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## ALABAMA-MISSISSIPPI SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

### SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER



Ventriess Hall, home to School of Liberal Arts, University of Mississippi

**The 2006 meeting of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association, was held in Oxford Mississippi, February 24-25 on the campus of the University of Mississippi, at the E. F. Yerby Conference Center. Based on the comments I have received from those who attended, the conference went well. We had a good turn-out. There were some excellent student paper presentations and faculty panels. The weather was nice. The interaction was cordial.**

**The theme of this year's 37th annual meeting of A-MSA, "Social Inequality in Our New Gilded Age," called attention to the growing inequities of wealth and income in America that have occurred in the last 30 years, and to some of their consequences—a concentration of income and wealth at the top of American society that is perhaps unprecedented since the "Roaring Twenties" and the eve of the Great Depression in 1929. The significance of the theme was made explicit in the Presidential Address given by Long.**

## Mississippi

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**Highlights of the meeting included a workshop on images of Afro-Americans in the news media over time, presented by my colleague, Dr. Kirk Johnson. Johnson discussed the ways news media have depicted Black Americans as outsiders—in subordinate roles, with their humanity diminished. Johnson’s session was well attended and well received. The Undergraduate Papers III session, chaired by Ross Haenfler from Ole Miss and featuring papers from Millsaps students had a large and enthusiastic turnout. Likewise, the Undergraduate Papers II session, chaired by Brent Hales, also featuring Millsaps students, was lively, informative, and well-attended. Larry Hall, Don Bogie, and Duane Gill presented their work on the early history of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association. Their conference room was full of attendees, reminiscences, and of information about how the A-MSA began the sociologists who were its early organizers. Hall, Bogie, and Gill plan to turn their research into a two-part paper on the organization’s emergence and development for the *A-MSA On-Line Sociological Review*. The final session on Friday, an overview of the ongoing research on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was enlightening—a window on the devastation of the Gulf Coast and into the efforts by our colleagues at Mississippi State and the University of Mississippi to find sociological, economic, and demographic insights in ruins left by an enormous disaster.**

**The President’s Reception at the Depot, a pleasing, visually interesting building, was pleasant and friendly. The snacks, the wine, and the music—played by the Ole Miss Jazz Quartet—were all good.**

**At the banquet Thursday evening, Dr. Ming Tsui was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award for her many contributions to the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association. Ming and her students from Millsaps have been a reliable source of papers and presentations, year after year, on which to build a conference. It would be difficult to stage a meeting without Ming Tsui and her contingent of students from south Mississippi. Dennis Peck made the award and offered a testimonial to Ming Tsui’s service to the organization.**

**At the banquet, long-time A-MSA member, past president of the association, Vaughn Grisham was recognized by President Long for his many years of service to the organization and to the University of Mississippi. Vaughn is retiring this year after more than forty years in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Former President of A-MSA and Professor Emeritus Columbus B. Hopper and his wife Pat were guests at the Banquet, as was Professor Emeritus Max W. Williams. Finally, seven students received recognition and cash prizes for their conference papers.**

**Among the many people who made this year’s meeting at the University of Mississippi possible was Dr. Glenn Hopkins, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Dr. Max Williams, Director of Research in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Both provided generous grants to underwrite the costs of hosting A-MSA on our campus. The assistance, of my colleague, and co-program chair, Dr. Elise Lake was invaluable in organizing the conference and attending**

to program details. David Swanson, chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was supportive and a source of good advice. Contributions for the meeting came from many sources: Oxford Tourism Council, Oxford Chamber of Commerce, Oxford University Bank and the First National Bank of Oxford, The Ole Miss Book Store, Serenity Spa, & Botanical Remedies, The Downtown Grill, McGraw-Hill, Wadsworth, Prentice-Hall, and Springer Books. Dennis Peck, Tom Kersen and Clark Hudspeth made important contributions to the conference.

To all those who contributed with time and assistance, and resources, I extend my thanks.

Gary L. Long  
A-MSA President, 2005-2006

### *Student Paper Awards & Awards Committee*

Seven students received framed certificates, and cash awards at the 2006 A-MSA banquet in Oxford, in recognition of the papers they presented at the conference.

Sheena Gardner from Mississippi State University won the first place award and a check for \$60.00 in the graduate student competition for her paper “Rural Sociology.” The second place award for graduate students and a check for \$30.00 went to Sarah Leonard from Delta State University for “Achieving Equity in Education for Women in the Mississippi Delta.” Her paper “Mississippi Delta in High Cotton,” earned Jesse Strassburg, from Delta State University, third place and \$25.00.



