

# THE HUMANIST SOCIOLOGIST

Newsletter of the Association for Humanist Sociology

Winter, 2015

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## Message from the *Humanist Sociologist* Editor Saher Selod, Simmons College

Hello AHS members. I hope everyone is doing well. In the winter issue you will find a lot of important information about AHS. Included is a letter from the President, Kathleen Fitzgerald, about the annual conference themed “Locavore Sociology: Challenging Globalization, Embracing the Local” which will take place in Portland, Oregon in October. There is also a call for papers for the conference. You will also find a Treasurer’s Report and Membership Report. Be sure to read Corey Dolgon’s piece, “Cultural of Poverty Reflux: Orlando Patterson and the Cultural Deficiency of Fat Cat Sociology.” Brian Sherman wrote a beautiful essay remembering Frank Nutch and there is a statement about Humanist Sociologists support for the release of Black Panther activist Albert Woodfox.

Please enjoy this issue and I look forward to hearing from you all for the summer issue.

### Portland 2015

#### Kathleen J. Fitzgerald, 2015 AHS President

I would first like to thank Stephen Adair, 2014 AHS President, and Mary Erdman’s, 2014 Program Chair, for organizing such a wonderful conference in Cleveland! They were also well supported by two amazing Case Western Reserve graduate students that deserve our thanks as well: Alicia Smith and Kaitlyn Barnes. For those of you unable to make it to Cleveland, you missed a great meeting. We hope you can join us in 2015 in Portland, OR.

We are very excited about the 2015 Association for Humanist Sociology conference in Portland, OR. The conference will be in the heart of downtown Portland, walking distance from great restaurants, museums, theaters, food trucks, brew pubs, and random nightlife. A brand-new mass transit line which was recently opened literally stops at the front door of the hotel, so conference attendees should have no trouble getting around the city during their free time. The conference hotel, the University Place Hotel, is unionized and on the campus of Portland State University. Even in this perfect location, we were able to find a hotel with affordable rates: the conference rate for standard rooms is \$110.00 per night (plus tax; while there are no sales taxes in Oregon, there are hotel taxes). The hotel is offering the conference rate to us for three days before and three days after the conference as well, in case you are lucky enough to be able to spend a few more days in the city. Conference registration is \$100.00



left to right: Steve McGuire, Estelle Record-Stanley, Johnny Williams, Emma Bailey, and Rebecca Hensley from the AHS 2014 annual conference in Cleveland.

(\$45.00 for graduate students). This makes AHS one of the most affordable professional conferences around.

The conference theme is “Locavore Sociology: Challenging Globalization, Embracing the Local.” I chose Portland as our host city because it best reflects the conference theme and is a natural gathering place for scholar activists. While walking through most major cities today is a lesson in corporate homogenization (every mannequin in every Gap window in every major city is dressed in the same clothes and strikes the same pose on any given day, hotels appear proudly interchangeable despite their locations, and national restaurant chains populate city centers across the country, nudging out local eateries), Portland proudly boasts an authentic local culture that challenges the forces of globalization and homogenization. They have a vibrant craft beer culture, a thriving local arts scene, and farm-to-table restaurants that specialize in artisanal foods and environments.

What is most exciting about Portland, however, is its thriving intellectual culture. A must visit is Powell’s City of Books (located in several locations throughout the city, but the flagship location is at 1005 W. Burnside). This warehouse sized bookstore, housing over 1 million books and swarming with customers, belies rumors of the death of publishing as we know it. Powell’s is open until 11:00pm on weekends and has to give a “last call” to get people out so they can close. Portland is often referred to as the most literate city in America; such a refreshing change from the anti-intellectual culture that many of us feel surrounded by. The dangers of such anti-intellectualism, when taken to extremes, can be seen in the actions of the Nigerian-based Islamist movement, Boko Haram. They have made anti-intellectualism into a form of terrorism with their attacks on schools, assassinations, and abductions of students. The words “boko haram” literally translates to forbidden books – and refers to a prohibition on education.

As scholars and activists, many of us have studied the emphasis on sustainability found in locavore food movements, the rise of urban farms, fair trade coffee, etc. We study globalization and social movements that challenge this development. In an era of global social and environmental crisis, we must strive as critical sociologists and activists to balance our critiques of capitalism and power with more community-based visions and strategies for social change. Yet, it is also important to turn a critical lens on locavore movements as well. What does it mean to be locavore? What are the limitations of locavorism as a form of resistance to globalization? These are the kinds of questions, among many others, that we hope to address at the 2015 Association for Humanist Sociology Annual Meetings in Portland, OR.

The Local Arrangements Committee (composed of Tony Ladd, Terri Akey, and myself) has begun working on the dining guide. I have begun mailing the poster-sized "Call for Participation" to colleges and universities in the region and Devon Goss, AHS Graduate Student Liaison, has begun reaching out to graduate departments in the region as well. We ask that you all work hard to bring someone new to AHS – or reach out to a past attendee that has not joined us in a few years. Let's all work to make this the best conference possible! Please submit your abstract to 2015 Program Chair Anthony E. Ladd (aladd@loyno.edu) or to President Kathleen J. Fitzgerald (fitzy88so@gmail.com), or use the online submission system on the AHS website by May 31, 2015.

Peace,

Kathleen J. Fitzgerald  
2015 AHS President  
University of New Orleans

Anthony E. Ladd  
2015 AHS Program Chair  
Loyola University New Orleans

## AHS Member News

Past President **Alan Spector** was recipient of the Outstanding Scholar Award for 2014 at Purdue Calumet. Previously, he was recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award and last year, was also chosen to give the Annual Faculty Lecture. Only one other prof in the history of the school was recipient of all three awards. He wants to note that he doesn't think he's a hot shot teacher or the greatest scholar but rather that it is an indication that other faculty do respect radical/humanist/marxist/anti-racist/activist work.

