

# Family Division Newsletter

Society for the Study of Social Problems

Fall 2004

## *In This Issue:*

Call for Chair-Elect of Family Division, 2005-2007.....	Page 1
2004 Graduate Student Paper Competition Winners.....	Page 1
2005 Graduate Student Paper Competition Call for Papers.....	Page 1
Book Review.....	Page 2
Preview of the 2005 SSSP Annual Meeting.....	Page 3
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucus Listserve Information.....	Page 4
Call for Papers for <i>Marriage and Family Review</i> .....	Page 5

## Call for Chair-Elect of Family Division

My stint as Division Chair will end next summer in Philadelphia. We need nominees (you can nominate yourself) for the next Chairperson. Please submit these to me, Michelle Janning, by November 15<sup>th</sup> (Department of Sociology, Whitman College, Walla Walla WA 99362, e-mail [janninmy@whitman.edu](mailto:janninmy@whitman.edu)).

## 2004 Graduate Student Paper Competition WINNERS

At the recent Annual Meeting in San Francisco, the Family Division was delighted to have two of our three graduate student paper competition winners (the second and third place winners) present their stellar papers in a special session. Congratulations to our first prize winner Elisabeth Sheff from the University of Colorado, Boulder ("New Queers on the Block: Polyamorous Families"), our second prize winner Anna Muraco from UC Davis ("Kith or Kin? Intersectional Friendship as Chosen Family"), and our third prize winner Laura Hamilton from Indiana University ("The Division of Household Labor in Adoptive Households: More Traditional or More Egalitarian?")!

*Thanks to all who helped make the 2004 SSSP Annual Meeting a huge success, from presenters and organizers, to supportive and vocal audience members. We look forward to seeing you in Philadelphia in 2005! The session titles for 2005 are listed on page 3.*

## 2005 Graduate Student Paper Competition CALL FOR PAPERS

The Family Division announces its **2005 Graduate Student Paper Competition**. Papers should be of professional quality, and may relate to any aspect of sociology of the family. Authors should be currently enrolled as graduate students, or individuals who received their Ph.D.s in May 2004 or later. To be eligible, a paper may not be published, accepted, or under review for publication. Papers that have been presented at a professional meeting or submitted for presentation at a professional conference are eligible. Papers must be student-authored; they can be authored by one or more students, but may not be co-authored with a faculty member or non-student. Papers should be no more than 35 pages in length, including all notes, references, and tables. Send papers and a cover letter specifying that the paper is to be considered for the Family Division Graduate Student Paper Competition to: **Nancy Mezey, Department of Political Science/Sociology, 400 Cedar Avenue, Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ 07764-1898. Alternatively, papers may be sent electronically to Dr. Mezey at: [nmezey@monmouth.edu](mailto:nmezey@monmouth.edu).**

Papers are due no later than JANUARY 15, 2005. The winner and any runners-up will be announced in Spring 2005. The winner(s) will receive a modest cash stipend, registration fees, and an opportunity to present her/his paper at the SSSP conference, held in August 2005 in Philadelphia.

**BOOK REVIEW – A Family Text that Could Satisfy both Professors and Students**

*Marriages and Families:*

*Relationships in Social Context*

Seccombe, Karen and Warner, Rebecca L.

CA: Thomson/Wadsworth (2004).

After several years of teaching in a liberal arts institution, please allow me to make a few observations. First, newer generations of students appear to be increasingly critical of the use of textbooks in the classroom, stating that they are too “basic.” Second, recent cohorts tend to, more than ever, prefer the internet as their primary source of information. Finally, these students tend to have a desire to be engaged in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

As a professor, I find it progressively more difficult to find texts that pique student interest, while at the same time challenging them to become critical scholars. However, this task has not yet become impossible. Authors of some texts are well aware of the changing student population, and have adapted their writing styles to these changes. Two such authors are Karen Seccombe and Rebecca L. Warner, whose text is titled, *Marriages and Families: Relationships in Social Context* (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004).

Seccombe and Warner have combined a fairly high degree of scholarly rigor with a student-friendly design. While only one chapter is devoted to the specific topic of social science research, the ideas are carried throughout. Their discussion of theory extends beyond the “basic three” (conflict theory, structural functionalism, and symbolic interactionism), into more contemporary and field-specific perspectives. This text offers a more thorough discussion of methods than what is generally available in other texts, and established research supports claims in each chapter. While no text can cover every detail of a field, Seccombe and Warner provide a significant degree of breadth and depth.

To satisfy student desires to obtain information from the internet, each chapter ends with a section titled, “Resources on the Internet.” Students can access a companion website that allows them access to exercises, Web links, and practice tests. To assist them in their research on any given topic, they may also go to the InfoTrac College Edition,

which connects them to “an online library of hundreds of scholarly and popular journals.”

