

Executive Officer Report

I have been very proud and delighted by the functioning of the Society during the year. All committees are doing the work of the Society in an excellent way. The Executive Office, with the very capable work of Administrative Officer, Michele Koontz and Graduate Research Assistant, Nancy Brannon, have been able to provide support to the committees as they took initiatives to move the Society forward. Under the leadership of Robert Perrucci, the Society has made an important contribution to public sociology. Truly collectively we are beginning to put legs on the unofficial motto of the society “Scholarship in pursuit of social justice.”

The Editorial and Publications Committee, under the leadership of Leon Anderson, has overseen the important task of selecting a new Editor for our journal, *SOCIAL PROBLEMS*, and will recommend one of two excellent candidates to the Board of Directors at this meeting. This is an extremely important task whose result influences the quality of the journal for at least three years. The new Editor will have a difficult time achieving a timelier and higher quality result than our current Editor, James Holstein, who is setting a standard of timely production that has placed the journal in the hands of our subscribers on time and with the highest quality. Further, Nancy Naples of the Editorial and Publications Committee has kept the Presidential Series of edited volumes with Rowman and Littlefield on track. Two other volumes are under contract and scheduled to be published this year. A number of others are waiting to be contracted depending on how well the series sells. We have received our first royalty checks from the sales of the series. We now need to consider how to promote the use of the series by our members in the courses that they teach. This is important not only for the income that it will yield to the Society, but also in encouraging the production of volumes in the variety of social problem areas that our members study and that our journal discusses. Stephen Couch continues to produce an informative and stimulating newsletter, *Social Problems Forum*. The series, “Convergences and Divergences: Points of View on Social Problems,” offers a venue for scholars to discuss the shaping of research within our wide-ranging areas of study and advocacy.

President Kathleen Ferraro and her program committee have worked extraordinarily hard in crafting an exciting set of activities and sessions for the annual meeting. The 2004 program presents a clearly stimulating series of papers and sessions. Coupled with the attractions of the “City by the Bay,” we have the largest registration in recent years. The Special Problems Divisions have done their part in organizing a strong program. We have many special sessions on important books. This is the first year for the newly organized Institutional Ethnography Division to contribute to the program. Seventeen films will be screened at the conference this year. A number of performance sessions have been scheduled. Members have not only registered for the meetings, but have filled up our room block at the conference hotel.

The C. Wright Mills Award Committee assembled a strong list of seven finalists for the award. This committee always works hard and we need to continue to support it each year by nominating books that meet the basic criteria for the award.

During this past year, the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee made an important visit to the University of Tennessee. With my taking the Emeritus Status with the University and a change in Department leadership, the committee came to assess whether and under what conditions the relationship with the University of Tennessee, as a host institution should continue. The new Department Head and the Dean appear to support continuing the relationship strongly. The details of their favorable recommendation from the committee appear in their report and are reflected in the report of the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee as well. I want to express my gratitude to both of these committees for the work that they do to evaluate and oversee the management of the activities of the Executive Office. The BFA Committee visits the office each year to review and plan the finances of the Society based on information collected by the

Executive Office. The Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee visits the Executive Office every other year and evaluates the performance of the Executive Officer, the Administrative Officer and Graduate Research Assistant in performing the duties specified in our operations handbook. The Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee has the additional obligation of keeping the Operations Handbook up to date. Over the years, the work of these two committees has proven essential to strengthening the organization and making possible many of our activities.

I note the passing of three quite diverse persons who have contributed much to the study of social problems. John Kitsuse, a past president, T.R. Young a true activist scholar and social critic, Paul B. Horton, author of six text books, including *Sociology of Social Problems* (with Gerald Leslie) now in its 12th edition and still in print. I knew slightly each of these men. All of them contributed in different ways to the molding of the study of social problems in the United States and around the world. Kitsuse and Young will be honored at memorial sessions at these meetings.

As noted earlier in my elections report, the members elected a fine slate of officers for the coming year. Of course, we had a group of very strong candidates and my hope is that we shall have another strong set of nominees for the 2005 ballot. We welcome Carrie Yang Costello to the task of leading the Council of Special Problems Division Chairpersons in their work of preparing an ordered list of candidates for the elected offices of the Society. Often this task is time consuming and tests the knowledge of some of the newer members of the Society, but time has proven that our system works against old-timers nominating old-timers.

The report of the Minority Scholarship Fund Committee contains a number of important recommendations. On the issue of expanding the definition of minority, the committee believes that either the Board of Directors or the membership should vote on enlarging the definition. Their discussion of the matter produced several other categories of minority such as sexual orientation and gender as criteria for inclusion. If their recommendation is approved, the Board may wish to appoint a committee to draft language for the 2005 application and/or ballot. Some good suggestions on procedures have been made and these may, with Board approval, be added to the Operations Handbook.

This year completes my fourteenth year of service as Executive Officer of the Society. When I accepted the position I had just completed a year as President of the Faculty Senate and was in my eighth year as Head of the Sociology Department. I stepped down as Department Head nine months after assuming the job of Executive Officer.

I have enjoyed working with many different members of the Society over these years and am willing to continue for the immediate future. Not only does our Administrative Officer Michele Koontz provide excellent work that makes my job easier, but also does our able graduate research assistant, Nancy Brannon. Nancy will turn the position over to a new student assistant, Denise Knight, after this annual meeting. Most gratifying to me is the ownership of the Society that volunteer officers, committee members and chairs, have increasingly been taking. As a student of social movement activity and a member of many voluntary associations, I know that a professional organization is only as strong as its members want it to be. SSSP members certainly are a diverse crew with many competing interests, BUT they are scholar advocates who want the organization to be strong and to be a voice for justice in today's world. Thank you for allowing me to serve you during the past year.