

# >>> NEWSLETTER <<< SSSP TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS DIVISION



## WINTER 2024-25 TOP NEWS

### 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

#### >>> READ MORE

At pages 4-8, you will find information about the SSSP 2025 Annual Meeting call for papers with a list of the Teaching Social Problems Division's sessions and Student Paper Competition Award.

#### READ MORE <<<

At page 10-12 you will find an interview with Corey Dolgon about his new book and teaching social problems for social change.

### INTERVIEW WITH COREY DOLGON

# NEWS AND UPDATES

By the Division Chair, Morena Tartari

## >>> INTRODUCTION

In this Newsletter of the SSSP Teaching Social Problems Division you will find news about the Call for Papers for the 2025 Annual Meeting, our Division Workshop in Chicago, and an interview with Corey Dolgon about teaching for social change. Moreover, you will find members' new publications, and some other announcements.

## CHAIR-ELECT

**Our new Chair-Elect is  
Janelle Pham**

## >>> CONGRATULATIONS!

The new elected Chair (2025-2027) of the TSP Division is Janelle Pham, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Sociology and Sociology Program Coordinator at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia. Congratulations! Janelle will start serving in this role from August 2025.

Morena Tartari, Chair (2023-2025)  
Northumbria University, [morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk)



# 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

INSURGENT SOCIOLOGY IN A TIME OF CRISES

## >>> ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

### CALL for PAPERS

**Deadline for submissions is 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on January 31, 2025.**

Here you can find the CALL for PAPERS:

<https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/1014/fuseaction/ssspsession2.publicView>

Here is the 2025 Annual Meeting **general information**:

[https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/1001/2025\\_Annual\\_Meeting/](https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/1001/2025_Annual_Meeting/)

Here are the **FAQs**:

[https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/1017/Annual\\_Meeting\\_FAQ/](https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/1017/Annual_Meeting_FAQ/)

## >>> REGISTRATION

Registration will open in **February 2025.**

This year we will commemorate our **75th anniversary** as a Society!

**CHICAGO  
AUGUST 8-10,  
2025**

**75TH  
ANNIVERSARY**

## >>> PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Assata Zerai, Chair, The University of New Mexico

Melanie E.L. Bush, Adelphi University

Walda Katz-Fishman, League of Revolutionaries for a New America and Howard University

Rahsaan H. Mahadeo, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

## **Session #75: “Bring Your Own Brilliance”: Sharing our Ideas That Have Been Successful in Teaching**

Session type: WORKS IN PROGRESS

Sponsored by Teaching Social Problems Division

Organizers: Zalewski, Jacqueline M. [ [jzalewski@wcupa.edu](mailto:jzalewski@wcupa.edu) ]

Pham, Janelle M. [ [jpham@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:jpham@oglethorpe.edu) ]

### **Description:**

In this session, presenters are invited to bring their most innovative and successful teaching strategies, techniques, and ideas to the floor. Participants can share insights, experiences, and best practices that have enhanced learning in their higher education classes. Presenters could showcase their unique approaches, from engaging pedagogical methods, creative use of technology, strategies for ensuring inclusivity and supporting student well-being, to writing practices to improve the classes contents. This session is an excellent opportunity to learn from each other's brilliance and build a collective resource of teaching excellence. Participants can be seasoned educators or junior scholars who desire to share their experiences.

## **Session #76: Teaching Social Problems in a Time of Crises: Challenges and Opportunities**

Session type: THEMATIC

Sponsors: Teaching Social Problems Division

Organizers: Bulanda, Jennifer Roebuck [ [bulandjr@miamioh.edu](mailto:bulandjr@miamioh.edu) ]

Awwad, Amani M. [ [awwada@canton.edu](mailto:awwada@canton.edu) ]

### **Description:**

Teaching social problems in the contemporary world, with its economic downturns, political radicalization, climate change effects and environmental disasters, pandemics, and armed conflicts brings challenges but also opportunities. While some opportunities can lie, for instance, in exploring the complexity of social issues and critically discussing the contribution that the sociological discipline along with interdisciplinary approaches can bring, some of the challenges can concern emotional and psychological stress, resistances, misinformation and the need to adapt teaching methods. This session will host presentations that address these opportunities and challenges.

