



Sociology Newsletter

Fall 2005

CWIL FELLOW CARRIE ERLIN JOINS DEPARTMENT

The Department of Sociology is pleased to welcome Carrie Erlin. She has been an energetic new member of our department this year. In her own words Carrie said, "I have come to the Sociology and Justice Education Departments as a Dissertation Fellow for the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership (CWIL). Being involved with both CWIL and the Sociology/Justice Education Departments provides me with an interesting, interdisciplinary perspective that continually renews my commitment to keeping social justice and issues of inequality in the forefront of my teaching and research agenda. I have a law degree from the University of Arizona and was a practicing attorney in Nevada specializing in custody and family law issues before I went back to graduate school in 2000. I received a Masters in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame and am currently completing my dissertation at ND. In pursuing my graduate degrees in sociology, I have focused on family sociology, social psychology, and therapeutic jurisprudence. I am very excited that next semester I will be teaching both Marriage and Family and Therapeutic Jurisprudence (Social Impacts of Laws).



When I'm not on campus, you can probably find me at home cheering on the Chicago Bears in the fall and the Cubs in the spring and summer, or enjoying the challenges of having three children - Zachary 15, Jonathan 3, and Kelsey 6 months old."

Mary Erdmans' Lecture at SMC

The Sociology Department was delighted to have one of our alumnae, Mary Erdmans '81, on campus September 29-30. On Thursday evening, Mary gave a public lecture titled "Nuns and Moms: The role of religion and motherhood in the life choices of white working-class women." Based on oral histories with her mother and four aunts, Mary's talk centered on the private lives of women that social scientists often overlook, the lives of women tending gardens, praying in church pews, and caring for the family. The talk focused on the life choices of Catholic working-class women who came of age in the domesticity of the 1940s and 1950s and were "called" to life careers as mothers and nuns. Understanding that women make choices within a particular set of circumstances (e.g. Bourdieu's "habitus"), Mary explained how career and family choices were influenced by class position, shaped by religious expectations, supported by ethnic culture, and privileged by racial standing. She also compared the lives of this pre-feminist generation with the choices and opportunities available to her post-feminist generation of women.

On Friday, September 30, Mary gave a talk at a Sociology Brown Bag on "Life Histories as a Research Method." She discussed the benefits and some of the potential problems one faces when conducting life histories, especially when those life histories are from close family members.

A special thanks to the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership and the Department of History for co-sponsoring the event.



Mary Erdmans at book signing
with professor Becky Stoddart (PSY)

Mary is currently a professor in the Department of Sociology at Central Connecticut State University. She recently published the book *The Graszinski Girls: The Choices They Had and The Choices They Made* (Ohio University Press, 2004).

Boulevard of Broken Dreams

by Stephanie Lutz, Senior Sociology Major

"Boulevard of Broken Dreams." These were the words I saw spray-painted on a piece of plywood that was propped against the remains of a one hundred year old oak tree along Beach Boulevard in Gulfport, Mississippi. This was one of many disturbing sights I encountered when I went home for Fall Break in October 2005. Before Hurricane Katrina ripped apart the Mississippi coast on August 29, it was picturesque — a string of coastal cities full of people with dreams. Now all that is left is the "boulevard of broken dreams." There are homes with only the front steps remaining, the "steps leading nowhere" as local people are calling them. There are buildings where the water literally washed through people's homes leaving debris a mile inland. Casinos broke loose from the moorings and the barges floated onto shore crushing what was in their path. Where trees once dotted the coast, nothing is left. The few trees still standing are brown from the salt water or split in half.

Having lived in Gulfport all of my life, I had no idea what to expect when I went home for the first time. Nearly two months after the hurricane, and it looked as if the storm had just hit. Neighborhoods were unrecognizable. When driving home I missed the turn onto my street. I could not find my way home because the landscape was so changed.

The sights were disheartening, and the people were sad. The patience and understanding demonstrated the first few weeks were

Remains of Beach Boulevard facing Bay of St. Louis



gone. Tempers flared easily. People were and are still homeless, jobless, and moneyless. There are relief crews everywhere, but it seems as if the clean-up will never be complete. It was hot, dusty and the smell flooded my senses. The once fresh salty breeze is replaced by the nauseating odor of stagnant mud and decay. The Gulf Coast was once so beautiful — a picture of Southern Elegance. Gorgeous homes, sprawling old oak trees, businesses, casinos, tourist attractions and more are all gone. An entire culture it seems has been washed away; only my memories are left of what used to be.

