

Thoughts from the Head

'Town and gown' is a common phrase in England. It distinguishes a world of book learning from the school of hard knocks. Scholars in gowns contrast with folks in towns, the latter doing 'real' work. A North American parallel claims universities are beyond the 'real world.'

My father chides me with his version of this. He claims I'm totally cocooned – I cite my friends and they cite me, I write in a foreign style only 'my types' understand, and I'm obsessed with questions disconnected from his reality. I live in a sociological bubble.

Scholars defend this town/gown distinction as a virtue of the university – a bubble wherein ideas reign and debate sharpens arguments. Some press the learning button, noting the lasting influence of the university experience on people. My father has his own insularity to these views – he smiles and nods, giving me that all-knowing, totally unconvinced look.

Recently scholars have addressed charges of insularity in a different way, returning to an older tradition of the public intellectual. Dissemination reigns; get out the message! Very good things happen in universities – from scholarship on human rights to research on nerve conduction – and more people ought to know this. Public relations R us!

In our discipline the idea of 'public sociology' has gained currency. Michael Burawoy, a Berkeley sociologist who was recently here at UBC, stresses the need for sociology to engage with issues of policy, purpose, and action. We need to move beyond the bubble and engage the town folk. Sociology

needs a more direct impact outside the halls of academe, while still maintaining a credible research and teaching agenda within the university.

Public sociology is reflected in the writing for this newsletter. Articles by Amy Hanser on consumer issues in China and by Nathan Lauster and Jim White on trends in family formation illustrate this. This is highlighted too in the brief write up featuring Tamara Ibrahim's presentation in Mexico City on her AIDS research.

Beyond the newsletter, work of Department colleagues has recently been reviewed in the Economist, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and Mclean's Magazine. Newspaper coverage of Department research has been featured in places like the Globe and Mail, the New York Times, the Chicago Sun-Times, and the Vancouver Sun. Colleagues are also frequently heard on the CBC, Global TV, and other local radio and television outlets.

Several colleagues make important contributions via memberships on public boards (e.g., Carrie Yodanis on the Board of Women against Violence Against Women; Ralph Matthews on the Board of British Columbia's Coastal Community Network). Many are active participants in a variety of organizations from Social Planning Councils to Immigrant Settlement networks through to a variety of government ministries, both provincial and federal.

And most persuasively the alumni of sociology programs, ours and others, speak volumes to the applicability of the sociological imagination. You will see this exemplified with abundance in the short bios of Theresa Harding, David Varnes, and Darrell Noakes. ♦



Neil Guppy,
Department Head

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Yellow Peril Consumerism by Amy Hanser



In March, 2007, a major pet food recall issued in Canada and the United States was traced to an ingredient supplied by a Chinese manufacturer. This recall marked the first in a string of recalls and product quality scares that were all linked to China-origin goods: "toxic toothpaste" was pulled from shelves around the world, toys coated with lead paint were recalled, and imported Chinese seafood, designated as "filthy," were banned in several

southern U.S. states. The U.S. media portrayed the problem as a weakness in America's food borders and a failure to police those borders in a globalizing world. A former U.S. FDA official, William Hubbard, defined the situation as a problem of globalization, with American food manufacturers seeking out cheap ingredients from "less-developed countries." Hubbard told the *New York Times* in May, 2007 that "the word is out...If you send a problem shipment to the United States it is going to get in and you won't get caught, and you won't have your food returned to you, let alone get arrested or imprisoned." At the center of the problem stood China, where, according to another *New York Times* report, "renegade businessmen" selling fake and counterfeit goods were integral to the "fabric of the nation's thriving industrial econ-

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(*Yellow Peril Consumerism*
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omy.”

These reports on tainted Chinese consumer goods were nested in a broader trend of reporting on China that documents the country's increasingly polluted and degraded environment; indeed, China has become the poster child for the threat of global warming. But while there are important truths in the media reporting described above, reporting on China frequently uses heavily loaded language (e.g., China's "insatiable appetite" for raw materials) deeply evocative of an earlier discourse about China's perilous massiveness. The recent scandal, beginning in September, 2008, involving powdered milk and other dairy products tainted with melamine, promises to add yet another chapter to this evolving story of China as dangerous, toxic, contaminated, and unscrupulous.