To deal with the issue of student engagement, Seccombe and Warner make several attempts to draw students into the subject matter. Narrative sections, available in most chapters, provide students with real-life examples to which they may be able to relate. Knowing that students may be drawn to applied sociology and practical information, the authors provide sections titled, “Constructing Strong Families.” These sections offer students a chance to critically think about real issues. In addition, the authors incorporate discussions of diversity throughout the text (by providing sections on several racial and ethnic groups and by offering a broad definition of what constitutes a family), making it easier for a wide variety of students to relate to the information.

For the professor, an overabundance of teaching resources are available. If chosen for a course, the publisher offers test banks, lecture notes, transparency acetates, video lists, and specific resources for each chapter. However, the professor is, of course, not completely absolved of responsibility. Needless to say, while the text provides a great deal of breadth and even depth, the professor will still be responsible for expanding this knowledge. In addition, while the statistics presented in the book are fairly recent, several will need to be updated by the time the text is adopted for use in the classroom. The professor will also be responsible for providing alternative suggestions for how to “construct strong families.” Often times, only one idea is presented; therefore, students must be able to recognize that there are alternative perspectives.

All of this being said, *Marriages and Families: Relationships in Social Context*, has strong prospects for classroom use. The authors appear to have carefully considered important changes in the student population, and have written a book that can be both engaging and challenging. This family text has the potential to satisfy both professors and a wide range of students.

Amy J. Orr, Linfield College

## 2005 SSSP Annual Meeting Preview

The Family Division is sponsoring or co-sponsoring nine exciting sessions in Philadelphia, listed below with contact information for session organizers.

**Why Marriage: Is Marriage Worth Fighting For?** (thematic). Co-organizers: Nancy Mezey (Sociology Program Coordinator, Dept of Political Science, Monmouth Univ, West Long Branch, NJ 07764. phone 732-263-5631, fax 732-263-5162, e-mail [nmezey@monmouth.edu](mailto:nmezey@monmouth.edu)), and Cheryl Boudreaux (Sociology Department, Grand Valley State University, 2161 AuSable Hall, 1 Campus Drive, Allendale, MI 49401-9403, phone 616-331-2164, fax 616-331-3735, e-mail [boudreac@gvsu.edu](mailto:boudreac@gvsu.edu)).

**Teaching About the Family.** Organizer: Cheryl Boudreaux (Sociology Department, Grand Valley State University, 2161 AuSable Hall, 1 Campus Drive, Allendale, MI 49401-9403, phone 616-331-2164, fax 616-331-3735, e-mail [boudreac@gvsu.edu](mailto:boudreac@gvsu.edu)) and discussant: Brenda Solomon (Social Work Dept., University of Vermont, 443 Waterman, 85 S. Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05405, phone 802-656-1337. e-mail [brenda.solomon@uvm.edu](mailto:brenda.solomon@uvm.edu). fax: 802-656-8565).

**Methods in Researching Families.** Organizer: Amy Hequemborg (Research Institute on Addictions, 1021 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14203-1016, phone 716-887-3343, fax 716-887-2510, e-mail [ahequemb@ria.buffalo.edu](mailto:ahequemb@ria.buffalo.edu)).

**Cultures of Parenthood.** Organizer: Michelle Janning (Department of Sociology, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA 99362, phone 509-527-4952, fax 509-527-5026, e-mail [janninmy@whitman.edu](mailto:janninmy@whitman.edu)).

Co-sponsored sessions:

**Sexual Violence** (with Sexual Communities & Politics Division). Organizer: Nancy Mezey (Sociology Program Coordinator, Dept of Political Science, Monmouth Univ, West Long Branch, NJ 07764. phone 732-263-5631, fax 732-263-5162, e-mail [nmezey@monmouth.edu](mailto:nmezey@monmouth.edu)).

**Attacking Obesity from a Community-Based Perspective** (with Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division). Organizer: Martha Hargraves (301 Univ Blvd, 301 Clinical Science, Univ of Texas, OB/GYN Dept., Galveston, TX 77555-0587. phone 409-772-2777 e-mail [mhargrav@utmb.edu](mailto:mhargrav@utmb.edu)).

**Families and Drugs** (with Drinking and Drugs Division). Organizer: Jane Bock (Phoenix House, 11600 Eldridge Ave., Lake View Terrace, CA 91342, phone (818) 896-1121, x4141, fax 818-899-6501, e-mail [jbock@phoenixhouse.org](mailto:jbock@phoenixhouse.org)).

**Children, Consumption, and Popular Culture** (with Youth, Aging, and Life Course Division). Organizer: Dan Cook (University of Illinois, 3720 W 71st St., Chicago, IL 60629, phone: 773-735-2928, fax 773-581-6564, email [dtcook@uiuc.edu](mailto:dtcook@uiuc.edu)).

