



North Central Sociological Association 2013 Annual Meeting: Saint Mary's Students and Faculty Participation

For the eleventh consecutive year the Sociology Department has been able to invite sociology majors to participate in the North Central Sociological Association's (NCSA) annual meeting. This year four sociology majors, Molly Harmon, Caroline Proulx, Hilary Whitsett, and Abby Madsen, along with faculty members Leslie Wang, Susan Alexander, and Sheryl Switaj attended the conference, which was held in Indianapolis from April 4-7, 2013.



Sociology faculty and students are joined in Indy for dinner by alumnae Kelly Reidenbach ('12), Stephanie Roth Kleinbub ('06), Shelly McGrath ('01), and Carlye Gibson ('05).

The students' travel this year was made possible through a successful grant proposal to Alpha Kappa Delta, the sociological honors society.

The faculty continue to be active in the NCSA, both organizing sessions and presenting papers. This year, Susan and a research team of two students, Molly Harmon and Abby Madsen, presented data for a paper titled, "It's a [White] Boy's Life: Hegemonic Masculinity on Boy Scouts Magazine Covers, 1911-2010."

Sociology Major's wins 1st and 2nd Place in the NCSA Student Paper Competition



Hilary Whitsett (left) and Molly Harmon (right)

Each year the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) sponsors a student paper competition for both graduate and undergraduate students. Since 2004, Saint Mary's sociology majors have won a total of five 1st place awards, three 2nd place awards, and three 3rd place awards. This year the winning streak continued with senior sociology major Molly Harmon, who won 1st place in the 2013 NCSA undergraduate student paper competition. Hilary Whitsett took 2nd place.

Molly's paper is titled "Broadcasting Blackness: A Content Analysis of Movies Aired by Black Entertainment Television (BET) Before and After Viacom's Ownership." Black Entertainment Television is a cable television station whose mission is to provide "an authentic, unapologetic viewpoint of the black experience" by offering "socially active and culturally influential content" that "reflects our audiences' lives" (Viacom.com). In 2000 former owner of BET, Robert Johnson, sold his black-owned company to media conglomerate, Viacom. This means that white-owned Viacom has control over the black image and idea "blackness" that BET conveys to its viewers. Molly's study is a content analysis of how blackness is portrayed in the five most frequently played movies aired by BET from January 1, 1999 to January 1, 2000, and BET's five most frequently aired films between January 1, 2011 and January 1, 2012. The purpose of this research is to identify how themes of blackness displayed on BET have changed with respect to the change in ownership.

For winning 1st place, Molly received a framed award certificate along with a cash prize. Congratulations Molly!

Sociology Guest Speaker

Codie Stone

Department of Sociology, Western Michigan University



On Thursday, January 24, 2012, the Sociology Department, along with the Gender and Women's Studies Program, was pleased to welcome Codie Stone to Saint Mary's College. Codie, a PhD Candidate in Sociology at Western Michigan University, gave a lecture titled "Finally the Tables are Starting to Turn: Talking About Transgender People." His talk focused on his own life story as a trans masculine queer person, the current social climate,

and issues facing transgender people in the U.S. today. The information he shared was drawn from the findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (conducted recently by the National Gay Lesbian Task Force, the National Center for Transgender Equality, and the Arcus Center for Social Justice). He also explained the varying impacts of social factors such as race, class, gender identity, sexual identity, age of transition, and ability on transgender people's potential desires to and ways of transitioning.

Donald N. M. Horning

Senior Comprehensive Award Winner

Hilary Whitsett



The Sociology Department is pleased to announce that Hilary Whitsett is this year's recipient of the The Donald N. M. Horning Award. This prestigious award is granted to a senior sociology major whose Senior Comprehensive research was deemed outstanding. Hilary's comp looked at Direct to Consumer Advertisements (DTCA) in women's magazines with a focus on how the age of the target audience influences advertising practices. Direct to Consumer Advertisements (DTCA) are promotions of prescription drugs that are aimed toward the general public. Her study looked at both the frequency and content of the advertisements and she used the Social Construction Theory to explain how these ads can affect the way in which women construct health. Her research showed that DTCA

frequency and variety increases with the average age of readership of the magazine. She also found that there were relationships between age and the content of both the text and the images.

Hilary's paper also earned 2nd place in the NCSA Student Paper Competition. Congratulations Hilary!

Sociology Alumnae

Sarah “Sam” Medina Steimer '06

Clinical Research Coordinator at the University of California,
Davis Medical Center in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

I have been fortunate to have found a career working in two fields that I am passionate about: women’s reproductive health and research. I completed my Masters in Sociology at the University of Connecticut in 2008. A few years later, I was hired as a research assistant at the Center for Family Planning Research in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. While I have had a lot of experience working as an academic research assistant, I had never worked in a clinical setting. The studies that we worked on ranged from large, industry sponsored clinical trials to small faculty initiated studies and studies funded by the National Institute of Health and other non-profit organizations.

My job as a research assistant included recruiting subjects to participate in our studies, facilitating the visits, transmitting the data to the study sponsor, and assisting the research coordinator with any other study related activities. While there were some things that I had never done for a study in sociology, such as taking vitals or processing lab specimens, there were three things that were always the same: follow the research process, do no harm to your subjects, and the importance of the integrity of the data.

After two years of working as a research assis-



tant, I accepted a clinical research coordinator position at the University of California, Davis Medical Center in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. As a clinical research coordinator, I am responsible for bringing new clinical trials to the department, working with the IRB to make sure our site follows all of the local, state, and federal guidelines, and managing the clinical trials from start to close. While my last position was in an established research center, I am currently working with faculty members in the department to create a research center for the entire Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. This center will be a resource for all Obstetrics and Gynecology research in our department, including Urogynecology (urology and gynecology), Maternal Fetal Medicine (high-risk pregnancy), and Gynecologic Oncology (gynecologic cancers).

Obstetrics and Gynecology research helps to create new and safe procedures, drugs, and medical devices to improve women’s health care. While the clinical trials process can be a difficult process, our researchers and research staff are committed to making sure there are safe, medically reliable, options for women’s health care now and in the future. That is my favorite part of my career.

WOLSFELD TEACHING GRANT

Congratulations to Mary Ann Kanieski who was awarded the Wolsfeld Sociology Teaching Grant to restructure SOC 350 Diverse Childhoods to include a global perspective. This will allow students to understand how childhood and parenting styles reflect the intersectionality of nationality combined with other social variables.

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E-mail Susan Alexander at
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Congratulations and Best Wishes to the Sociology Class of 2013



The SMC Sociology Class of 2013 includes

Front row: Sociology Faculty Susan Alexander, Mary Ann Kanieski, and Leslie Wang

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