

**SUMMER 2012**  
**TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS DIVISION NEWSLETTER**  
**SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

Message from the Chair

*Greetings once again from Lancaster County, PA! Very soon, we will be gathering in Denver, CO for the annual meeting. At that time, I will end my term as division chair and we will welcome our new chair, Corey Dolgon (see profile on pg. 2). With Corey at the helm, I am sure that our division will continue to thrive and grow.*

*It's been an interesting academic year for me, since I spent most of it in an administrative capacity and away from teaching. This was a wonderful professional opportunity for me and I am grateful for it. However, it also gave me a different view of the different perceptions that still exist between administration, faculty, and students. I suspect that most of your institutions, like mine, are grappling with the consequences of severe budget difficulties – expanding class sizes, elimination of programs and departments, and increasing economic burdens on students. As faculty, we work hard to maintain the integrity and rigor of our courses; and some of us still believe in the value of a liberal arts-based education. I may be old-fashioned, but I strongly believe in a hands-on, dialogue and writing intensive approach to teaching social problems. However, as class sizes increase, the ability to design dialogue and writing intensive courses is affected. As students need to work more hours to pay their tuition bills, the time and energy they have left to do deep and analytical reading and writing is affected. Administrators are often under pressure to improve graduation and retention rates and to yield more tuition dollars to make up for shrinking state support. I don't need to tell you that this creates a situation where we feel as though as we're all working at cross-purposes. Faculty are frustrated that the students don't seem very engaged with the course material and feel that they're getting no support from administration as their class sizes continue to grow. Students feel as though faculty do not understand the pressures they're under. Administration is tasked with the unenviable task of accommodating yet more students with fewer new faculty hires, and also with charting a path ahead for the institution. The challenges are very real. We all want to do what's right and what's best for our students, and we want to find real and effective solutions.*

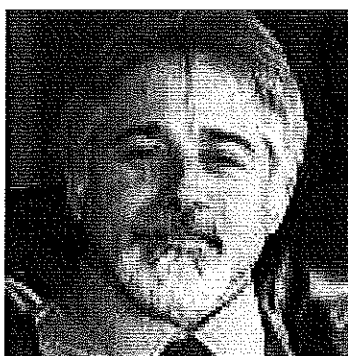
*With all these challenges, let me say that I am happy to be returning to a full-time teaching load once again this fall. I know that in the years ahead, we'll need to do some deep soul-searching about college education, teaching and passing on sociology in these difficult times. Let's get this conversation rolling, and let's work together to share ideas and strategies about how we can maintain the integrity and rigor of our teaching*

*and programs. As a final note, thank you to all of you who've helped me in my role as division chair, and to all of you who've eagerly offered to organize panels, serve as judges on paper competitions, and who've responded to my requests in many ways. I'm grateful to have had this opportunity to serve SSSP, and hope to stay actively engaged and involved in both the division and the organization at large. I hope to see many of you in Denver, and please, come up and say hi if you see me wandering around!*

Carrie Lee Smith  
Millersville, PA

### Meet Our New Division Chair!

Corey Dolgon is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Office of Community-Based Learning at Stonehill College. Corey is the author of 3 books, including *Social Problems: A Service Learning Approach* (with Chris Baker). His book, *The End of the Hamptons: Scenes from the Class Struggle in America's Paradise*, was recognized with awards from both the Association of Humanist Sociology and the Marxist Sociology section of the American Sociological Association. Corey holds a B.A. in English and Sociology from Boston University; an M.A. in American Studies from Baylor University; and a Ph.D. in American Culture from the University of Michigan. An accomplished singer, he performs "singing lectures" on the role of folksongs in labor organizing and other social movements. Please join me in congratulating Corey as he takes on the office of division chair! Corey can be reached at: [cdolgon@stonehill.edu](mailto:cdolgon@stonehill.edu).



## Sessions at the Annual Meeting

Check out the fantastic slate of programming we have at the upcoming annual meeting!