While the environmental problems are great, the social structure has also broken down. People wait in lines at Wal-Mart for hours for a limited amount of goods. There are no restaurants to eat at; no movie theaters or clubs to frequent. One woman said to me, "I never wanted to sit at a slot machine so much in my life just to pass the time, but I can't because they are gone."

It is almost impossible for me to describe. There really is nothing left. Where does this society begin to pick up the pieces? Everywhere there are small, encouraging signs that the Coast will rebuild, but this glimmer of hope is contrasted with the constant state of desperation. I hope Americans do not forget the entire coast is truly a boulevard of broken dreams.

Alumna Jessica McManus Warnell

Jessica McManus Warnell '98 is a Program Manager and Instructor at the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Saint Mary's, she received a MA at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration (2000), with a thesis examining implementation of a new program model in the Cook County, Illinois, Juvenile Correctional Facility.



Jessica joined the Mendoza College of Business (MCOB) in 2000, in a newly created position funded in part by the ND Center for Social Concerns. She teaches the *Business Ethics Field Project* course and facilitates partnerships between business faculty, students and community-based organizations through course-based service-learning and other initiatives. Her applied course examines the role of business in community stewardship within the framework of ethics theory.

As one of the founders of the MBA Net Impact/Community Partners program, Jessica is the advisor to this MBA student program designed to foster innovative collaboration between local businesses and nonprofits. She also has the opportunity to coordinate MCOB's partnership with the Robinson Community Learning Center, through which MCOB teaches entrepreneurship fundamentals to high school youth. Jessica also serves on the Advisory Board of the local Youth Restorative Justice Project and she served as a member of the Board of Directors at the Urban League of St. Joseph County. Her current research project, with Anne Cahill Kelly and Jay Brandenberger, examines the development of moral learning and principled reasoning through business ethics and community-based curricula.

Jessica continues to be interested in dynamics of race and socioeconomic status. In the future, Jessica plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Sociology. Jessica and her husband, Douglas, are the proud parents of two sons, ages 4 years and 4 months, and live in South Bend, Indiana.

WANTED ALUMNAE BUSINESS CARDS

We'd love to hear from you!!

Email Sociology department chair Susan Alexander @ salexand@saintmarys.edu or send your business card!!

And next time you're in South Bend, remember to stop in and visit!!



A Summer in Cameroon

by Dr. Carolette Norwood



This summer I went to Yaoundé, Cameroon, central Africa. Cameroon is a coastal country that shares its borders with seven west and central African nations- Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. I began preliminary research on a new project that addresses Microcredit and HIV. My dissertation research examined Microcredit in Ghana and the impact of participation on women's empowerment and family planning. Recently, however, advocates of Microcredit are touting these programs as being effective in bat-

tling against HIV infections for women.

Just a bit of background --- Microfinance organizations have recently been embraced by international organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank as a remedy for empowering women both personally and economically. Recently, advocates also claim that Microcredit programs can and do also provide HIV/AIDS education, which is believed to reduce women's susceptibility to the HIV virus. The purpose of my study in Cameroon is to assess the effects of membership in a microlending program on HIV prevention and risk reduction strategies, women's empowerment status and family planning practices. Additionally, a goal of this study to uncover why women who are knowledgeable of HIV and AIDS and are aware of ways to prevent the transmission of the virus, choose not to modify sexual behaviors to avoid HIV. According to a recent Health Survey in Cameroon (DHS, 2004), 89.7 percent of women sampled report having heard of HIV, only 4.6% report not knowing ways to prevent HIV, yet more than two-fifths (42.3%) report having not made any changes in sexual behavior to avoid AIDS. In addition to learning about the financial usefulness of tontines in Yaoundé, a principal aim of my study is to unravel why barriers to HIV risk reduction persists for urban women in Yaoundé.