## **Session #66: Teaching Social Problems and Theory: The Present and Future of Textbooks**

Session type: CRITICAL DIALOGUE

Sponsors: Teaching Social Problems Division, Social Problems Theory Division

Organizer: Thomas, Pattie [ [pattie.thomas@csn.edu](mailto:pattie.thomas@csn.edu) ]

### **Description:**

Many critiques have been raised regarding textbooks, including the cost, the tendency to reinforce Western dominance of the discipline, the absence of marginalized voices, and the narrow pedagogical approaches. This can especially be true of surveys of social problems courses and social problems theory courses. What is and is not considered a social problem is influenced by institutional social forces. Textbooks can reflect this bias towards establishment ideas about social issues. This critical dialogue session encourages submissions examining the present state of social problems texts and speculation of how self-publishing, OER, AI, and decolonization movements will influence the future of textbooks in social issues courses. Submissions examining specific texts and general discussions about textbooks are welcomed.

## **Session #55: Teaching Social Problems through Institutional Ethnography**

Session type: CRITICAL DIALOGUE

Sponsors: Institutional Ethnography Division, Teaching Social Problems Division

Organizers: Brule, Elizabeth L. [ [e.brule@queensu.ca](mailto:e.brule@queensu.ca) ]

Tartari, Morena [ [morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk) ]

### **Description:**

This session focuses on using Institutional Ethnography (IE) to explore social problems and social change with academic and non-academic audiences. Institutional Ethnographers who are teaching/imparting what they have learned from their IE research to academic and non-academic audiences are invited to submit their contributions to this session. Presentations can focus on how to guide, through IE, academic and non-academic audience in understanding how everyday experiences are shaped by institutional and social forces, in discussing the impact of IE research, and in highlighting the potential of IE to uncover hidden power dynamics, policies, and organizational practices. This aim is to discuss how to help these audiences and communities critically examine institutions while engaging with the possibilities of impact that IE offers.

## **Session #21: Intersectionality in the Classroom**

Session type: REGULAR

Sponsors: Critical Race and Ethnic Study Division, Teaching Social Problems Division

Organizers: Linhart, Laurie J. [ [llinhart@dmacc.edu](mailto:llinhart@dmacc.edu) ]

Leshko, Christina M. [ [leshkoc@canton.edu](mailto:leshkoc@canton.edu) ]

### **Description:**

This session aims to discuss how to effectively incorporate the concept of intersectionality into teaching and in interactions with students. Moreover, it will focus on how intersections shape students' experiences and how educators can create an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and supports these diverse perspectives. Presentations will address the relevance of intersectionality in education and why it is crucial to address it in teaching and the impact of intersectionality on students, their experiences, of privilege, oppression, or marginalization. Furthermore, presentations will discuss strategies to discuss intersectionality in the classroom, to develop teaching materials that effectively incorporate an intersectional approach, to create an inclusive environment in the classroom.

## **Session #15: Teaching about Conflict and Inequalities in Challenging Times**

Sponsors: Crime and Justice Division, Poverty, Class, and Inequality Division, Teaching Social Problems Division

Organizers: Williams, Stephani [ [stephani.williams@gmail.com](mailto:stephani.williams@gmail.com) ]

Ragan, Kasey Carmile [ [kragan@stedwards.edu](mailto:kragan@stedwards.edu) ]

Pearce, Jessica [ [jessica.pearce@louisiana.edu](mailto:jessica.pearce@louisiana.edu) ]

### **Description:**

This session will present papers that address challenges and strategies for teaching about conflict in unprecedented times. Attacks on DEI, books, and professors make it clear that teaching about social problems is a task that must be navigated with care. Authors are encouraged to discuss how an insurgent approach might guide educators to confront important issues and teach about conflict and social problems.

## **Session #7: How to Teach Social Change in the Classroom**

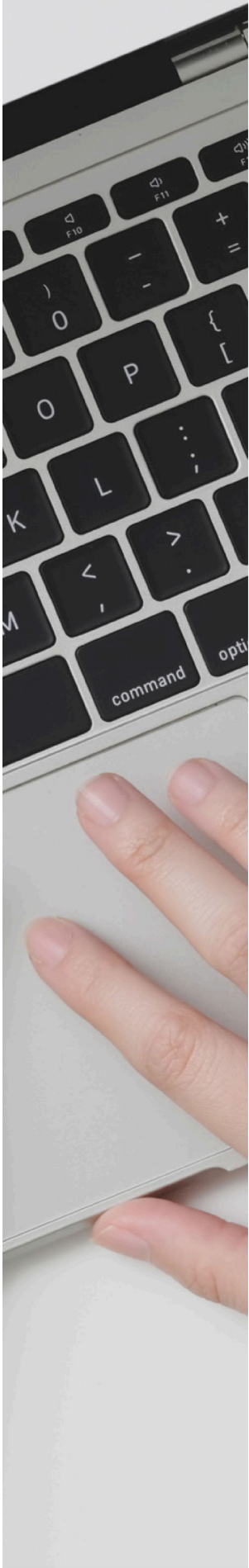
Session type: CRITICAL DIALOGUE

Sponsored by Community, Research, and Practice Division, Teaching Social Problems Division