Atlanta Skyline 2006, gl

In the undergraduate competition, Melanie Ginn from Jacksonville State University won first place and \$60.00 for her paper, “Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned that Life Imitates Art.” Elisabeth Sessions from Auburn University, Montgomery took second and \$30.00 for “Exploring Cross-Sex Friendships.” There were two third place winners, each received a check for \$25.00: Susan Mixon for “The Changing Role of Women in the Labor Market,” and Chelsea Chicosky for “Preventing the Cycle of Violence: Profiling Domestic Abusers. Both Susan and Chelsea are from Millsaps.

Nineteen students submitted papers to the conference, including five graduate student papers, thirteen undergraduate papers, and one paper from a high school student. The student papers represented 5 colleges and universities: Millsaps (8), Delta State U. (4), Auburn University, Montgomery (1), Jacksonville State University (1), and Florence High School, AL (1). Three graduate student presentations from the University of Mississippi were not entered in the paper contest.

The Committee members—Ming Tsui, Chair, David LoConto, Steve Parker, Robert Jenkot, Janis McCoy, and John Green did yeoman work in assessing student contributions. Ming Tsui and members of the committee suggested, at the end of their task, that in the future two additional criteria be used to judge papers: Theoretical Analysis and Data Collection and Analysis.

***Excerpts From Dennis Peck's Presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Ming Tsui***

**“The Distinguished Service Award is given by the Association...to a member of long standing... who has...supported the A-MSA with time and talent.... Eligibility for this award is defined as: ten years or more of A-MSA membership and a strong record of involvement in Association governance and annual programs.**

**Tonight we honor one of our own,...a special person...who represents the spirit and warm character...[of] the A-MSA.... A graduate of Henan Teacher's College where she earned a degree in English (1981),...a native of...the People's Republic of China,...she...earned a Master of Arts degree in Linguistics from the State University of New York at Stony Brook...by 1984...and moved into sociology earning the Master of Arts...and subsequently the Ph.D in from...Stony Brook in 1988 and 1992.**

**Since 1992, she has taught a large number of courses (thirteen) at Millsaps College,...where she currently is an Associate Professor. ...Despite the heavy instructional load she remains committed to the Millsaps mission,...her only academic appointment.**

**Once located in the Southland, she hit the ground running; ...her fall arrival at Millsaps... [marks] her initial participation in a professional meeting, [at] the Mid-South Association...in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Her second...professional meeting was in Birmingham...[at] the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association.... [Since then she has presented]...eighteen papers at national and regional meetings...[in] Beijing China, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, New Orleans, Toronto, Lafayette, Starkville, and...Conway Arkansas. [She has]...an impressive list of publications that appear in such...journals as *Education and Urban Society*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Gender and Society*, *Asian Thought and Society*, *Pacific Migration Journal*, *Sociological Spectrum*, and *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. [She has contributed to the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association in many ways as:] Member-at Large, Member of Student Paper Awards Committee, Chair of the Student Paper Awards Committee,...[but especially as a] mentor to a large number of student[s who have presented papers at our]...annual meetings.**

**Each year our colleague is responsible for the large number of undergraduate students from... [Millsaps who are] an important component of the annual A-MSA program. With only a few exceptions,...[each year] a student from her college has received an award for the student paper competition. Such things do not occur by accident, but are the result of...enthusiasm, encouragement to students, ...[a search for difficult-to-find] financial support for food and travel, and ...[effort to resolve the logistical problem] of coordinating the travel for...[a] large contingency of students. I know the students...appreciate our colleague['s efforts].**

**The membership of the association think it is time we also let her know how much these efforts are appreciated within the association. On behalf of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association, and as Chair of the 2005-2006 Committee for Awards, I am pleased to present our colleague and request that you join with me in recognizing Dr. Ming Tsui, the 2006 recipient of the A-MSA Distinguished Service Award.”**

**The Awards Committee was chaired by Dennis Peck and included Duane Gill, John Dunkelberger, Albert Nylander, and Larry Hall.**

## *New officers of A-MSA*

The new president for 2006-2007 is Dr. Kim Brackett, Department of Sociology, Auburn University at Montgomery, 329 Business, Montgomery, AL 36124-4023, [kbracket@mail.aum.edu](mailto:kbracket@mail.aum.edu).

