculum Study.

Cynthia L. Sipe, Consultant, North Wales, PA

Thanks to everyone who agreed to be a candidate for office this year, as well as to our outgoing officers!

Practice-Related Events at ASA in Atlanta

Please check the ASA and SPA websites and/or programs for additional dates and times.

Section on Sociological Practice Reception (Co-Sponsored by SAS and SPA) – Sat 8/16, 6.30 pm

Regular Session (at ASA Meeting): A Professional Culture of Applying Sociology - Sun, 8/17, 10.30 am

Prisler Leora Lawton, Tech Society Research - Discussant, Tillman Rodabough, Baylor University

“A Tale of Three Discourses: Doing Action Research in a Research Methods Class”, Stephen R. Couch, Pennsylvania State University

Abstract: This paper tells the tale of a collaborative research project between a graduate research methods course in action research, and a community grassroots environmental group. In order to give the students the opportunity to do part of an action research project, the instructor approached the leaders of the grassroots group and asked if they would like the class to undertake research that would be of interest to them. The grassroots group is concerned that toxic releases from nearby facilities are causing detrimental health effects to area residents, and asked that the class gather and analyze health data that would speak to their concerns. The results of the research generated media attention and angered a state representative, who attempted to discredit the research and to get the university to disavow it. The results of this saga are used to illustrate differences between the discourses of science, politics and education, and how interpretations of scientific research are shaped by the discourses in which they are used. Implications for sociological practitioners and teachers are discussed.

“The Possibility of Healthy Organizations”, Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, Alliant International University

Abstract: I focus primarily on the question of what is meant by “healthy organizations,” how our consulting in this arena is impacted by theories we bring from sociology that unfortunately are unknown to non-sociologists working in this arena, and how we need to sustain our own state of well-being in order to be effective practitioners. Sociological practice can contribute significantly to the creation of “organizations of the future” (Argyris, 1973) in which there is a state of reciprocal maintenance (Bennett, 1976) between individuals and organizations. ‘Reciprocal maintenance’ means that neither is aiming to take advantage of the other: the organizations are designed to enable the growth and development of their members or workers (in the broadest sense, including managers) and the individuals do their best to enhance the organization’s long-term viability. I define as healthy those organizations that foster such ‘reciprocal maintenance’ and which create an organizational culture in which people have more influence and even control over the decisions that affect their lives.

“The Role of Status in Evaluating Research: The Case of Data Editing”, Erin Leahy, University of Arizona

Abstract: Cleaning and editing apparently illogical, or seemingly incorrect, data is a ubiquitous research practice. But a lack of formal guidance in this realm of research may promote reliance on colleagues’ knowledge and on information from the situation at hand, such as status considerations. To investigate the extent to which status considerations influence sociological research practice, I conducted a survey-based experiment using hypothetical vignettes. A sample of sociologists was asked to respond to a hypothetical vignette depicting a researcher’s encounter with apparently messy data and a proposed editing strategy. The vignettes controlled for all variables except one – the status of the hypothetical researcher – and one vignette was randomly assigned to each sociologist. I find that status considerations are relevant to sociological research. Researchers judge the same data cleaning strategy more stringently when a graduate student, rather than a professor, proposes the strategy. Implications of these findings for the objectivity and universality of sociological research practice are discussed.

Section on Sociological Practice Council and Business Meetings – Sun 8/17, 12.30 pm

Career Workshop: Operating Your Own Firm or Consulting Business – Sun 8/17, 12.30 pm – Ross Koppel – (Check program for possible time change)

SPA and SAS Joint Meeting – Sun 8/17, 8-10 pm

Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology – Mon 8/18, 8 am – 12.10 pm

Career Workshop: Clinical Sociology – Preparation and Career Opportunities – Mon 2.30 pm
Jan Marie Fritz, Ann Marie Ellis

SPA Silver Anniversary Conference 8/18-19

SPA Silver Anniversary Reception (Co-Sponsored by SAS and Section on Sociological Practice) – Mon 8/18, 6.30 pm – Speaker: Michael Buroway, Newly-elected President of ASA.

