

THE HUMANIST SOCIOLOGIST

Newsletter of the Association for Humanist Sociology
Summer 2024

From the Newsletter Editor

Real Estate by Corey Dolgon

In post-ironic times, every moment, every breath, every turn of the head suggests a deeply symbolic metaphor for disaster. My flight from Sweden arrived 40 minutes early to Logan Airport, where the doors opened, and the city of Boston greeted me with stifling 90% humidity and 90+ degree heat. It was as if the continent across the pond couldn't wait to get rid of me and my own country couldn't wait to torture me more.

It's only been a week since I've been home—but what a week. The region has experienced two heat waves, an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Donald Trump (which killed one rallygoer and injured two others) followed immediately by his coronation as Republican nominee for Dictator. *Hillbilly Elegy* fraud and megalomaniac, J.D. Vance, became his running mate and the highest courts in the land refuse to prosecute him for crimes. Floods, storms and record-setting heat waves, rising tides of fascism, 12 people killed and over 50 injured in mass shootings across the U.S., all have me looking at property in places with universal health care, free education, childcare and serious efforts to reduce environmental hazards and the inhumanity of poverty and violence.

Truth is, however, most of us are here for the long haul and will need to be fully fortified for the fight ahead regardless of who the next President is. For almost half a century, AHS has been a professional, political, and personal space that nourishes our resistance and fuels fledgling images of what a different world might look like. We will meet again in Rochester, NY, barely two weeks before the 2024 election and I encourage all of you without a relocation plan to join us as we prepare for the coming storm.

From the AHS President

Almost Rochester Time! by Daina Harvey

As many of you know a lot of associations and societies are floundering. Membership is down, dues and fees are up; the façade of professional organizations is cracking. But this is an exciting time for AHS. We have always been a grassroots activist organization. We don't have executive officers or staff or fellows. It's just us. Unlike other groups we can decide how we want to run our conferences, our journal, etc. We can be creative. This is the time to reimagine what associations and societies might be. We should be doing more public-facing work. We should be working with one another, using our knowledge and skills, to benefit our community partners. We should be doing more. But WE can do more.

Reach out to your network and ask people to join AHS. I've always heard colleagues say that they wish there was an organization that did X, or cared about Y; that was less bureaucratic, where they could make a difference. We're it. There are literally hundreds of people from the last several years who have lapsed memberships. Give them a nudge. Tell them we need them to come back. The colleague down the hall that does cool work—we want them. The person you met at a conference that gave a great presentation about their activist work that you've been meaning to email—we want them, too. Your neighbors—maybe?

We're busy planning plenary sessions, workshops, guest speakers, and field trips, but there is still time to get your ideas in. Let us know what kind of programming you would want; make a suggestion about speakers or workshops; send in your abstracts (ahsconference2024@gmail.com). But do it soon! The last day for submissions is August 1st. We can't wait to see you in Rochester.



Rochester's Public History Library

Newsletter editor just discovered these very cool walking tours sponsored by city's public library. Perhaps worth a look when we are in town?

June 12 - Douglass, Anthony, & Beyond: Activism and Social Justice in Rochester Learn more and register

at <https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/12348792>

June 15 - Rochester's Photographic history before Eastman: 1840-1880. Learn more and register

at <https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/12396288>

July 17 - Multicultural Rochester: Immigrants, Migrants, & Minorities in the Flower City. Learn more and register

at <https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/12349177>

August 21 - Beyond Flour and Flowers: Industry in Rochester. Learn more and register

at <https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/12349793>



c0003135 City Hall Photo Lab contemporary collection

Why Do Members Belong to AHS? A Reflection

By Jim Pennell

I have been a member of AHS since 1993 when John Leggett, one of the professors at my university and also the organizer of our intramural softball team (the Wobblies), convinced Greta and me that we should attend a meeting. We have both served as Co-VP for Membership (together), President, and Nomination Committee members and co-chairs. Greta served a term as Treasurer and I have stepped in three times to get newsletters out until an editor was secured. So, I speak here as someone who hasn't necessarily seen or been privy to it all, but I have been through many of the ups

and downs in the life of the association since we joined. So, without the benefit of a recent survey, I speak about why members belong to AHS from these experiences and many, many conversations.