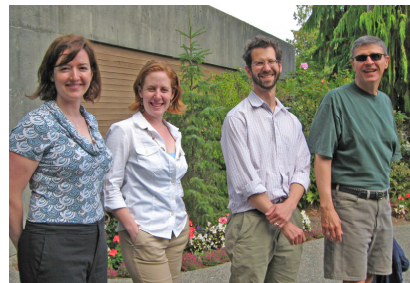
In fact, "yellow peril" themes of China as a source of contamination and pollution, home to unscrupulous, profit-oriented criminals, and a threat to North American living standards span historical eras. Starting in the 1800s, anti-Chinese sentiment in North America was bolstered by pervasively negative imagery of Chinese people that portrayed them as potential sources of disease (especially leprosy and the plague), as dirty and unscrupulous, and above all cheap labor with lowly, almost animal-like, standards of living. In both eras—the late 1800s and the early 2000s—China is characterized as a menacing global presence. However, whereas over a hundred years ago it was the flow of Chinese *people* that gave rise to yellow peril discourse, today it is the flow of *goods* (and money) that is cause for concern. I call this new era of yellow peril rhetoric "yellow peril consumerism."

I would argue that these are not superficial parallels—rhetoric that casts China as dirty, untrustworthy, and contaminating draws upon a long-standing discourse that paints an emotionally resonant—and threatening—portrait of China and Asia more generally. But whereas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries a yellow peril discourse in North America served to bolster exclusionary immigration policies, today yellow peril consumerism acts to obscure the complex, and sometimes disturbing, aspects of global production by casting the problem as errant, immoral China. This characterization rests upon an essentializing portrayal of Chinese people who are part of the "fabric" of China's capitalist economy, whereas similar problems in the U.S. or Canada are shown to involve only "bad actors," bad individuals. Indeed, two Canadian scholars, Paul Beamish and Hari Bapuji, have shown that since 1988 the majority of recalls involving China-made

toys involve design flaws (made by corporate headquarters). Yet public anger has clearly been directed towards Chinese manufacturers where, according to one letter to the New York Times, "production of exported goods...is seemingly driven by greed."

The pet food and toy controversies reveal, I believe, how the North American consumer provides the moral mooring for Western, and perhaps especially American, economic hegemony. In an increasingly global configuration of labor and consumption, it is the consumer-as-consumer that becomes the site of national interest to be defended. Whereas in an earlier era the "American standard" (in both Canada and the United States) was represented by the everyman worker and threatened by low-quality (Chinese) labor, today the everyday consumer is threatened by low-quality consumer goods. In a context of gross trade imbalances between North America and China, an imbalance driven in part by our own consumerism, we find, somewhat oddly, that it is the consumer who is imperiled. ♦

The Department continues to grow...



Amy Lang, Jennifer Black, Neil Gross and Ed Grabb

The Department is pleased to welcome Associate Professor, Dr. Neil Gross who has come here from Harvard, Visiting Professor Edward Grabb, who has arrived from U. of Western Ontario, and two new post-docs: Amy Lang (Wisconsin) and Jennifer Black (NYU) have also joined us.

Katherine Lyon: Undergraduate Honours Thesis

Empowering Representations of Femininity?:

Girl Power, Sexuality and Physical Appearance in Popular Western Music

Producing original and critical research work as an undergraduate student is no easy accomplishment. In this newsletter we have featured such work previously and here we are proud to do so again. One of our recent honours theses, written by Katherine Lyon, focused on the Spice Girls and the Pussycat Dolls, both all-girl entertainment sensations that have scored major successes.

Katherine's research focused first on the Spice Girls, who despite a recent revival were mainly successful in the mid to late 1990s. She contrasted them with the Pussycat Dolls, a group that achieved musical success in the mid-2000s. Her focus was on the messages of the two groups, in their lyrics, videos, interviews, and photographs.