Alan Spector's memoir/analysis of his years as a full time activist for Students for a Democratic Society and the strengths and weaknesses of the 1960's campus anti-war movement has been published and is also available on the web at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2013/Spector.pdf>.

**Jerry Lembcke** (Holy Cross) and **Levon Chorbajian** (UMass Lowell) attended the *World War I: Dissent, Activism, and Transformation Conference* co-sponsored by Georgian Court University and the Peace History Society which took place at Georgian Court University in Lakewood, New Jersey between October 17-18, 2014. Jerry presented his paper "'Shell Shock' in the American Imagination: World War I's Most Enduring Legacy" and Levon presented "History by Fiat: Lying about the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to the Present."

## Farewell to Frank Nutch

by Brian Sherman

**F**rank Nutch, an active AHS member from our earliest years, died on May 14, 2014 at age 71. Frank had retired from Trent University near Toronto where he had taught sociology from 1972 to 2009.

Frank said "Nutch" as a name was an Americanism. His southern Italian forebears were Nucciolo or "something like that" he told us; he wasn't quite sure himself.

Frank was a great enthusiast for AHS and did what he could to help the organization. Frank was a regular at AHS through the 1980s and early 1990s. The last time I think he was with us was in Newport, Rhode Island in 2001.

According to contemporary issues of *The Humanist Sociologist* Frank was on the Program Committee for the 1980 annual meeting in Louisville and he was on the Publications Committee. I remember when Frank was on the AHS board of directors as the international representative. This was during an earlier AHS constitution, when our board was comprised mostly of regional representatives voted for only by those who lived in the same region. As a professor in and resident of Canada, Frank was in the "international region" and was elected as "international representative" by the small number of AHS members located outside the US. With Frank in the mix with Betty Lee, David Gil, Al Lee, Thomas Ford Hoults, Lynda Ann Ewen, Vickie Rader and Jerry Starr among others, those were very enjoyable board meetings with their mix of passion, intellectual what-to-do leftism, and humor, a lot of the last supplied by Frank.

AHS in its early days had two regular paper sessions on Sunday morning beginning at times like 8:30 and 10:00 am. Some time in the mid-1980s Frank chaired a Sunday 10:00 am session on C. Wright Mills, which has had a lasting effect on our AHS meetings through today. The session on Mills was so good, both for the ideas and for the vibes. More than a dozen of us stayed beyond the official end. The session evolved into an animated wrap-up of the whole AHS meeting. It was such a good finale for the meeting that Frank proposed it be routinized into an annual open-ended Sunday morning ideas and vibes session at every AHS meeting, replacing the two paper sessions. The proposal was accepted by the next few program committees and as a result the

Sunday ideas and vibes wrap-up session was established and routinized.

Through an evolutionary process, not by a decision to change things, Frank's session has become the Sunday morning AHS board meeting. Frank's AHS presentations in the 1980s were mainly about his work as, what I liked to call him, a cetaceous sociologist, literally one who studies whales. But more accurately, Frank studied the marine biologists who studied whales. He went on many boat voyages with marine biologists and according to one obituary, made significant contributions to the method of identifying individual whales in the wild [the ocean] by the shapes of their appendages.

In his AHS paper presentations about marine biologists Frank taught us about “going strange,” the obverse process of “going native.” Going strange was the process Frank observed in himself, then in others, of maintaining one's own identity and self-definition as a social scientific researcher when doing participant observation among others who might take us for one of them. Frank said Going Strange was necessary to avoid both ethical and methodological problems when doing field research.

In his later years Frank did some sociological writing about cooking. I recommend one of his articles, which you can access on line. The article is “Hard to Swallow: Reflections on the Sociology of Culinary Culture,” from a 2007 issue of the journal *The Discourse of Sociological Practice*. You can find the article easily by putting “Frank Nutch” into your search engine. Unlike many other journal articles, access is free and you can print a copy.

If you've been coming to AHS for a while, but don't remember Frank Nutch by name, do a search for Frank Nutch on the internet and click on his obituary in *Your Life Moment*. The photo of Frank appears to be from the era of his AHS heydays, the 1980s.

Frank enjoyed life as a sociologist, a father, and a cook. He helped to make sociology at AHS more enjoyable for those of us who knew him.

## **Cultural of Poverty Reflux: Orlando Patterson and the Cultural Deficiency of Fat Cat Sociology** by Corey Dolgon

Reading Orlando Patterson's latest screed [<http://chronicle.com/article/How-Sociologists-Made/150249/>] blaming sociologists for their own irrelevancy reminded me of that bad taste you get in your mouth after eating really fatty, greasy food. It's like the Marxian dietary adage—first time tragedy, second time blecchh. For those of us activist academics in the trenches of applying our research and scholarship to community organizing and economic and educational reform, Patterson's rant is simply absurd. That he uses false claims and factually incorrect accusations to buttress regurgitating culture of poverty theories offers an even bitterer pill to swallow.

Sometimes it is better to just ignore these things until they pass, regardless of how foul a wind. But given the emotional bloatedness already building from the week's news about Grand Jury negligence and more unarmed Black males killed by white police officers, I needed to find some elixir. So I sat in a field, munched on some grass, and out came this diatribe.

