

Faculty Research in High Gear

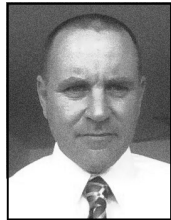
The UAH Department of Sociology faculty has been quite busy this past year conducting research (as always!). Several faculty-authored papers are either forthcoming or currently under review, and were presented at academic conferences. As usual, our faculty's work covers a wide range of interesting and timely topics.



Dr. Nancy Finley has authored an article called "Skating Femininity: Gender Maneuvering in

Women's Flat Track Roller Derby." The article reports on her two-year ethnographic study in which she examined the way alternative femininities are created within specific subcultures. The paper will appear in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. Dr. Finley is also continuing her work on analyses of gender constructions in subcultures with a specific focus on the way that intra-group interactions between women create, transgress, and stigmatize femininities. As Dr. Finley notes, "These empirical examinations extend the

theoretical literature on hegemonic femininity, and power relations between women." Dr. Finley is also working on developing a community change EXPO on campus for spring 2010. This will be a joint venture with the UAH Women's Studies Program, other university departments, and organizations in the community.



Our newest department member, **Dr. Mark Jones**, specializes in the Sociology of Science and Technol-

ogy, particularly high-tech industries, making Huntsville a great spot for him to continue and extend his work. He has an article coming out in the December issue of the journal *Social Studies of Science* entitled "Entrepreneurial Science: The Rules of the Game." According to Dr. Jones, "This paper investigates the ways in which scientists and university administrators managed intellectual property issues and conflicts of interest and commitment during the 'biotech revolution' of the late 1970s. Dr. Jones is also working

on a paper that he'll be giving at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science in Washington, D.C., called "Ecological Statecraft: The U.S. Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program," and working on a book manuscript entitled *Biotech's Perfect Climate: The Hybritech Story*. Obviously, Dr. Jones is bringing a lot of energy and scholarly thought to our department. Welcome, Dr. Jones!



Dr. Jason M. Smith ("Dr. J") recently submitted two papers to scholarly journals. One

is a collaborative work with Dr. Kovacs in the UAH Education Department, "NCLB's Impact on Teachers and Teaching in One Mid-Sized City," detailing the effects of the No Child Left Behind federal education policy on teachers and classroom practice. The paper shows that certain subjects are being taught far less (like Social Studies) in favor of more time on tested areas (like Math), and (continued on page 2)



Our student club, the Student Sociological Association (SSA) is going strong, thanks to the work over the last few years by alumni like Ellen Parker (2008), Amanda Bissett (2007), Becky Purcell (2008), Sarah Ragan (2009) and current students Mossy Maurer and Heather Harwell (2010). Current officers include President Blake Brambach, Vice-President Veronica Ferreira, Secretary Shermete Brown, and Treasurer Mindy Jones.

According to Faculty Advisor Dr. Mark Jones, the club is just getting started for 2009, and is making plans for the year. They will be actively involved with a community change EXPO being organized in association with the Women's Studies Program for spring 2010. The SSA is also looking to be involved in a cooperative civil rights history project with the History Department, the Women's Studies Program, and other groups on campus.

For more info on SSA, contact President Blake Brambach at ssa@uah.edu.

Message from the (Acting) Chair



(With Dr. Berbrier on sabbatical, **Dr. Sitaraman** is serving as Acting Chair of the department.)

The past year was both challenging and rewarding for faculty, students, and staff at UAHuntsville. We endured budget cuts and faced a potential hiring freeze that could have seri-

ously hurt our ability to staff classes with adequate full-time faculty. Many dedicated students expressed patience and flexibility as we weathered the challenges of an uncertain budget and we appreciate your support. The economic situation in the country, and in the state of Alabama, has not changed dramatically and will continue to threaten our meager resources in the coming year. Nevertheless, if you disregard the dismal big picture, there is a lot of positive news

in the Sociology Department. Last year, we graduated 17 majors, the highest since 2004-05, and inducted several members into the Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honors Society. We are looking forward to a great year for Sociology. Don't be shy and please contact us if you have any concerns or questions.

