

## **Annual Report of the Executive Officer, 2007**

Serving as Executive Officer and Professor Emeritus has been a privilege. The continued excellent work of our Administrative Officer Michele Smith Koontz has afforded time to consider a number of possible options for the Society. Mary Walker has proven to be an exceptionally able Graduate Assistant. We anticipate that our new Assistant Sarah Hendricks will be equally efficient. The University of Tennessee and the Department of Sociology under the leadership of R. Scott Frey has remained very supportive of the relationship with the Society. Several of you have asked how long I plan to serve as Executive Officer. Ginger, my wife, and I have decided to travel more extensively while our health continues to be good. As a sustaining member I intend to continue to be an active member of SSSP. Nevertheless in July I notified President Val Jenness that I would like to end my service as Executive Officer not later than the end of the 2009 Annual Meeting. This notification fits within the guidelines adopted by the Board of Directors last year. The Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee has been notified; they will be bringing advertisement-seeking applicants for the position as a part of their report to the Board of Directors. We have every reason to expect that The University of Tennessee and Department of Sociology will support the relationship within their contractual guidelines on the annual basis until a replacement is found. I believe that a member of the faculty at the University of Tennessee is likely to apply for the position.

In taking stock of what happened during the past year, Michele and I have been excited by the amount of work done by the volunteer committees and the officers of the Society. In addition to the survey of the membership to inform the planning retreat, the Program Committee and the Special Problems Division have given us a program with the largest number of sessions in recent memory. President Val Jenness and her Program Chair JoAnn Miller deserve special credit as does President-elect, Nancy Naples who worked very hard to make sure that we could have an excellent planning retreat. We anticipate the largest attendance at an Annual Meeting in recent history.

Membership in the Society has reached a new high. As I write this report we have 200 more 2007 members than we had 2006 members at this time last year. When I became Executive Officer, I wanted very much for us to have as many current members as we had library subscriptions. At that time we had 2200 to 2400 library subscriptions. As of the writing of this report we have 1850 that have paid their 2007 membership. In case you are wondering if SSSP is a student friendly organization, the percentage of members who are students was 34% in 2005 and 2006 and is currently 36 %.

As the report from the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee revealed we managed to finish 2006 with a gain in net assets of \$27,000. Most of this gain was due to unrealized gain (\$22,000.) in our investments. However, an examination of the expenditures of the Society showed that most major sections of the Society spent less than their budgeted amounts in 2007. This accounted for the gain in net assets as well. The Executive Office operated under the budgeted amount by almost \$7,000. We try to operate both effectively and inexpensively.

Continuing on the matter of support, from time to time during my tenure as Executive Officer, particular individual scholars who have accumulated some sizeable estates have approached me with the idea of making the Society a beneficiary in their will. Having some policies in place on how to handle such inquiries would be helpful. This year we received \$50,000.00 endowment from Joseph B. Gittler Estate to fund a special award. Ken Kyle and Nancy Jurik will be presenting a report on how this award is to be administered. The Budget, Finance and Audit Committee has determined that such endowments can be handled within the existing financial structure of the Society as long as the funds are segregated from those that are a part of the regular budget of the Society. As we continue to develop worthy activities, like the Justice 21 project, the Society might want to endow such activities and encourage members who believe in our effort to use social research to inform decision making on social policy to contribute to the endowment. A brochure describing the possibility of such action could be prepared to distribute to members either by mail or online.

This year we moved our website host from the University of Tennessee to Aterra. We are working toward having balloting for our next election available online. We think that our web site is quite effective in accomplishing our Society's goals, but improvement is possible always. Please let us know if you find something that you would like to see improved.

During the preparation for this meeting and the retreat that preceded the meeting, Michele Smith Koontz has been working very long hours to fulfill all requests from officers and committees as well as to serve as support for the retreat committee. In discussing the matter with our very capable Graduate Assistant, Mary Walker, I have come to the conclusion that I must recommend to the Permanent Organization and Strategic Planning Committee (POSPC) that another employee be added to the staff of the Executive Office. At the present time, I am recommending a year round part-time employee. The workload varies over the course of the year but becomes particularly heavy during the months of March, April, May, June, July and August. During these months Michele fills two sets of duties for the Society: those associated with her Administrative Officer position and those associated with Meeting Manager position. I am recommending that the POSPC consult with Michele and I in developing a job description and duties that can be brought to the Board for approval before the beginning of the next budget year in January. I am recommending to the Budget Finance and Audit Committee that they consider adding a line to the 2008 budget to take care of this expense. If both of these actions are completed and approved by the Board of Directors, then an initial assessment of the arrangement can be made when POSPC conducts its visit to the University of Tennessee in the spring of 2008.

I know that by the time this report is presented at the Board meeting many of us will have new ideas for direction of the Society arising from the planning retreat. I have no idea if the following will be an idea that emerges from the retreat, but I have a dream of organizations associated with SSSP, which we assist in forming in other countries around

the world such as Argentina, Japan, India, Australia and perhaps South Africa. Many scholars interested in our meetings would never be able to attend, but if a viewing site could be established in connection with a professional organization, they might become virtual participants.

Let us remember to constantly work toward the prize of making our knowledge fully understandable to all persons who want to work for justice and to make the earth a healthier place to live for all.

Tom Hood, Executive Officer, July 21, 2007