

Social Problems Theory News

Summer 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The 2011 SSSP meetings in Las Vegas are fast approaching. I hope to see many of you there.

In this issue of Social Problems Theory News you will find several items pertaining to the annual meetings. In addition, we highlight the award-winning scholarship of our members and provide information on opportunities to participate in the betterment of the Theory Division and its members.

The theme of the upcoming meetings is "Service Sociology," and the Theory Division has a wonderful collection of sessions planned for this year. See pages 4-6 for more details on our sponsored/co-sponsored sessions.

We hope you can join us at our reception, which we are co-sponsoring with several other divisions, on Friday, August 19th from 6:30-7:30 in the Reno room.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

I am pleased to announce the recipients of the division awards for 2011.

The winner of the division's annual graduate student paper competition is Amanda Gengler (for "Points of Connection and Divergence between Organizational and Personal Narratives of Social Problems: Ideology, Identity Work, and Battered Women's Stories"). More information about this promising work can be found on p2.

This year the division also sponsored an article award to recog-

nize outstanding scholarship in the area of social problems theory. Darin Weinberg was selected as this year's recipient (for the article, "On the Social Construction of Social Problems and Social Problems Theory: A Contribution to the Legacy of John Kitsuse"). See p2 for more about this article. I would like to thank Donileen Loseke (chair), John Barnshaw, and David Schweingruber for their work on this committee.

The outstanding article award is offered bi-annually, alternating with the outstanding book award. Look for our call for nominations



Theory Division Chair, 2010-2012

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for the 2012 outstanding book award in the next newsletter, and consider nominating your own work or that of a colleague.

Winners of both the student paper award and the outstanding article award will be recognized at the SSSP banquet, which will be held from 8:00-10:00PM on Saturday, August 20 in the Reno Room.

Please remember to share news of your accomplishments (or those of a colleague) so that we can spread the word in future newsletters.

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INTERESTED IN BEING A MENTOR?

The **Meeting Mentor Program** seeks experienced mentors who can spend a few minutes at the annual meetings speaking with a student or newcomer, making them feel welcome, and offering suggestions to help newer members get the most out of their conference experience.

To date there has been a high level of interest in this program from students and new members seek-

ing mentors at the 2011 meetings, but a considerably lower response from members volunteering to serve in this role. If you are interested in serving as a Meeting Mentor, please take a few minutes to complete the online application form ([Click Here](#)). For more information, please contact Pat Donnelly (donnelly@udayton.edu) or Michele Koontz (mkoontz3@utk.edu).

SSSP also offers the **Professional Mentor Program** ([Click Here](#)), which is designed to help junior members with career development. This program requires a long-term commitment of 3 months, 6 months, or one year.

Please consider lending your expertise and experience to these worthwhile programs!

AWARDS

Outstanding Article Award

The Social Problems Theory Award is designed to encourage and recognize scholarship in the area of social problems theory. This year, the Awards Committee received numerous outstanding papers that contributed to the development of social problems theorizing. However, one article that stood out to the committee as particularly promising was "On the Social Construction of Social Problems and Social Problems Theory: A Contribution to the Legacy of John Kitsuse" by Darin Weinberg (University of Cambridge). This article highlights the long and distinguished career of one of the most seminal scholars in constructionist social problems theorizing, and offers a concise discussion of where the field has been, and through this analysis, provides

some promising directions for the future of social problems theory. The full article may be found in *The American Sociologist*, Volume 40:61-78.

Committee members:

Donileen R. Loseke, Chair
John Barnshaw
David Schweingruber

Student Paper Competition

The Theory Division's Graduate Student Paper Competition is designed to recognize the contributions of young and emerging scholars in the area of social problems theory. This year's winning paper is "Points of Connection and Divergence between Organizational and Personal Narratives of Social Problems: Ideology, Identity Work, and Battered Women's

Stories" by Amanda Gengler (Brandeis University). This paper exemplifies how field work plays an important role in advancing social problems theory, and provides important insights into battered women's personal narratives in support groups by showing how and why battered women tend to accept or reject public narratives of wife abuse based on whether they coexist or clash with their own personal sense of self. Amanda is scheduled to present this research on Friday, August 19 (12:30-2:10 in the Ecko Room). For additional information about this research or to request a copy of the paper, please contact Amanda Gengler at amg@brandeis.edu.

CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

Submissions of all sorts are welcome! From comments and calls for papers, to brief analyses and critiques related to Social Problems Theory. Let us know your reactions to this newsletter, the events at the annual meetings, or inform us of your new work so we can help spread the word. Send submissions to: Brian Monahan at bmonahan@iastate.edu as a Meeting Mentor, please take a few minutes to complete the online application form. For more information, please contact Pat Donnelly (donnelly@udayton.edu) or Michele Koontz (mkoontz3@utk.edu).

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN DIVISION AFFAIRS

We are always interested in identifying division members who are willing to participate in the administrative operation of the division and help to shape its future directions. There are a variety of ways to become more actively involved, including:

Attend the division business meeting. This is a great way to have a direct voice in division affairs. The meeting provides an opportunity to suggest sessions for next year, volunteer to serve on an awards committee, or network with other scholars who share your interest in social problems theory. This year's meeting will be held on Friday, August 19 from 12:30-2:10 in the Lake Tahoe Room. Please join us to offer

suggestions, become involved or simply observe the proceedings.

Volunteer or nominate a colleague to serve on a committee or in an administrative position. This can be done by attending the division business meeting or by sending me an e-mail with nominating information (bmonahan@iastate.edu). We have two annual award committees: one for graduate student papers and one for published journal articles/books. We will also begin soliciting nominations for the next Theory Division Chair at this year's division business meeting (elections will be held early in 2012, and the term will be from August 2012-August 2014).

Propose and/or organize a session for future annual meetings.

Submit content for future newsletters. Share news of your accomplishments. Submit a call for papers. Provide brief analyses or critiques related to social problems theory. Any and all submissions are welcome!

SPT MEETING CALENDAR

Friday, August 19

Division Business Meeting

12:30-2:10

Room: Lake Tahoe

New Directions in Social Problems Theorizing (Session 39)

4:30-6:30

Room: Laughlin

Division Reception

6:30-7:30

Room: Reno

Saturday, August 20

Social Problems Theory in Scholarship and in Service (Session 49)

8-9:40

Room: Tonopah

Presidential Address

11:10-12:20

Room: Lake Tahoe

Ten Years Since 9/11: Research and Reflections (Session 81)

2:30-4:10

Room: Lake Tahoe

SSSP Awards Banquet

8-10 PM

Room: Reno

Sunday, August 21

Making Social Constructionism Relevant for a Public Audience

(Session 94)

8:30-10:10

Room: Elko

Serving Families Through New Social Theory (Session 113)

(co-sponsored with Family Division)

12:30-2:10

Room: Parlor D

Sanctions and Punishment (Session 137)

(co-sponsored with Law and Society Division)

4:30-6:10

Room: Goldfield

2011 SOCIAL PROBLEMS THEORY DIVISION SESSIONS

Friday, August 19
4:30 PM - 6:10 PM

New Directions in Social Problems Theorizing (Session 39)
Room: Laughlin

Organizers: Lynn Letukas, University of Delaware and John Barnshaw, University of South Florida
Discussant: Lynn Letukas, University of Delaware

"The Textuality of Torture: Claims-Making and the Construction of Non-Human Agency,"
Jared DelRosso, Boston College

"The Relationality of Social Problems: Reorienting Contextual Constructionism Towards Problematic Actor-Networks,"
Evan W. Bowness, University of Manitoba

"Rock Bottom: Celebrity Gossip Blogs, Visual Images, and the Moral Order of Addiction,"
Rebecca Tiger, Middlebury College

"Policy Processes: Towards New Directions in Social Problems Theorizing,"
Donileen Loseke and John Barnshaw, University of South Florida and Lynn Letukas, University of Delaware

Saturday, August 20
8:00 AM - 9:40 AM

Papers in the Round: Social Problems Theory in Scholarship and in Service (Session 49)
Room: Tonopah

Organizer: Sara Horsfall, Texas Wesleyan University

"Governmentality and Social Problems Construction Applied to Homelessness: An Exploration of Governmental Control Enacted Through Claims-Making,"
Kristen A. Desjarlais-deKlerk, The University of Calgary

"Categorization and the Polarization of the American Abortion Debate,"
Erin Maurer, CUNY Graduate Center

"Trust and the Rehabilitative Ideal in Hong Kong,"
Michael C. Adorjan, The University of Hong Kong

