

Forum

A Letter From the President

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that each of you has had a most productive summer and that life is beginning to take on a more "normal" routine. Like all of you, I was shocked and upset by the events of September 11, 2001. Here we are, a full year later, and it is still difficult to grasp the scale of the attacks and the devastating loss of innocent life. Last October in Mobile, Clifton Bryant and several of his colleagues organized a special plenary session on the attacks, and the questions that were being asked were: What had motivated the terrorists to inflict such damage? How could people decide to end the lives of so many civilians in the name of their cause or religion? What should we as a nation do in response to the attack and would military action result in future attacks? These questions have yet to be answered and we must admit that we live in a changed world. This year's annual meeting will shed light on some of these questions. David Knottnerus has put together a splendid program around the theme "Social Order, Disruption, and Change: Classic Themes and Current Challenges." Many of the sessions are designed to help us answer some of the questions associated with the crisis of September 11.

We are honored to have Russell Dynes, of the Disaster Research Center at the University of Delaware, serve as our plenary speaker on Friday afternoon. If you have not had the pleasure to hear Dr. Dynes speak, you will be in for a special treat. As usual, the American Sociological Association's executive office will be represented at our meetings. Dr. Carla Howery, deputy executive officer, will represent ASA and will be present to discuss and share teaching aids and ideas developed to help our students deal with crisis situations and social change. Again, our program chair, David Knottnerus has put together a thoughtful and very timely program.

On another note, I would like to thank all of the members who have organized sessions, prepared papers, and served on committees during the past year. The names are too many to mention in the space allotted here. However, I would like to give a special thanks to the local arrangements committee for all of their work, and a special thanks to DeAnn K. Gauthier for her work on *Spectrum* and *Forum*. As you know, DeAnn has been wearing two hats since February as editor of both of our publications. She graciously agreed to continue to serve as *Forum's* editor until a successor could be found. We as an association are lucky to have such a dedicated member.

If you haven't, please make your travel arrangements for Memphis. It is a great city with much to offer: blues, catfish, casinos, the Peabody Hotel, the Civil Rights Museum, and a dynamic downtown entertainment district. Our Annual Meeting is a time to share our intellectual ventures as well as catch up with what is happening with our friends. I hope to see each of you in Memphis.

Sincerely,
Obie Clayton, Jr.

Wanted:

New Editor(s) for *Forum*

The current editorship of *Forum* will end on October 17, 2002. The MSSA is seeking proposals from members of the MSSA who wish to edit the newsletter during the next three years (2003-2005). Duties include solicitation of news items from the membership and reporting the business of the Executive Council. At least two newsletters per year are to be published. The editor is responsible for the complete lay-out of the newsletter. Applicants must be dues paid members of the MSSA.

Proposals should be submitted no later than **October 7, 2002**. The application should include a statement of credentials, a commitment of support from the applicant's administrative superiors, and any other supporting materials. Send to:

Obie Clayton, Jr., President, MSSA
Department of Sociology, Morehouse College
830 Westview Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30314

From the Desk of the Secretary-Treasurer

Membership in the MSSA for 2002 is 209, the lowest since 1985. Currently we have 153 Active members, 51 Student members, and 5 Joint members. The current membership level reflects a continuous downward trend from 322 in 1999. A similar pattern is seen in registration at annual meetings. Registration declined by approximately 43% from 299 in 1999 to 169 in 2001. These trends significantly affect revenue generation from membership retention and meeting participation.

Membership dues and meeting registration fees are the main sources of revenue of MSSA. The Association has been fortunate in previous years to receive generous donations from host State institutions and Departments of the Program Chairs. This year, I received contribution commitments from Morehouse College, Oklahoma State University, and Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Contributions are, however, not likely to exceed 25% of receipts in recent years.

The Association will, nevertheless, be able to meet its financial obligations for the year from current assets (\$30,971.00) held in Checking, Saving, and Certificate of Deposit accounts and anticipated revenues. I may, though, have to finance part of current operations (approximately \$4,000.00) from past savings. This figure can be reduced if our hotel pick-up exceeds 304 room nights. We will not have to pay \$2,500.00 for hotel "Facilities Utilization Fees."

