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A POSITIVE SOCIOLOGY

A Cordial Invitation to Attend the February 24-25, 2005

A-MSA Program

from

Dennis L. Peck, A-MSA President

The University of Alabama



It has been more than a decade since we have last convened in Tuscaloosa at The University of Alabama and it is with great pleasure that a cordial invitation is made to present, past, and future members of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association to attend the 36th annual meeting. Representing institutions of higher learning located in a two-state association, the 2005 meeting will convene on the campus of The University of Alabama during February 24-25. It is the goal of all those who are involved in the creation of this program that the 2005 meeting will be among the very best, and it is within this context that I have chosen as the program theme "*A Positive Sociology*."

The 2005 program theme, *A Positive Sociology*, was selected in recognition of the important historical and contemporary teaching and research contributions members of our discipline have made to the understanding and explanation of the human experience, including areas such as conflict and social change and organizational and institutional structure and the influence of these on human behavior. The implications of sociological studies are vast and these have held and continue to hold important implications for social policy. As representatives of what has been described as a general social science, the discipline of sociology has given birth to numerous areas of study. The practitioners of the discipline continue to develop new research interests, adding to what seems to be an ever evolving sociological inquiry, while many other representatives of the discipline contribute their expertise to enhancing interdisciplinary research. Indeed, sociologists have much to be proud of with respect to their accomplishments, past and present. It is with a great confidence that one is able to envision a

creative, positive future for sociological study. Such contributions to scholarly knowledge can only continue to generate positive, insightful, and influential contributions that are destined, when applied, to enhance the human condition.

The 2005 meeting is beginning to take shape. Based on the support and encouragement received from the Dean of The University of Alabama College of Arts and Sciences and, in particular, Associate Dean Dr. Carmen Taylor, early agreements have been negotiated to hold the 2005 program meeting sessions at the Bryant Conference Center adjacent to The University of Alabama campus. The Thursday evening reception and banquet is scheduled to be held in Smith Hall, an historical museum which also is located on campus, and a banquet menu, selected in consultation with caterer Tisha's Cubbard, will prove to be a dining experience worthy of your attendance. A "Call for Participation" was sent to a number of book publishers during early September and we anticipate having a nice Book Display section for program attendees. Many more program initiatives are currently in preparation for your enjoyment.

Although I have been advised by previous presidents of the association that one can anticipate late entries for the program, work has already begun to develop the program. Attendees can anticipate a variety of faculty led paper and panel sessions, round table discussion groups, as well as distinguished speakers. In addition, one of the highlights of the annual A-MSA meeting has been the program participation of undergraduate and graduate students. Program Chair, Darren Surman, and I strongly encourage faculty to promote such participation among their students and to request students submit their entries, if possible, by early to mid-January 2005. One of the benefits of such participation will be presentation of A-MSA student recognition at the Thursday evening banquet as well as the A-MSA Best Student Undergraduate and Graduate Paper Awards.

The Program Chair for the 2005 meeting in Tuscaloosa is Mr. Darren Surman, an aspiring sociologist whose enthusiasm for this role serves as an inspiration and reinforces a personal observation that the future of the discipline will indeed be in good hands. Mr. Surman is at work on details which are essential to ensuring the satisfaction of all 2005 attendees. Program suggestions and participatory efforts of members past, present, and future are welcome and we encourage each of you to contact Darren during the early portion of the fall semester to ensure a place on the 2005 program. He can be reached by e-mail at surma001@Bama.ua.edu or darrensurman@yahoo.com. If anyone has a question pertaining to the committees, association awards, or the 2005 program, you may make direct contact with me at The University of Alabama; Box 870314; Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0314; telephone 205/348-1944; e-mail dpeck@tenhour.as.ua.edu; or dpeck@Bama.ua.edu.

We invite you to make plans to attend the 2005 meeting of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association. Although a personal hope that the 36th A-MSA meeting would coincide with the revival of our sociology major program has been diminished by what one administrator has defined as "a resource problem", your attendance at this meeting will serve as a strong indicator to the administration that sociology remains a strong, vibrant intellectual resource important to our two-state region.

I encourage both your attendance and participation at the 2005 meeting. Members of the Executive Council, Committee members, and Past A-MSA Presidents are working diligently to ensure the vitality of our organization. Please show your support for their efforts and for this unique two-state association by marking your academic calendar for February 24 - 25. The President of the Southern Sociological Society and a graduate of The University of Alabama, Dr. Michael Hughes of Virginia Tech, will attend our meeting and speak in support of A-MSA and the discipline.

In addition to Dr. Hughes, the 2005 program will feature two special guests and speakers, each of whom will provide session and banquet attendees with a array of important insights into cultural, social, and legal aspects of our region: Dr. J. Kenneth Davidson, recently retired Professor Emeritus of the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire will offer the Plenary Address, Mr. Stephen Foster Black of the Birmingham, Alabama law firm Maynard, Cooper, & Gale, P. C. will speak at the Thursday evening banquet.

As a special note, two officers who have served the association long and well A-MSA Secretary Stacy Ruth (1999 - present) and Treasurer Craig Robertson (2000 - present —he also does extra duty as the A-MSA Communications Director) are due recognition and praise for their dedication to the association. These two positions are the most important in any professional group and Drs. Robertson and

Ruth have provided significant service to the association during a most critical juncture in its' history. When you see these individuals at the 2005 meeting, do not hesitate to offer a special appreciation for the many contributions they have made to our association.