In addition to these sessions, work is underway to co-sponsor an "Author Meets Critic" session on the new C. Wright Mills awarded book, *FLAT BROKE WITH CHILDREN: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform* (Oxford University Press), by Sharon Hays. Look in the preliminary program for more about this exciting session!

In *Flat Broke With Children* Sharon Hays tells us the story of welfare reform from inside the welfare office and inside the lives of welfare mothers, describing the challenges that welfare recipients face in managing their work, their families, and the rules and regulations of welfare reform. Welfare reform, experienced on the ground, is not a rosy picture. The majority of adult welfare clients are mothers—over 90 percent—and the time limits imposed by welfare reform throw millions of these mostly unmarried, desperate women into the labor market, where they must accept low wages, the most menial work, the poorest hours, with no benefits, and little flexibility.

## Sociologists' LGBT Caucus Listserve

You are invited to join the Sociologists' Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucus (<http://www.asanet.org/sectionsex/SLGBT.html>). The Caucus, founded in the late 1970s, operates as an activist/social organization for LGBT scholars across all areas of research.

*The Sociologists' Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucus was organized to:*

- *Encourage unprejudiced sociological research on LGBT people and their social institutions;*
- *Provide a forum for current research, teaching methods and materials, and professional issues relevant to LGBT issues;*
- *Monitor anti-gay ideologies in the distribution of sociological knowledge and to investigate practices oppressive to LGBT people;*
- *Oppose discrimination against LGBT sociologists in employment, promotion, tenure, and research situations;*
- *Maintain a social support network among its members.*

For more information, subscriptions or submissions to the newsletter, email Michael Handel [mhandel@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:mhandel@ssc.wisc.edu), Diane Illig [dsilling@salisbury.edu](mailto:dsilling@salisbury.edu), or Kevin Henson [khenson@luc.edu](mailto:khenson@luc.edu)



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### JOIN THE CONVERSATION...

To join the Sociologists' Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender caucus listserv:

Send the following command in a message to [listserv@listserv.kent.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.kent.edu)

sub SOCLGBT-CAUCUS firstname lastname

To unsubscribe from the list, send the following command in a message to [listserv@listserv.kent.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.kent.edu)

SIGNOFF SOCLGBT-CAUCUS

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Special issues of *Marriage and Family Review on Families and Public Policy: U.S. and International Experiences* - co-edited by Linda Haas and Steven Wisensale.**

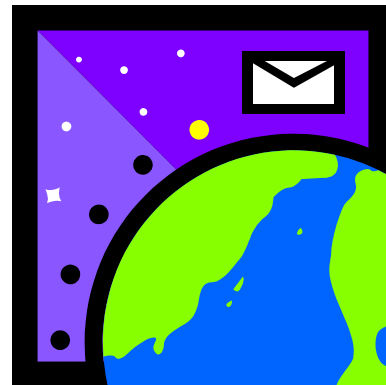
The purpose is to put together a collection of cutting edge research articles on family policy that will be of interest and use to students, researchers, professionals, policymakers, and journalists interested in gaining a better understanding of how the well-being of families is influenced by the political process. "Cutting edge" articles present new data, analyze existing data from new theoretical perspectives, or analyze policies or problems that have been previously underresearched. To pragmatically solve social problems concerning families, a strong research base is needed.

Topics should reflect issues of contemporary social concern, and can include but are not limited to: changing demographics and its effects on families (e.g., aging), partnership formation, parenting, economic welfare, family dissolution, family health and well-being (e.g., domestic violence), and integration of work and family responsibilities. Families of all types will be covered, including two-parent, single-parent, gay/lesbian, and childless families; a strong effort will be made to include research on families at all levels of socioeconomic status and stages of the life cycle, and from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds, including immigrant families. Articles may analyze the impact of particular existing government policies on families, or may describe a problem that families commonly have that could be alleviated by social policy, accompanied by a set of policy recommendations designed to attack the causes of the problem. Papers for the International section may address family policy in one society or culture, or may look at a policy issue across several societal contexts; authors must approach a policy topic from a comparative or international perspective.

The articles will first be published in two sets of articles, one with a U.S. focus and another with an international focus; a selection of articles will then be published as a book useful for scholars and advanced undergraduate/graduate students.

Manuscripts should be no longer than 35 pages, and must be written using the APA 4th Edition format, for section titles, in-text citations, and references. No more than four authors can be listed on a single paper.

**PAPERS MUST BE SENT VIA AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT TO: Linda Haas at [lhaas@iupui.edu](mailto:lhaas@iupui.edu). Please put figures, models, and graphs in separate files. Deadline for the U.S. papers is March 1, 2005; for the International papers the deadline is May 1, 2005.**



*Any questions about the Family Division or our newsletter can be addressed to the Family Division Chair and Newsletter Editor: Michelle Janning, Department of Sociology, Whitman College, Walla Walla WA 99362. E-mail [janninmy@whitman.edu](mailto:janninmy@whitman.edu), phone (509) 527-4952.*