The Nominations Committee, composed of Vaughn Grisham, Albert Nylander, Don Bogie, and John Dunkelberger nominated the following people as new officers of A-MSA:

President elect for 2007-2008 is Dr. Domenico Parisi, Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work, Bowen, Room 1005, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762, [mimmo.parisi@ssrc.msstate.edu](mailto:mimmo.parisi@ssrc.msstate.edu).

New At-Large Representative from Alabama is Dr. Frederick A. Myers, History & Social Sciences, Wallace Hall 308 B, The University of West Alabama, Livingston, AL, 35740, [fmyers@uwa.edu](mailto:fmyers@uwa.edu).

The new At-Large Representative from Mississippi is Dr. Elise S. Lake, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Mississippi, University, MS, 38677, [salake@olemiss.edu](mailto:salake@olemiss.edu).

## *Meet the New President*

Dr. Kimberly P. Brackett joined the AUM faculty in 1996 after completing a doctoral degree at University of Florida. (How about that Basketball National Championship? Go Gators!) She holds a bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, from Jacksonville University (Jacksonville, Florida) and a master's degree from University of Florida. While attending University of Florida she received a campus-wide graduate student teaching award for her Sociology of Marriage and Family course.

She has been actively involved in professional associations during her career. Her organizational affiliations include National Council on Family Relations, American Sociological Association, Southern Sociological Society, and the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association, where she served on the Executive Committee for three years. She has also served three terms as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Family Issues.

Dr. Brackett's research interests include the links between religion and divorce, construction and expression of self in everyday life, and dating and mate selection. Her publications have appeared in various outlets including Sociological Inquiry, Journal of Family



Atlanta Skyline, 2006, gll

Issues, and Social Science Journal. She has authored several textbook supplements and teaching aids and is currently working on an encyclopedia of family controversies.

Dr. Brackett serves as the undergraduate academic advisor for sociology majors. Also, she is co-director for the Interdepartmental Master's Degree in Sociology with colleagues at Auburn. Her other departmental activities include founding member and past sponsor of the Sociology Club, and Chapter Representative for Alpha Kappa Delta (Xi of Alabama), the International Sociology Honor Society. The courses that she teaches are Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, Sociology of Family, Social Psychology, Sociology of Gender Roles, Women and Culture, and Advanced Seminar in Sociology. This fall she is offering a new special topics course on Motherhood in American Society. For Dr. Brackett the time spent in the classroom is the highlight of the workday and she relishes the interactions with her students. This dedication was rewarded when she received a Distinguished Teaching Professorship (2003-2006).

Now for a few unique things that you may not know (or want to know) about me. My husband, Dr. P. David Brackett, Jr., a pharmacist, fellow Gator, and Auburn faculty member is my high school sweetheart. Together we have two wonderful boys, Brendan (5) and Kyle (2). A personal accomplishment of which I am very proud is having lost 60 lbs. on Weight Watchers. I am addicted to Starbucks's coffee, even though I still can't order my grande, non-fat, sugar-free hazelnut latte correctly. I am known by my students for never wearing the same outfit twice in a term. For recreation I enjoy reading, bird watching, hiking, and travel. The book by my bed right now is Miriam Peskowitz's The Truth Behind the Mommy Wars. My favorite common backyard bird is the Carolina Wren. I am a member of Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity for women and was president of my collegiate chapter, Zeta Mu.



Sculpted Red Sandstone, Four Corners, Northern NM, 2005, gll

I would love to hear about your Unique and Universal self and welcome responses. See you in February.

### *The Plenary Address at the 2006 Meeting in Oxford, by Brent Hale*

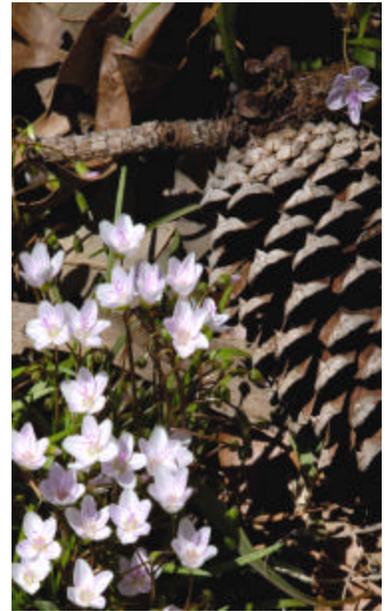
In no other industrial nation are wealth and income as concentrated as they are, today, in America. Examination of monetary and fiscal policies pursued by the U. S. Federal government, suggests that the concentration of wealth and income at the top of American society is, in part, a consequence of policy. A reduction in the number of income tax brackets, reduced tax rates on individual, corporate, and interest incomes, increases in social security taxes, the use of social security revenue surpluses to supplant monies lost from tax cuts,

recurring budget deficits and their beneficial effects on the interest paid to those who loan money to the federal government—all—have contributed to a sharp increase in the income of in upper quintile households and in the fortunes of wealthiest one percent of Americans. Some connections between federal policy and inequalities of wealth and income were presented by Dr. Gary Long, President of the Alabama/Mississippi Sociological Association at the 2006 Annual Meeting held in Oxford, Mississippi. Dr. Long provided an overview of the growing polarization of American society in his presidential address to the Association.