Finally, a special recognition and appreciation is due Ms. Cherry Sims of Mississippi State University for graciously sharing the program material and her expertise employed to develop the 2004 meeting program handout in Starkville. This initiative has lightened the initial impact of creating the 2005 annual program content. Ms. Sims demonstrates many of the special traits that characterize the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association.

Dennis L. Peck

Report on the 2004 A-MSA Meeting in Starkville by Craig Robertson

A profound thank you is extended to A-MSA President Duane Gill, Program Chair Liesel Ritchie, and to Ms. Cherry Simms for their diligent effort in creating the 2004 program. The success of the 2004 meeting held in Starkville at the Hunter Henry Conference Center offers strong evidence that the A-MSA continues to fulfill an important need.

The theme for the 2004 meeting "Community: Past, Present, and Future" drew 88 program registrants who enjoyed the ambiance of the meeting facilities and were treated to an array of paper sessions and a light-hearted banquet. Dr. Arthur Cosby presented the Banquet Address entitled

"The Future of Community Research." This presentation drew a good reaction from the audience given the number of questions posed to Dr. Cosby.

Dr. Steve Kroll-Smith of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro enlightened the association membership with two talks. The Keynote Address was entitled "Liquid Communities or Individuals and Gemeinschaft by Seduction" and his Capstone Address "Community as Rhetorical: Tradition, Harbinger, and Invention" set the tone for the program theme. The Association will continue to benefit well beyond the knowledge imparted in these two presentations; Dr. Kroll-Smith donated his honorarium to benefit student participants at the 2005 meeting to be held at The University of Alabama.

The large number off student participants lent an enthusiastic aura to the meeting. It also led to intense competition in identifying the best student paper awards. Each student presenter, representing Auburn University, Auburn University, Montgomery, Millsaps College, Mississippi State University, Troy State University, Montgomery, and the University of Alabama was honored at the A-MSA banquet with a certificate .

The 2004 Best Student Paper Awards again honored a Millsaps College student.

The Undergraduate Award went to

Doc McAlister Billingsly for his paper entitled "Three Perspectives on Thai Demographics: A Comparison of Social Theories."

The Graduate Student Paper Award Committee honored

"A Baby Story: The Socially Constructed Experience of Childbirth"
authored by Gina Yeager of Mississippi State University

Each of these individuals received a certificate and a \$50.00 cash award. These papers also will receive strong consideration for publication in the soon to be established e-Journal.

June "Mid-Year" Meeting of the Executive Council and Committee Chairs

Despite the fact that so many faculty members are involved in teaching, research and administrative activities during the summer months, on June 26, 2004, a well attended meeting of the Executive Council was hosted at the Tuscaloosa home of Dr. Dennis and Mrs. Peggy Peck. A special note of ap-

preciation is extended to all who shared a good portion of their weekend to contribute to the success of this exciting meeting. Many important issues were raised and the earnest discussion that emerged indicates that a significant level of support exists for the A-MSA organization. We are indeed fortunate that the A-MSA membership includes a dedicated group of individuals who are diligently working to ensure that A-MSA will remain a strong, viable state association. Included among the many agenda items proposed and discussed at this meeting were the important need for continued host institutional support for the annual program, expansion of the sessions to capitalize on the fact we are required to rent meeting space for two full days while holding sessions the equivalent of one full day, the proposed A-MSA e-Journal, membership development, the ever expanding A-MSA Archives, increasing faculty involvement in the annual program, the prospects of developing a Procedures Manual, and the proposal that the President-Elect serve as the chair of annual program to be held at the President-Elects' institution. Given the nature of these issues, we leave it to the reader's imagination as to the nature and content of the spirited albeit good-natured discussion and exchange among those in attendance at the mid-year meeting.

Publications Committee/ the proposed e-Journal

Chaired by Dr. Larry Hall of Springhill College, this committee has recently been energized by the efforts of President-Elect, Dr. Gary Long of the University of Mississippi. I believe that the membership will be enthusiastic and encouraged by the information that will be reported at the 2005 annual meeting. Larry Hall has been steadfast and most fastidious in his efforts to carry forth the call to create an e-Journal. The more recent activities initiated by Gary Long to bring to fruition an A-MSA journal is not only encouraging, but, again, demonstrates the dynamic energy of the Southern and, more specifically, the Mississippi and Alabama sociologist. Our two-state association does indeed bring to bear important aspects of professionalism.

Recent discussions between President-Elect Gary Long, the e-journal Committee Chair, Dr. Larry Hall, and the members of this committee have been fruitful. The following highlights the general substance of this exchange. An on-line A-MSA peer reviewed journal of sociology will serve the publication needs of both faculty and students alike with a proposed ratio of papers at 50:50. This journal would include articles that focus on empirical research, theoretical essays, and opinion pieces. To date it is proposed that Dr. Gary Long would serve as editor for a yet to be determined period of time and that colleagues from The University of Mississippi, namely Drs. Elise S. Lake and Minjoo Oh, would fill two of the four deputy editor positions. It is also proposed that approximately 20 associate editor positions be created and filled by Alabama and Mississippi A-MSA members who hold positions in education and applied areas. The task of the associate editor would be to assist in the organizational and peer review processes. Of utmost importance is the firm commitment that has already been received from Dr. David Swanson of the University of Mississippi Department of Sociology and Anthropology for office space, a computer, and a modest operating budget. Yet to be determined is the location of the web site for the journal. However, a member of Dr. Long's family has already begun designing the website.

In keeping with the spirit of A-MSA of sharing responsibility for our organization, Dr. Long is seeking volunteers to design and arrange for the housing of the e-journal. In addition, he is eager to identify nominations and volunteers for the deputy editor and associate editor positions.

