



Knowledge Creation: Faculty Research

As scholars, part of the faculty role is to develop new knowledge, and your friendly neighborhood UAH sociologists continue their endeavors in understanding and explaining our social world. Papers have been accepted for publication, others have been presented at conferences, and the wheel of science keeps on turnin'. Some highlights:



Dr. Mark Jones attended the annual meeting of the Society for the Social Study of Science

(the "4S") in Tokyo, Japan, this past August. He presented his paper "Eli Lilly and the Routinization of Charisma" in a session on corporate science, and that paper is slated to appear in an upcoming special issue of the *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Sociology*. The theme of the special issue is industrial research, and it will feature the papers from the Tokyo sessions.



Dr. Mitch Berbrier has just completed his book telling the story of the Cleveland Cultural Gardens

(CCG) and is sending it out to publishers for review. The book looks at the construction of ethnicity and race in 20th century America by focusing on the symbolic politics and social history of the CCG, and is intended for a general audience. Dr. Berbrier says, "The

main argument of my book is: 'Cleveland Rocks, but it also Gardens.'" He is now also writing up some research articles, using the data from this study to address more esoteric social scientific issues.

Congratulations to Dr. Berbrier on completing a multi-year effort that is writing a book!



Dr. Bhavani Sitaraman is continuing work on her research exploring work, culture, and identity

among employees in Indian call centers that service foreign clients in the UK and United States. She interviewed more than 25 workers on a variety of issues related to the shift work, culture and accent training, use of scripts, interactions with foreign clients, and gender differences in work experiences. She is currently analyzing the data from close to 80 hours of taped interviews and is working with UAH student Erin Camp-Meeks who is assisting with collecting and synthesizing the published research on globalization and the culture of work in call centers.



This summer, **Dr. Nancy Finley's** research on alternative femininities in the rapidly growing sub-

culture of Women's Roller Derby was published in the August 2010 volume of the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. This article, "Skating Femininity: Gender Maneuvering in Women's Flat Track Roller Derby," examined how intra-group interactions can create new versions of femininities and stigmatize other femininities. She is continuing this conceptual analysis in her current work on *non-hegemonic* femininities by looking for gender indicators in the media that acknowledge a plurality of femininities. She predicts that the increase in varied expressions of femininity could destabilize the traditional gender order or could support it depending on the structural resources of the environment in which it emerges.

Dr. Finley was also the primary investigator for 2009-10 Campus Action Project (CAP) grant from AAUW for "Strengthening the Chain: Using Women's Social

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Community EXPO a Success!

On March 31, 2010, the Student Sociological Association (SSA) joined Women's Studies and other organizations to host the "Charged Up For Change! EXPO." By all accounts, this event turned out to be wonderfully successful for the UAH campus.

The purpose was to encourage students and others who visited to see how they might get involved in community activities, or how they might use their own innovative talent as a platform to drive social change.

There were over 75 booths and displays, and more than 500 people attended. Exhibitors and visitors networked and exchanged ideas. Local musicians, actors, and performance artists contributed to the carnival-like atmosphere, as did refreshments, door prizes, and creative surprises.

EXPO brought together local individuals and groups who engage in creative activities, hobbies, or social entrepreneurial projects that promote social service and address social problems. Some of these groups were well-established groups such as Invisible Children United and UAH Engineers Without Borders, while other booths displayed the work of smaller, creative groups who were using their talents and interests to bring about positive social change, such as Afghans for Afghans and Clean Food Network.

People from the community joined with students in viewing

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LATE BREAKING NEWS: Jones on Research Leave

Dr. Mark Jones has accepted an offer to spend one year conducting research with the goal of developing a book on the history of commercial biotechnology.

The offer comes from the Life Sciences Foundation (LSF) in San Francisco, CA, a new non-profit organization supporting scholar-

ship on the social impact of the biological science and biotechnology. Dr. Jones' leave of absence is for the 2011 calendar year, and we are already looking forward to his return in January 2012.

We are all grateful to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Glenn Dasher, and the Provost of UA-

Huntsville, Dr. Vistasp Karbhari, for quickly and enthusiastically supporting Dr. Jones' request for leave, and for their continued support of sociological research and our Sociology program at UAHuntsville.

Congratulations, Dr. Jones!

Sociology Honors Student Veronica Ferreira

The Sociology Honor Student for 2010 was Veronica Ferreira. Veronica was a standout student in all of her classes, receiving honors in History as well as Women's Studies and participating in research projects with both Dr. Berbrier and Dr. Finley.

