



# NEWSLETTER

## EASTERN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 14, No. 3, Fall 2000

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT By Jay Demerath

The ESS is well embarked on the road to Philadelphia and its annual climactic meetings next March 1-4. A few postcards from along the way are certainly in order.

First, a number of us were busy on ESS duties at the recent ASA Washington. There was a meeting of the Sociological Forum Editorial Board, presided over by its distinguished editor, **Dick Hall**, of the University at Albany. This was followed by a meeting of our Publications Committee, led by the able out-going chair, **Liliane Floge**, whose successor is **Victor Lidz**. Finally, the Executive Committee spent much more time than it had bargained for on a sunny afternoon with competing commitments. We grappled with a host of clouded fiscal issues.

The ESS continues to March with its head held high but its purse strings tight. Those of us who have already contributed to the new "Crisis Fund" are eager for company. Meanwhile, membership continues to climb towards the 1100 mark necessary to obviate a dues increase for next year, though at the moment any bet on success would be a long shot.

But Philadelphia itself promises to be a tonic for us all. The December

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### Submission Deadline Extended

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Eastern Sociological Society on August 14, it was voted to extend the deadline for submissions for the 2001 Annual Meeting. The new deadline for all submissions is October 15, 2000. All submissions must be postmarked by that date. Please send materials to Dr. **M. P. Baumgartner**, Executive Officer, Eastern Sociological Society, Department of Sociology, William Paterson University, 300 Pompton Road, Wayne, NJ 07470. Please direct any questions about the submission process or the 2001 Annual Meeting to the ESS Executive Office at the above address, or at phone number 973-720-3689, or by email at [ess@wpunj.edu](mailto:ess@wpunj.edu).

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*EDITORS' NOTE: Sociological Forum is one of ESS's most significant undertakings and its prestige has risen steadily under the able management of the current editor, Dick Hall, and his staff. As Dick's term of office draws to a close (see article by Victor Lidz in this issue), the Publications Committee requested that he write an article for the newsletter describing the day-to-day operations of the editorial office.*

**From the Editorial Office  
of Sociological Forum**  
by Richard H. Hall, editor

In this brief note I will describe the operations of the Editorial Office of *Sociological Forum*. The journal is doing very well. The number of papers submitted continues to rise and the

acceptance rate remains low. The only problem that we have is that there is a large backlog of accepted papers. We are working to reduce this backlog.

The editorial operations require continuous attention. Co-managing Editors Heather Laube and Sara Sobieraj and I have to keep up with the continual flow of manuscripts, reviews, faxes, email, voice-mail, and postal messages. We also have to prepare a complete "issue package" to send to Plenum/Kluwer Publishing Company every three months. In 1999, we processed 155 manuscripts. It appears that this volume will increase in 2000.

The process for handling new manuscript submissions is quite straightforward. When a manuscript arrives, I open the package and make an initial judgement about whether or not the

manuscript is suitable for review for *Sociological Forum*. I base this initial decision on the contents of the manuscript. Content that is not suitable includes polemic essays, from any direction, that contain no sociological content. Also, papers that cite no authors since Marx or Weber are returned to the authors. Similarly, papers that cite only the authors themselves are returned. I write a polite letter to the authors in these cases and I rarely hear from them again. These cases are relatively rare, perhaps 5-10 percent of the submissions. We do not include these cases in our manuscript statistics.

After this initial decision, the process is to identify potential reviewers. I start with the list of references in each paper. I try to be careful to identify potential reviewers who are not related in some way to the paper's author(s). This usually works, but there are occasional slip-ups. In most cases, the listed references do not include enough names for potential reviewers. My next resource is the program of ASA annual meetings. Even though we are the Journal of the Eastern Sociological Society, I have always used this national (and international) base for selecting potential reviewers. After I have identified at least six potential reviewers, I take the paper to the journal office.

The next step is to fax or e-mail potential reviewers and ask them if they are willing to complete a review within the next six weeks. We include a copy of the abstract of the paper to our reviewer. We need at least three reviewers for each paper. In many cases, I have to identify additional names for potential reviewers.

In difficult cases, this process can go on for an extended period of time, up to several months. The difficult cases are most frequently papers that cut across specialties. These papers, of course, can turn out to be among the most interesting that we publish.

On a particular manuscript, the process is then to wait for the reviews to be returned. At the present time we have about 16 new manuscripts out for review and 10 revised manuscripts also being reviewed for a second or even third time. The office is always busy.