Suggestions for the name of our official journal are most welcome. To date three such suggestions are: 1) The A-MSA e-Sociologist; 2) The A-MSA e-Lectric Sociologist; and 3) The A-MSA Sociological Review. Membership input is now being solicited and a separate brochure is attached with this Newsletter that contains further information pertaining to the e-journal.

Membership Committee

We are fortunate to have in place a wonderfully enthusiastic Membership Committee. This most important committee, I am pleased to report, is chaired by a determined faculty member from Auburn University, Montgomery, Carolyn Pevey. Because of numerous commitments and obligations Dr. Pevey was somewhat reticent when I first approached her about chairing this most important committee. Fortunately for the association Dr. Pevey agreed to serve as chair and she has responded in a manner that far exceeds the limits of my imagination. The result of Dr. Pevey's decision is that I can barely keep up with her given the numerous requests for information and her suggestions for enhancing our efforts to not only recruit new members, but to retain those who have previously experienced the collegial nature of the A-MSA association. Included among the many activities of this dynamic committee is the creation of a brochure in which the special characteristics of A-MSA are highlighted. The other members of the Membership Committee are Drs. Jerri Bullard, Rodney Friery, David LoConto, Marc Matre, Amy Chasteen Miller, and Thomas Petee.

The A-MSA Archives

After having served as 1999 A-MSA President one individual continues to contribute to our two-state association. I refer to an individual who clearly demonstrates just how dedicated and caring of the A-MSA group he is. In this instance I refer to Dr. Don Bogie, Director of the Auburn at Montgomery Demographic Research Center. Don continues to gather and catalogue important archival material to ensure the history of the association remains intact and he does so in a manner that will allow future scholars to gather important information and insights about A-MSA.

Student Paper Awards Committee

Who are these people anyway? Have you ever wondered just who is responsible for the decision making process? I have! Well, I need not wonder any more nor should you because early appointments were made to this committee and with great confidence I look forward to the decisions of this group of dedicated scholars. Their efforts are significant for not only do students receive an important opportunity to present their best effort before an audience of peers and professionals, but the authors of the best Undergraduate and best Graduate papers receive a monetary award and consideration will be given to publication of their conference papers in our future e-Journal. The distinguished committee members of the Student Paper Awards Committee are: Drs. Ronald Jones (Chair), Don Bogie, Robert Jenkot, David LoConte, Paul Mills, Ming Tsui, and Louie Albert Woolbright.

*Committee for Awards***

The Committee for Awards is comprised of the past five Presidents of the Association and these members have the responsibility for evaluating the contributions of faculty who have rendered "Outstanding Achievement in and Distinguished Service to the Discipline." To date fifteen individuals have been so honored and each of these individuals is listed in our annual program. Please consider making a recommendation for one or more of these categories. The Committee members are: Drs. Duane Gill (chair), John Dunkelberger, Albert Nylander, Larry Hall, and Don Bogie.

According to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association, the following criteria are to be used by the Committee in making their recommendation.

Distinguished Service Award – This recognition is given to a member of long standing who has promoted and supported the AMSA with his/her time and talents. Eligibility for this award is defined as: Ten years or more of AMSA membership, and a strong record of involvement in Association governance and annual programs.

Outstanding Achievement Award – During the course of a member’s professional career, there are particularly noteworthy accomplishments which bring special recognition to the sociology profession and the AMSA. Eligibility for this reward requires only that the individual has been a member of the AMSA for a minimum of six years (not continuously).

** See the nomination form enclosed with this Newsletter (separate file) or visit the A-MSA web site.

Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee wasted no time after the February 2004 meeting in identifying candidates for two of the most important positions in a professional association, namely the positions of Secretary and Treasurer. Chaired by Dr. Xiaohe Xu of Mississippi State University, the Committee welcomes membership input while seeking nominees for President-Elect from Alabama (2006-2007) and Members at Large to represent both Alabama and Mississippi. The other members of this important committee are Dr. Annette Allen, Kim Bracket, Larry Hall, Kent Kerley, and Albert B. Nylander, 111.

Focus on Delta State University and the Center for Community and Economic Development, reported by Brent Hales

The Center for Community and Economic Development seeks to improve the quality of life for citizens in the Mississippi Delta through research, public service education programs, and technical assistance to public and private sector organizations. The Center staff attempt to create sustainable partnerships that address education, leadership development, economic development, and community development. As the mission of the Center implies, we work towards **Building and Empowering Relationships That Strengthen Communities**.

To facilitate the long-term goals of the Center, several projects have been undertaken that will provide both collaborative partnerships and continued funding for future initiatives. For the past seven years, the Center for Community and Economic Development has maintained AmeriCorps programs designed to address such critical issues as childhood literacy, community development, youth development, housing assistance, and technology adoption. The Center for Community and Economic Development currently houses four AmeriCorps programs. The Delta Reads Partnership program tutors children in grades K-6 who score in the lowest quartile of their classes. Another program is the America Reads Mississippi program for children in low-performing schools that provide after-school and summer programs, and assists in community service projects. The Mississippi Delta Service Corps is devoted to creating sustainable methods of community service in the Delta region to promote youth and adult literacy, healthy lifestyles, and sustainable community development. The fourth AmeriCorps program, the Mississippi Delta Service Corps AmeriCorps VISTA program, is designed to create and expand opportunities for low-income individuals through financial asset development, welfare to work, public health and children and youth.