Veronica assisted Dr. Berbrier in researching women's roles in the Cleveland Cultural Garden Federation, looking at immigrant social clubs, women's municipal housekeeping organizations and Cleveland's participation in the City Beautiful movement. For Dr. Finley, she explored theories that attempt to explain the nature of media coverage of women's sports, compared these theories with their roller derby data set, and helped create the roller derby data set by collecting media articles that contain descriptors of derby."

Last year, Veronica applied to graduate school in Sociology. We are very pleased to note that this process ended with her being admitted to the highly-ranked program at the University of Iowa, where she is now in her first year of graduate study. Congratulations, Veronica, and continued success in your academic career!

Veronica recently talked to us about her experience in graduate school. See page 3 for the story.

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Message from the Editor

Greetings, all!

It has been another busy, eventful, and successful year around the Sociology Department since our last newsletter. Just look at the article on faculty research—that alone is chock-full of news! And check out the article on EXPO—what a great event that was! There have been lots of other developments as well, and we've tried to include as much of them as we could to keep you in touch with your department and the goings-on around here.

One area of change concerns the Sociology program structure. We are always looking to improve our department and how we develop our students, and the manner in which we organize our courses and major has undergone some modification. Mainly this means that some course names and/or numbers have changed. As Dr. Berbrier noted in a letter you may have received, the

changes mostly "reflect our effort to revise the program to better emphasize and ensure *developing skills*." Students are now going to be strongly encouraged to take Methods, Stats, and Theory early in their academic career, which will help further develop the skills learned in those classes as students take upper-level (300 and 400 level) classes later. These changes also help highlight to students what these skills are, to better define how sociology will develop their talents, and to help them market themselves after graduation

Another change involves administrative structure. Due to a lack of funding at the university and college levels, many cuts have been instituted within the academic units across the university. One consequence has been the temporary merging of chair positions in several departments in the College of Liberal Arts, including ours, where Dr. Kathy Hawk is now fulfilling

many of the duties of the chair for both Political Science and Sociology. Thus far, this has had little impact on our students, and most have not even noticed it. This is probably because those responsibilities that we felt were most critical for our students are still being handled by the Sociology faculty, while Dr. Hawk is mostly taking care of the more general administrative tasks at the college and university levels with which a chair has to deal. Thanks to Dr. Hawk and Dean Dasher for their efforts in keeping things running through these difficult financial times!

We hope things are going well for all of you and encourage you to email us or visit if you get the chance. We love hearing about our alumni, so keep in touch!

Cheers,
Dr. Jason M. Smith
("Dr. J")

Knowledge Creation: Faculty Research (cont.)

(from page 1) Networks to Encourage Nontraditional Students in Engineering." As one of twelve grants awarded nationally, the UAH project's main objective was to stimulate recruitment and retention of women students by strengthening supportive links among current students, prospective non-traditional students, and professionals.



Dr. Jason M. Smith ("Dr. J") and Dr. Philip Kovacs (UAH Education Department) published an

article on the effect of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy on teachers and classrooms in the international journal *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*. Their article, "The Impact of Standards Based Reform on Teachers: The Case of 'No Child Left Behind,'" found that, as a result of

NCLB policy, instructional time and professional development opportunities in non-tested areas are being reduced, and that future teacher retention and recruitment may be problematic.

Dr. J is involved in another collaborative effort with the Education Department, working with Dr. Jason O'Brien on a project assessing how elementary education majors from around the country define "citizenship." They have just submitted their paper, and it is currently under review.

Dr. J is also continuing his work on the effects of extracurricular activities. His paper on the differences in these effects between High Poverty Schools and other schools is being revised for an invited resubmission to *Sociological Forum*, and he recently presented an extension of this work at the Mid South Sociological Association Annual Meeting in Baton Rouge, LA. This paper evaluates how participation in school activities affects the attitudes of a stu-

dent's friends, and how those attitudes impact the student's odds of graduating and going to college. Dr. J says this paper will be submitted for publication soon as well.



Dr. Teresa Terrell is currently working with Lambert Academic Publishing Company to

publish her dissertation, "Community participation in Birmingham, Alabama: How leadership, social networks, framing and participatory democracy shape inner-city participation."

The revised manuscript will include a comparison of civic participation in inner-city neighborhoods in North Minneapolis, based on the post-doctoral work Dr. Terrell completed during her 2008-2009 Fellowship at the University of Minnesota.