The ethos of AHS—its founding bones and the people who participate—tend to be cutting edge and across a wide variety of specialties and interests. Teaching is seen as centrally important—a deeply reflexive and innovative act of engagement in making the world a better place for all. Multiple perspectives come together to nudge, shift, and coalesce into a broad sociological quilt. AHS tends to be sought out by people engaged in various struggles, typically not the famous academics, but the people doing the work across many milieus and in various ways. Many are engaged in their communities in supportive roles that promote community members and their efforts, not themselves.

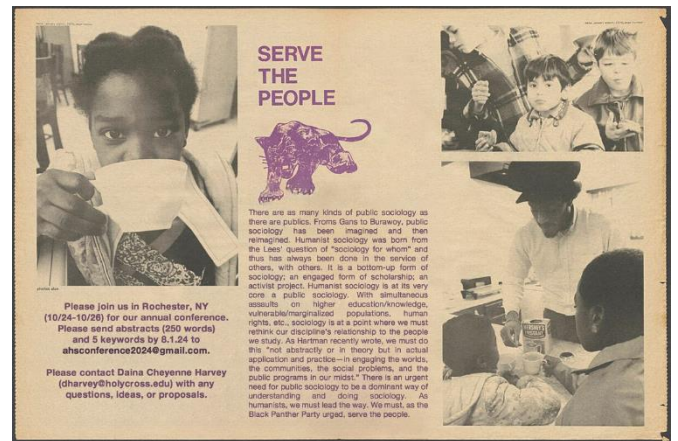
The AHS journal, *Humanity & Society*, is cutting edge, delving into topics and extending what counts as scholarship with action notes and the like that most scholarly journals avoid or prohibit. Authors share the trials and tribulations of engaged work along with in-depth explorations of social local, regional, and global problems and potential solutions.

AHS annual meetings are celebratory gatherings where what we are doing is shared, critiqued in a supportive environment, and discussed further during evenings in the hospitality suite. It is also very hospitable to students, which was my circumstance when I started attending. I have also taken many students from my school to the meeting, often to share collaborative research. Unlike many conferences, AHS meeting attendees try to learn what is going on with activist efforts in the places where we are meeting. AHS is also a place where friendships are formed.

At its best moments, the newsletter shares why and how we continue to persevere, providing us with glimpses of members lives and actions, the challenges we face, and details of our next gathering. At times, it can be a place to discuss and clarify issues and initiatives of the association and seek some form of consensus.

AHS is also a democratic organization in its conception. Although in practice its operation as a democratic organization can slip in various ways, it provides paths for members to point out issues and take action. This process can be challenging, messy, even painful at times. Ultimately, our association is only as strong as the members who make it up and actively participate. It was not configured to exist above and beyond its members. If too many let its issues and processes slide, it will be gone. So, engage—show up, speak up, and listen. Otherwise AHS and the power and ideas that it brings to our work will wane.

2024 AHS Meetings in Rochester, NY “Serve the People”



Members suitably satisfied at the after-session possibilities of finding a decent meal in New Orleans—here at Queen Trini Lisi



There are as many kinds of public sociology as there are publics. From Gans to Burawoy, public sociology has been imagined and then reimagined. Humanist sociology was born from the Lees' question of "sociology for whom" and thus has always been done in the service of others, with others. It is a bottom-up form of sociology; an engaged form of scholarship; an activist project. Humanist sociology is at its very core a public sociology. With simultaneous assaults on higher education/knowledge, vulnerable/marginalized populations, human rights, etc., sociology is at a point where we must rethink our discipline's relationship to the people we study. As Hartman recently wrote, we must do this "not abstractly or in theory but in actual application and practice—in engaging the worlds, the communities, the social problems, and the public programs in our midst." There is an urgent need for public sociology to be a dominant way of understanding and doing sociology. As humanists, we must lead the way. We must, as the Black Panther Party urged, serve the people.