The Institute for Community-Based Action Research was developed through collaboration between the Center for Community and Economic Development and the Division of Social Sciences. Directed by Dr. John Green, faculty associate in the Center and Assistant Professor of Community Development and Sociology in the Division of Social Sciences, the Institute will be housed in the Center.

The Center, in collaboration with partners from Mississippi Valley State University, Coahoma Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, and numerous other private and public entities has established the Mississippi Delta Technology Council (MDTC). The MDTC is currently operating in the Center for Community Development. Established on November 11, 2002, this organization, represented by a broad range of disciplines, is charged with the task of creating networking opportunities, showcasing the technologies presently in use in the Delta, and developing avenues for future growth in technology. Its service area is the 19 counties of the Mississippi Delta region. The mission

of The Mississippi Delta Technology Council is to enhance the strengths of the Delta by promoting, celebrating, and leveraging successful applications of technology. This will be accomplished by developing a web portal to act as a clearinghouse or forum for information, building coalitions within clusters and across sectors, informing policy decisions, and assessing infrastructure by mapping the resources of the Delta.

Additional projects underway include a Business Development and Assistance Project funded by the Delta Regional Authority. The purpose of this program is to help local chambers of commerce and industrial development foundations implement strategies that will reduce the number of jobs that are being lost in the tri-county area, and to help create new jobs within existing private sector firms and in the public sector. This program is headed by Dr. Jerry Robinson, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Rural Sociology and Faculty Associate in the Center.

The Delta Rural Poll recently surveyed 809 residents of the Mississippi Delta. The data collected from this poll is being used for policy recommendations, community outreach, and economic development. This program will be headed by Dr. Alan Barton, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Community Development and Faculty Associate in the Center. Another program operating in the Center is the Delta Youth Program in Leadership and Community Development. Its mission is "Giving Youth a Voice in the Community to Serve, Learn, Lead and Grow" through *service, learning, leading*, and personal *growth* activities.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation/Mid South Delta Initiative awarded a five-year \$1.2 million grant to Delta State University, Arkansas State University, and Grambling State University to implement the Mid South Delta Leaders Program, a tri-state Delta leadership development program for improving the intellectual and social capital needed to enhance community and economic growth. This program is intended to enhance the quality of life through human resource development, community development and economic development.

Delta State Graduate Students Engage in Grassroots Community Development, reported by John Green

Dr. John Green led a summer school course on data collection in the Arkansas Delta. As part of an ongoing project within the Institute for Community-Based Research at Delta State University, a group of graduate students focused on the livelihoods of small-scale, limited resource and minority farmers. The Institute partnered with Heifer International South Central program, Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation, and the Livestock Association of Eastern Arkansas to collect baseline data for future project assessment. Heifer International assists community organizations to use sustainable agriculture as a rural development and poverty alleviation tool.

The group assisted with developing and administering a survey, conducted field observation and entered/analyzed data. Twenty-two farmers were surveyed in a five county area, and the class visited a wide variety of farms. In their follow-up report, graduate students Starr Parker and Rebecca Kimport wrote,

The most important part of research and evaluation is what you learn from the experience. We have learned from these farmers. They have shown us many new things, and we, as community developers, have gone where many other students have never gone.

The Institute for Community-Based Research engages in projects involving social change from the grassroots level. The foci include: 1) underemployment and persistent poverty, 2) environment, health and food security, and 3) organizing cooperative alternatives. A collaborative effort of the Center for Community and Economic Development and the Division of Social Sciences at DSU, the central goal of the Institute is to provide an avenue through which Delta State University students pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Community Development can work with community organizations to engage in meaningful applied research.

Around the A-MSA ----Department News and Events

From the University of Mississippi, reported by Gary L. Long.

The department's new chair, Dr. David A. Swanson, a demographer from the Helsinki School of Business, assumed his duties in the Fall of 2003. In addition to his vision for a positive sociology at the University, David brought the editorship of the Journal of Population Research and Policy Review to the department.

Dr. Kirsten Dellinger (Ph.D. Texas-Austin, 1998) who specializes in Gender and Work, was awarded tenure, effective the fall of 2004. Congratulations Kirsten! However, consistent with the expectations within the department, Kristen continues to be professionally active through the presentation of papers at the August meeting of the American Sociological Association. Two tenure track Assistant Professors, Drs. Oh and Haenfler, will begin their duties during the 2004-2005 academic year.

Dr. Minjoo Oh (Ph.D. SUNY, Buffalo, 2002) specializes in theory and the sociology of culture. Minjoo is especially interested in the expanding area of post-modern theory.

Dr. Ross Haenfler (University of Colorado, Boulder, 2003) specializes in political sociology and social movements. Ross has conducted research on the Straight Edge Movement, an area that undoubtedly will receive an increasingly amount of academic attention.

Dr. Gary L. Long organized three "Sociology of Literature" sessions at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association meetings in San Antonio during the spring, 2004. He also chaired one session, and presented a paper.

Dr. Elise S. Lake (Ph.D. University of Washington, 1989) presented a paper in San Antonio at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association meeting in San Antonio. She also is assisting in editing the Journal Population Research and Policy Review.

Dr. Jeff Jackson (University of Texas, Austin, 1998) is completing a book length manuscript on NGO professionals contracted through Johns Hopkins University Press. Active in an evolving area of sociological inquiry, he is expected to apply for tenure during the forthcoming academic year.

Dr. Vaughn Grisham, former President of A-MSA, is currently engaged in consulting work. He is on leave during the fall semester.