Organizers: Draus, Paul J. [ [draus@umich.edu](mailto:draus@umich.edu) ]; Leviss, Perri S. [ [pleviss@ric.edu](mailto:pleviss@ric.edu) ]

### **Description:**

This session will explore innovative approaches to teaching social change in the classroom, equipping educators with strategies to inspire critical thinking, activism, and social responsibility among students. Participants will engage with practical methods for integrating topics such as equity, inclusion, justice, and community engagement into their curriculum. Presentations will explore a range of approaches, from case studies, interactive discussions, integration of research into lectures, to real-world examples. The aim is to focus on how to develop learning environments that empower students to address societal issues and become agents of positive change in their communities and beyond.



# STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION 2025

8

**Deadline: 1/31/25**

The Teaching Social Problems Division invites submissions for its 2025 Annual Student Paper Competition.

We will consider submissions of short papers (max 2000 words) that answer the following question: What is the joy you find in teaching social problems?

There are several requirements for a paper to be eligible for submission.

First, the paper should not already be published or accepted for publication.

Second, the paper must be student-authored. This means the paper may be authored by either one student or co-authored by multiple students but cannot be co-authored by a faculty member or non-student.

Third, papers should not exceed the 2000-word length. Text should be double-spaced.

Fourth, author(s) may only submit their paper to one Division. Author(s) is required to submit their paper through the annual meeting Call for Papers online system by the deadline indicated on the SSSP website.

Moreover, they are required to send their paper to the Teaching Social Problems Division Chair, Dr. Morena Tartari, at the following address: [morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk), by January 31, 2025.

In their email to the Division Chair, the author(s) should include (1) a cover letter indicating that they are submitting their paper for the competition; and (2) a letter from their advisor that certifies their graduate-student status and offers some brief comments about their work.

If selected for the award, the author(s) must commit to present the paper at a session at the 2025 SSSP Annual

Meeting in Chicago and will receive: a \$150 cash award; a one-year SSSP student membership; waiver of 2025 Conference registration fees; and a recognition plaque.

For further information author(s) can contact the Division Chair at the following address: [morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk)

Pattie Thomas have contributed a chapter to an upcoming book:

"How I Found Out I Am Human" by Pattie Thomas (p188) in Ellis-Ordway, N., Osborn, T., eds., *Weight and Wisdom: Reflections on Decades of Working for Body Liberation*, Pearlsong (January 2025).

The book is a collection of stories about the early days of Fat Acceptance/Fat Liberation as told by long-time activists and scholars.

Here the link to the publisher's website:

<https://pearlsong.com/weight-and-wisdom/>

Morena Tartari is among the editors and authors of the following book in OA:

Tartari, M., Rinaldi, C., Scarcelli, C. (eds) (2024). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics in the COVID-19 Pandemic*. London: Routledge.

Here the link to the publisher's website:

<https://www.routledge.com/Folk-Devils-and-Moral-Panics-in-the-COVID-19-Pandemic/Tartari-Scarcelli-Rinaldi/p/book/9781032591490>

BY MORENA TARTARI

This interview was inspired by the new book edited by Corey Dolgon and the need of some suggestions about teaching for social change. Thanks again to Corey who accepted this interview!

Corey Dolgon (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sociology for Social Justice*, Oxford Handbooks (2024; online edn, Oxford Academic, 19 Sept. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197615317.002.0008>

### **Corey, what did make you decide that this book was necessary?**

I think it is necessary that scholar activists interested in sociology as a tool to organize and mobilize people for political struggle and social change make bold statements about the work they do and the possibilities we have. This book is especially constructed for younger scholars—graduate students and new faculty—who once found themselves drawn to the legacy of radical sociologists and revolutionaries engaged in sociological imaginings as part of their political work. The professionalization of sociology and the neo liberalization of higher education has squelched so much of the radical impulse among sociologists. This book's contributors demonstrate that a wide spectrum of approaches to political engagement can be supported by sociological research and practice.

### **What perspectives or ideas have you challenged with this book?**

I believe the essays here shatter any lingering concern that somehow engaged research and pedagogy compromise the rigor and impact of sociological practice. Part of decolonizing sociology must be to recreate and re-envision research and methods that don't constrict our work with false standards of objectivity and aloofness. This book not only reinforces trends towards engaged and activist research but offers myriad ways in which authors have gone about applying sociology to their encounters and strategies for social change and social justice.