1. Patterson wonders why Obama's recent Promise Keeper task force didn't include any sociologists and then builds his entire argument on the assumption it is because sociologists have “made themselves” irrelevant. Firstly, why not actually FIND OUT why this committee didn't have any sociologists. It's called research. Secondly, by ASSUMING it had to do with sociologists desire to be “academically pure” (which it ends up is really Patterson's phrase for those politically correct sociologists who discredit his culture of poverty argument) Patterson creates a conundrum from which he tries to build a strong case after already hoisting himself on his own petard.

For instance, sociologists have almost ALWAYS been irrelevant when it comes to government policy making (read Max Weber or look back at the conference presentations of last year's Society for the Study of Social Problems [SSSP] annual meeting where so many bemoaned the fact that a half-century of poverty research on structural inequality and racism found deaf ears among policy makers looking for evidence that tax cuts and personal responsibility would solve poverty and discrimination). The gap is so large between what sociological research tells us about poverty and what kinds of policies have actually been passed. Good sociological research rarely makes for good political fundraising or campaigning, especially in the current political climate where republicans waiver between “blame the victim” and “kill the victim” and democrats triangulate their way into being 1980s moderate republicans (I remember many argued that Clinton was the best Republican President since Eisenhower, until Obama out-Republicaned him. And a brief aside—the *reason* Republicans could fight tooth and nail against Obama's healthcare reform act without offering their own plan was that Obama's reform plan WAS the Republican's plan. They just couldn't give him credit).

When politicians DO cherry pick, they generally find sociologists whose research and writing can best suit their own political goals. For the sociologists with the integrity to avoid the bastardization of their work for the political goals of opportunist politicians, they do *choose* to leave the halls of power. For the rest of us, we don't ever get invited. But Patterson also begs an interesting question? What actually does he MEAN by academic purity? How could demanding rigor and validity be “largely irrelevant in molding the most important social enterprises of our era?” Wouldn't we want the BEST research? Wouldn't we want the science to NOT be bastardized? If Patterson is suggesting we compromise our findings to be heard and included, we are better off speaking truth to power and avoiding the big government consulting contracts or getting to pal around with Bill Cosby.

2. I find Patterson's claims about public sociology and engaged scholarship and pedagogy ignorant and insulting. He writes, "We need to reinvigorate public sociology. To be clear, I'm not talking about general volunteer work—helping at a Habitat for Humanity project or a drug-rehab facility, for instance—though those are noble and worthwhile efforts. I'm talking about using our expertise to help develop public policies and alleviate social problems in contexts wherein the experience and data can, reciprocally, inform our work." In his contempt for public or community based engagement work, Patterson suggests having students or scholars themselves volunteer is admirable, but not the kind of public sociology he is talking about. While there is a serious critique of those who have reduced engaged pedagogy to basic and uncritical volunteerism, I would suggest that EVEN basic service with Habitat or a drug rehab facility CAN be powerful pedagogically if wrapped around a good sociological investigation of social problems, structures of inequality and oppression and everything from the structural causes of homelessness and unequal housing markets to the profit-driven and paranoia-producing parameters of our drug policies. In other words, I know there are SOME service-learning projects that never do the analytical and scholarly work they should, but MOST do. Personally, I actually see these projects as first-tiered engagement work--good for an intro or survey class. I prefer to have advanced students engaged in economic development, capacity building--community organizing type projects. And this just scratches the service of community-based research [CBR] which more fully challenges Patterson's assumptions. In fact, CBR is exactly the kind of research that DOES integrate experience with data in collaboration among scholars and community organizations and residents.
3. But again, what DOES he mean by, "using our expertise to help develop public policies and alleviate social problems in contexts wherein the experience and data can, reciprocally, inform our work." This IS what almost every applied sociologist I know does. This is what it means to be rigorous and analytical. Surely this process isn't what makes us irrelevant? Ultimately, I find the Patterson simply creates straw sociologists on either side of his claims and simply dismantles his own credibility and seriousness. I do believe we could have a sincere debate about the forces of and tendencies towards professionalized pretensions, jargon, and the kinds of expertise that alienates and isolates scholars. Even more important, I think, we should consider a sociology that challenges expertise with the kind of popular sociology Gramsci suggested—an accessible and applicable discipline focused on leading, "a mass of people to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world." But the kind of flippant back and forth Patterson proclaims here is useless chatter between himself and a bucket of red-herring. Besides, he is NOT referring to the kind of application where sociologists try to gain access to mainstream media and dialogue. Patterson is talking about entry into the halls of power. Perhaps he is just angry about not getting invited to this particular Promise Keeper's party.
4. To continue an increasingly ludicrous argument, Patterson then frames his own study in what can only be a willful ignorance or an arrogant (political?) omission of decades of work by people like Elijah Anderson, Katherine Newman, Philippe Bourgois, Annette Lareau, Michelle Fine and Timothy Black who have been taking culture VERY seriously for a very long time. Having "dissed" this group, he suggests that HIS study is the FIRST to revisit culture. What I think he means to say is that his may be one of the first to revisit culture as THE most important determinant of poverty. This probably isn't true as Fox news and Heritage Foundation ALWAYS seem to be able to find a sociologist who has a study that suggests that if young black men would just get good grades, pull their pants up, avoid getting shot by police, etc. they would succeed. Even better, if we put them into white shirts and ties and drill them like they were in basic training they could all become Colin Powell. Problem here, of course, is that it just isn't true. And it's bad sociology. It assumes that individual agency can overcome structure on a *structural* level! Poverty is a structural problem that suggests an inequality of resources based on power. We can suggest as Parsons (and Gans in the uses of poverty) might that inequality is functional, but if the basic function of an economy is the production and distribution of the needs for economic and social reproduction, Patterson, et. al. make a dubious proposal at best. Regardless, poverty is a structural issue that could no more be solved by changing the values and behaviors of poor children of color than divorce rates could be solved by suggesting married people *communicate* better or that high unemployment rates were caused by workers who have bad attitudes and don't want to work. Not only is it bad sociology, it's also unethical--done to prove an already misguided but politically desired and very fundable proposition: poor people of color are poor because they don't think or act right. No wonder he calls his naysayers "nervous nellies;" we Nellies have something to be nervous about.
5. Thus, when Patterson asks "where are sociologists' voices in these public debates?" I would point to the ASA newsletter that lists only a fraction of the sociologists who are regularly featured in public fora on these issues and who are suggesting that poverty is a structural problem that needs to be solved by anti-racist and redistributive policies that create real equality. In other words, we need REAL anti-poverty programs that make available better education, job training, health care and housing, etc. But we must go further as sociologists and argue that structurally, the real cause of poverty is unregulated and unrestrained wealth. What WE REALLY NEED are policies that regulate wealth and power, policies that enforce greater democratic opportunities and make sure that public policies aren't dictated by corporate think tanks and rich fascists like Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson, and their cohort.