Continuation Session at SPA: The Professional Culture of Applying Sociology II – Tues 8/19
(Co-sponsored by the ASA Section on Sociological Practice and the Society for Applied Sociology)

Chair and Discussant: Jay Weinstein, President, Society for Applied Sociology

“An Academic Model for Client-Driven Community-Based Research”, Tillman Rodabough, Center for Community Research and Development, Baylor University

Abstract: Three social science professors, driven by the dual goals of training students to apply their research skills in a community setting and providing much needed research to local community and governmental agencies, began a consulting firm to research community issues. This paper details the steps in building trust and a clientele in the community and how to manage a rapidly expanding business. This paper addresses three major issues. The first concerns developing a curriculum with minimal faculty that fits the academic demands of a university while protecting the privacy needs and meeting the time constraints of community clients. The second involves educating faculty colleagues and the university administration to provide institutional support for community research. The third consists of building relationships with community entities that provide the necessary opportunities for research and, in so doing, for funding the program. Several outcomes attest to the success of this endeavor: an integrated undergraduate/graduate program in applied research; a city council that makes data-based decisions and contacts the Center for program evaluations, population projections, needs assessments and data collection; and, finally, shared respect and stronger relationships between the university and community.

“Taking Sociology to the Streets”, Sandra S. Stone, State University of West Georgia

Abstract: In his book, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Ernest Boyer discusses four types of scholarship: research, integration, teaching and practice. This paper will focus on the scholarship of practice as a worthy endeavor, as well as demonstrate how sociological practice can be meaningfully interwoven into research, knowledge integration and teaching. Examples of applied sociology will be provided, along with discussion of the research that guided project design and the future research possibilities suggested by the results, ways project results build on the knowledge base in the field, and how project results can be utilized to better prepare current and future practitioners for related experiences. Using the examples as background, the paper will explore the pitfalls often encountered in applied work, with suggestions for ways to avoid them, work around them, and/or learn from them. In conclusion, the paper will argue the benefits of sociological practice to the vitality of the field, especially in areas that address issues of social change, social justice and social problems at both the micro and macro levels.

“Past versus Future in a Culture of Sociological Practice”, Robert A. Dentler, University of Massachusetts at Boston

Abstract: This paper will define a professional culture as it bears on practice, and it will define practice for the purposes of this interpretation. It will then explore the conditions under which such a domain did not emerge between 1900 and 1960 and, where it did, how it got blocked and thwarted by changing conditions within American higher education. I will then explore how these conditions have begun to disappear and how they will likely disappear within the ranks of the ASA, making a future possible in which applied professionals will work happily and unstigmatized and equally alongside non-applied academics. I will also identify a few ways in which we can work today to make this future materialize.

“Understanding Medication Errors in the Context of Hospital Culture and Operations: Sociological and Information Systems Analyses.” Ross Koppel et al, Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Medicine and Department of Sociology, University of Pennsylvania

Abstract: We examine the effects of hospital workplace organization, stressors, and the use of computer technology to facilitate physician’s medication orders on the commission of medication errors. That is, we examine the causes of faulty drug prescriptions. The research involves several methods. We conducted: 1) several focus groups and 2) many face-to-face interviews with physicians on their perceived stressors and on perceived sources of medication ordering error. We also 3) observed (shadowed) physicians while they ordered medications via a computer physician order entry (CPOE) system. And 4) we systematically surveyed the physicians about medication errors. We also interviewed and observed hospital computer programmers, nurses, pharmacists, administrators, laboratory directors, and senior physicians. The paper combines the results of the several methods to examine causes of medication ordering errors.

Breakfast reception sponsored by the Sociological Practice Association – Tuesday 8/19

Guest speaker Saad Edin Ibrahim, the Egyptian sociologist featured in the February 2003 issue of Footnotes, who will be the recipient of a special SPA Humanitarian Award

Feature: Point of View

Note from the Editor: In each issue, we will include an article stating a point of view on an important practical and theoretical issue. Either I or a contributor will address a topic that has implications for both society and our field.

“On the shoulders of giants”: Developing a role in scholarly dialogue

Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, Alliant International University

I always thought of myself mainly as a practitioner, although I have been interested in “big picture thinking” since before my graduate studies in the 70’s. Most of my focus has been on action, not on writing. Until I returned to a university setting a few years ago, my time was taken by serving clients needs, not by doing any “grand thinking” or research, unless it fitted with an ongoing project.

Now that I lead a doctoral program *for* scholar-practitioners, I find myself wondering about what we need to be nourishing in our students in order for the field to flourish in the future. I spent yesterday at a conference for practitioner of organizational development and realized how much the session that I convened was different from the norm for this group. The sessions I’ve convened have also differed from the norms for academic conferences, so I think it is important for us to consider what we want those norms to be.