[it continues to the next page]

**What are the aspects of this book which might be important for colleagues who teach about social problems in higher education?**

I think this book accomplishes two things directly:

1) The book begins with people—young people, workers, farmers, community residents, etc.—and the desire to understand and mobilize against social problems from the perspective of those experiencing them. Most of the articles begin with notions of co-creating projects and engaging communities through all aspects of the research and action activities. At the same time, this work engages institutions on both the research and action level, thus schools, government agencies, factories and workplaces, “the streets” are all examined in ways that analyze how they work; their impact on communities, what kinds of changes are necessary; and how people can fight for them.

2) By focusing on political engagement—both epistemologically and practically—we believe this book is an elixir to the dour and depressing traditions of Social Problems studies as merely a litany of misery. This book could be an inspiration for young scholars NOT to give up their vision of doing engaged and politically important research that demonstrates various levels and entry points for progressive and radical sociology.

**How does this book connect with your daily practice (or experience) of teaching?**

I try to focus all of my social problems and other courses towards doing engaged teaching and research. I want to students to not only link anything we are learning in class about how sociology approaches social problems to peoples’ experiencing them, but I also require students to engage in community work and consider how those experiences change the way they think about sociology and its tools. In upper-level class I prepare students in the first half of a course to use the second half of a course for community-based projects with a public sociology or community organizing focus. I believe the book will give young faculty a variety of different theoretical and practical approaches to construct projects like this.

[it continues to the next page]

**What do you think is the best way to improve teaching for social change?**

I think faculty driven to have students analytically engage social problems but also engage with challenging and solving those problems have to consider ways to bring students into communities surrounding colleges and universities. Particularly in this current historical moment, students seem overwhelmed and apathetic about politics in general and doing social justice work in particular. I strongly believe the most effective way to engage students hearts and minds is to have them develop relationships with people from communities who are doing the hard work of social change.

**Is there any fundamental reading/author that you would suggest about teaching for social change?**

There are so many folks who have talked about this kind of teaching—from Paolo Freire and bell hooks to more current authors like Mariame Kaba and Wayne Au. But I do think there are a number of articles in the Oxford University Press Handbook of Sociology for Social Justice that discuss these areas on campuses and in college classrooms: Messineo, Rost-Bank and Mitchell, Olmos, etc. There are also many articles about popular education outside of the classroom: Payne, Thurber, Ponte, Futterer, etc. I have another edited collection—with Tania Mitchell and Timothy Eatman—Cambridge University Press Handbook of Service Learning and Community Engagement that also has great articles on social justice pedagogy including an entire section on “Best Practices and Pedagogies.”

**Is there any underappreciated book or piece of writing or author that you find important to the purpose of teaching social problems for social change?**

I think the most effective and inspirational books I use when teaching about social problems with a social change and social justice lens comes from the pen of non-fiction narratives written by academics. For example, I love the work of Sandra Steingraber whose books such as Raising Elijah and Having Faith are powerful documents of everyday life and struggle with environmental devastation linked to the environmental justice movement. Sarah Smarsh’s Heartland is a strong indictment of rural poverty and oppression on multiple levels addressing work, gender, family, substance abuse within the context of federal policies and regional politics.

[the end]



# RESOURCE FOR WHITE ANTI-RACIST SOCIOLOGISTS

13

A MESSAGE FROM ELROI WINDSOR, GEORGIANN DAVIS, AND WYNN STRANGE

We are a group of white anti-racist sociologists interested in accountability, solidarity, and critical praxis. Each of us has witnessed ongoing institutionalized forms of racial oppression within sociological settings. We began discussions about how to reflect and root out internalized and unconscious racism within ourselves and take action in solidarity with others' accountability work in response to intentional and unintentional racism and white supremacy.

We invite other white scholars interested in this work to join us.

Our hope is to hold a series of virtual meetings to share challenges we have experienced or witnessed and mistakes we have made, with the aim of discussing how we addressed these situations, how we wish we would have addressed them, and to share insight with each other on how we could address similar situations in the future. We will incorporate somatic approaches to understanding our emotions and felt experiences in these situations, and develop tools to identify and manage the felt experiences of white supremacy. We envision a combination of reading work that explores these concepts for discussion, along with group practice. And, as we develop these skills and a network of anti-racist white sociologists across institutional settings, we hope to work together and in solidarity with other collectives to make institutionalized change across universities and professional organizations.

The vision for what we become will evolve as our collective needs shift, and as we respond to the social conditions around us. We are open to hearing from other anti-racist sociologists as to what additional activities and actions we can collectively engage in.