Once we receive the requested three or four reviews, I make the editorial decision on a manuscript. If all the reviews recommend rejection, I quickly scan the paper to see if I agree, which I almost always do. I then write the dreaded rejection letter. We do not use preprinted forms for this. The opposite outcome has happened only once during my tenure as Editor. Papers are almost never accepted on their initial submission.

The most common outcome, of course, is the "revise and resubmit (r and r)." This outcome may be based on the consensus of the reviewers that a paper might be publishable if it were revised in ways that they specify in their reviews. There is a very high degree of "inter-rater reliability" among reviewers, which makes my job easier. The outcome might also be a result of differences of opinion among the reviewers. I go over each "r and r" before the comments are returned to the author. In my letter to "r and r" authors, I try to pinpoint what I see as the problems with the paper, trying very hard not to over-edit. Once a decision is made, we make copies of each reviewer's

comments and send a copy of all the reviews of a particular paper to each reviewer of that paper. This is a process that takes a little bit of time, but which our reviewers appreciate.

Revised papers come in at varying rates. Some come in quickly, even too quickly, while others take longer, even too long. Authors vary in their eagerness to be published. When revised papers are resubmitted, they are generally sent out to the original reviewers and the review process is repeated. When this review round is repeated, I make another decision. At this point, a paper is accepted or rejected, or a decision is made to request another revision. In most cases, I do not send a paper out for review again in a second revision. Instead, I make the final decision.

I have oversimplified our processes in some ways. There are cases in which we have to plead with reviewers to get critically needed review to us. We have angry authors. We have grateful authors. None of these processes could be completed without support. The University at Albany provides our office space and furnishings. The office equipment, including the computers, is provided by funds generated by the journal itself through the Eastern Sociological Society. The university provides my own office, where I do almost all of my *Sociological Forum* work. If these logistical arrangements were not available, it would be impossible to carry out the editorial operations for the journal.

The results of these processes are the published issues of *Sociological Forum*. We have good, but not perfect, record of

getting issues published on time. Most importantly, all of the evidence points to the fact that we are producing a very good journal.

## **SEARCH FOR NEXT EDITOR OF *SOCIOLOGICAL FORUM* By Victor Lidz**

Richard H. Hall will complete his period as editor of *Sociological Forum*, the journal of the Eastern Sociological Society, on December, 31, 2001. Professor Hall has provided distinguished leadership to *Sociological Forum*, which has grown in pages, readership, prestige, and, most importantly, quality under his editorship. The Society announces its search for his successor with determination to find an editor who will continue *Sociological Forum's* remarkable development.

Candidates for the editorship may submit proposals to Victor Lidz, Ph.D., Chair, Publications Committee, Eastern Sociological Society, 1308 Valley Road, Villanova, PA 19085 before December 31, 2000. Nominations by persons other than candidates are welcomed before November 30, 2000. Candidates should be scholars who have published extensively in leading journals and have previous editorial experience. Proposals from or nominations of women or minority candidates are welcomed.

Proposals should include: a 2-4 page statement of planned editorial policies and innovations for *Sociological Forum*; a complete *Curriculum Vitae*; a statement of previous journal and/or book editorial experience; names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three senior

scholars familiar with one's work and collegial relationships; and a letter addressing the possibility of support for service as editor from one's own academic institution.

It is customary for colleges or universities to offer at least modest support for members of their faculty who serve as journal editors. Such support may include released time from other duties, secretarial, administrative, and/or research assistance, office space, access to supplies, and/or direct financial assistance. Initial proposals need not include formal commitments to support, but should reflect discussion with a chair, dean, or other authorized official about the parameters of possible support.

The Publications Committee will begin to review proposals as they are received. A short list should be compiled by the end of January 2001. The Committee plans to submit a ranked list of three leading candidates to the President and the Executive Committee after its session at the March meetings. Appointment in March will facilitate a smooth transition to the new editor by the end of the year.

**Deadline for  
Submissions  
for Winter Issue  
November 20, 2000**

*Continued from page 1 column 1*

Newsletter will have more to report on the city itself, its culinary features and other attractions, plus the sparkling new hotel site at bargain rates. **David Elesh** is Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. Program planning is also hurtling forward, with more to be announced in December. With the meeting theme of "Culture: Revived, Revised, and Relevant," I am well along in putting together a line-up of heavy hitters who will join in a series of "Thematic Forums" to debate and discuss a wide array of issues concerning culture as both a dependent and independent variable.