At the practitioner conference, it seemed like many of those attending sought and expected “tools” rather than wanting to think about concepts, their history, or how to think in new ways. The general focus is on learning one’s craft, or adding new elements to it. At most academic conferences, the norm is to present scholarly papers, rather than to challenge colleagues to think together about fundamental issues. This approach seems driven by the way universities reward faculty: they need to present papers at national conferences.

This year, I am very aware that key thought-leaders who taught me have been passing away. Within a few months, we’ve lost Robert Merton, Bob Tannenbaum, Robert Alford, and Will Schutz – all significant action-oriented scholars, each of whom influenced me considerably. When I think about the people I chose to study with, it makes me think about what we teach and how, both within the context of the university and also in the form of public workshops. Am I, are we – whether in my department or in our section – taking on the mantle of thought-leadership that will lead others to want to learn from us and that will make our fields significant in the world? It feels very different to think of oneself as a competent practitioner, ready to foster or mentor others in the field, assuming that the field already exists and has a shape, than to see oneself as influencing the fundamental shape that the field will have in the future.

Are we, within our section, taking on this role? At some level, the recent deaths of my teachers generate similar feelings to what happens in some people when their parents pass away. I suddenly feel as though I have allowed myself to remain in the role of child, rather than parent, feeling that they are somehow larger than life and that my thoughts are not at their level. It is funny to notice this, because I have been teaching and practicing for over two decades, but still I can perceive a sense within me that others are somehow the thought-leaders and I should not be so presumptuous as to take a seat at that table.

Yet unless we do teach and write at such a level of conceptual novelty and magnitude, how will our field continue to have the depth and richness that attracted us to it in the first place?

Valdosta State (GA) Concentration in Applied and Clinical Sociology Accredited

The Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology has accredited the Undergraduate Concentration in Applied and Clinical Sociology at Valdosta State University. The program has an exceptionally well-organized and well-administered internship component. Excellent relations exist with the community and community-based organizations in which interns work and graduates find employment. Faculty are actively engaged in practice, and bring that experience into the classroom and the community. The program has a sound curriculum that clearly instills sensitivity to professional, ethical, and practical issues that applied and clinical sociologists encounter. Students receive a thorough grounding in theory, methods, and substantive courses in sociology. Valdosta State joins undergraduate programs at St. Cloud State (MN) and Our Lady of the Lake (TX) as accredited programs.



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A Note from the Chair

Rick Stephens, Eastern Nazarene College

“Find a Busy Person”

As the saying goes, “If you want to get something done, find a busy person.” In my association with those in applied sociology, sociological practice, clinical sociology, etc., I find lives which are full, often rewarding, and always busy. Go through any list of members in the ASA’s Section on Sociological Practice, the Sociological Practice Association, Society for Applied Sociology, or any other such organization, and you will find more than mere activity. You will find relevance. Unfortunately, the relevance evidenced in these busy lives does not seem to capture the imagination of the larger audience, be it professional sociologists, the media, or, most certainly, the man or woman on the street. While people rarely know in detail just what a medical doctor does in an average day’s work, the medical doctor just as rarely has to explain (defend?) his work. On the other hand, the sociologist is frequently challenged, not just simply asked, to explain, and justify their work. This puts many of us on our heels, and it is an uncomfortable circumstance. So, what do we do?

One response has been to organize, as noted above. However, in our various organizations, we have routinely run into the problem of numbers. Our Section is one of the smallest in the ASA. And, SPA and SAS just as routinely worry over membership, even to the point of considering mergers, collaborations, etc. I like and enjoy these organizations, and have made many of my best friends through them. So, I attend. But many, many, many others do not. At least not enough to make the rest of us feel comfortable about the stability of our association efforts. It’s kind of ironic, isn’t it? Sociologists, applied sociologists, not being especially good at pulling off the practical aspects of organization. This is not a statement about our practice of sociology per se. But somehow we have not reached a level of organizational success with which most of us feel comfortable.

In my last column, I suggested that one of the issues confronting sociologists who seek to apply the discipline to some practical concern of society, is the difference between sociology as a discipline, and sociology as a profession. We can get so caught up in where we are (the success of our associations) that we lose sight of where we ought to be going.