You can read more about our commitments and values, as well as a resource list we are developing here, and copied below:

Google Doc: <https://tinyurl.com/antiracistsocresources>

PDF: <https://tinyurl.com/pdfantiracistresources>

You can join our listserv here: <https://groups.google.com/g/white-anti-racist-sociologists>

Please note that you must be logged into a gmail account. Select "Ask to Join Group". This will add you to the listserv and you will receive emails regarding organizing and attending sessions, as well as a space to put out calls for support and mentoring around responses to racism at any level.

We are planning to gather in December to discuss our strategies and next steps in the face of ongoing and dangerous white supremacy.

If you have any questions you can email us at:

[whiteantiracistsociologists@gmail.com](mailto:whiteantiracistsociologists@gmail.com)



## BOOK YOUR SIT!

Our Division has organized the following workshop at the 2025 Annual Meeting in Chicago.

### **Teaching Social Problems for Social Change: A one-day experiential workshop (limit 50)**

**Monday, August 11, 2025, 9:00am–4:00pm**

**Location:** Palmer House Hilton (morning); fieldtrip with local organizations in Chicago (afternoon)

**Registration Fee:** \$30 for employed registrants or \$25 for unemployed/activist/student registrants

The Teaching Social Problems Division is hosting an interactive workshop for teachers, scholars and activists who are interest to expand knowledge concerning strategies and techniques about teaching social problems in higher education. This workshop is an opportunity for junior and senior scholars, teachers and activists to use sociological imagination to empower students and support them to make a better world.

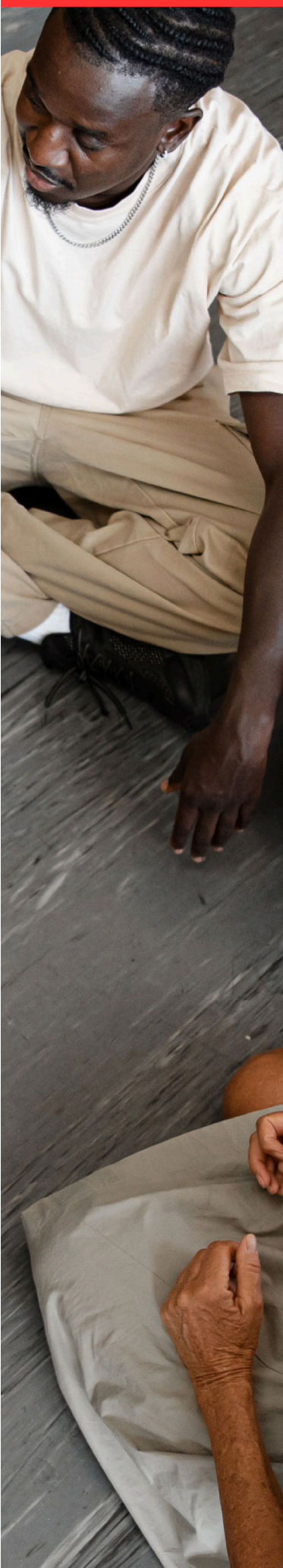
The aim of this workshop is twofold: to develop new perspectives on how to teach social problems with optimism and how to develop a sensitivity towards the vulnerabilities that students can present about some social problems, and to provide examples, strategies and techniques to develop a new or improve already existing syllabi and case studies.

In the morning, the workshop features two keynote presentations on innovative ways to teach social problems positively as well as opportunities for large and small-group discussion and learning.

In the afternoon, the workshop will provide attendees with opportunities to engage directly with initiatives concerning social change with a fieldtrip organized together with local organizations and to discuss how to incorporate these case studies in syllabi and teaching.

Attendees who are interested in sharing and receiving feedback on a syllabus or a case study or other teaching materials during the small-group discussions should submit these documents to Pattie Thomas ([pattie.thomas@csn.edu](mailto:pattie.thomas@csn.edu)) and Morena Tartari ([morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:morena.tartari@northumbria.ac.uk)) by July 1.

Workshop fee includes morning coffee.





## FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

15

### RENEW YOUR SSSP MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your SSSP membership!

Please invite colleagues and friends to join the Teaching Social Problems Division!

SSSP offers amazing opportunities for professional development and support graduate students and scholars in all stages of their academic career.

Click [here](#) to renew your membership!

### GIVE THE GIFT OF A MEMBERSHIP

Purchase a membership for a year to a student or a non-academic activist.

This gift would allow them to participate in the Society and their divisions of choice. It's a simple way to share the work of our society!

Click [here](#) to purchase a gift membership!