Meanwhile, now is the time to submit papers and session topics of your own -- whether or not they bear on the meeting theme. We have extended the deadline until October 15 for materials to be sent to Executive Officer, **Mary Pat Baumgartner**, at William Patterson College. You may submit a one-page paper abstract as an individual presenter, a wholly complete session with several paper abstracts and individuals represented, a possible professional workshop, an author-meets-the-critic session for a new book with both authors and critics listed, or some other program wrinkle that captures your fancy and is likely to attract others.

Philadelphia has been the site of some of our most successful meetings and has always been a great draw. As winter lingers elsewhere in the Northeast, I have it on good authority that Spring will be making an early March appearance in the city of sibling sodality.

## ESS TO HAVE NEW WEBSITE

The Eastern Sociological Society is about to unveil a new and improved website. The site, designed by Iwebsight.com Solutions of Madison, New Jersey, will include extensive information about membership and the annual meeting; a complete Members Directory; a What's New section with online copies of our newsletter as well as other up-to-date announcements; news about awards competitions; the Robin M. Williams, Jr. lecture; elections; and an opportunity for members to pay dues and registration fees online via credit card. Look for the new website around mid-September at [www.essnet.org](http://www.essnet.org)

*See you in  
Philadelphia*

*with your*

- *scholarship*
- *innovation*
- *enthusiasm*
- *smile*

## DISPLAY YOUR BOOK AT THE ESS MEETING!

If you would like your book(s) displayed at the meeting, please contact our Exhibit/Advertising representative, Harve Horowitz at:

Exhibit Promotions Plus, Inc.  
11620 Vixens Path  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
Phone: 410-997-0763  
Fax: 410-997-0764  
Email: [exhibit@erols.com](mailto:exhibit@erols.com)

Exhibit Promotions Plus will contact your publisher.

Please note that should your publisher not arrange to display your book, you can do so yourself by providing a copy to Exhibit Promotions Plus in advance of the meeting, along with a nominal \$20 fee. EPP will then feature your book in the impressive Combined Book Display and will also take orders for your book and forward them to your publisher. (You can pick up your copy of the book at the end of the meeting).

If you have any questions about your exhibiting options, please contact Exhibit Promotions Plus.

## CORRECTION

In the Election Results printed in the previous issue (Summer, 2000), Judith Lorber's affiliations should have been listed as Brooklyn College and the Graduate School, CUNY.

## Society Business

### Report of the Membership Committee

**March 5, 2000**

By Ted Mills, Chair

The committee's work during 1999 was done prior to the Executive Office move to Wayne, NJ. Mailings were sent to former members who had not renewed for 1999, accompanied by a letter from the president; to ASA members in western PA and western NY who were not ESS members; and to 500 department chairs in Northeast. Each mailing invited renewal or new memberships.

Our plans for 2000 are still in formation but will be more extensive.

- 1) We expect to repeat the mailing as done in 1999, and to expand them to include the area around Philadelphia, the site of the next annual meeting.
- 2) We will support a direct appeal from the president to senior sociologists in the region who are not currently ESS members.
- 3) We will develop a list of non-academic sociologists in the region and invite them into membership.
- 4) We will select a group of graduate schools in the region and approach their graduate students and junior faculty for membership 2000.
- 5) We will sponsor a session in the 2001 Philadelphia meeting on associational sociology, dealing with the role of ESS in the discipline.

We welcome an Executive Committee member on our committee, plus advice from officers and members. Our budget needs are hard to estimate at this point, but the suggested \$2500 is probably adequate for these tasks.

### Computer Committee Plans for 2001

By Robert Wood

The ESS Computer Committee has been reconstituted with an expanded membership that included **Robert Wood, chair, Greg Carter, Ian Lapp, Susanne Morgan, Louis Orzack, Arthur Paris, John Pfuhl, and Chris Toulouse**. The committee is interested in exploring the use of computing in both teaching and research, and also the significance of computerization and cyberspace within and between societies around the globe.

The committee maintains a website at [Http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/~sood/Es/computercomm.htm](http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/~sood/Es/computercomm.htm), which includes links to online resources concerning teaching, research, and the digital divide. More specific information about the committee's sessions at the next ESS meetings will be placed on the site as its plans evolve. Currently, the committee is looking into sessions on Internet culture, online classroom culture, and new technological initiatives to support both teaching and curricular development. It welcomes other suggestions as well.

The committee invites sociologists who might be interested in participating in its sessions at the Philadelphia meetings in March 2001 to contact **Robert Wood** at [wood@crab.rutgers.edu](mailto:wood@crab.rutgers.edu).