6. The Fair housing study he cites is an interesting anecdote, but undercuts his already dubious point--after all, had sociologists really become irrelevant 20 years ago who would have provided the ideological justification for more policing and prisons? Who would have written Giuliani's anti-crime speeches and legitimized 3-strikes, harsh sentencing, and privatizing prisons? Besides, how can we continue to blame sociologists themselves for their own absence from the halls of power (government) and influence (media) when...oh I get it...it's sociologists' own fault for being irrelevant JUST the way it is poor peoples' fault for being POOR. I get it. No one dare accuse Orlando Patterson of being inconsistent on this point!!!
7. Patterson ends up being stuck in his own ideological bubble. While he proposes that culture is not immutable, a good thing since it would be hard to argue otherwise (after all even biology is not immutable) he first had to create the straw men (hyper-structuralist sociologists) necessary to keep his plastic bubble intact. Then he makes this claim which still has me scratching my head. "Compare the remarkable dismantling of the cultural system of Jim Crow or American values pertaining to gay people and same-sex marriage with the failure of structurally oriented policy to make a dent in inequality, despite the vast number of social, economic, and policy studies devoted to the subject." Well, first I would suggest that these cultural changes were largely due to political and social movements that changed STRUCTURAL inequalities and hindered the system's brutality and exclusion. Secondly, it was these movements that brought down institutional segregation and various discriminations against people of color and gay men and lesbians. Finally, I would point out that the organizing among oppressed people and their allies were led by people within these communities who recognized that the problems were not their own cultural deficits but the inadequacy of a system that did not allow their voices, talents, and capacities to be realized.
8. He concludes, "Third, black youth, and people generally, are not offended by attempts to change their values, habits, and even their modes of self-presentation if they are first persuaded that it is in their own interests to do so. Jackie Rivers and I learned this firsthand from our study of a group of inner-city youth, many with prison records, undergoing a demanding job-training program that aimed to alter those aspects of their cultural styles and attitudes toward work that made it hard for them to get or keep a job. None of them considered this a threat to their identities, as individuals or as black people." I am not Black. But, this is one of the most insulting things I have ever read. I will let others comment on this, but suffice to say that WEB Dubois notion of double consciousness is unfortunately alive and well and deeply imbedded in the work of many professionals. More to the point, Patterson displays a limited understanding of culture and research. After all, how do WE know and how does HE know what people perceived as a threat or an insult. Cultural dialogue and performance demonstrates a complex ability for not only cognitive dissonance but also the ability to say one thing and believe others. I imagine many workers of varying races and ethnicities demonstrate varying levels of deference and punctuality, grooming and obedience while still FEELING constricted, exploited, offended, insulted or just disrespected. Patterson claims that too many sociologists treat their subjects like "cultural dopes" (a phrase he takes from Garfinkel). But I wonder who is treating who like a simpleton?
9. In concluding with Garfinkel's rules, I would suggest the great ethnographers I mentioned earlier certainly do not treat their subjects as cultural dopes. Far from it. But what can we say for sociologists who simply use them as *tropes* as Patterson does time and time again throughout the article? And his last proclamation, "If you find that neighborhoods have no effects, you should be prepared to do the rational thing and go live in an inner-city neighborhood with its much cheaper real estate, or at least advise your struggling son or daughter searching for an apartment to save by renting there. If the thought offends you, then something stinks," sounds more like misplaced self-righteous indignation than some parting note of ironic "gotcha." The point is NOT about the individual activity just as it is not about whether a neighborhood has an impact or not. It's about changing the neighborhood by changing the policies that dictate so much of the neighborhood's economic and social challenges. It's about changing the rules that disinvest in public institutions and the policies that constrict the actual possibilities for poor people and people of color in these communities. But first and foremost, we have to realize that solving the problem starts with admitting there is a problem. The problem is wealth and unrestricted power. The problem is that wealthy and powerful groups continue to dictate policies that impoverish, not strengthen communities. The problem is that we could end poverty tomorrow if we redistributed resources seriously and changed policies away from profiting off of draconian drug laws and crazy immigration policies, privatized medicine and food production that encourages and subsidizes eating poison and destroying the planet. And the problem is we have sociologists doing really bad sociology but getting paid mega bucks by powerful, rich institutions to propagate the false idea that poor people could change poverty by learning to behave more like rich people, people of color could fight racial oppression by acting more like white people. I tend to agree with Chris Rock on this one. Racism is caused by white peoples' craziness (or greed and arrogance and blood lust and brutality). I would suggest that poverty is not a poor peoples' product—it's a rich peoples' one. Rich people and their institutions cause poverty and it will never be solved until we recognize and work from there. It's not rocket science; it's sociology.