From the University of Alabama, reported by Dennis L. Peck

Three sociologists have joined the combined sociology and criminal justice programs at the University of Alabama, including two recent graduates. Although I am unable to identify each of these individuals to you for reasons that remain unclear to me, I am pleased to introduce two of these colleagues to the A-MSA membership.

Dr. Robert Jenkot (Ph.D. Southern Illinois University, 2004) recently defended his dissertation entitled "An Ethnographic Examination of Women Involved with Methamphetamine." Bob's research interests and teaching areas include deviance, criminology, race, class, gender, illicit drug use, organized crime, the history of crime, qualitative methodology, social injustice, and social movements. An active participant in regional and national meetings since 1996, and a progressive classroom instructor, Dr. Jenkot is an enthusiastic personality who encourages interaction with students. His active involvement in A-MSA can be anticipated in the near future.

Dr. David L. Klemmack (Ph.D. University of Minnesota, 1970), Professor of Sociology and long time Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of the New College Program and Acting Director of a number of College-wide programs, has rejoined the faculty on a full-time basis. Effective the fall term, David has assumed teaching responsibilities in the sociology program as well as offering courses in New College. David functioned in an administrative capacity for 20 years, but he continues to be a productive research scholar, especially in the area of gerontology. Currently Dr. Klemmack is researching health related issues among the elderly.

The role of our discipline at The University of Alabama remains a matter of great concern. Although the current Dean of the College apparently supports resurrection of the sociology major, the issue remains unresolved at a higher administrative level because, I am informed, it is "a resource problem". Thus, despite the fact sociology is the mother discipline of a number of ancillary College programs, it does not appear that the role of sociology will regain its' rightful academic position in the

immediate future. We can only hope that higher administration officials will realize the importance of sociology to the overall curriculum at the University of Alabama, and that a resource problem is insufficient reason to deny our students the right to declare sociology as a major.

From Auburn University, reported by Thomas Petee

Several long time members of the department have retired within the recent past. Drs. Arthur Wilke and Murray Adams retired from the Department of Sociology in 2002 and 2003, respectively. At the end of the 2003-2004 academic year long time A-MSA member Dr. Glenn Howze retired from the Rural Sociology Department as did two-time Past A-MSA President Dr. John Dunkelberger. Best wishes are extended to each of these individuals as they establish new life-roles within the context of their golden retirement years.

Although individuals such as those named above cannot be replaced, two recent and important additions to the department are: Dr. Dennis Brewster (Ph.D. University of Oklahoma, 2002) and Dr. Mari DeWees (Ph. D. University of Florida, 2004).

These two new colleagues join a very productive faculty. Examples of this level of excellence include the recent publication of The Sociology of American Drug Use (2003) authored by Drs. Charles Faupel and Greg Weaver.

Three scholarly journals are currently housed in the department; Sociological Inquiry, the international sociology honor society journal is edited by Dr. Charles Faupel; The International Journal of Contemporary Sociology is edited by Dr. Raj Mohan; and Homicide Studies is co-edited by Dr. Thomas Petee.

From the University of North Alabama, reported by Craig Robertson

After over 30 years of service to the UNA Department of Sociology and perhaps as many years of activity and support for the Alabama Mississippi Sociological Association, Dr. Jerry Miley retired last July.

After conducting a national search, the faculty, with great satisfaction, extended an offer of employment to Dr. Thomas Kersen who recently completed a post-doctoral research fellowship with the Mississippi Health Policy Research Center at Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center. Dr. Kersen is responsible for teaching a variety of courses included research methods, population, and ethnic and minority groups. In the Community course, Dr. Kersen is attempting to encourage his students to study a local issue with the goal of bringing the academic community and the local population closer together. He recently coauthored an article in *Population Research and Policy Review* entitled "Naturalization of U.S. Immigrants: Highlights from Ten Countries" and is currently working on an article looking at military pay differences by gender and race. One of Dr. Kersen's long-term objectives involves completing a book about the process of military socialization and its effects on an individual soldier who committed suicide right after World War II.

Consistent with his area of specialization and teaching interests related to social psychology, Dr. Alex Takeuchi is working on an experimental study to find effective strategies to dissolve status differences and promote cooperative interaction (as opposed to competitive interaction) within small groups. He is conducting this research with colleagues at Washington State University. Dr. Takeuchi is also conducting an historical analysis of the criminal justice system in feudal Japan and their penal and correctional practices. An earlier and similar study titled "Taiho Jutsu: Law and order in the age of the Samurai" recently appeared in a book authored by Don Cunningham (2004) and published by Turtle Publishing. Finally, Dr. Takeuchi has been conducting historical analysis of institutionalized stratifications in feudal era Japan that were implemented and supported by a series of strict weapons control laws targeting "commoners."

Dr. Jerri Bullard, a former A-MSA President and has recently worked as Director of the Certificate in Gerontology program to offer courses related to the certificate via distance learning. Along with being active on campus, Dr. Bullard is currently serving as a member of the Board of Directors for the Northwest Alabama Community Health Association and Riverhill School. During the past year she has been involved in seeking grant funds for this non-profit health clinic.

Dr. Craig Robertson currently serves as Chair of the Department of Sociology at UNA and remains active in criminological research. He currently assists the Lauderdale County Community Corrections Agency in conducting an evaluation of their pilot drug court program for adult offenders. This fall he will begin a study examining legal decision making affecting female felony offenders.

From Spring Hill College, reported by Larry Hall

Spring Hill College is searching for a Assistant Professor of Sociology beginning August, 2005. The hiring of this second sociologist will allow Spring Hill College to reestablish the sociology major which was abolished in 1995. Restoration of the sociology major will meet student demand and move toward achieving one of the goals of the current administration that is consistent with the Spring Hill College mission of providing an excellent liberal arts education and promoting social justice.