Dr. Long noted that changes over the last 25 years have greatly benefited the top one percent of the nation's wealth holders and households with incomes in the top quintile. Meanwhile, middle and bottom quintile households have been losing ground, experiencing decreases in their incomes.

In the last 25 years, beginning with the administration of Ronald Reagan, the number of billionaires in American has increased dramatically. The number of millionaires has also risen sharply — especially when Republican presidents have occupied the White house. It is not only economic growth and a bull market that has funneled money toward the top of American society. A flattened and increasingly regressive tax structure increased the fortunes of the wealthy and the incomes of those who once had their own special tax brackets with high marginal tax rates.

Putting Long's address into local perspective, consider that in the rural South, people from Alabama and Mississippi have historically been over-represented among the poor. Areas such as the Mississippi Delta region have experienced, and continue to experience, significant rates of poverty as the agrarian economy shifted from manual labor to mechanized operations. The resulting loss of income left the region with a largely poor, undereducated, underemployed population.



Spring Beauties, 2005, gll

Those at the bottom essentially had two choices. They could leave for the promise of employment in the North or stay and take the low-paying manufacturing jobs that were recruited to the South with the lure of low wage and low tax rates.

Over the last ten years, much of the employment base in the Delta region has evaporated. From just 2000 to 2004, the 18 counties of the Mississippi Delta experienced an 18 percent decline in the number of manufacturing jobs. Plant downsizing and closures in response to globalization and the shrinking economy have left the region searching for answers. Meanwhile, the policies put in place by the federal and state governments largely continue to ignore growing problems. Similar economic troubles affect many of Alabama's rural areas.

The growing inequities of wealth and income in America seem to be the result of a conscious policy, adopted by Ronald Reagan and continued under George Bush-1 and George Bush-2, to undo the policies of Roosevelt's New Deal, to protect wealth and to reduce services provided to lower income Americans. Reagan's trickle-down economics, at best, have been ineffective at addressing poverty and at worst, have exacerbated the problem. According to Long, the

current federal administration has continued the policies begun by Reagan, but with a vengeance. Dr. Long suggested that current policies will increase the divide between rich and poor.

## ***Other Committees and Memberships***

### ***The new e-Journal by Gary L. Long***

Our new A-MSA e-Journal, the *A-MSA On-Line Sociological Review*, housed at the University of Mississippi (as is the journal web site), is open for business and submissions. The new journal is peer-reviewed, and it publishes theoretical, empirical, and other manuscripts (e.g., opinion pieces) of note to sociologists. Student submissions are welcome.



Sunset on a High Sierra Lake, 1971, gll

As editor, I can report that I have have three articles that have been reviewed. Two have been revised and resubmitted. One is under revision. I have invited a fourth piece, on the history of the A-MSA. When I have four or five pieces complete and ready, I will publish the inaugural edition. For information about the journal, the editor, Gary L. Long at [salong@olemiss.edu](mailto:salong@olemiss.edu).

Deputy editors for the new journal are Elise S. Lake ([salake@olemiss.edu](mailto:salake@olemiss.edu)), Minjoo Oh ([minjoo@olemiss.edu](mailto:minjoo@olemiss.edu)) and Ming Tsui ([tsuim@millsaps.edu](mailto:tsuim@millsaps.edu)). A list of associate editors and statement of journal policies can be found on the journal web site at: <http://www.olemiss.edu/pubs/amsa/>.

We urge you to consider our new journal as a home for your manuscripts.

### ***Executive Committee Meeting, by Gary L. Long\****

At the Executive Committee meeting in Tuscaloosa an idea was discussed for securing a more reliable bank balance for the A-MSA. The suggestion was that we ask departmental to underwrite the association with annual membership subscriptions of \$100.00. A-MSA's bank account depends, in part, on the willingness of the deans and other administrators at hosting institutions to subsidize our meetings. Unwilling administrators can threaten our organization's solvency.