## 2014 AHS Treasurer's Report (year-end) by Chuck Koeber

<b>STARTING BALANCE</b>	\$26,667
 <b>2014 ESTIMATED INCOME</b>	
Subtotal Membership Dues/Donations (collected 2014)	\$7,895
2014                   \$5,300	
(of tot. \$8,709 collected in 2013-14)	
2015                   \$2,595	
Subtotal Annual Meeting Income	\$10,430
Registrations and lunch fees	\$9,345
Program Ad revenue	\$200
Book Sale Revenue	\$535
CCSU Sponsorship of Pres Rec	\$350
Subtotal Other Income	\$1,300
Midwest Regional Meeting	\$995
Royalties	\$255
Lindenfeld Fund Contributions	\$50
 <b>TOTAL 2014 INCOME</b>	 <b>\$19,625</b>
 <b>2014 EXPENSES</b>	
Annual Meeting Subtotal	-\$14,184
Hotel Charges	-\$11,111
Three speakers (honorarium)	-\$1,250
Four Activists	-\$600
Travel for Perry	-\$450
Lodging for Perry 120+tax	-\$135
Hospitality Suite &	-\$500
Misc. conference expenses	-\$138
Subtotal Non- Conference Expense	-\$6,942
Administrative and Clerical Projects (Erin Mundus)	-\$1,000
Online Pay charges ("Square"@ 2.75% per transaction)	-\$500
Registered Agent Fees (represent, report, reinstate fees)	-\$600
Journal (\$5 per member per year to Sage)	-\$634
Regional Outreach (Midwest Annual Meeting)	-\$300
Newsletter production and supplies (electronic distribution)	
(Jason Graham, three issues)	-\$450
Accountancy	-\$800
Website (Yearly Fee + Domain AHS.ORG for 10 years)	-\$408
Postage and supplies	-\$150
Trip to Cleveland for meeting Preparation	-\$400
Trip to Denver for site visit	-\$500
Down payment for Portland Hotel (2015 site)	-\$500
Secretarial support for mailings, etc	-\$500
Book Award	-\$200
 <b>TOTAL 2014 EXPENSES</b>	 <b>-\$21,126</b>
 <b>OVERALL TOTAL (Income minus expenses)</b>	 <b>\$ 1,501</b>
<b>ENDING ESTIMATED BALANCE</b>	<b>\$25,166</b>
<b>FRANK LINDENFELD MEMORIAL BALANCE</b>	<b>\$1,045</b>

### Summary/Recommendations

Although the AHS Treasury experienced a significant decline (nearly -\$20K) during 2012, this decline slowed considerably in 2013, with a net decline of approximately \$10,000.

With our total account balance at approximately \$25,000, AHS cannot continue to exceed its budget to the extent it has. Fortunately, President Adair's 2014 budget balanced and (barring a small amount of unanticipated unbudgeted expenses) our income approximated our expenses. If we sustain or increase membership

and the 2015 meetings are attended by at least a moderate amount of people in comparison to past meetings, the budget proposed by incoming President, Kathleen Fitzgerald, has an excellent chance of balancing or coming out ahead.

Online pay may help to increase both membership and conference registration. AHS chose and began using "Square" this past April because it was one of the least expensive options, but one that is reputable, used widely, and is (hopefully) secure. It charges 2.75% per transaction, with no additional service charges. Square has disadvantages, namely that it cannot be integrated into our website and we cannot design the form that is used to purchase memberships. Therefore, as I am sure many of you noticed, you must first fill out a form on the AHS website, then link to the Square store and purchase the appropriate item. The advantage of Square is that AHS has complete freedom to change websites without having to worry about implementing a new and compatible online pay structure. Additionally, it also gives us the ability to use an Ipad to accept payment by credit or debit card at the conference. Therefore, I recommend that we remain with Square at least another year and then evaluate whether or not to stay with Square.

I am optimistic about the future of the Treasury, as it appears we have stopped the downward trend in the balance of funds and gained control over our budget. Presidents Adair and Fitzgerald have implemented cost saving measures using realistic budgets. This is no easy task, given the rising prices of conferences and

the declining ability of many to afford travel. As stated, President Adair's budget balanced and thereby offers us a sustainable model for near-future Presidents to follow until our revenue affords us the opportunity to increase expenses. In my opinion, as revenue increases, it will then be important to invest in things that grow AHS rather than to maintain the conservative budget that we are compelled to maintain at this moment in time. However, I will leave that discussion for AHS and its leadership to discuss at the appropriate time.

To increase revenue, I recommend that AHS focus on increasing membership and conference attendance by recruiting new members/conference attendees. A dues increase has gone into effect this year, which should help boost revenue. In order to more effectively keep up with rising costs, I recommend that at least every other year, the Board routinely consider whether or not to propose a dues increase. I also recommend that we continue to innovate and consider ways to save money. For example, a few years ago we decided to purchase our own projectors and other media equipment, which members have volunteered to transport each year for use at our meetings. Although this arrangement is not ideal and poses a few challenges for Program Chairs and others, this has no doubt saved thousands of dollars in rental costs over the past few meetings even when accounting for the cost of the equipment.

This is my last report as AHS Treasurer, as I am leaving my post to assume the position of President-elect. It has been challenging but also enjoyable to serve and be involved in some changes that I think will strengthen AHS in the long-term. Greta Pennell has graciously volunteered to finish out the duration of my second term as Treasurer and will be as capable, if not more capable, than I. The AHS Treasury will be in good hands. Thank you for allowing me to serve AHS as your Treasurer.