The concept of 'Girl Power' was popularized by the Spice Girls in the late 1990s. Indeed it was a central message of the band, a message some saw as a marketing ploy, others as a feminist statement. The Pussycat Dolls rose to popularity later, and while also an all-girl act, had a very different message. But the point was not to judge the message. As Katherine says "I don't judge who's good or who's bad. For example, the Pussycat Dolls have some positive messages about taking control," she says, adding, "I don't want to contribute to the sentencing and

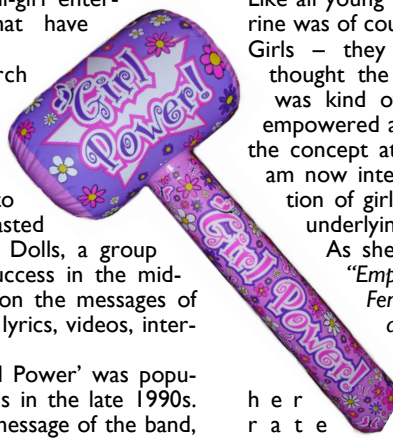
policing of what girls can do."

Her goal in the research was to use the two bands as a way to examine issues of femininity and empowerment. How could a researcher peel away the layers of meaning in the words and images of the two groups?

Like all young women of the time, Katherine was of course well aware of the Spice Girls – they were hard to avoid. "I thought the whole idea of girl power was kind of neat," she notes. "I felt empowered and didn't think to question the concept at the time. Looking back, I am now interested in analyzing the notion of girl power and considering its underlying ideologies."

As she notes in her thesis, titled "Empowering Representations of Femininity?: Girl Power, Sexuality and Physical Appearance in Popular Western Music," this is an industry. As her work points out, corporate interests -- mostly male-dominated -- continue to present limited and stereotypical ideals of beauty. "These images serve to create insecurities in young women, which has been a fundamental part of our society and consumption-based economy."

(excerpted and revised from an article by Lorraine Chan in UBC Reports).



Family Change *by Nathan Lauster and Jim White*

The form families take, and the very definition of family, is constantly changing. Today's family changes are in part a continuation of processes that began after the Second World War. Almost everyone is aware of the **population bulge** created by the post war baby boom. Not everyone is aware that the patterns of family formation creating the baby boom, including nearly universal marriage and parenting at relatively young ages, were unusual rather than traditional (thus the boom!). These new patterns led to a sharp rise in nuclear family households during the baby boom era (which peaked in 1959), with the number of people entering into these arrangements (through marriage and childbearing) vastly exceeding the number leaving (through death, divorce, or leaving home to live alone). Nevertheless, various processes set in motion after WWII would soon lead to a decline.

Divorce rates began rising with the end of WWII. This rise, however, was neither uniform nor monotonic. During and just after WWII, the divorce rate soared. Then, in the 1970s, after the baby booms peak, the rate climbed steadily in response to two factors. One factor was mostly demographic, as the age structure and early marriage rates of the population began to place many more people at risk of divorce than at other times in North American history. An additional factor was that the Divorce Act of 1967-68 liberalized the grounds for divorce. As a result, Canadian divorce rates reached an all time high during the 1970s.

The rise in divorce was accompanied by a rise in non-marital **cohabitation**. Beginning in the late 1960s, more couples began to live together without getting married. In Canada, this pattern became particularly pronounced in Quebec as part of a "Quiet Revolution" against church and state authority. Today, age specific cohabitation rates for 20-30 year olds suggest that living together may now be normatively preferred as a stage in the life course occurring prior to marriage. For many, cohabitation also supplies an alternative to marriage, and in Quebec about half of all children are raised predominantly in cohabiting relationships.

The rise in divorce and cohabitation is related to another process during this period; the **decline of marriage**. The marriage rate today is about half of what it was fifty years ago such that proportionately fewer people are now living in a married household. Some of this decline is due to

demographic change, with an older population and a correspondingly larger proportion of people living as widows or widowers. However, other factors are also at work, including both the rise in divorce and the rise in non-marital cohabitation as a competing form of coupling. In addition, more and more people are choosing to remain single for long periods of their life, usually living alone or with roommates. All of this results in more people spending more of their lives outside of marital couplings.