With more predictable revenues it might make it possible to hold meetings at some of the schools in the association with fewer resources, more often. This idea was discussed under old business at the 2006 executive committee meeting in Oxford. It was the sense of the meeting that we ought to pursue subscriptions.

In Tuscaloosa in 2005, the Executive Committee discussed increasing conference and membership fees by \$5.00 per year for a few years to generate revenue for the association. Membership and registration fees were increased by \$5.00 each for the conference in Oxford. The issue was revisited in Oxford. Executive Committee members voted not to increase membership dues next year, and to raise conference registration fees by \$5.00 for the next two years.



Chaco Canyon, NM 2004, gll

President Long presented an itemized list of expenditures (estimated) that could not be covered by the grants to support the conference received from the University of Mississippi. The largest single expenditures were for food for meetings and student helpers, wine for the reception, and cash awards for the winners in the students' papers contests. The estimated total came to \$1031.21. (That estimated total was reduced when Long and Elise Lake absorbed the cost of (purchased) left-over bottles of wine for the reception.)

Long pointed out that he made a decision to increase the amount of cash awards give to winners of the students' paper contests and to give cash awards to first, second, and third place winners in the amounts of \$60.00, \$30.00, and \$25.00. The sense of the meeting was that this was a good idea, one that might encourage student participation.

There was a rather lengthy discussion precipitated by Clark Hudspeth about authorizing association presidents to spend monies on meeting expenses—who should authorize and for what amount. The sense of the meeting was that in the future presidents should seek authorization from a simple majority of the Executive Committee for any single expenditure larger than \$500.00 that came form the association's bank account.

\*Copies of Executive Committee Agenda are available on request.

### *The A-MSA Archives & History*

Our Archivist continues to be Don Bogie, Director of the Auburn at Montgomery Demographic Research Center. At the Oxford meeting, Larry Hall, Duane Gill and archivist, Don Bogie collaborated on a presentation about the formative years of A-MSA's history and the founders who brought the association into existence. Larry, Duane Gill, and Don have agreed to write up a two-part history of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association to be published in the association's on-line journal.

### *The 2006 Business Meeting*

President Long called the meeting to order, present were: Gary Long, University of Mississippi; Tom Kersen, University of North Alabama; Clark Hudspeth, Jackson State University; Elise S. Lake, University of Mississippi; Rhonda Hallmark, Itawamba Community College; Janis McCoy, Itawamba Community College; Duane Gill, Mississippi State University; Annice Yarber, University of Alabama-Montgomery; Carolyn Pevey, University of Alabama, Montgomery; and Kim Brackett, Auburn University, Montgomery. The chairs of the Awards Committee, Nominations Committee, and Student Paper Awards Committee were not present, their reports were submitted in writing. (See prior pages of this newsletter.)

Long reported the nomination for President Elect and ask for a vote. Likewise, he reported the nominations for members-at-large from Alabama and Mississippi. After some discussion about the candidates, they were elected by voice votes.

Long reported on the number of articles received and under review for the association's e-journal (see previous pages), and ask Clark Hudspeth for a Treasurer's Report. Hudspeth indicated an opening balance in A-MSA' bank account of \$5089.61, and an end of conference total of \$6276.45. The conference added an interim total of \$1186.84 to association's bank account. (Note: After all accounts were settled and new monies deposited, Clark reported to me in an email, a final account balance of \$6723. 61, which means the association made \$1634.00 on the conference in Oxford.)

Long passed the gavel to incoming president Kim Brackett, who presented Long with plaque for his service to A-MSA. At the end of the meeting, raffle tickets were drawn from a canister and winners were presented with their prizes.



Rock and Cloud Formations, Northern, NM, 2005, gl

### *An Update on the Katrina Recovery Raffle*

Thanks to all of you who purchased tickets for the Katrina Recovery Raffle for the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport, Mississippi. This hands-on children's museum was heavily damaged by the hurricane, but many organizations and individuals have rallied to provide volunteers to aid in the clean-up and rebuilding the center's facilities.

Early last fall, Gary Long and I were talking about the activities that would constitute the 2006 A-MSA program. In past meetings, drawings for door prizes have entertained those attending the conference; but with the Gulf Coast devastated by Katrina, we felt it would be appropriate to hold a drawing that would not only be fun for members, but contribute in some small way to relief efforts. I phoned Aletha Burge at the United Way of South Mississippi for advice on what we

might do to help the Gulf's children, and she recommended the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center. After checking their website ([www.lmdc.org](http://www.lmdc.org)), learning about their programs, and seeing photos of the destruction caused by Katrina, I knew we had our cause.

