Welcome to the Fall 2009 edition of AKRONews, the annual newsletter of the Department of Sociology at the University of Akron.

Each year, Dr. Baffour K. Takyi, our newsletter editor, does a painstaking job of cataloguing our individual and collective accomplishments across the past 12 months, along with coming up with a few people/projects to highlight. It is a lot of work, but those who know Baffour know that he attacks it with his usual zeal and good natured charm, and we are always very pleased with the outcome. One of his tasks, of course, in this is to make sure that I write a “Chair’s Column” worthy of the rest of the newsletter. Given how much you’ve told us that you like the newsletter, my job is getting harder and harder.

Speaking of my job, although I remain Department Chair, in July I also moved into the position of Interim Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. In this I am just the latest in a long line of sociology faculty – most recently, Dick Gigliotti, Frank Falk, Brian Pendleton, Kathy Feltey, and Mark Tausig – who have held important university leadership positions outside of the department. We must be doing something right when we hire faculty.

Later in the newsletter, you’ll discover that we were fortunate to hire a new assistant professor this fall, Dr. Emily Asencio. Emily received her doctorate at University of California-Riverside and then spent four years on two different post-doctoral fellowships there. She is a specialist in criminology and social psychology, and will fit nicely into both of those key areas in our department.

As you might imagine, the dean’s office has kept me pretty busy, so that almost all of department’s daily operations are in the very capable hands of our Associate Chair, Dr. Kathy Feltey. Kathy has been here for more than 20 years, and in addition to taking the lead on many important department functions, Kathy also served as Director of Women’s Studies.

Enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter and please stay in touch with us. We love hearing from you. Thanks again to Dr. Baffour Takyi for putting this together.
A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE CHAIR

DR. KATHRYN FELTEY

Greetings! This year I have taken on new responsibilities in the Department of Sociology as our Chair, John Zipp, is serving as Interim Associate Dean of the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences. To fill the void, as associate chair, I am covering the day-to-day duties of the Chair in the Department, or as the sign says on my office door I am Acting (like a) Chair. After many years with the Department, I am learning a lot about the university bureaucracy (something I have for the most part successfully avoided!).

The most satisfying aspect of my new responsibilities is that I am daily reminded of the great undergraduate and graduate students we have in the Sociology program, and the dedication of our faculty in teaching and mentoring our students. An important resource for those of us teaching in the Department is the brown bag series, coordinated by Dr. Val Callanan. At the first teaching brown bag of the Fall semester, I led the discussion on using novels to teach sociology. Many of us use novels and popular nonfiction to teach different topics in sociology. Some of our favorites? Your Blues Ain't Like Mine, by Bebe Moore Campbell; 8 Ball Chicks, by Gini Sikes; The Space Between Us, by Thrity Umigar; Kindred, by Octavia Butler; There are No Children Here, by Alex Kotlowitz.

On the research front, I am working with Dr. Cheryl Elman on the Pioneer Women’s Project. We are using a social historical perspective and multiple methods to study the pioneer experiences of women in the late 19th century. Joining us in this work is Dr. Barbara Wittman (History) and sociology graduate (Dani Jauk, Jennyerin Steele, and Mary Weaver) and undergraduate (Hannah Furnas) students. Funded by a University Faculty Research Grant, I spent part of the summer 2009 in Arkansas historical societies and library archives reading diaries, letters, and memoirs of women who were among the early settlers. To date we have collected data in North Dakota and Arkansas. Through the generosity of the UA Friends of the Library we have also obtained the largest electronic data set of women’s diaries and letters, the North American Women’s Letters and Diaries, Colonial-1950s.

In other news, I am still collaborating with Drs. Behrman and Spickard on the qualitative/multi-methods ARM (Active Research Methods) Lab. We hosted many exciting events in the last year (visit our website for more details: http://www3.uakron.edu/arm/) including a workshop by the renowned qualitative sociologist, Dr. Kathy Charmaz on Grounded Theory and a team of fifth graders who became research partners in a study of urban children and food insecurity. We are currently applying for the next stage of National Science Foundation (NSF) funding to expand the capacity of the ARM Lab.

In my spare time I try to catch up on my reading (having a very long list from the Teaching with Novels Brown Bag) and enjoy hiking in the beautiful Cuyahoga Falls National Park. I hope you are enjoying the fall as well!

MEET OUR NEW COLLEAGUE

Dr. Emily Asencio joined our Department this Fall after spending most of her life in Southern California. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology (Criminology/Socio-legal Studies and Social Psychology) from the University of California, Riverside. She also completed four years of postdoctoral research in Southern California at the Center for Disease Control’s Academic Center for Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention, and The Presley Center for Crime and Justice Studies. She is married and has 2 ½ year old son named Diego.