From The University of Southern Mississippi, reported by Amy Chasteen Miller

The program in sociology at The University of Southern Mississippi offers an undergraduate major in sociology, as well as both graduate and undergraduate minors. The program includes four permanent faculty members, Drs. Robert Turner, Ann Marie Kinnell, Amy Chasteen Miller, and Dave Hunt. This year we also have a one-year visiting assistant professor, Dr. Dena Wittmann. Those of you familiar with USM will also note the absence of our longtime colleague, Frank Glamser, who elected to retire this summer after a heated and nationally publicized battle with our university president. Spring 2004 was a contentious time on our campus, and a challenging one for our department. Dr. Glamser's absence is certainly felt as we begin a new year without him.

The sociology program, despite all the challenges, has been doing quite well. We have over sixty majors, and we are busy teaching and mentoring them. Faculty members also maintain an active research agenda in the areas of gender, social movements, sociolinguistics, education, and work. Ann Marie Kinnell, our program director, is busy with a number of projects, including research on domestic violence patterns on our campus and a project exploring communication between computer technicians and users. She also has spearheaded an increased focus in our department on academic service-learning, and this community-oriented methodology has been implemented in a number of courses. Dave Hunt is involved in an ongoing project with the local schools, examining the student experience of transitioning from middle to high school. Amy Chasteen Miller continues to research midwives and birth practices in the United States and the Caribbean. As a result of their research, the faculty has recently published the results of their work in journals such as *Sociological Spectrum*, *Sociological Focus*, and *Sociological Quarterly*. The faculty also remains active in national and regional sociological associations.

From Auburn University at Montgomery, reported by Carolyn Pevey

Some good things are going on in sociology. A new faculty member, Annice Yarber (ABD University of Alabama, Birmingham), joined the Department of Sociology as an assistant professor effective the fall 2004 term.

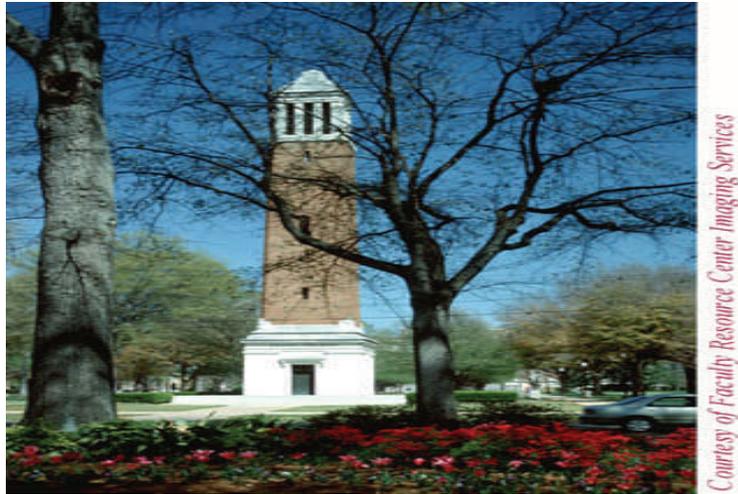
Dr. Paul Sharp, Professor of Sociology and a team of undergraduate students are developing a database of death penalty cases in Alabama, using original records.

Dr. Terance Winemiller is establishing a program in Geographical Informational Systems within the Department of Sociology.

From Mississippi State University, reported by the Editor

Because of his involvement in overseeing the transition of the Department of Sociology into a new campus facility, Dr. Marty Levin was unable to provide insights into the recent activities of this dynamic and progressive department.

Important Information pertinent to the February 24-25, 2005 A-MSA meeting



Denny Chimes
The University of Alabama

Guest Speakers Scheduled for February 24-25, 2005

The 2005 program will welcome and highlight the contributions of three special guests. A long-time friend of many individuals who hold membership in A-MSA, Dr. J. Kenneth Davidson, Sr., a Certified Family Life educator through the National Council on Family Relations and a Clinical Fellow with the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, will offer the Plenary Address. A research scholar and recognized authority in the areas of the family and human sexuality, Dr. Davidson is the author, co-author, and editor of numerous journal articles and well-received textbooks on these same topics. At a time most individuals would be satisfied to benefit from a life-time of achievement, Dr. Davidson and his work is destined to gain even greater notoriety as he continues to research and write on areas that cross interdisciplinary boundaries.

Mr. Stephen Foster Black of the Birmingham, Alabama law firm Maynard, Cooper, & Gale, P. C. will speak at the Thursday evening banquet. Mr. Black studied American history at the University of Pennsylvania, where he completed his bachelors degree Magna Cum Laude in 1993; he graduated from the Yale Law School in 1997. Following law school, Mr. Black moved to Birmingham to become involved in public affairs and to practice law at the firm Maynard, Cooper and Gale. After three years in private practice, he spent a year serving as an assistant to the Governor, where he researched policy and legal issues, worked on economic development projects and spoke on behalf of the Governor at throughout the State of Alabama. After leaving the Governor's office in 2001, he returned to Maynard, Cooper and Gale and began his campaign for Alabama State Treasurer. Active in state politics, Mr. Black was a candidate for State Treasurer in 2002. At present Mr. Black Stephen practices law at Maynard, Cooper and Gale and continues to support the educational goals of the State while serving as Adjunct Professor in the Honors Program at the University of Alabama.