Local merchants were generous in donating prizes for the raffle. Oxford's Downtown Grill provided a \$75 gift certificate, Serenity Spa and Botanicals contributed a \$50 gift card, and First National Bank and Oxford-University Bank donated mint Silver Eagle dollars. The Ole Miss Bookstore gave us a copy of Kevin Phillips's *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich*, a book completely in tune with the 2006 meeting's emphasis on social inequality.

At \$5 a ticket, sales at the meeting totaled \$255, and some additional contributions after the raffle brought the total up to \$300. Sending our donation on to the museum proved a bit tricky, as the reconstruction is still underway. After several tries, I was able to reach Mary Anne Caldwell, who handles public relations for the center, to confirm their mailing address. (It's the same as always—but recipients must pick up their mail at the local Wal-Mart!) In a colorful card, Mary Anne thanked A-MSA for our interest in their work and our contribution:

*Dear Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association Members:*

*As we continue to plan and rebuild, we are so grateful for supporters like your association. Our MS Gulf Coast families are very excited about our first event since the storm—Third Annual Bear Creak Bluegrass Festival on May 6.*

*We appreciate you selecting the Discovery Center as the recipient of the proceeds from the raffle at your annual meeting.*

*Our LMDC staff is excited about hearing the laughter of children and adults once again.*

*Best regards,*

*Mary Anne Caldwell*

Reconstruction has sometimes been slower than hoped, but the center will initiate activities with the Bluegrass Festival on the center's grounds, and the museum itself is slated to open June 6<sup>th</sup>. The LMDC website notes that buildings and exhibits can be repaired with help from insurance, but restoring the museum's operating budget will be challenging. For more information on how you can help the center, contact Betsy Grant, the center's Director, at [betsygrant22@msn.com](mailto:betsygrant22@msn.com). And again, thanks for contributions to the Katrina Recovery Raffle!

Elise Lake

University of Mississippi

## *Departmental News & Events*

*From Delta State University, by Brent Hales*

Delta State University, through its College of Business, Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Research, Small Business Development Center and Center for Community and Economic Development, in partnership with the Mississippi Micro Enterprise and Assistance Network, will present the first annual Delta Business and Entrepreneurial Symposium, Wednesday, March 29. The symposium will be held at the Charles W. Capps Entrepreneurial Center in Stoneville, MS, from 8 am- 3 pm. It will feature information on business opportunities in the Delta region, opportunities for funding and programs designed to assist existing and emerging entrepreneurs. Jim Clinton, Executive Director of the Southern Growth Policies Board, will keynote the event's luncheon.



The Lynn Meadows Discovery Center

In the last 10 years, the Mississippi Delta has experienced significant decline in manufacturing employment. With such declines, the traditional response of seeking large-scale manufacturing opportunities is costly and often ineffective. Similarly, most new jobs for uneducated or low skilled workers pay minimum or near-minimum wages and are not substantially increasing wealth in the community. Also, population declines are projected for the region for the next 15 years by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Office of Policy Research and Planning (2005).

Such downturns affect communities' tax bases and their abilities to promote their existing businesses. Opportunities for growth in the Delta may largely depend on using local resources and local talent to promote new small or niche businesses.

The Delta Business and Entrepreneurial Symposium will highlight innovations in entrepreneurship and mechanisms that communities can use to encourage small business development.

According to Dr. Brent Hales, Director of the Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Research at Delta State, "The Symposium is designed to bring together community and business leaders, entrepreneurs, economic development professionals, and other interested parties, both to learn about business practices and to create a network of existing and emerging entrepreneurs. I would encourage anyone interested in learning about entrepreneurship to attend this symposium."

The cost of the symposium is \$10. For more information or to register for attending, please contact Dr. Hales at (662) 846-4233 or at [bhales@deltastate.edu](mailto:bhales@deltastate.edu).

*From Jacksonville State University, by David LoConto*

The 2005/2006 school year at Jacksonville State University (JSU) has witnessed a continued expansion of our program. In the spring of 2002 we had 49 majors. As of March of 2006, we have 110 majors. The addition of Dr. Tina H. Deshotels in the fall of 2005 has brought a

renewed energy to the department and program. Her blend of enthusiasm and camaraderie has been contagious. This has come at a time when we have added an extra math course to the program. Our goal is to reach 130 majors by the 2009/2010 school year, and hopefully to add an additional position by that time.