An Interview with the Editor of SOCNews

Dr Ascencio, could you please tell us about your research interests:

- My research interests include the relationship between identity and criminal behavior. I am currently focusing on how identity development during adolescence leads to delinquency and crime at different stages of the life course.

Best part about your job:

- So far, the best part about my job is my colleagues. Everyone has been wonderful in helping me transition both into the Sociology Department and the Akron area.
What drew you to your field:
• As an undergraduate, I did volunteer research work at a criminology research center. The experience I gained from my work there generated my interest in pursuing criminology. My interest in social psychology and identity developed through my research experiences in graduate school.

What drew you to Akron, Ohio:
• I have no previous experience with Akron. My advisor started out here and had good things to say about Akron. I love the old houses, and the fall colors are beautiful while they last!

Thank You and Enjoy your stay in Northeast Ohio.
Baffour K. Takyi, editor

FACULTY NEWS

UNIVERSITY RECOGNITION AND PROMOTIONS

Dr. John Zipp is the new acting Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences. Congrats for your promotion and recognition.

Dr. Kathy Feltey was appointed Associate Chair in the absence of Dr. Zipp. Dr. Feltey was also the recipient of the 2009 AKD Faculty Mentor Award.

Dr. Stacey Nofziger was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure this year.

Dr. Baffour K. Takyi and Dr. Cheryl Elman were promoted to Full Professors.

Cheryl Elman has also been appointed ASA’s New Chair of Membership Committee, Section on Aging and the Life Course.

We all say: Congratulations!

NATIONAL and INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Flame of Love Project Receives International Recognition

The Flame of Love Project, co-directed by Margaret M. Poloma and Matthew T. Lee, was the subject of a feature article in the Korean publication Church Growth Journal (Jong Hyun Jung, 2009, “Godly Love Project: Can Godly Love Change the Society?” Church Growth Journal 196:136-141).

The readership of this journal is primarily church pastors in Korea and the article is the latest example of how the scholarship produced by the Flame of Love Project is being applied in ways that can foster positive social change both in the U.S. and abroad. In related news, Margaret Poloma’s work was recently translated into German in a recent issue of Evangelische Theologie. This article focuses on Poloma’s research into the institutional dilemmas facing the Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world.

The primary objective of the Flame of Love Project is to develop a new interdisciplinary science of Godly Love (defined as the dynamic interaction between perceived divine and human love that enlivens and expands benevolence). The project was funded by the Templeton Foundation for $2.3 million over three years. The project is funding a three-wave national survey on Godly Love.

Lee and Poloma’s analysis of 101 qualitative interviews with “exemplars” of Godly Love—individuals who have been recognized by their communities for extraordinary service to others in a Pentecostal context—has been released this fall (Matthew T. Lee and Margaret M. Poloma, 2009, A Sociological Study of the Great Commandment in Pentecostalism: The Practice of Godly Love as Benevolent Service, Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press).

Sociologist Debunks the Myth of the Criminal Immigrant

In the lead chapter in Volume 13 of the series Sociology of Crime, Law, and Deviance, Matthew T. Lee provides a synthesis of recent scholarship on the “Immigration Revitalization Perspective”. This perspective—which builds on Lee’s previous work,
classic criminological theories. Although there are good reasons to suspect that the arrival of immigrants into a neighborhood might increase “social disorganization,” “cultural conflict,” and economic “strain,” Lee's research finds just the opposite to be the case. Immigration is associated with economic revitalization, reduced disorganization, and lower rates of crime. In fact, some research in this tradition has suggested that much of the recent “crime drop” in the U.S. is traceable to increased immigration.

Faculty Research, Awards & Grants

**DR. KATHY FELTEY**

2009. The University of Akron Faculty Research Grant, $6,000 for “Pioneer Women: A Multi-Method Socio-Historical Exploration of Gender on the Frontier.”

The University of Akron Friends of the Library, $25,000 for the purchase of the North American Women's Letters and Diaries, a dataset including the experiences of 1,325 women and 150,000 pages of diaries and letters spanning 300 years from colonial days to the mid-20th century. With Cheryl Elman and TJ Boisseau (Department of History).

Jamestown, NY Boys and Girls Club, $20,000 for “Tier IV Asset-based Program Evaluation.” Co-Principal Investigator with Lynn Metzger (Department of Classical Studies, Anthropology, and Archeology).

**DR. MATTHEW LEE**


**DR. ROBERT PERALTA**

Was nominated for the Faculty Mentoring Award. Presented by Alpha Kappa Delta chapter of the Department of Sociology, The University of Akron.