The President of the Southern Sociological Society and a graduate of The University of Alabama, Dr. Michael Hughes of Virginia Polytechnic and State Institute, will be in attendance at our meeting to offer support of A-MSA, the discipline, and A Positive Sociology. A graduate of The University of Alabama, (earning the B. A. and M. A. in Sociology in 1967 and 1971, respectively), Dr. Hughes has come a long way since his days at the Capstone and after earning the Ph.D. in Sociology at Vanderbilt University in 1979. In addition to his numerous at Virginia Tech and serving as the current President of the largest regional sociological association, Dr. Hughes is a well published scholar who also keeps busy by serving as editor of the Journal of Health and Social Behavior and working to enhance the co-authored introductory textbook Sociology: The Core, (McGraw-Hill), which is currently in its 7th edition.

Please Plan for an Earlier Start of the 2005 Program

In addition to the many topics previously identified, at the June 26 meeting the Executive Council approved expansion of the overall 2005 program. This includes starting the annual program earlier on Thursday. In recent years the program began at 1:00 p.m. at which time a welcoming of meeting attendees and the introduction of administrative officials occurred and often a Plenary Address was given. Because of the increasing cost involved in providing meeting space, the Council noted that a more practical approach would be to maximize use of this space by including more sessions throughout Thursday and Friday. Taking advantage of this situation by expanding the actual program time allotted will allow more sessions to be created, thereby enhancing the opportunity for greater participation in the program. Thus, the 2005 program will be scheduled to commence at 9:30 a.m., at which time a welcome to the general assembly will occur. Sessions will begin at 10:30 a. m.

*The proposed schedule of sessions and events is as follows:****

Thursday February 24, 2005

8:00 – 9:20 a.m.	Executive Council Meeting/Breakfast
9:30 – 10:15 a.m.	Welcome and Presidential Comments (Bryant Conference Center)
10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	Sessions
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Luncheon break
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Executive Council Meeting/Lunch
1:00 – 2:15 p.m.	Sessions (with three presenters each)
2:20 – 3:50 p.m.	Sessions (a slightly longer session with four papers each and a “Teaching statistics” workshop)
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Plenary Session
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	President’s Reception (Smith Hall)
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Banquet (Meal and music; Keynote Address; Student Awards; Special recognition)

Friday February 25, 2005

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Executive Council Meeting
8:00 – 9:15 a.m.	Sessions (three papers each and roundtables)
9:20 – 10:35 a.m.	Sessions (three papers each and roundtables)
10:40 – 11:55 a.m.	Sessions (three papers each and roundtables)
12:10 – 1:30 p.m.	General Business meeting

*** If necessary, sessions can be added for Friday afternoon; the General Business meeting will begin immediately thereafter.

How to find the location of the 2005 A-MSA meeting and meeting accommodations

As indicated elsewhere in this Newsletter, the 2005 meeting will convene at the Bryant Conference Center located on Paul W. Bryant Drive (10th Street). The convenient location of the Sheraton Four Points Hotel adjacent to the campus allows easy access to both the Conference Center and lodging for program attendees, as well as the Paul “Bear” Bryant Museum. The Sheraton is a luxury full service facility for which the state rate will be \$79.00 plus lodging tax for single, double or triple accommodations. A very nice restaurant, the Champs, located within the hotel, is open for breakfast and lunch from 6:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. and for dinner from 5:00-10:00 p.m. Hotel reservations should be made by

January 24, 2005 by calling 1-800-477-BAMA 92262). You may also make a reservation via the internet: www.Fourpoints.com/capstone. Click on Meeting Planner; click on attend a meeting; enter Tuscaloosa, AL; enter Meeting Code 3199; click on choose Fourpoints by Sheraton Tuscaloosa Capstone; choose dates (February 24-25) and book.

From your place to our meeting location, directions to the hotel and to the Bryant Conference Center may be obtained via the internet by going to MapQuest.com. The Sheraton Four Points Hotel is located at 320 Paul W. Bryant Drive; 35401 (205/752-3200), and the Bryant Conference Center (205/348-8600), located at 240 Bryant Drive 35487, is adjacent to the Sheraton Four Points Hotel.

Although not as convenient to campus and the conference meeting location, there are many motel facilities located within approximately one mile of our meeting facility. These include:

Best Western Park Plaza motor Inn—3801 McFarland Blvd. E.; 205/556-9690. Includes a complimentary breakfast, pool, spa, and fitness center, and in-room coffee.

Home-Town Suites—1650-15th Street, 35404. 205/553-3828; www.htshotel.com. Includes fully equipped kitchen and health club.

Quality Inn—4541 Jug Factory Ln. (I-20 & I-59, exit 73), 205/759-9878. Includes microwave, refrigerator, pool, in-room coffee, newspaper, and free breakfast.

Ramada Inn—631 Skyland Blvd E. (I-20 & I-59 at exit 73); 1-800-2RAMADA; 205/759-4431. Includes free complimentary breakfast and small pets are allowed.

Sleep Inn—4300 Skyland Blvd E. (I-20 & I-59 at exit 76); 205/556-5696. Includes free continental breakfast and in-room coffee.

Days Inn—1-800/325-2525. 205/759-5000.

Hampton Inn—6400 Interstate Drive, 35453. (I-20 & I-59 at exit 73); 1-800/4267866; 205/562-9000. Includes free continental breakfast, swimming pool, queen size beds, and in-room coffee.