The decline in marriage has been accompanied by a decline in Canadian fertility. Most Canadians are now aware that Canada, like most other developed countries, has been **below replacement level fertility** (approximately 2.1 children per woman) for at least two decades (the 2005 rate was just over 1.5). While more and more Canadians are having children outside of marriage, the trend is not making up for the lower fertility resulting from the decline in the proportion of Canadians who are married. Moreover, within married couples the proportion with children is declining relative to proportion without children.

As a result of the shifts described above, fewer people are entering nuclear family households (by marriage and childbearing), while more people are leaving (by divorce, death, and leaving home to live alone). This

results in a decline in the proportion of households reflecting the baby boom modal category. A related trend is the rise in same-sex couples, some of whom are adopting children, but as this new family form grows in size this too will alter not only definitions of the family, but also the types of family recognized by the state (on June 28, 2005 Canada became only the third country to recognize same-sex marriages).

The ongoing nature of this family change is so robust that it can even be seen in side-by-side comparison of 2001 to 2006 census results. While the number of family households continues to rise (due mostly to immigration), the proportion of Canadians living in family households has declined. Furthermore, for those living within family households, the proportion living in nuclear family households, comprised of married couples with children, is continuing to decline, moving from 42% of the population in 2001 to 39% of the population in 2006. Over the same time, the proportion of people living as couples (of any sort) without children, as common-law couples with children, or as lone parent families, has all risen. ♦



Table 1.: Families by family structure, Canada and regions*

	2001		2006	
	in thousands	in %	in thousands	in %
Total families	8,790	100.0	9,486	100.0
Couples with no children	3,333	37.9	3,752	39.6
Married	2,720	30.9	3,044	32.1
Common-law	614	7.0	708	7.5
Couples with children	4,271	48.6	4,358	45.9
Intact families	3,769	42.9	3,855	40.6
Married	3,438	39.1	3,438	36.2
Common-law	331	3.8	417	4.4
Step families	502	5.7	503	5.3
Married	251	2.9	261	2.8
Common-law	252	2.9	243	2.6
Blended families	200	2.3	231	2.4
Her children	252	2.9	218	2.3
His children	50	0.6	54	0.6
Total married couples (with children)	3,689	42.0	3,698	39.0
Total common-law couples (with children)	583	6.6	660	7.0
Lone-parent families	1,186	13.5	1,376	14.5
Male parent	210	2.4	265	2.8
Female parent	976	11.1	1,111	11.7

*adapted from Béchard, M. (2007). Family structure by region. Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-625-XIE — No. 001, Ministry of Industry, Canada.

Canadian Eh? by Rima Wilkes



Who are the ten greatest Americans? Who are the ten greatest Canadians? Most likely, while you may have had no difficulty answering the first question, you struggled with the second. However, if you were able to come up with a list it is likely that there will be a lot of similarities in who is on your list. This was certainly the case when, in 2004, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation asked Canadians to nominate who they thought were the greatest Canadians. The top ten on the list included the following: Pierre Trudeau, David Suzuki, Frederic Banting, Alexander Graham Bell, Terry Fox, Sir John A. Macdonald, Lester Pearson, Tommy Douglas and Don Cherry. At the time CBC journalists commenting on the list appearing somewhat embarrassed by the fact that no women and only one person on the list was a person of colour made the top ten list.

At the outset of my Canadian Society class I use this example to get students thinking about what it means to be Canadian and how we have many assumptions that

typically remain relatively unchecked. We start by talking about what Canadian values are – among those students typically come up with are peaceful, tolerant, generous, multicultural, unassuming, funny, and most importantly – not American. Then we look at what is the actual evidence to show that there is or is not a ‘we’ for Canadians, the evidence as to whether these are really Canadian values and to what extent we need the United States in order to define ourselves. Certainly the list of greatest Canadians illustrates that while we may hold values of multiculturalism and diversity, when it comes down to it this may not be reflected in practice.

Another example I like to use is the famous ‘I am Canadian’ commercial for Molson Canadian beer that became widely popular a few years ago. In this ad, a twenty-something white male named ‘Joe’ rants about what it means to be Canadian – pronouncing words a certain way, not living in an igloo, believing in diversity rather than assimilation, and of course, loving hockey. This commercial became so popular among Canadians that the actor who played Joe was asked to appear and give his rant before sports games at large national venues. Yet this rant (beside the fact that we still seem to need the U.S. in order to define who we are) is based on a premise about who is really Canadian. Could Joe have been anything other than a white male? Could Joe have been an Asian female ranting about being Canadian? While the rant points to the fact that as Canadians we value diver-

sity (and on the whole we do) we still have a ways to go. Had Joe been anything other than the actor chosen he or she would have been making a political statement about diversity.