"A Love Review Within Sociology of Postmodernism and Postmodern Social Theory,"
Beverly M. Pratt, University of Maryland

"Altruism in the Study of Social Problems: A Neglected Necessity or an Unrealistic Ideal,"
Sara Horsfall, Texas Wesleyan University

2011 SOCIAL PROBLEMS THEORY DIVISION SESSIONS

Saturday, August 20

2:30 PM - 4:10 PM

Ten Years Since 9/11: Research and Reflections (Session 81)

(Co-sponsored with Program Committee)

Room: Lake Tahoe

Organizer: Brian Monahan, Iowa State University

Description: September 11, 2001 has been widely billed as "The Day That Changed the World." While such statements are routinely decried as mere hyperbole by social critics, there is little doubt that 9/11 had tremendous sociological reverberations, many of which continue today. Panelists will present their research and facilitate discussion of the practical, theoretical and pedagogical lessons learned from sociological inquiry related to the September 11 attacks.

"Remember, Reflect, Renew: The Politics of 9/11 Memorials, Sacred Space, and Closure,"
Nancy Berns and Stephanie Woodson, Drake University

"Meaning Contests and Moral Currency: Exploring the Symbolic Politics of Ground Zero,"
Brian Monahan, Iowa State University

"Catastrophe and Construction of Safety: What Have 9-11, Katrina, and Japan Taught Us?"
Joseph Trainor, University of Delaware

Sunday, August 21

8:30 AM - 10:10 AM

Making Social Constructionism Relevant for a Public Audience (Session 94)

Room: Elko

Organizer: Nancy Berns, Drake University

"Crime in the News Media: Nancy Grace and the Era of Sound Bite Justice,"
Brian Monahan, Iowa State University and R.J. Maratea, New Mexico State University

"In the Name of Closure: Politicians and Salespeople as Grief Counselors,"
Nancy Berns, Drake University

"Age-Grading the Randy Young: Shag Bands, Rainbow Parties, Sexting, and Hooking Up as Twenty-first Century Sex Panics,"
Joel Best, University of Delaware and Kathleen A. Bogle, La Salle University

"When Activism Involves Constructionism: The Movement for Ethical Adoption and Its Discursive De-constructions,"
Jennifer L. Dunn, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

"Is a Shrinking Population Really a Social Problem?"
Manabu Akagawa, University of Tokyo

2011 SOCIAL PROBLEMS THEORY DIVISION SESSIONS

Sunday, August 21

12:30-2:10

Serving Families Through New Social Theory (Session 113)

(Co-sponsored with Family Division)

Room: Parlor D

Organizer: Ebonie Cunningham Stringer, Wilkes University

"(Mis) understanding Generational Transmission of Family Violence,"

Katherine Maurer and Robert L. Hawkins, NYU Silver School of Social Work

"Fathering in a Distinct Society: Quebec Parental Insurance Policy,"

Erin M. Rehel, Vanderbilt University

"How We Do Family; Understanding family formation and Stability among African Americans,"

Marci Littlefield, Assistant Professor, IUPUI

"The Rejection of Structural Privilege Regarding the Presumption of who is a 'Good' Mother among Women from a Dominant Social Location,"

Jennifer Heller, University of Saskatchewan

Sunday, August 21

4:30-6:10

Sanctions and Punishment (Session 137)

(Co-sponsored with Law and Society Division)

Room: Goldfield

Organizer: Richard A. Leo, University of San Francisco

"'Homicide: Life on the Street' and Sentenced to Life Behind Bars: Juveniles without the Possibility of Parole,"

Christopher A. Mallett, Cleveland State University

"Penal Subject(ivity)s: Examining Penal Consciousness Among Ohio State Prisoners,"

Lori Sexton, University of California, Irvine

"The Institutionalization of Strategic Incapacitation and the Policing of Mass Gatherings: From Public Protest to Everyday Crowd Control,"

Patrick Gillham, University of Idaho

"Truthiness, [In]Justice, and the American Way: Negotiating Capital Punishment in Cyberspace,"

R.J. Maratea, New Mexico State University and Brian Monahan, Iowa State University

"Uncovering the Mean Length of Stay in Prison During America's Race to Incarcerate, 1979-2004,"

Evelyn J. Patterson, Vanderbilt University