We welcome papers and panels on anything related to public sociology. The Association for Humanist Sociology has always been oriented towards “a common concern for the real life problems of equality, peace and social justice. We share a commitment to address all facets of the human condition in our scholarship and in our practice, and to make sociology more relevant to human needs.” So if this is your first time attending AHS or your twentieth time, we welcome you!

Rochester is an important site for women's rights and was home to Frederick Douglass for twenty-five years—making it a perfect place for public sociologists to visit. The Strong National Museum of Play and literally hundreds of things to do in the area provide ample opportunities to ensure a good time. Join us at the Hyatt (information to come) this October to get back to the purpose of sociology—serving others.

Please send abstracts (250 words) and 5 keywords by 8.1.24

to: ahsconference2024@gmail.com.

Please contact Daina Cheyenne Harvey (dharvey@holycross.edu) with any questions, ideas, or proposals.-----
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Association of Humanist Sociology Call for Nominations

2024 Betty and Al McClung Lee Book Award

The Association for Humanist Sociology is pleased to announce their 2024 Betty and Alfred McClung Lee Book Award call for nominations. Authors, publishers, and AHS members may nominate books for consideration. The winner will be recognized at the annual meeting October 24-26, 2024 in Rochester, NY. Nominations should be for Sociology or interdisciplinary social science books that approach their subjects from a humanist perspective.

The AHS mission statement defines this as:

Humanist sociologists strive as professionals, scholars and as activists to uncover and address social issues, working with others to lessen the pain of social problems. We view people not merely as products of social forces, but also as shapers of social life, capable of creating social orders in which everyone's potential can unfold. Difficult times give humanist sociologists opportunities to apply their special skills and perspectives for the purpose of creating a more humane world.

Eligible books should have been published in the calendar year 2023 or the first half of 2024. If a book was submitted for last year's consideration, it cannot be nominated again. Edited volumes and textbooks are not eligible for this award.

To nominate a book, authors/publishers/nominators should e-mail a letter of nomination with the subject line "AHS 2024 Book Award Nomination" **to Dr. Anastacia Schulhoff at schulhoffam@appstate.edu**

Authors/publishers should send one desk copy and one digital copy (if available) of the book to each of the award committee members listed below. *The deadline for nominations is August 15, 2024. Additional information about AHS is available at <https://www.humanist-sociology.org/>*

2024 AHS Book Award Committee:

Dr. Anastacia Schulhoff (Chair)
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AHS members studying the vibe on Bourbon Street

AHS Member Publication News

Rios-Contreras, N., & Hernández Mateo, L. F. (2024). Caravanas in Tijuana: A Qualitative Account of Women in the 2018 Central American Migrant Caravans. *Humanity & Society*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01605976241266240>

Krase, Jerome. 2024. "The evolution of war crimes using the example of the war in Ukraine.," Granite of Science, June 27: [Эволюция военных преступлений на примере войны в Украине | Granite of science](https://www.graniteofscience.com/evolution-war-crimes-ukraine)

Krase, Jerome. 2024. "My Favorite Coffee Shops: An Autoethnographic and Photographic Essay," in "Dining Out," Francesco Mangiapane and Frank Jacob, Eds, *Global Humanities* 11, Spring: 33-53. <https://www.edizionimuseopasqualino.it/product/global-humanities-dining-out-year-10-vol-11-2024/>

Krase, Jerome. 2024. REV: Bratchford, G. and Zuev, D. (eds). 2023. *Vision & Verticality: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. *Urbanities: Journal of Urban Anthropology*, 14 (1): 105-106.