The Essential: Eating facilities located near the Bryant Conference Center

In addition to the Champs restaurant located at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel, the usual fair essential to maintaining the hectic schedule mandated by a professional meeting are conveniently available. Located contiguous to the campus of the University are Arby's and Jack's short order restaurants. Located in the center of the University in the Ferguson Student Center is a food court where one can dine on a variety of choices, each of which is certain to achieve a semblance of satisfaction. Within a mile of the University there is an array of medium priced to upscale restaurants that will be familiar to you as well as many of the local T-Town variety.

A Special Invitation to Students

The Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association strongly encourages student participation and we attempt to create a friendly environment in which all participants and attendees enjoy the special feeling of A-MSA. We extend a special invitation to both graduate and undergraduate students to take advantage of this unique opportunity to submit papers for inclusion in the 2005 meeting. Participation not only offers a supportive environment where students can gain valuable experience, but the Association honors each participant with a certificate, and an award of \$50.00 will be presented to those participants whose scholarly effort achieves recognition as the best paper in the undergraduate paper and graduate student paper competitions. Please encourage your students to submit their work (indicating their desire to be considered for the student competition) to: Surma001@bama.ua.edu or darrensurman@yahoo.com by January 31, 2005.

The Alabama –Mississippi Sociological Association website

Dr. Craig Robertson has created a very website nice which can be located either by typing in Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association or going directly to

www2.una.edu/almssa/

Login in on occasion for information pertaining to the A-MSA. Our web site expert continues to lend his considerable talents by maintaining an updated list of membership and by posting important information pertinent to the efforts of our association to maintain an essential role in your academic life. Please express your appreciation to our web site coordinator when you see him at the registration desk during the meeting in Tuscaloosa.

Past President's Report

It was an honor and privilege to have served as President of the A-MSA during the 2003-2004 term. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the 2004 meeting at Mississippi State University was very successful. I believe that all participants received a rewarding experience. Of course, a successful meeting does not happen without individual effort and institutional support. I would like to give a special thanks to Liesel Ritchie and Cherry Sims for their contributions. I also would like to acknowledge Steve Kroll-Smith and Art Cosby for their addresses to the A-MSA. In organizing the 2004 meetings, I was fortunate to receive support from the Greater Starkville Development Partnership and several Mississippi State University organizations including the Social Science Research Center, the Unit for Community and Environmental Studies the Evaluation and Decision Support Laboratory, the local Chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the Office of Research, the Athletic Department, and the MSU Bookstore. Most importantly, I want to thank the A-MSA membership for creating a successful meeting through your participation and support. I am confident that you will extend your enthusiasm towards the February 2005 meetings to be held at the University of Alabama!

Meet the 2004-2005 President of A-MSA

Dr. Dennis L. Peck, Professor of Sociology at the University of Alabama, assumed the presidency of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association at the end of the February 27, 2004 meeting. As President of the Association and Professor of Sociology he welcomes the opportunity to host the 2005 A-MSA meeting in Tuscaloosa.

Dr. Peck earned the Ph.D. degree from Washington State University in 1976 and the B. S. and M. S. degrees in 1969 and 1970 respectively from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Having previously served in the United States Air Force for a period of three years, seven months and 29 days, upon earning the M. S. degree he returned to government employment with the U. S. Public Health Service. But after working with the government for a period of two years and having left an aspiring academic heart behind, in late 1973 he returned to the life of a graduate student at Washington State University to study with such notable scholars as William R. Catton Jr., James F. Short, Jr., Steven Burkett, Louis Gray, Riley Dunlap, Lois De Fleur and Melvin De Fleur, among others.

His first two academic years can be described as “interesting” as he served as an Assistant Professor at East Texas State University. Inspired to seek a more scholarly environment, in 1978, he received an appointment as Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Alabama where he rose through the ranks to his current position. Perhaps still a bureaucrat at heart, during his tenure at the University Dr. Peck has twice served as a senior analyst with the federal government, first with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and then with the U. S. Department of Education.

A typical sociologist, or one who claims to be a fairly active participant in representing the discipline, Dr. Peck’s research and writing interests are varied to include applied sociology, deviant behavior, law and society, evaluation research and social policy. In each of these areas he has published research articles both within sociology as well as interdisciplinary journals, and he has contributed a number of book chapters, research reports, and book reviews. Overtime the confines of armchair academics have been transcended. He was a research reviewer for the Black History Project while on the faculty of East Texas State University, was engaged as a team member evaluator/consultant for an Alabama coal mining corporation, contributed to his adopted regional area as a consultant with the Alabama State Department of Corrections, and was co-evaluator of a longitudinal study of inadequate self-discipline.

In addition to serving on the editorial boards of several journals throughout his career, Dr. Peck was Book Review Editor of Deviant Behavior during the period 1985-1991, and he served as editor of the official international journal of Alpha Kappa Delta, Sociological Inquiry, from 1987 to 1993. He is a Past-President of the Mid-South Sociological Association (1985-1986), and has authored, edited, and co-edited as well as contributed to five books on topics such as suicide, hazardous toxic waste disposal, demographic and structural change, open institutions and democracy and social problems. In addition, Dr. Peck has served as thematic editor of journal issues in the areas of post-traumatic stress disorder, science and technology, and civility. More recently he served as co-editor for Volume 2 and contributor to Volumes 1 and 2 of the four volume Encyclopedia of Criminology and Deviant Behavior (Brunner-Routledge (2001) and as one of five editors of and contributor to the two-volume Handbook of Death and Dying (Sage 2003). The Handbook of Death and Dying received recognition in 2004 as “Outstanding Reference Resource” awarded by the American Library Association. At present he is co-editor-in chief of the forthcoming two-volume Handbook of Sociology in the 21st Century (Sage).