Best wishes,
Bhavani Sitaraman, Ph.D.

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IN THE NEWS

Sociological Grounding in Obama Admin, White House

Sociology is a common tie among three members of President Barack Obama's cabinet. A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University's sociology program, Chicago public schools administrator Arne Duncan was appointed Secretary of Education in December. Duncan's senior thesis, "The Values, Aspirations, and Opportunities of the Urban Underclass," focused on inner-city Chicago.

United States Trade Representative Ronald Kirk majored in sociology and political science as an undergraduate at Austin College. His career has included service as the secretary of state in Texas and mayor of Dallas.

Ray LaHood, appointed Secretary of Transportation, earned his bachelor's degree from Bradley University in education and sociology in 1971. Prior to his cabinet appointment, LaHood represented the 18th district of Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The election of Barack Obama to the presidency also brings a sociological mind to the White House. First Lady Michelle Obama graduated cum laude with a degree in sociology from Princeton University in 1985. During her studies, she wrote a thesis examining "Princeton-Educated Blacks and the Black Community."

(originally printed in Footnotes, the Newsletter of the American Sociological Association, February 2009)

Goodbye, Dr. Colclough!



Dr. Glenna Colclough retired from the UAH Sociology Department following the 2008-2009

academic year. Dr. Colclough had been a faculty member at UAH since 1984, after receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Georgia. During her career, she investigated a variety of topics, publishing research on education, labor markets, and economic inequality, among other things.

Outside Morton Hall, her favorite pursuit was riding her horses, an activity she plans to spend much more time on now. Her strong opinions and keen sociological imagination will be greatly missed, and everyone here wishes her the best.

Meet the New Faculty

Name

Dr. Mark Jones

Education

BA Indiana University at South Bend; Ph.D. University of California, San Diego

Areas of Interest

Sociology of Science, Technology and Medicine, Economic Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Sociological Theory

Courses Taught at UAH

SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology, SOC 465 Sociological Theory, and SOC 380 Sociology of Science and Technology

Current Research

I'm trying to finish up several projects right now—I'm trying to get a book and several articles published. The book is about the commercialization of science.

The articles are about the scientific and technological dimensions of state-building; relationships between medical experts, biomedical researchers, and various publics where diet, nutrition, and aging are concerned; and, lastly, contradictions between methodological conventions and modes of theoretical reflexivity in sociological practice.

When I get these things done, I'll be looking for opportunities to conduct research on scientific and technological work conducted locally, here in Huntsville. There's a billboard on I-565 that says something like "Economic Growth is Rocket Science." Many different parties and players have interests in shaping advances in science, technology, and industry. I'm interested in documenting and analyzing how these interests are being pursued.

Faculty Research (cont. from page 1)

(cont.) that teachers are feeling devalued as professionals because of the ways they have to teach in order to try and meet NCLB's demands for test scores. Dr. J's other paper, "The Right Crowd on the Wrong Side of the Tracks: Extracurricular Participation in High Poverty Schools," shows that participation in school activities has powerful, positive effects on student attainment, even for students in "high poverty schools" where most students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Dr. J is now investigating the "achievement orientation" of participants in different types of activities.



Dr. Mitch Berbrier is currently on sabbatical. He is using that time to continue working on

his book and research related to the Cleveland Cultural Gardens (CCG). This project looks at the construction of ethnicity and race in 20th century America by focus-

ing on the symbolic politics and social history of the CCG. Some of this work also included a project collaborating with Veronica Ferreira, one of our Sociology majors (see the "Student News" section for more on that.) As Dr. Berbrier notes, "The main argument of my book is: 'Cleveland Rocks, but it also Gardens.'"

After a sabbatical leave in fall 2008, **Dr. Bhavani Sitaraman** returned to campus last spring. During her sabbatical she began work on new research that explores 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.