“Going,” implies movement from wherever we are to someplace else. That movement can, and should be intentional, if we are organized. At the least, we ought to be sentient enough to recognize that we have moved, even if we are not where we intended, and to understand what has brought us to such a place and time. In fact, this is what we do, as sociologists. We assess how circumstances have come to be, and even suggest how the next steps will likely play out. Applied sociologists will help clients get from point “A” to point “B.” The illustrations are endless (see Roger Straus), and the benefits substantial. We are relevant. But, the question remains: “Why have are our attempts at consistent association produced such inconsistent results?”

I think that there are a variety of answers, but I’d like to focus on one. Did you know that we had only two nominations for the 2003 Sociological Practice Student Practitioner Award? Because the work submitted along with the nominations was not deemed by the Section review committee to be substantially applied, then no Student Practitioner Award will be presented in Atlanta. Here’s my point. If we are to “go” anywhere with our associations in sociological practice, then we must insure that those who come along in the next ten to twenty years somehow identify with what we do. On a case by case basis, with our students, and with interns who serve with us in our sociological businesses, we do outstanding work. We make the relevance nearly self evident. But, as an association, we too often miss the mark.

I can show what I mean via an illustration from nearly thirty years as a tennis coach, seventeen years at the college level. While I was coaching I was responsible for both the performance of my current team, and the recruitment of my next team, at the same time. And the two were related. If I did not have competitive teams in the present, it was difficult to recruit talented players for the next team. I also had to develop the players I had, and this meant all kinds of activity, from practice to off season conditioning, etc. I would dare say that the closest and most enduring relationships I had in twenty-five years of college teaching and coaching, came from those developed on and around the game of tennis.

Here’s what I am getting at. One, ideas about what to do about our memberships have been the object of many well intentioned efforts over the years. Unless we take care of those in our charge now, the students in our classes, the interns in our businesses, etc., we will not ever progress beyond small associations of close friends who like to get together now and then. Perhaps, this is really what we want? I do not think so. But an honest self-assessment, much like I had to do as a coach, would not suggest that we are really committed to a different path. Two, perhaps organizing

and associating beyond what we do right now is just more than we can offer. We are all very busy and hard at work on the very substance of our identities as practicing sociologists. Not much is likely to change without a different kind of focus. Three, I would suggest that if we do indeed want a different pattern, and thereby a different result, then one place to start would be a renewed effort to cultivate our students. A simple act would be to make sure that next year we have plenty of nominations for the Student Practitioner Award, and this means we have to get to know and develop worthy candidates. My experience with colleagues in all the applied associations is that we are more than ready to lend a hand. This requires that we add to the busy lives we already have. But as the saying goes, "If you want to get something done, find a busy person." I suggest we do just that.

Member News

Harry Perlstadt was named Director of the Program in Bioethics, Humanity and Society at Michigan State University. The program is multi disciplinary and draws on philosophy, history, literature, anthropology and sociology among others. The major objective is to promote integration, synthesis and coherence through a set of courses dealing with health and healing and to bridge the gap between abstract and practical knowledge. Undergraduates may obtain a specialization within their major. A Masters of Arts degree is offered for students with a practical health related background who wish to augment their experience with broad based humanities and social science course work or who wish to pursue a strong multi disciplinary foundation for their doctoral work. This may include students in medical or nursing programs at Michigan State.

With the growth of Institutional Review Boards in both university and health care settings, the demand for people trained in medical ethics and IRB management should increase. In addition the field could benefit from decision-making based on empirical evidence about the nature and understanding of informed consent and under what conditions scientific inquiry and health care is advanced or hindered by the human research protection process.

SOCIETY FOR APPLIED SOCIOLOGY (SAS).

21st Annual Meeting, October 16-19, 2003.

Theme: "*Sociological Know-How: Back to Our Applied Roots.*"

The SAS Program Committee seeks proposals for papers, poster presentations, panels, and round tables that address important research questions, increase the knowledge and skills of SAS members, and promote the development of Applied Sociology in the academy, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector consulting firms. Individuals in related fields and disciplines who share an interest in applying knowledge to solving social problems are invited to submit proposals and participate.

Proposal Submission Deadline: July 31, 2003. Contact, Paul T. Melevin, Ph.D. (E-Mail: pmelevin@sbcglobal.net) 2003 Program Chair, Customer Survey Services Unit, Audit and Evaluation Division, Employment Development Department, 800 Capitol Mall, MIC 78, Sacramento, CA 95814-4807. (916) 487-6990; fax (916) 653-7171. More information at <http://www.appliedsoc.org>.