These examples provide a jumping off point for thinking about Canadian nationalism and Canadian values. Other topics we consider include the use of indigenous peoples in the creation of the Canadian nation, immigration (under the current points system most of us wouldn’t get into our own country), the role of the military, and poverty and the welfare state. Ultimately I hope to show that while it is great to have pride in place of birth and pride in place of residence, its meaning needs careful examination if its substance is to contain anything more than empty platitudes. ♦

Sociology in Court!

Nathanael Lauster served as an expert witness on a case involving alleged violations of the Fair Housing Act in Indiana, USA. The case centred around the question of whether or not the enactment of rental restrictions can be used as a means of discriminating against minorities (by reducing minority representation) in a neighborhood or multi-unit apartment building. Using census data, Dr. Lauster testified that in the US minorities are more likely to rent than non-minorities, and that this also held for the neighborhood involved in the trial in Indiana. Given troubling patterns of minority representation in the housing complex involved, there was a potential that rental restrictions were being used to exclude minorities.



Graduate Student Council Report



For the academic year 2008-09, the Graduate Students’ Council of Sociology is empowered with a new, executive committee composed of five graduate students. These consist of two co-presidents, Junrong Du, a PhD student and Fang Xu, an MA student, plus three, vice-president slots ably manned by MA students: Administration VP, Chris Buse, Finance VP, Mike Halpin, and a first time, External VP, Risako Ota, who was previously in Family Studies. This new team has decided upon several items concerned with the working plan.

First, we wish to hold a student conference in the early spring of 2009, carrying on with the theme proposed and voted for in the previous year, “Power and Practices in the Everyday.” With the incoming graduate students, along with the strength of previous Family Studies graduate students, we hope this conference will

assist in bringing closer together the graduate students’ community in the Department of Sociology, and provide a firm platform for communicating brilliant ideas and exploring fascinating research projects.

Second, the MA Collective and PhD Springboard, widely welcomed by graduate students, will continue to facilitate students’ research projects and provide peer support. Last, but not least, in order to voice graduate students’ opinions on the revision of graduate programs, one MA student and one PhD student will sit on the department’s revision committee, working with faculty members to modify the requirements and examination procedures for both programs.

With a brand new academic year underway, we are looking forward to meeting incoming students and welcoming back those who are continuing their study, in the hope that more of you will be interested in chairing diverse departmental student committees, while participating in our conference planning.

We wish everyone a successful, productive year!

Fang Xu,
Co-President of GSCS



Seminars from the Fall of 2008

September 9th **Karen Bradley (Western Washington University)**
"Cultural and Structural Factors Affecting the Incorporation of Women into Systems of Higher Education"

September 30th **Ching Kwan Lee (University of Michigan)**
"Out of Precariousness: Politics of Casualization in Africa's Chinese Enclaves"

October 9th **Stephen Turner (University of South Florida)**
"Sociological vs. Genuine Normativity: Weber and Kelsen On Legality"
 (co-sponsored by the Philosophy Department)

October 30th **Mia Tuan (University of Oregon)**
"Choosing Ethnicity, Negotiating Race: Korean Adoptees in America"

November 4th **David Grusky (Stanford University)**
"The Scary Take-Off: Why Conventional Accounts of the Rise in Inequality are Wrong and Why We Should Wish They Were Right"



Karen Bradley of Western Washington University set off the Fall 2008 Seminar Series with her talk on "Cultural and Structural Factors Affecting the Incorporation of Women into Systems of Higher Education"

Upcoming - Winter 2009 Seminar Series

Jan 27 **Scott Frickel (Washington State)**
"Mapping Ignorance in Post-Katrina New Orleans: A Study of Environmental Knowledge and Non-Knowledge"

As a rule, historians, philosophers, and sociologists of scientific knowledge study knowledge *making*; seldom do scholars study the non-production of knowledge. Yet scientific work involves the interplay of both processes, as described in a socio-spatial analysis of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's hazard assessment of Orleans parish, Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. Findings point toward the theoretical elaboration of knowledge gaps as epistemic forms whose production and organization shapes broader patterns of knowledge/ignorance.