This year, the program has added three new courses which have contributed to the direction we set out in the fall of 2002. The courses are: Drugs and Society; Theories of Gender; and Sociological Internship. The purpose of these courses is to provide students with subject material that reflects the ever-changing social dynamic, and to provide further opportunities for students majoring in sociology.

The faculty have been busy in research with over 25 publications in the last four years. Recently, Dr. Tina H. Deshotels and Dr. Craig J. Forsyth published "Strategic Flirting and the Emotional Tab of Exotic Dancing," in the January issue of *Deviant Behavior* (Vol. 21:1). Dr. Clark Hudspeth, and Dr. Xiaohe Xu and Dr. John P. Bartkowski from Mississippi State University had "The Role of Cohabitation in Remarriage," accepted for publication in *The Journal of Marriage and Family*. Dr. David G. LoConto with Danielle Jones Pruett published "The Influence of Charles A. Ellwood on Herbert Blumer and Symbolic Interactionism," in *The Journal of Classical Sociology* (Vol. 6:1). Dr. LoConto, with Amy D. Francis, published "Cultural Variation within European American Families," in the *Comprehensive Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology*, Craig L. Frisby and Cecil R. Reynolds, eds.

Presentations at conferences included: "Model City or Marred City: The Incinerator at Anniston, Alabama," by Dr. Rodney N. Friery at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, in Toronto, Canada; "Sex Rules: Edicts of Control in Exotic Dancing," by Dr. Tina H. Deshotels and Dr. Craig J. Forsyth at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association; "Attitudes vs. Actions in Sexual Activities Outside of Relationships" by Dr. Clark Hudspeth and Dr. Xiaohe Xu at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association; "Sociological Naturalism: Integrating Pragmatism and Physics," by Dr. David G. LoConto and Becky R. Hawkins at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association; Pragmatism and its Application Toward an Understanding of Grieving of People with Mental Retardation," by Dr. David G. LoConto, at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society; "Pragmatism and Grieving: Incorporating Mead and Dewey to Understand the Grieving of People with Mental Retardation," by Dr. David G. LoConto, at the Annual Meeting of the Atlantic Coast Pragmatist Conference; "Collaborating Across Continents: Lessons Learned from the U.S.- Brazil Initiative," by Dr. Adrian Aveni and Rita Crider, at The U.S.-China Forum on Distance Learning.

In addition, regarding service, Dr. Rodney Friery continues as chairperson for the Rights Protection Committee for The Learning Tree. Dr. Clark Hudspeth has been actively involved as faculty sponsor for All Faith Student Alliance (AFSA), as well as Social Acceptance for Everyone (SAFE). Dr. Tina Deshotels has been involved with SAFE also as faculty advisor, and the Women's Issues Support and Empowerment (WISE) student organization. All faculty members have been involved actively with the Sociology Club and Alpha Kappa Delta. WISE has sponsored the Clothesline Project here at JSU as a testimony to the problem of violence against women. SAFE has co-sponsored with AFSA "Peace Fest," a festival celebrating tolerance and diversity. The Sociology Club and Alpha Kappa Delta have created club t-shirts, participated in the university Preview Days, participated in breaching events at two area restaurants, and sponsored raffles at sporting events giving away cash and an IPOD. They also sponsored the First Annual Paper Competition for Sociology majors and

minors. The competition was won by Sociology major Melanie Ginn for her paper, "Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned That Life Imitates Art." Melanie's paper also won the undergraduate student paper competition at the AMSA meeting this year in Oxford. We are very proud of Melanie. This was the first time one of our students participated in the AMSA competition.

Committee work has been a regular part of our daily lives, however, with respect to committees outside of JSU, Dr. Clark Hudspeth served his first year as Treasurer of the AMSA; and Dr. David LoConto is currently serving on the Membership and Program Committees for the MSSA. He served on the Student Paper Competition Committee for the AMSA, as well.

All-in-all, it has been a wonderful year at JSU, and we look forward to further developments of our program.

### **From the University of North Alabama, by Thomas Kersen**

During the fall of 2005, Dr. Jerri Bullard headed a new program implemented at the University of North Alabama called Learning Communities. Learning communities are springing up at colleges and universities all over the nation in an attempt to increase retention rates and to help students adjust to college life. In their simplest form they are the pairings of courses usually connected by a third course where faculty work together to help students get the most out of college. Learning communities do the following: organize students and faculty into smaller groups, bring faculty and students together, encourage integration of different subjects, focus faculty and students on student learning, help students establish support networks, and provide a context for adjusting to college life.