## Report from VP for Publications

Susan Machum

Welcome to the first 2015 issue of *The Humanist Sociologist*. As the person entrusted with the role of VP Publications I must take full responsibility for the late publication of this issue of the newsletter. Kathleen raised the need to write reports at the Cleveland board meeting and then again on our January conference call but like many others, I am coping with my fair share of personal troubles and this directive completely fell off the 'to do' list page. Secondly, I feel like I am in a steep learning curve in terms of this role.

In reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the VP for Publications it is clear that the broader definition — “the act of making something generally known” — is at play within the AHS constitution and handbook rather than the more narrow definition of “preparing and issuing of book, journal, piece of music, or other work for public sale”. In time we may want to consider renaming the position VP for Communications to make the broader mandate more transparent. At this time, I perceive the position as having a threefold mandate: first to ensure strong and ongoing written communications with the AHS membership through the newsletter, website and/or member endorsed blogs; secondly to strengthen the presence of AHS in the public domain through ongoing improvements in the production and distribution of our journal *Humanity & Society*; and thirdly to increase awareness of the Association through the adoption and presentation of various awards.

According to the AHS handbook the newsletter is to be published three times a year — January/February, May/June, and August/September. This issue of the newsletter is expected to

publish the minutes and reports from the Fall AGM. In future we may also want to consider using this issue as a vehicle to provide information from the nominations committee about who is willing to serve the organization by letting their name stand in the Spring election. The Spring issue will include the results of the election while the Fall issue highlights features of the upcoming AGM/conference. Of course every issue aims to be a forum for membership discussion and debate; as well as a place to recognize membership achievements and challenges. Historically the newsletter was distributed by post but when Alan Spector was President and David Embrick was VP for Publications, the membership agreed that emailing the newsletter (and making it available electronically on the website) would be the most timely and cost-efficient means of distribution. And it has worked very well.

It should be on the membership's radar that Saher's term as newsletter editor is drawing to a close. Saher took on the three-year post in the Fall of 2012 so at the end of this year we will need a new editor. If you like design and layout, have the time and resources, and are interested in undertaking this important role please contact me at [smachum@stu.ca](mailto:smachum@stu.ca) to indicate your interest.

If you regularly use the AHS website, you may have noticed some changes there. Stephen Adair's campus, Central Connecticut State where the website was being hosted, recently changed its website program which was making adding and changing content unwieldy. At the Cleveland meetings, Hephzibah Strmic-Pawl and Daina Harvey agreed to work on the website. Throughout December and January Daina investigated and test ran several website management programs. In total he partially built approximately 15 websites and settled in the end for Wix.com. This is a bare bones website but its advantage is that it is easy to navigate and make changes. Over the coming months, content is being migrated from the old to the new website and members can continue to access the new website page at the old address: <http://ahssociology.org> or use <http://www.humanist-sociology.org>. On behalf of the membership I would like to thank Daina for the time and effort he put into this task and for taking on the job of webmaster.

There is also some interest in increasing AHS presence by pursuing more Twitter and blog feeds among and between members. Johnny Williams was especially motivated to see the membership undertake such activities to increase our public presence and perhaps build membership though such means. Being somewhat of a luddite on the social media front, such undertakings will need to be pursued by other members of the organization. However, we may need to establish guidelines and codes of practice for such endeavors that would need to be discussed at board meetings, through the newsletter and at upcoming AGMs.

As readers of *Humanity & Society* you are aware that the journal is thriving under the leadership of David G. Embrick as Editor and Kasey Hendricks as Managing Editor. At the time of the meetings in Cleveland, they reported that the backlog of articles has been cleared up and things are working much more fluidly. The goal is to be two issues ahead and they were currently on target to meet that objective and in the long run they would like to be a whole year ahead so that operations would run even more

smoothly with Sage. They would also like to reduce the turnaround time of articles so that authors know where their work stands more quickly. This may mean developing more structured guidelines for authors and reviewers in terms of what constitutes research versus opinion pieces and clarifying what action notes are. For example at present not all authors use the American Sociological Association style guide when submitting work which slows down production timelines if and when their article is accepted for publication. Clear instructions and guidelines will enhance the workflow of the journal.

Right now we are receiving approximately 70 articles a year and David would like to see this increase to 100 per year. We will still continue to publish 4-5 articles a year but a higher rejection factor will improve the credibility of the journal. In addition to articles we are publishing book reviews, multimedia reviews and final thoughts. Each of these sections has its' own editor. David and Kasey's overarching goal is to expand the visibility and content of the journal which is why they are considering adding an 'action notes' section.

During the October 2014 and January 2015 board meetings there was discussion of providing the Managing Editor, who is usually a graduate student, with a modest stipend such as membership dues, hotel accommodations and conference registration for the amazing work they do. As board members noted, Kasey Hendricks is doing an outstanding job as Managing Editor and everybody agrees in principle with this motion put forward by Editor-in-Chief, David G. Embrick. There was some discussion around whether or not the membership would need to vote on this and it was thought that would be necessary so such a motion will be brought forward at the next AGM. In the meantime, Kathleen thought her budget would allow for conference accommodation and registration support at the upcoming conference in Portland, Oregon.