Dr. Teresa Terrell recently returned from her leave during the 2008-2009 aca-

demical year, when she was participating in a postdoctoral fellowship in Race, Gender and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Dr. Terrell was chosen as one of two fellows for the 2008-2009 fellowship year. While in Minnesota, she collected data on neighborhood participation in North Minneapolis, a depressed area of Minneapolis, and she is now finishing up a research article that compares the leadership strategies used in Birmingham for encouraging resident participation in neighborhood organizations in predominantly African American neighborhoods with strategies used by leaders in North Minneapolis with its multi-racial and multi-ethnic neighborhoods.

Staff Award Winner in Sociology Department

Erin Reid, our very popular and most valued staff assistant, received the much deserved UAHuntsville Foundation Staff Award last year. Erin has served the Department of Sociology and Women's Studies Program since 2004 and is a UAH alumna in History.

As everyone probably knows, Erin is the hub around which much activity in the Sociology Department revolves, and no one is more deserving of this award than she.

Erin also spent a month traveling and studying in Spain and Washington this summer and seems to have been bitten by the travel bug.

Congratulations on a great year, Erin! May 2010 be even better!



Notes from Students and Alumni

All of us in the Department of Sociology enjoy the students we get to know so well as majors and minors. Their successes don't end here at UAH, and we managed to catch up with a few, as well as having some news from those still here. (Pictured left to right)

Amanda Bissett (2007) has returned from her volunteer work in Africa, and just moved to Washington D.C. in August, where she is attending Howard University's Masters program in Social Work, with a concentration in displaced populations. She is hoping to get more involved with refugee relief work after graduate school.

Pedro (Peter) Pacheco (2009) and Rachel Carson were married this summer here in Huntsville. The ceremony was held downtown, followed by a reception at the Heritage Club. Best wishes to the happy couple!

Stephanie and Sean Kaloi (2009) welcomed their first child into the world, Jasper Puna'ikaika Curtis Mayfield Kavanagh Kaloi, this past summer. Say that three times fast!

Becky Purcell (2008) is in the graduate program in Theater at West Virginia University, having earned a prestigious fellowship with that program. She is "adjusting to life" outside of Alabama and enjoying her new school and program very much.

Veronica Ferreira (2010) received honors in History and Women's Studies in the spring. This fall she presented a poster session about research she did with Dr. Berbrier. She is also working with Dr. Finley on femininity studies. Here's how she describes her activities: "For Dr. Berbrier, I have been 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, I am currently looking for theories that attempt to explain the nature of media coverage of women's sports. We hope to compare these existing theories with our data set on roller derby. I have also been helping to create the roller derby data set by collecting media articles that contain descriptors of derby." Veronica is in the process of applying to graduate school in Sociology.

Shauna Floyd was the proud recipient of our Outstanding Sociology Major Award and a College of Liberal Arts Scholarship last year. She was accepted into the graduate program in Speech Pathology at Auburn University. Good luck, Shauna!

IN THE NEWS

Sociology Makes Top-Ten Careers List

CareerCast.com names sociology as one of the nation's best jobs in its "2009 Jobs Rated Report." Sociology ranked as the eighth most appealing job in the new website's analysis of 200 occupations. The ranking is based on various job characteristics including perceived work environment, income, employment outlook, physical demands, security, and stress. See www.careerCast.com/jobs/jobsRated.

CareerCast.com's finding that mathematician was ranked as the most desirable job contrasts with ASA research, which used the 2003 Survey of Doctoral Recipients data on satisfaction among PhDs within nine disciplines. In ASA's research, which has been submitted for publication, PhD mathematicians reported the lowest level of job satisfaction, while sociology fell toward the middle of the pack. See www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/SatisfactionWithDoingScience.pdf

This latest "top-ten" recognition for sociology comes on the heels of an online *Forbes* feature appearing in April 2008 in which the discipline was listed as one of the nation's highest-paying rare jobs.

(originally printed in Footnotes, the Newsletter of the American Sociological Association, February 2009)

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 me at mitch.berbrier@uah.edu or (256) 824-2301. 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.

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