I urge members and participants in the Annual meetings to stay at the conference hotel. The meetings will held at the Memphis Marriott East, 2625 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Memphis, TN 38118. **Meeting dates are: October 16 –19, 2002. Call 1(800)627-3587 for reservations before October 2, 2002. Room rates are \$89.00 per night plus tax.** Further information on membership, registration, and reservations can also be found at [<http://www.uakron.edu/hefe/mssapage.html>].

I also appeal to members and participants to renew membership in the Association and pre-register for the Annual meetings as early as possible. Pre-registration saves you money and reduces stress on my volunteer onsite assistants. Both are positive effects.

Look forward to seeing you in Memphis.

Sahadeo Patram

President Elect and Program Chair's Report

The 2002 Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association should be a very exciting and productive conference this year. At present we have approximately seventy-four paper, panel, roundtable, and workshop sessions and at least eighty-two events for the conference (including the plenary address, luncheons, breakfast meeting, receptions, and sessions). Many persons from both within and outside our region are working hard to make this a successful conference. As is usually the case in the MSSA, these contributions come from both faculty and students.

I also want to remind everyone that we will have a full array of sessions not only on Thursday and Friday but also on Saturday morning. Please plan on staying in Memphis for the entire meeting, including Saturday. Furthermore, some of these sessions are new, not having been listed in the two calls for papers that were mailed out earlier this year. Finally, we have introduced several new features to this year's meeting, especially an Undergraduate and Graduate Student Poster Session (dealing with research and service activities). Please make an effort to attend the poster session at the scheduled time and take this opportunity to meet with and talk to the student presenters about their work.

A special highlight of the conference will be the Plenary Address. Dr. Russell R. Dynes, cofounder and former Co-Director of the Disaster Research Center, Department of Sociology, University of Delaware, will be our plenary speaker. His speech, scheduled for Friday afternoon, is *Finding Order In Disorder*.

Please remember that all meeting participants must be dues-paying members of the MSSA, pre-register for the annual meeting, and ideally stay at the conference site hotel, the Memphis Marriott East. If you have any questions concerning your submission or about the conference program please e-mail me at jdk2307@okstate.edu.

I look forward to seeing you in Memphis. As always the annual meeting of the MSSA provides an excellent opportunity to visit with old friends, create new relationships, and discuss our work in a professional and highly supportive environment.

J. David Knottnerus

COMMITTEE ON THE PROFESSION

At the Annual Meeting in Memphis, there will be two special panel sessions that have been organized under the aegis of the Committee. Both of these panels will focus on early career issues. They are targeted for graduate students and relatively new Ph.D.s. The first panel is called "Vita Construction and Job Search Skills." This will cover seeking employment in both academic and applied settings. Strategies for identifying positions, vita preparation, and interviewing will be discussed. The second panel is called "Developing a Research Agenda." Information will be presented on how to develop an actual research agenda, as well as how to balance research with teaching and other academic and personal responsibilities. I also want to invite everyone to check out the Graduate School Information Exchange Display at the Meeting.

Keith F. Durkin, Chair

"People"

Duane A. Gill (Mississippi State University) has been elected president of Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association for the year 2004. Duane is a Professor of Sociology at Mississippi State University where he has served in the in the Department of Sociology and the Social Science Research Center since 1988. He is the Co-Director of the Unit for Community and Environmental Studies (UCES). He is a member of numerous professional organizations and is currently Vice-President-Elect of the Mid-South Sociological Association.

Peter B. Wood, Associate Professor of Sociology at Mississippi State University, is the new President-Elect of the United Chapters of Alpha Kappa Delta, the International Sociology Honor Society. Wood is also a Research Fellow at the Social Science Research Center, and Director of the Criminal Justice and Corrections Program at MSU. He has served as the AKD Faculty Advisor for the Alpha Chapter of AKD at Mississippi State for the past six years, and as Associate Editor of Sociological Inquiry, the official peer-reviewed journal of AKD for the past five years. Over 80,000 scholars have been initiated into the Society, and more than 500 chapters have been chartered in the United States and in countries around the world.

Alpha Kappa Delta sponsors student travel to professional meetings and annual student paper competitions, and presents awards that include monetary prizes, travel support, and scholarships. In addition, by funding research symposia and honoraria for guest speakers, the Society supports chapter activities which further education. The Society is a primary contributor to the ASA Minority Scholarship Fund and continues to recognize scholarly excellence in sociology by inducting approximately 4,000 lifetime members each year.