News from Sociology Alumni, Ferreira

We in the Sociology Department love to hear from our alumni after they leave the hallowed ground of Morton Hall. Recently, Veronica Ferreira (2010) dropped us a line to talk about her experiences both at UAH, and in graduate school.

Regarding her time at UAH: Being a liberal arts major in a school that prides itself on its commitment to engineering and science can be hard on the self-esteem. I worried that I might not be as marketable as someone from a liberal arts school. I worried that I wouldn't measure up to my peers in a large department like the U. of Iowa. I worried until I finished the first week of classes. That's when I realized I was totally prepared for this step. The faculty I'm working with now seem surprised by the research skills I came in with, which is a huge compliment to UAH's Sociology Department as far as I'm concerned.

On the grad school experience so far: Grad school is fantastic! When the UAH Sociology faculty told me that it would be a time I would remember fondly, I thought they were crazy—all I could see was the work. And it IS a lot of work! But SO much fun. Thanks to the Sociology Department at UAH, I was more than prepared. My new colleagues told me that classes would be the least of my concerns: they were right. Only up to half of

my week is taken up by classes. The rest is working as a teaching assistant (actually a lot of fun) and networking within the department. I am working with my gender strat professor to develop my masters' topic, and I am learning the joys (half-sarcasm!) of grading for the Soc of Sexuality class I am TA-ing.

She also offered some advice for those of you considering graduate school: Graduate seminars are very similar to Dr. Berbrier's Social Movements class: expect to read about 100-150 pages a week per class. Do not expect lectures: you'll be disappointed. Most classes are based on discussions led by grad students. [Outside of class,] talk to everyone about your research interests, and ask about theirs. Professors see grad students as potential collaborators, and it is not uncommon for them to co-author articles with students that share their interests. Networking will also help you when you look for advisors for your own research.

And her "most important lessons for transitioning to grad school":

1) No one knows everything. Everyone specializes in their own

area, so no one thinks less of you if you are not familiar with a prominent scholar in their area. And everyone knows you're new, so they're usually surprised if you remember anything from undergrad.

2) Group work is not a curse! I know, I know: undergrads hate group projects. The best thing that has happened to me so far was finding a colleague who has a similar schedule. We got in at the same time so we share the required courses. We meet regularly (at least twice a week!) outside of class to study and brainstorm. It's been a huge benefit.

3) Schedule, schedule! Most of grad school is self-paced. There's a lot of work, but it's manageable. Set a schedule and stick to it. Make sure to include leisure time! All of this may sound intimidating. I work harder than I ever have. The best news is that I am also having so much fun. It's wonderful to go to class every week and talk about things I am interested in with people that come in with a variety of interests and perspectives, and everyone respects everyone else. Everyone works hard, but we have so much fun, too.



Veronica and husband Brian, 2010



Here's the latest on the Student Sociological Association, according to Dr. Jones (advisor):

"This year, the SSA is composed of a small group of seniors who are planning to attend graduate school. The members of the group are preparing to acquire some professional experience by traveling to Montgomery, Alabama, in the spring with Dr. Smith in order to present papers at the annual meeting of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association."

According to Dr. Jones, the students who will be attending the Conference are Blake Brambach, Will McKenna, Brenda Moody, and Jawan Armstrong.

Good luck to all of you! Presenting a paper at a professional meeting is exciting, and even a little nerve racking. We know you'll do very well and make UAH Sociology proud!

EXPO (cont.)

(from page 1) the variety of inspiring displays. Many signed up to be involved with the work of the organizations. The exhibitors themselves made connections with each other and reported that they were able to form networks of groups that were working on similar issues. Most of all, we all had a great deal of fun and left inspired by all the ways people are making the world a better place.

EXPO will be held again in spring 2012. Local individuals and organizations are invited to participate. Help make EXPO bigger and better than ever! For more information, contact the Sociology office at 256.824-6190 or email us at soc@uah.edu.

Calling All UAH Sociology Alumni We want to know about you!

We want to know where you are *in your lives* – what you are doing, what your plans are – and also how you remember your time here with us.

Please get in touch – contact us at soc@uah.edu or (256) 824-6190.

Also, if you wish to check up on friends from years gone by, please join our Facebook page (UAH SOCIOLOGY).

Contribute to the Sociology Scholarship Fund!

Help make a Department of Sociology Scholarship available to students who need it. The scholarship will be awarded to students based on academic merit with consideration also given to financial need.

YOUR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION (October 1 – September 30)

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