March 17 **Bonnie Erickson (University of Toronto)**
"Untangling the Roots of Tolerance"

Past research suggests that tolerance flows from personal characteristics (especially education), from diversified networks, and from participation in voluntary associations. Earlier work has never included all of these in the same study, so we have not been able to explore alternative theoretical accounts of how these possible causes of tolerance connect to each other and to tolerance. For example, does education lead to tolerance because education opens minds, or because more educated people develop more diversified networks and are more active in associations? Do association members have more tolerance because association activities meet the conditions of the "contact hypothesis," or because members are well educated, or because association activity widens one's networks? Further, both associations and social networks vary in the extent to which they provide the experiences theoretically linked to tolerance, so types of associations and types of networks should have different effects on tolerance. Exploring such variations provides an enriched test of theoretical conjectures. Findings from analyses of the 2004 Canadian federal election study show that tolerance is complex, stemming from a combination of social networks, voluntary association activities, and individual attributes. Complexities include varying effects of different aspects of networks: weak ties matter more than strong ones, and different kinds of weak tie diversity have different effects.

March 31 **Greta Krippner (University of Michigan)**
"Capitalizing on Crisis: The State and the Origins of the Financialization of the U.S. Economy."

April 3 **Yang Yang (University of Chicago)**
"Age-Period-Cohort Analysis in Social Research: What's New?"

Abstract: I provide a summary and synthesis of various new developments in cohort analysis, including new models, methods, and empirical applications for three common research designs in social research: 1) Age-by-time period population data in form of tables of rates; 2) Microdata from repeated cross-section surveys; 3) accelerated longitudinal designs.

April 9 **Moon- Kie Jung (University of Illinois)**
"The Racial Unconscious of Assimilation Theory"

In the past two decades, immigration scholars have revised and revitalized assimilation theory to study the large and growing numbers of migrants from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean and their offspring in the United States. Neoclassical and segmented assimilation theories seek to make sense of the current wave of migration that differs in important ways from the last great wave at the turn of the twentieth century and to overcome the conceptual shortcomings of earlier theories of assimilation that it inspired. Examining some of the central assumptions and arguments of the new theories, this talk offers a critique of their treatment of race. It concludes with a brief proposal for a fundamental reorientation, replacing *assimilation* with *politics of national belonging* as the overarching object of analysis.

For current Seminar Series info
 visit: www.soci.ubc.ca

Academic Launch, September 2008

The Department's **Academic Launch 2008** began with a panel discussion with UBC Professor Emeritus Dr. Pat Marchak, about her book *No Easy Fix: Global Responses to Internal Wars and Crimes against Humanity*.



From the Sociology Students Association (SSA)

The Sociology Students' Association is back in gear for September, following a successful 2007-2008 year. Our mandate is to connect undergraduate sociology students with each other, sociology faculty, and information about careers and graduate school.

After a summer break, in August the SSA participated in UBC Shinerama by getting together to wash cars and raise funds for cystic fibrosis. Shinerama is a Canada-wide campus fundraiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

This year we will be putting on classic SSA events for undergrads, including graduate school information sessions involving faculty and graduate students, career panels involving UBC sociology alumni, and wine and cheese receptions for graduating students. We are also excited to be putting together a sociology undergraduate journal this year and having a number of fundraisers and social events.

Our executive is already working together on materializing our tried and true as well as fresh ideas, and is looking forward to another exciting year.

Marysia and Anna, Co-Presidents



SSA students lathering it up, participating in UBC Shinerama in August - a fundraiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation - at the IGA on Dunbar Street.

Congratulations!

• **Sophia Woodman**, PhD student, recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue PhD fieldwork in China.

• **Katherine Lyon** recent BA Honours grad, chosen as valedictorian for the graduating class in November, 2008.

Longboat Victory...