As Rebecca Hensey reported in the Fall 2014 issue of the Newsletter (page 2), at the 2013 AGM the membership agreed to the creation of a new award. This award is presently being referred to as the Humanity & Society Distinguished Paper Award (in time we may wish to rename it) and its purpose is to identify the best research article published in Humanity & Society during the previous calendar year. For 2014 there are 16 articles under consideration (four from each issue). Kasey Hendricks has written up the following description of the award and procedures:

Humanity & Society presents one award for the article that has contributed most effectively to the advancement of empirical, methodological, and/or theoretical research in humanist sociology. The article must have been published within the journal during the previous calendar year. No nominations will be accepted for the award, since every article will automatically be considered. The Deputy Editors of Humanity & Society, along with the Managing Editor, will serve as the committee for The Humanity & Society Distinguished Paper Award. The Managing Editor will chair this committee but will not cast a vote, except in the rare instance of a tie vote. The winner will be formally announced during the Annual Meetings of the Association for Humanist Sociology. A plaque of recognition will be awarded.

The goal will be to name the award recipient by April 30th of each year in order to provide sufficient time for Sage to create the award, as they have kindly agreed to provide the official certificate; AND to provide sufficient time for the recipient to consider attending our annual conference to receive the award.

It is also time to begin collecting books for the 2015 Book Awards. Last year's Committee Chair Bhoomi Thakore did a truly phenomenal job and she has submitted a separate report outlining the outstanding work of that committee's work in 2014. If you are aware of a recently published book you would like considered for that award please forward details to me at smachum@stu.ca.

## 2014 AHS MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Johnny E. Williams, VP for Membership

When I assumed AHS VP for Membership on an interim basis in 2013 the dues paying membership for the year stood at 65. In 2014 that number rose to 126. The increase was due in large part to a more rigorous approach to urging members to renew their membership. Two months after our annual meetings, membership renewal emails are routinely sent asking members to renew their membership for the coming year. At this time, 56 of the 148 colleagues listed as members have renewed their 2015.

In my role, I urge members to renew their membership as soon as possible on the AHS website, (<http://www.humanist-sociology.org>), and by doing so, you would be joining the challenge to increase membership to 200 regularly paying members by 2016.

For the first time in a long time an AHS Membership Directory in pdf format will be emailed out to the membership. Please look for this in the coming months. I also want to report that Twitter and Facebook accounts have been established to help attract new members and conference attendees. AHS twitter handle is @ahssoci and please like the AHS Facebook page to be updated on calls for papers, conferences, scholarship and other important information.

## Other AHS Related News!



Welcome Owen Robert Graham to world, born Nov. 25 2014. He is the son of Carrie Graham and Jay Graham, former AHS *Humanity & Society* Production Editor and *The Humanist Sociologist* layout guru.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANIST SOCIOLOGY  
CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

**"LOCAVORE SOCIOLOGY:  
CHALLENGING GLOBALIZATION, EMBRACING THE LOCAL"**

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY  
PORTLAND, OREGON  
OCTOBER 21-25, 2015

The 2015 annual meetings of the Association for Humanist Sociology will be held at the University Place Hotel, on the campus of Portland State University, in the heart of beautiful, downtown Portland, OR. With a vibrant craft beer culture, a thriving arts scene, a commitment to sustainability, twenty-first century mass transit options, and a flourishing intellectual culture, Portland provides not only a perfect site for investigating locavore cultures and activism, but a natural location for a gathering of humanist sociologists. Please consider joining us and spreading the word to your progressive colleagues.

LOCATION

Humanist sociologists not only challenge existing structures of economic and political inequality, but work to create alternative organizations and relationships that can help build a more humane and sustainable world. In recent years, the emergence of locavore food movements, urban gardens, fair-trade coffee, micro-grid solar and wind energy systems, bike paths, mass transit, and the celebration of indigenous cultures represent viable challenges to the corporatized and exploitative global market place. While Marx famously called for a "ruthless criticism of everything existing," he did not foresee a future of bioregional alternatives to industrial society. In an era of global social and environmental crisis, we must strive as critical sociologists and activists to balance our critiques of capitalism and power with more community-based visions and strategies for social change.

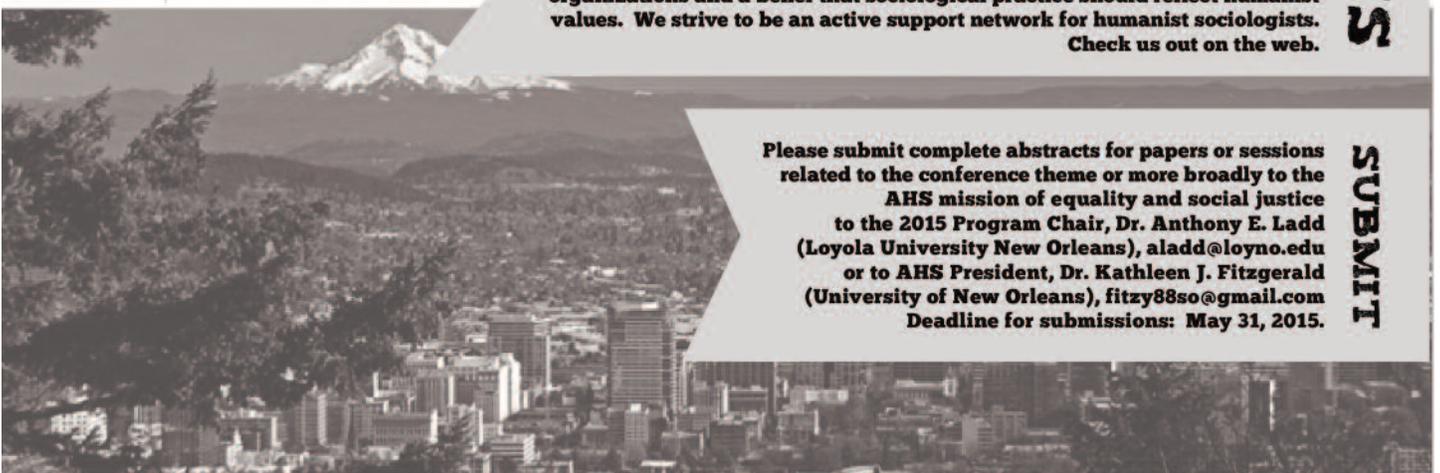
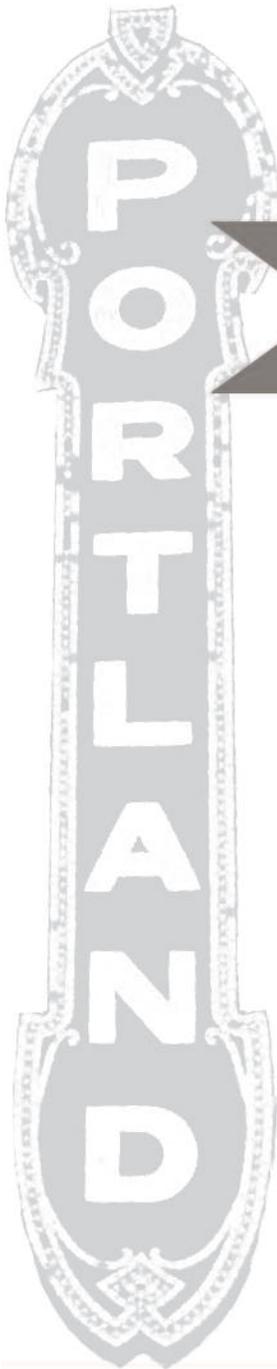
CONFERENCE INFO