National Hispanic Science Network Travel Award to present at the NHSN meetings in Miami, FL October 2009

Institute for Teaching and Learning Faculty Grant Award ($400).

**Publications**

We take this opportunity to congratulate our faculty and students who won grants and awards, published or presented at professional meetings during the past year. Below are some selected achievements during the past year.

**DR. EMILY ASCENCIO**


**DR. VALERIE CALLANAN**


DR. CHERYL ELMAN


DR. REBECCA ERICKSON

Editorial Boards - Social Psychology Quarterly


DR. KATHRYN FELTEY


Schneider, Rachel Zimmer and Kathryn Feltey. “No matter what has been done wrong can always be redone right”: Spirituality in the Lives of Imprisoned Battered Women.” *Violence Against Women* 15:443-459.


DR. RUDY FENWICK


DR. MATTHEW T. LEE


Matthew T. Lee and Margaret M. Poloma. 2009. “Has Charisma Been Taken from Us? An Empirical Examination of Rieff’s Theory” at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion conference in Denver, CO (October).


DR. STACEY NOFZIGER


DR. ROBERT PERALTA


Schrop S & Pendleton, BF. 2009. Managing chronic disease: Free to be healthy update. Tenth Annual Ohio Free Clinic Conference, Columbus, OH. (Oct.)

DR. RACHEL SCHNEIDER

Schneider, Rachel Zimmer and Kathryn Feltey. “No matter what has been done wrong can always be redone right”: Spirituality in the Lives of Imprisoned Battered Women.” Violence Against Women 15:443-459.


DR. BAFFOUR TAKYI

Mann, Jesse R. and Baffour K. Takyi. 2009. “Autonomy, Dependence or Culture: The Impact of Resources and


**Takyi, Baffour K.** 2009 “Religion and the Public Sphere in Ghana.” Presented at the Conference of Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research, University of Akron, Akron , OH.

**DR. JUAN XI**


**DR. JOHN ZIPP**


“How to Do the Scholarship of Teaching” (with Liz Grauerholz and Jeff Chin), American Sociological Association (San Francisco, 2009).

Keynote address, Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology Pre-Conference, American Sociological Association (San Francisco, 2009).

**GRADUATE STUDENTS NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS**

**FALL 2009 GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Danielle Bequeath-Shaw, Jamie Chapman, Marci Cottingham, Daneen Harrison, Monica Oliva, Jenny-Erin Steele-Staats, Michael Steiner, and Carolyn Sutter.

**AKD NEWS Update**

AKD would like to thank everyone who attended the banquet and for making it a successful event. The ’09-’10 representatives are:

President: Daysha R. Lawrence
Vice President: Virgil Russell
Secretary/Treasurer: Justin Oldaker

**AKD STUDENT AWARDS**

Outstanding Paper – Angela Adkins
Outstanding Student Service Award – Daysha Lawrence
Outstanding Student Award – Dana Williams
Outstanding Student Teaching Award – Liza Grossman
Peer Mentor Award – Daysya Lawrence
Faculty Mentor Award – Kathy Feltey

**2009 Outstanding Undergraduate Award** – Heather Marsh

**GRADUATE STUDENT ALUMNI**

Congratulations to our recent PhD and MA recipients

**SPRING 09**

Angela Adkins MA
Suzanne Slusser PhD
Dana Williams PhD

**SUMMER 09**

Daysha Lawrence MA
Virgil Russell MA
Stayce Blount PhD
Dr. Stacye Blount: “Negative Spillover and Mental Health: The Moderating Effects of Sociodemographic Characteristics, Family Characteristics, and Socioeconomic Resources”

Dr. Suzanne Slusser: “Gender Empowerment and Gender Inequality, The Global Economy and the State: Exploring the Relationship between Economic Dependency, the Political Order, and Women’s Status.”

Dr. Dana Williams: “Cross-National, Protest Potential for Labor and Environmental Movements: The Relevance of Opportunity.”

KUDOS: Graduate Student Highlights and Awards

Dr. Stacye Blount - has accepted a position in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati as a Visiting Assistant Professor. This is a one year position, with the possibility of renewal depending on whether the department is able to secure a tenure-track line. Congratulations Stacey!

Daysha Lawrence was elected as student representative for NCSA. She will be representing students from Eastern Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ontario, Canada.

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS


About 50 people stayed for the Q and A session with Chyng which was moderated by Marie Bozin who also brought in her own findings of qualitative projects on this topic. The discussion was characterized by the powerful impressions the documentary had left in the audience and brought – among other topics – to light the contradiction between illegal prostitution and the flourishing porn industry in this country and the overall missing critical discussion of porn. Clearly the argument that it is a good job opportunity for uneducated women is not as convincing, as only very few women gain wealth with pornography and can sustain a career in this business.