2003 Annual Meeting

Next year's meeting will be held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana at the Radisson Hotel, located at 4728 Constitution Avenue. The phone number is (225)925-2244. The meeting dates run November 5-8, 2003. The room rate is \$89.00 plus tax if reservations are made before October 6, 2003.

Women and Power 2003

Call For Papers

Reclaiming Faith: Socially, Spiritually, Artistically

5th Biennial Interdisciplinary Conference in Women's Studies
February 27-March 1, 2003
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Featured Speaker: Cherríe Moraga ('*Cherrie Moraga was born in Los Angeles in 1952. She is of Chicana/Anglo descent which has influenced her experiences as a lesbian poet, playwright, essayist, editor, teacher, and activist.*')

For more information, visit:
<http://www.mtsu.edu/~womenstu/wp2003.html>

International Studies Course -- Working in Barbados: Issues of Gender, Ethnicity, and Class

What must work be like on an island paradise? Ever thought about how men, women, and children accomplish their everyday needs when surrounded by the allures of mountain and sea, thousands of tourists, and an explosive global economy? When considering available work, is it really an island paradise? For everyone? Find out for yourself as we explore *the world of work* for the diverse people of Barbados - on the beaches, in the streets and bars, in the fields and mountains, in the backrooms and in the boardrooms. The advantage, as with all international studies courses, is in the opportunity for first-hand experiences and analysis. Students may read about work and working as they relate to gender, ethnicity, and class, but to explore it in a cross-cultural setting, makes all the difference. The course is scheduled to occur June 16-July 3, 2003. The deadline to enroll is February 28, 2003. For more information, contact Jackie Eller at Middle Tennessee State University (jaeller@mtsu.edu).

From the Editor

When I first became editor of this newsletter, I had goals in mind that I wanted to achieve. As with most things in life, I have achieved some but not all of those goals. One primary goal was to resurrect the newsletter and ensure it was published twice per year as per our by-laws. I hoped to even expand to three issues before ending my tenure as editor, but funding has always been a concern of mine.

I was also able to begin setting up, with the help of the executive council, policies to guide future editors of the newsletter with regard, for example, to paid advertisements (which would help to offset the costs of printing each issue). To some people's dismay, I toyed with a digital camera, trying to put names to faces, and capture events as they occurred at the annual meetings. Unfortunately, these do not transfer well from laser printing to photocopying, so some of us have looked more fuzzy and round than we actually are.

I have coerced reports and announcements from those of you willing to share with me in sharing with others. To you I am especially indebted, because I could not have produced a single page without your support. I thank my colleagues Bob Gramling and George Wooddell at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Department of Sociology, for their generous assistance in technological acquisitions. I also thank the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for the time and the funding provided to perform my editorial duties. Eddie Palmer deserves recognition for pushing me into the application process, and Ken Davidson and Obie Clayton, Jr. for teaching me about the true politics of sociology. Pat, you too, I will never forget.

I came to this association as did many of you, a student in graduate school, scared of what someone might ask me when I presented a paper and scared that noone would ask me anything when I presented a paper. That was in 1990, and I stayed a member because I came to believe with my heart, not only my head, that this was the regional association for me. In that time, I have also served on the executive council as both Vice President and Chair of the Committee on Small and Community Colleges.

I have learned much from those council meetings, and fully encourage the rest of you to think about getting involved in your leadership. There are some great leaders who have served alongside me on council over these years - several who deserve naming: Pete Heller, Jackie Eller, Keith Durkin, Roma Hanks, and "Doc" Gibson. If I was ever on an airplane that was going down, these are the folks that would make sure we all continued to fly high above the clouds. Thanks to you all.

As I retire as editor of this newsletter, I do not retire from service to this organization. I became editor of *Spectrum* in February, 2002, and will continue to serve the membership in that capacity. For information on *Spectrum*, please go to:

<http://www.louisiana.edu/Academic/LiberalArts/SoAn/Spectrum/index.html>
DeAnn K. Gauthier

MSSA Executive Council 2002

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Editor, <i>Forum</i>	DeAnn K. Gauthier