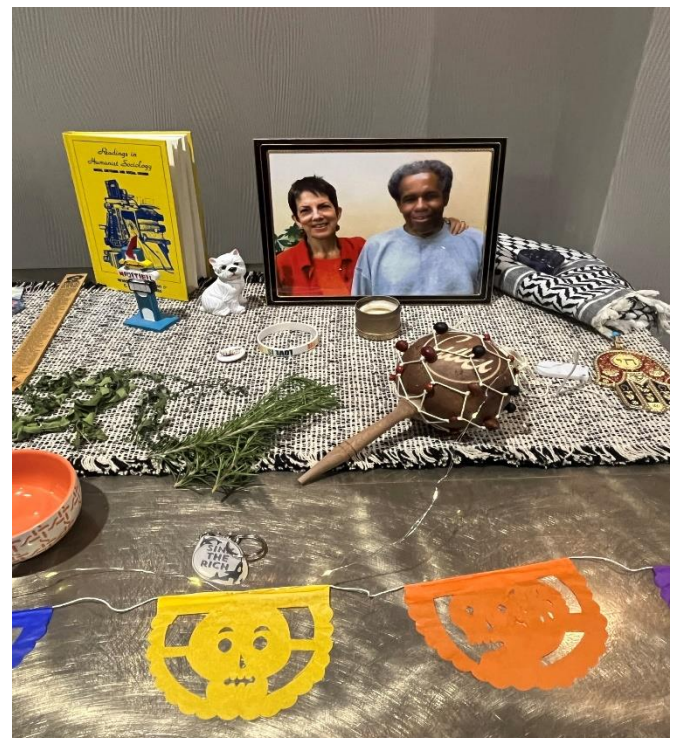
Krase, Jerome. 2024. REV: Karner, T. X. 2023. *Making a Scene! How Visionary Individuals Created an International Photography Scene in Houston, Texas*. Amsterdam: Schilt Publishing., *Urbanities: Journal of Urban Anthropology*, 14 (1), May: 109-110.

Krase, Jerome. 2024. REV ESSAY: *Stories, Streets, and Saints*, by Anthony Riccio. SUNY Press Excelsior

Editions, 2022, *The Italian American Review*. 14 (1): 120-123.

Corey Dolgon, Editor. *The Oxford University Press Handbook of Sociology for Social Justice*. Oxford University Press. 2024

Corey Dolgon, Editor, *Clementinos: Voices From the Clemente Writers' Program*. University of Massachusetts Press. 2024



AHS as a Democratic Organization

By Jim Pennell

There was quite a bit of talk at the most recent annual meeting in New Orleans about making changes to AHS. Some of the concerns came from financial and membership issues. These have been ongoing concerns since I became a member in 1993 and have an ebb and flow that were certainly exacerbated by COVID. My feeling is that some of the concerns came out of a lack of real awareness about the wisdom that was built into the organizational structure and processes that are laid out in the AHS Constitution—a living, breathing document that leads to good outcomes and allows for thoughtful changes if its features are used to guide our actions. A handbook was also created to provide additional guidance for officers as a way to remind ourselves of particular practices and timetables that seem to work—again a living, breathing document that can be more easily changed than the Constitution. For those who are not intimately familiar with these documents or, to my way of thinking, what makes AHS more successful as a democratic organization at certain times and less successful at other times, I share the following thoughts. I do this as someone who served on the board in various capacities for a decade as well as worked and taught as a sociologist in the areas of organizations, work, leadership, and social change for over thirty years.

One of the most novel, democratic aspects of AHS is its decision-making process. As in many organizations, we in AHS tend to put a lot of emphasis on the presidency since the president is primarily responsible for organizing the annual meeting and leading board meetings. However, AHS has a very flat organizational chart. All officers have primary responsibilities that make AHS work when it works well. I won't spell all of those out here since they are in the Constitution and Handbook, but when AHS is working well, officers are knowledgeable of those responsibilities and carry them out in a timely fashion. Otherwise, key pieces of what makes AHS work well are missing and additional burdens are placed on other officers. Part of the decision-making process involves member review of board decisions as well as generation of initiatives that do not necessarily originate with the board. My feeling is that the association has become lax on