Undergraduate Student News
Sociology Majors: Profiles and Highlights

Peter Barr
Sociology major and reservist Peter Barr was called to active duty and deployed to the Middle East, spending a year in Egypt. He returned this past fall and is enrolled full-time this semester to continue working towards his Sociology degree. As a soldier, Peter had many duties and responsibilities, but he also took on the role of sociologist in-the-field. Using the research methods he learned at the University of Akron, he initially planned on studying gender in active military duty. However, his focus shifted to the overall experience of role adjustment from civilian to soldier in an active duty setting. Peter is currently writing up his findings and making the transition from military to civilian life. Welcome home, Peter!

Oriana House
On November 13, 2009, the research team from Oriana House, Inc. spoke to our department about research projects they conduct and potential areas for collaboration. The representers were Dr. Alec Boros, (Research Manager, Oriana House, Inc.), Rebecca Fischbein, Joel Endres, and our own graduate student Darlene Forrest. Oriana House is a large non-profit organization that specializes in substance abuse treatment and reintegration programs for offenders. With more than 500 employees, numerous programs and facilities, the organization offers a number of possible research projects for our students as well. They are hoping to build on the relationship they currently have with UA, and specifically, with the Department of Sociology.

Women in Higher Education Luncheon—front: Bethany Bercheck, Jennifer Schartiger, Dani Jauk; back: Angela Adkins, John Zipp, Cheryl Elman

Educational Development: Brown Bag

Black Woman’s Burden
On Friday, October 30th, the department had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Nicole Rousseau, an Assistant Sociology Professor at our sister department at KSU. She spoke about her new book, Black Woman’s Burden.

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Where Are They Now

Professor Emeritus Margaret Poloma, has been collaborating with our own Matt Lee on Godly Love. More recently, she published *Blood and Fire: Godly Love in a Pentecostal Emerging Church*, a book which has been received highly in academia. by Margaret M. Poloma & Ralph W. Hood, Jr.

Professor Emeritus: Richard C. Stephens, Ph.D. officially retired from UA in November 2009.

Professor Emeritus: Frank Falk published the following:


Professor Mark Tausig participated in the 2009 Akron Road Runner Marathon. Mark is currently an Associate Dean of Graduate School but continues to participate in our departmental activities on a regular basis.

ALUMNI BRIEFS

Frankie Abruzzino—BA ’06
Frankie is currently working as an Adult Protective Services worker doing home visits and investigations of abuse, neglect and exploitation allegations in Wooster, OH.

Jeffrey Breese—MA ’89, PHD ’93
Jeffrey is Dean, for the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Rockhurst University, Kansas City, MO.

Janet Cosby—PHD ’94
Janet is an Associate Professor at Eastern Illinois University, Department of Sociology.

Jenny Dunn (Swiatek)—BA ’01
Jenny is a Field Examiner for the National Labor Relations Board in Winston-Salem, NC.

Paul Kim—BA ’01
Paul is employed with the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, MD as a defense contractor and involved in research investigating PTSD and other mental illnesses in the army.

Emilia Lombardi—MA ’91, PHD ’97
Emilia is currently an Assistant Professor for the dept of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology at the University of Pittsburgh. She is also a member of The University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Research on Health and Sexual Orientation.

Marianne Noh—PHD ’08
Marianne is a visiting assistant professor at the University of Victoria, Department of Sociology, Victoria, BC, Canada.

Ariane Prohaska—MA ‘01, PHD ‘07
Ariane just recently accepted a position as Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, at The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Darryl Tukufu—PHD ‘84
Darryl is Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Urban Studies at Crichton College, Memphis, TN.

Shiela Venkataswamy—MA ‘91
Shiela is an Instructor in Sociology at McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL.
SCHOLARSHIPS CHANGE LIVES

Many students today cannot afford the cost of a college education and rely on the availability of scholarships to pursue their dream of achieving a college degree in their field of interest. The University of Akron is proud of its top-notch Department of Sociology, whose alumni and friends are especially mindful of students’ needs.

A scholarship in your name can be established for as little as $10,000. For information on contributing your support or for making a donation of any denomination, please contact:

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Thank you for your generosity!

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AKRONews is a publication of the Department of Sociology, University of Akron, Akron OH 44325-1905. Its purpose is to provide news concerning the activities of the Department, including teaching, research, scholarship, and service.

Contributions and comments are welcomed. Please direct all correspondence to:

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We encourage you to visit our website at:
www.uakron.edu/sociology

Graduate Students 2009-2010