As part of this program the department paired an Introductory Sociology course with a World Civilization course. Students in these two classes had more opportunities to interact with their professors and with other students. It was a wonderful chance to get to know others and to adjust to college life. Learning communities introduce students to fields like Sociology at a higher level. Most students, because they are more comfortable in their classes, tend to participate and actively engage the subject matter. Over 98 percent of the students who participated in a learning community during the fall of 2005 said that they would recommend a learning community to in-coming freshmen.

Dr. Kersen was an invited panelist at the Southern Sociological Society meeting in New Orleans at the end of March. He presented "How Town/Gown Issues Mediate the Influence of Professional Associations on the Formation of Social Capital" within the panel session entitled "Building Professional Connections through State Sociological Associations." He was funded through an Arts and Sciences Developmental Grant to present his work.

Dr. Alex Takeuchi, was quoted recently in the local paper about Alabama's divorce rate and the challenges faced by today's married couples. His commentary on the popularity of names and the effects of peoples' names on the perceptions of others was also quoted in the same paper. In March, Dr. Takeuchi introduced a new theory about physical

attraction in an article entitled "On the Matching Phenomenon in Courtship: A Probability Matching Theory of Mate Selection," which will appear in *Marriage & Family Review*. Together with Mr. C. U. Guido Schiller (an internationally renowned scholar of Japanese swords), Dr. Takeuchi authored the article "Koshirae: The Mountings of the Japanese Sword," which will be published by Macao Museum of Art in May for its upcoming exhibition on ancient Japanese swords.

*From the Mississippi State, by Duane Gill*

Greg Dunaway has been named Interim Head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at Mississippi State University.

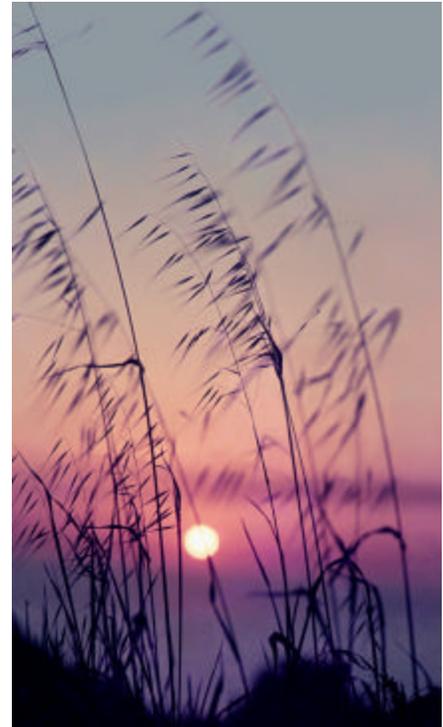
During Mississippi State's 2006 Faculty Awards and Recognition Program, Dr. Arthur G. Cosby was named a William L. Giles Distinguished Professor. Cosby is director of the Social Science Research Center. Dr. Cosby was honored with a reception at the Social Science Research Center on April 21st.

*From the University of Mississippi, by David Swanson*

At a session of the 2006 meeting of the Southern Sociological Society on Friday, March 24th, Jeff Jackson, Kirsten Dellinger, and David Swanson presented papers about the data collection they, along with others, have done for the NSF-funded research they are engaged in, on the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Sociology & Anthropology Department at Ole Miss welcomes a new colleague, Dr. John Sonnett, who will join the faculty in the Fall of 2006. John received his Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in 2005. He will teach methods and statistics. His specialties include content analysis and the creation of methods for analyzing and comparing forms of discourse. His dissertation compared discussions of global warming in popular, political, and scientific media.

Gary L. Long and other members of the department at Ole Miss will be offering ritual sacrifices to the SAP Deity—the computer automated scheduling software— next fall to see if the deity is appeased and will stop changing the descriptions of course schedules built by the Department of Sociology & Anthrpology, after they go online.



Sunset on the North Coast of CA, 1970. gll

## ***The Alabama –Mississippi Sociological Association website***

Visit the Association's web site, currently maintained by Tom Kersen at: [ww2.una.edu/almssa/](http://ww2.una.edu/almssa/)

### ***A Retraction***

In the Fall Newsletter, in the “Departmental News“ section, I printed information from the University of Alabama that was inaccurate. The item indicated the existence of a vacancy for the chair of the Criminal Justice Department. This was not true. I apologize for the inaccuracy and for any trouble or consternation this mistake may have caused.

-GLL



July 4, 2004, gll

**Finis!!**