The Association for Humanist Sociology Inc. is a community of sociologists, educators, scholars, and activists who share a commitment to using sociology to promote peace, equality, and social justice. AHS was founded in 1976 in response to a growing disenchantment with mainstream sociological organizations and a belief that sociological practice should reflect humanist values. We strive to be an active support network for humanist sociologists. Check us out on the web.

AHS

Please submit complete abstracts for papers or sessions related to the conference theme or more broadly to the AHS mission of equality and social justice to the 2015 Program Chair, Dr. Anthony E. Ladd (Loyola University New Orleans), [aladd@loyno.edu](mailto:aladd@loyno.edu) or to AHS President, Dr. Kathleen J. Fitzgerald (University of New Orleans), [fitzy88so@gmail.com](mailto:fitzy88so@gmail.com)  
Deadline for submissions: May 31, 2015.

SUBMIT





ahssociology.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 6, 2015

Kathleen Fitzgerald, AHS Pres., fitzy88so@gmail.com  
Rebecca Hensley, AHS Secty, luv2lurn@earthlink.net

## **Humanist Sociologists Vote to Support the Release of Black Panther Activist Albert Woodfox**

The membership of the Association for Humanist Sociology, an organization dedicated to scholarship and action in the service of justice and peace, has voted to call for the immediate release of the last “Angola 3” prisoner, Albert Woodfox, from the Louisiana Department of Corrections where he has been held in solitary confinement for more than forty-two years for the murder of a prison guard in 1972, a deeply flawed conviction that has now been overturned three times.

No physical evidence linked Woodfox or his co-defendant, Herman Wallace, to the crime. A man claiming to be an eyewitness for the prosecution was released from a life sentence as a serial rapist in exchange for his testimony. And potentially exculpatory DNA evidence was lost under questionable circumstances. Today, the widow of the murdered guard has said that she believes the State failed in its mandate to bring her husband’s true murderer to justice.

In the years just previous to the guard’s murder, Woodfox and Wallace had organized the first prison chapter of the Black Panther Party, working to desegregate Angola State Penitentiary, end systematic rape and violence among the prisoners, stop routine corruption and brutality by the guards, and demand better living conditions in the institution. Even from solitary confinement, Woodfox has continued to win legal suits related to prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners, encourage and empower others, and affect change in the community in which he resides. Nevertheless, States Attorney Buddy Caldwell has called Woodfox “the most dangerous man in the world.” And Angola Warden Burl Cain has stated that until Woodfox disavows his Black Panther principles, he belongs in solitary confinement whether he did anything or not.

Herman Wallace died of cancer a few days after his release on habeus corpus in 2013. After Woodfox’s conviction was overturned by the courts for the third time that same year and the Appellate court upheld the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit ruling in November of 2014, the State has continued its ongoing commitment to keep Woodfox incarcerated. Nevertheless, a petition with more than 25,000 signatures from around the world has been delivered to Governor Bobby Jindal, beseeching the State of Louisiana to release Albert Woodfox forthwith and without delay.

The Association for Humanist Sociology stands with Amnesty-International-USA, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (a coalition of 325 organizations committed to end torture and cruel, inhumane, degrading treatment), Juan Mendez (the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture), and Rep. John Conyers, in supporting the petition.

-- end of release --

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THE HUMANIST SOCIOLOGIST



ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANIST SOCIOLOGY NEWSLETTER

## **Who Are We The Association for Humanist Sociology**

Our Past: The Association arose out of growing disenchantment with conventional sociology and a need for a more clearly value committed emphasis in sociological work. We came together in 1976, not out of shared politics or similar "schools" of sociology, which were, and still are, richly varied, but out of a common concern for "real life" problems of peace, equality, and social justice.

Our Philosophy: Humanists 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.

Our Purpose: Accordingly, humanist sociologists study life with a value commitment to advance that possibility through scholarship and practice. We intend to be an active support network for sociologists committed to humanist values, as they practice sociology in institutions often hostile to such an approach. To this end, we produce a quarterly journal, *Humanity & Society*, as well as a newsletter, *The Humanist Sociologist*; we organize national meetings and have sessions at regional sociology conferences.