Green power skimmed the Pacific Ocean waters Saturday morning, September 27th. The SuperStar Sociology boat easily eclipsed the old world record for Sociology voyageur canoes. Going out at 14:12, the boat shattered the 15:00 minute barrier, outpacing the next boat in their heat by over a minute.

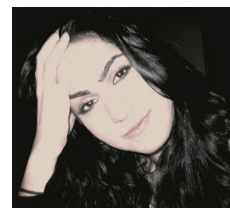
Finishing number one in their division, unheard of in the history of this competition, the team immediately began gearing up for Sunday's final. World famous photographer Ian Tietjen was among the huge crowd Saturday and he managed to snap a few award winning shots (using an ultra sophisticated super fast film). No team members tested for performance enhancing drugs.

After this stunning success the team raced again in the Sunday finals. Here the humanitarian heart of Sociology took hold. Another team capsized their boat after having been rammed by several errant canoes. Ten people were unceremoniously dumped into the cold Pacific. Two of the capsized people, one of whom could not swim, grabbed onto the Sociology canoe. After some moments of confusion the Sociology boat stopped, facilitating a rescue from one of the specially equipped rescue boats. From here the team continued racing, overtaking several other boats who had not only helped to cause the capsizing, but who had left the scene without offering assistance. Sociology roared to a bronze medal finish. Although the Sunday time was slower than the record setting pace of Saturday, the team felt satisfied in not only overtaking most of the competition, but also in the knowledge that none of our competitors were injured.

Training for the 2009 season will begin in a few hours.



Tamara Ibrahim



Wins Naegele Prize

This year I was fortunate to have been awarded the Kaspar Naegele Memorial Prize in Sociology, which I used to attend the 2008 International AIDS Conference. Held this year in Mexico City, this was the first AIDS Conference to be hosted in Latin America. I presented an abstract with my colleagues at AIDS Community Action Network (ACAN), an organization of which I am a co-founder. Our abstract was entitled *Collaborating Communities* and was exhibited in the "Social, Behavioural and Economic Science" track on harm reduction day. Our presentation discussed ACAN's work in the Downtown Eastside in collaboration with the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) from 2006 to 2008.

I will continue to pursue my interest in harm reduction and marginalized communities at the University of Cambridge, King's College where I will be reading for an M.Phil in the Department of Social and Political Science this fall.

Tamara Ibrahim, SOCI BA grad, 2008

Alumni: Where are they now?

From sociology to planning: a natural alignment

Theresa Harding, SOCI BA '99

At the time I registered for a degree in sociology, I could not foresee just how well it would prepare me for my career in community and development planning. I was a single mom with three young children and no educational or employment credentials. I wanted a career that could build on my transferrable life skills. Community development planning aligned with my life skills and my interests. Before graduating from UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP), I needed an undergraduate degree. I wanted to understand social issues that perplexed me, so I chose sociology.

Many aspects of planning are well informed by a sociological perspective. This is increasingly more apparent as planners integrate principles of sustainability: Environmental planning and "greening" behaviour at home and work, Transportation planning that includes cycling and walking, Building and landscaping materials and practices.

Sociology and planning also work closely together on housing issues. The rapidly rising need for affordable housing is the "tip of the iceberg" of layers of submerged social intersections. The need for clear direction at these intersections has more municipalities and private planning agencies hiring social planners for the first time.

Sociology showed that underlying social conditions are a myriad of assumptions located in histories, religions, ideologies, bodies, genders, and more. I learned to look below the surface to better

understand, for example, causes and conditions of homelessness and the lack of rental units for lower income households.

This approach can inform planning principles and policy. It can put in context social intersections, such as gender, race, and class. Understanding how these affect access to affordable housing is essential in designing, for example, a mixed income housing policy. Identifying the demographic implications of closing an elementary school is necessary in recommending to a municipality that new housing be directed to the school catchment area.

Planning involves discussions with members of the public. These are opportunities for planners to listen and learn, as much as they are occasions to raise public awareness of the social circumstances that motivate planning decisions.

The research methods and critical analysis learned in my sociology studies are used frequently to survey communities and stakeholders on a range of topics, and to identify statistical trends. Research outcomes are applied to frame a project, inform content, or make recommendations.