this matter. This is the primary purpose of the business meeting at the annual meeting when officers share their reports. This procedure has enlivened AHS meetings and been a feature of newsletters in the past. It has also resulted in a loss of members at times—the support of the BDS movement being a prime example when we lost some longtime Jewish members. I will note here that the decision by the membership to support that initiative took about three years; informed, inclusive, democratic decision making is not usually a fast process. The issue was considered quite deeply at two meetings. These kinds of policy statements require a membership vote. They are not decisions a president or board can or should make without full member consideration and affirmation, not to say that hasn't happened at times. This is a key democratic element to AHS that is often not found in other organizations. Certain offices are also filled by election or appointment each year in accordance with the rotation of offices. Every member is eligible for an office, any member can nominate another member as well as self-nominate, and every member has a vote. This includes student members.

The second feature I would point to that is built into our guiding documents and, when enacted, serve the association well is communication. Prior to the development of the internet and email, the Humanist Sociologist newsletter served as the primary source for information about the meeting, issues at hand, and whatever else members wanted to bring up. That is still a key function of the newsletter as the official record of AHS. In addition to officers providing reports at the annual meeting, those reports and the actions of the board and the membership at the business meeting are to be reported in the newsletter. Board meetings are open to any member. In the past, a board meeting was held Thursday morning and Sunday morning. The Thursday morning meeting gave officers the opportunity to share reports of their accomplishments and make recommendations for consideration by the board as well as members at the business meeting. Sunday typically was an opportunity for the board and attending members to review the strengths and weaknesses of the meeting, orient new board members, and consider priorities for the coming year and meeting. Our meeting in Cuba disrupted the Sunday meeting for various reasons and it has not been a feature of the annual meeting in the last few years. Instead, new presidents have been using online meetings, often well after the

annual meeting. Most of us have experienced the pros and cons of this format but there has not been a serious discussion about when and how the AHS board should meet. Neither of our guiding documents address this change in actual practice. These kinds of considerations are important because as a nonprofit association, we are legally obligated to follow our guidelines. We can do more than specified, but we must do what is specified or make the changes necessary for our governing rules and actual practices to align. This is also one piece of what makes us democratic—we create and then use the guidelines we have created for ourselves with the ability to change them through a process of communication and decision making. On communication, I will add that in addition to the president, other officers have communication responsibilities. These are important for making the association work by engaging members and helping them feel and be informed. Our journal is another outlet for us to engage and know each other and communicate our interests and work, although it is open to those outside AHS as well. It communicates who we are as an inclusive, progressive, scholarly organization.

A third feature of AHS is its collegiality and anti-elitism. I mentioned above that students have a vote in AHS, unlike in many other professional associations that work very hard to maintain distinctions among members. I regularly experience and have heard others note many times how sessions at the AHS annual meeting feel different than other meetings. Our reflexive statements communicate to others who we are or are working to become. AHS was created by founders who wanted an association that differed from the elitism and disregard for actual practice that was found at ASA or SSSP at that time. Perhaps some of that difference is due to size. Everyone is invited to the hospitality suite in the evenings, and in good years there is room for everyone to fit. One concern that resulted in a constitutional rule change was for the election of presidents. We used to have competitive elections for president. A group of members became concerned that those who lost elections often didn't return, so a new process was developed in which the Nominations Committee selects a presidential candidate after vetting nominations and the AHS Board either affirms that decision or

sends it back. Not everyone supported this change, but a vote of members decided in favor of it.

For AHS to continue and thrive as a democratic organization, members must be engaged in the decisions and work of the association. It requires regular attention and care from all of us. Newer members require encouragement and support. They also must be re-socialized in the sense that many organizations want members to sit back and do little unless ordered. University faculty are trained by administrators to go along with the decisions that come down. AHS has its members, its guiding documents, past decisions, and common practices to guide us. The only people who will make it work is us. We take turns on the major responsibilities of offices, but we are collectively dependent and responsible for keeping AHS alive as a viable association. AHS has been my professional home and has served as a model for me of what a democratic organization should be. I don't know what I would have done without my AHS friends as part of my career. I certainly would have experienced much less democratic engagement.