### **Session 31 – Using Art, Visuals and Popular Culture to Teach Social Problems**

Organizer & Discussant: Ryan D. Orr (Millersville University)

Time & Place: Thursday August 26, 2:30pm-4:10pm, Mt. Harvard

### **Session 44 – Making Social Problems Theory Accessible to Students and the General Public (co-sponsored with Social Problems Theory)**

Organizers: John Barnshaw (University of South Florida) and Lynn Letukas (University of Wisconsin – La Crosse)

Time & Place: Friday August 17, 8:00am-9:40am, Maroon Peak

### **Session 98 – Reflections on Being a Scholar-Activist (THEMATIC SESSION)**

Organizer & Presider: Carrie Lee Smith (Millersville University)

Time & Place: Saturday August 18, 8:30am-10:10am, Mount Evans

### **Session 110 – The Practice of Public Sociology and the Teaching of Social Problems**

Organizer: Margaret Austin Smith (University of Maryland)

Presider: Leslie Hossfeld (University of North Carolina – Wilmington)

Time & Place: Saturday August 18, 10:30am-12:10pm, Mount Evans

### **Session 120 – Social Construction of Environmental Problems (co-sponsored with Environment and Technology)**

Organizer: Michael A. Haedicke (Drake University)

Presider & Discussant: Erin E. Robinson (Canisius College)

Time & Place: Saturday August 18, 12:30pm-2:10pm, Mt. Yale

**WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE DIVISION?**

**HAVE GREAT IDEAS FOR PANELS OR WORKSHOPS?**

**WANT TO MEET SOME GREAT PEOPLE?**

**COME TO THE DIVISIONAL MEETING FOR “TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS!!”**

**THURSDAY AUGUST 16, 4:30PM-6:10PM, IMPERIAL BALLROOM**

**CAN'T MAKE IT?**

**FEEL FREE TO CONTACT COREY DOLGON ([cdolgon@stonehill.edu](mailto:cdolgon@stonehill.edu)) TO INDICATE YOUR INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE DIVISION!**

## Other Events at the Annual Meeting

Don't forget to mark the following events on your calendar!

- *Welcoming Reception*  
*Wednesday August 15, 6:00pm-7:00pm, Mt. Oxford*
- *New Member Breakfast*  
*Thursday August 16, 7:15am-8:15am, Mt. Sopris*
- *Division-Sponsored Reception*  
*Thursday August 16, 6:30pm-7:30pm, Mount Evans A & B*
- *Graduate Student Happy Hour Reception*  
*Thursday August 16, 10:00pm-11:00pm, Pub17-Hotel Bar*
- *SSSP Business Meeting (Open to all SSSP members)*  
*Friday August 17, 9:50am-11:00am, Imperial Ballroom*
- *Reception Honoring Michele Koontz and our Past Presidents*  
*Friday August 17, 6:45pm-7:45pm, Pyramid Peak Foyer*
- *Awards Banquet (Ticketed event)*  
*Friday August 17, 8:00pm-10:00pm, Pyramid Peak Ballroom*



Denver Convention Center

### Division Outstanding Paper Competition Winners

This year, the winners for the division's outstanding paper competition are Sarah Nell Rusche and Kendra Jason. Both Sarah and Kendra are doctoral candidates at North Carolina State University. Their winning paper is titled "Welcoming the Personal as Sociological: Critical Self-Reflection and Transformation in the Classroom." In this paper, the authors propose "welcoming students' personal perspectives and narratives, as they understand them, as fertile ground for sociological investigation and critical self-reflection." Doing so, the authors argue, provides a critical pedagogy approach in the classroom and offers the potential for deep and transformative learning. Sarah and Kendra will be presenting their paper at the annual meeting at the following panel:

#### **Session 96 – Student Award Winning Papers III**

Organizer: Ashley Currier (University of Cincinnati)  
Presider: Lisa D. Brush (University of Pittsburgh)  
Time & Place: Saturday August 18, 8:30am-10:10am, Mt. Yale

Please do attend the session to support Sarah and Kendra!

Thank you to the members of the paper competition committee: Corey Dolgon (Stonehill College), Shirley Jackson (Southern Connecticut State University), Lauren Ross (Quinnipiac University) and Carrie Lee Smith (Millersville University).

Congratulations, Sarah and Kendra!



Denver Airport