Well, the trip was fantastic. I learned a lot more about Microcredit in Africa than I could have ever anticipated. These organizations in Cameroon are well rooted in the local culture and date back centuries! I met a lot of terrific people who took me into their communities and families. Two important contacts I made were with Madame Francois Onodobo and Ms. Jose Anne Onodobo (no relation, just an odd happenchance). The former is a founder and president of a local Microcredit group in Yaoundé and is currently in the United States visiting her son in Atlanta. She will likely visit us here at Saint Mary's sometime in November. Madame Jose Anne is the head nurse that oversees a family planning office at a local hospital that is dedicated to women's reproductive health care. She, along with the Chief Doctor on staff, has formally extended an invitation to me return to Cameroon next summer to begin research on mother-to-child HIV transmission. I am terribly excited about this opportunity and am eagerly looking forward to returning to Cameroon -- hopefully, with some of our students from Saint Mary's. I've spoken with several young ladies who has expressed serious interest in accompany me to Yaoundé next summer as research assistants.

Additional Faculty News, Fall 2005



Dr. Susan Alexander

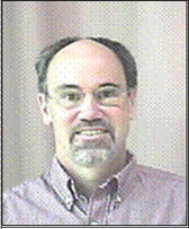
It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. It's been a busy one professionally. I had an article published titled "Social Justice and the Teaching of Sociology" in the August 2005 issue of *Sociological Focus*. Two teaching related pieces, "Hidden Curriculum: Gender Socialization" and "Self-Identity and the Consumption of Gendered Images: *The Good Wife's Guide*," were just published in the 2nd edition of *Teaching Sociological Concepts and the Sociology of Gender* (2005), edited by Marybeth Stalp and Julie Childers. Classes are going well and reading the many drafts of those senior seminar comprehensive research papers fills many hours. On a personal note, my husband Brett (whom many of you know) and I were very much concerned by losses so many in the Gulf Coast faced after the hurricanes. As a result, Brett trained with the Red Cross for disaster relief work and in October he was "deployed" to the New Orleans area to help. I wish I could have joined him in the efforts.

Dr. Mary Ann Kanieski

I specialize in sociology of the family, childhood, and inequality. I teach in the areas of Marriage and Family, Sociological Statistics, and in the spring, I will teach a course on Diverse Childhoods. I am very excited about this course because it really brings together my interests in family and inequality. In my research, I have been exploring educational inequality, wealth inequality, and the sociology of childhood. I am currently finishing a paper on wealth inequality and am writing a paper examining childrearing. I have taught introduction to sociology, Marriage and Family, and Sociological Statistics This spring I will teach a new course on the Sociology of Childhood.



Additional Faculty News cont.



Dr. Hank Borne

Although it's only the beginning of the semester, I have many great things to look forward to. In November, I will be presenting on the issue of academic integrity and the process of developing an academic integrity system at Brown-Mackie College. In January 2005, I published the 11th edition of the Student

Study Guide for the Maconis *Sociology* text. I will be co-chairing the SoTL Midwest consortium annual meeting at IUSB in April 06 followed by a workshop on class assignments that encourage academic honesty at the Midwest Sociological Association in Indianapolis. Finally, next fall I will be taking on the role as the Director of Faculty Development at Holy Cross College. I am currently teaching a social problems course focusing on deviance and social inequality, where I have seen that the keen sociological perspective of the students shows confidence for the next generation of college graduates.



Daniel Boudon

I am privileged to be teaching social problems at Saint. Mary's where I have encountered some of the brightest and most socially conscious students. I've been instructing sociology courses for the past 3 years at various colleges and I am currently a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame. My areas of interest are class, race and social justice.



Dr. Donald Horning

I just concluded my second term as regional representative for Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), the international sociological honor society. (Two terms is the statutory limit). I have been asked to stay on as editor of the Alpha Kappa Delta Newsletter for another three year term. I founded the newsletter in 2003 when I recognized that there was a real gap in communication between the AKD council (governing board) and the active membership in the organization.



Brandy Ellison

I am enjoying teaching my first class and getting to know the Saint. Mary's students, faculty, and staff. I presented a paper at the American Sociological Association meetings this year and will present another paper at the Eastern Sociological Society meetings in

Boston in February. I have two co-authored book chapters on ability grouping in public and private schools that will be published soon. I am currently working on various research projects looking at college graduation rates, Catholic school students, the social construction of creativity, and employment outcomes for local refugees.



Kathy Hammond

I have worked at SMC for 19 years and am new to this department. So far, the people and the environment have been wonderful. I've been married for over 37 years to my husband Bob and have four wonderful sons and two beautiful grandsons. Any chance I get I love to go out to Colorado and visit with them.



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