While many perplexing issues, including the notion of answers to them, were unpacked in the sociology classes, the major lessons learned came through the self-reflection inherent in the sociology learning process. Self-reflection and a sociological analysis are essential tools in the kit of a good social planner.

My studies in sociology were brought alive and made relevant by my professors in the department's outstanding faculty, and by my education advisor who deserves a special thank you: Professor Dawn Currie.



David Varnes, SOCI BA '75

David worked in the Canadian air transport and trade union milieu for more than forty years, retired in 2004, and now enjoys the "boomer's dream" as the part-time Secretary-Treasurer of an air transport Local Lodge in Vancouver.

With numerous and detailed recorded experiences in issues like deregulation, air transport safety, NAFTA, Open Skies, 9/11, airline mergers in Canada, and the personalities who shaped this history, whether corporate, governmental, or trade union, coupled with a passion for crisp writing, a history has been written with my "sociological eye and awareness" and submitted in 2008 to Canadian publishers for consideration, in celebration of Canada's 100th year of powered flight in 2009.

Darrell Noakes, SOCI BA '79

I graduated with my sociology degree in 1979. Since then, I've worked in the news media (radio, television, print), government (public relations) and other public sector agencies. I left BC for Saskatchewan in 1982, spending six years working for the federal government in Regina and nearly two years in Ottawa before returning to Saskatchewan. I married and moved to Saskatoon in 1990, a city that struck me as a wonderful place to live when I had first visited nearly 10 years earlier. For the past 16 years, I've worked on my own. I started a bicycle touring, education and advocacy company and also work as a freelance writer and photographer, a calling that I have never been able to give up since my days at UBC and CITR. So, I guess it's true, as noted by Department Head Neil Guppy in the April issue of *Think Sociology!*, we are motivated by a passion to change the world.

Darrell Noakes, Freelance Writing and Photography, Borealis Outdoor Adventure Inc., Saskatoon, SK



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Think Sociology!



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Donations from Sociology alumni have made a positive impact on many deserving undergraduate and graduate students in their studies at UBC. This generous financial support is critical in our continued efforts to provide every opportunity for students to excel within the department and ensure they have access to the resources that give them the best education possible. A gift can be directed to one of the following areas of support:

Sociology Department Excellence Endowment Fund

This fund was established to support the advancement of excellence in the Department. Donations provide for visiting professors, support for publications, graduate and undergraduate student support, seed money for research collaboration and other initiatives.

Sociology Graduate Scholarship

Scholarships have been endowed for graduate students pursuing research studies in Sociology. Our goal is to provide sufficient support so students can devote extended time to their scholarly work.

Kaspar Naegele Memorial Prize in Sociology

This \$1,300 prize has been endowed by Robert (BA '60) and Judith Doll (MA '94) and former students, friends, and colleagues in memory of Dr. Kaspar Naegele, a caring and inspirational teacher and renowned scholar who served as Professor of Sociology from 1954 to 1965 and the Dean of Arts (1964 - 1965). The award is offered to an undergraduate student in the honours or majors program in Sociology.

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Thank you! to the following who have very generously made recent donations to the Department (apologies to anyone whose generosity is not acknowledged here):

Fernando Alves, Penny Bartel, Mr. Kenneth Beckett, Mr. Brian Burtch, Ann Daskal, Umber Dosanjh, Deanna Gilmore, Daphne Grant, Neil Guppy, Theresa Harding, Kristin Helgason, Wendy Johnson, Wendy King, Dr. Carlos Kruytbosch, Peter Maidstone, Vincent Ng, Ms. Rose Ormerod, Ms. Patricia Sandquist, Maureen Sawkins, Richard Saxton, Raj Sihota, Shirley Stonier, John Sutcliffe, Ms. Colleen Walsh, Keith Warriner, Charlene Wee, and the Office of the Dean of Arts.

Attention Sociology Alumni!

The Sociology Department would like to keep in touch with you electronically. With your email address we will be able to send your newsletters via e-mail rather than print, and keep you informed about departmental events such as the Sociology Seminar Series. Reply to us at socihead@interchange.ubc.ca

Are you interested in appearing in our "Alumni - where are they now?" feature? If so please email us a short bio.

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