

Sociology Department Newsletter

Newsletter for the Alumni and Friends of the Department of Sociology, Grinnell College - Spring 2008

GRINNELL COLLEGE



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Volume 6

My Home in Zambia

by Keli Campbell '05

I had been living in Zambia in the Peace Corps for almost a year when I had my first family member visit me in my village. To see my home and life through the eyes of someone fresh off the plane from a first world country made me realize how settled I was in my little mud hut. I am quite comfortable with candlelight, cooking over a fire, and using a pit latrine. Carting water in jugs to my house is a chore but no longer a burden. Whatever inconveniences exist are a fair trade for living in wild untamed beauty, riding my bike through the bush, and building relationships with people with only a handful of mutually understood words between us. People often focus on the rustic living, but that soon becomes more of a joy than a challenge. The real challenge of the Peace Corps, the unending process, is trying to spend these two years as an asset to my community. How do I address and try to alleviate any of the myriad of troubles that face a rural Zambian subsistence farmer?

When my training group first arrived in Zambia we were told that the three goals of Peace Corps are: 1) to train men and women in your host country, 2) to share American culture with Zambians, and 3) to share Zambian culture with Americans. I initially scoffed at two-thirds of our mission being "cultural exchange." Sure cultural exchange would happen, but I wanted to DO things, have significant work that would make my service worthwhile. Since that beginning stage, when all my theories and ideas were completely unattached to experience, I have come to realize that "exchange" is the only way to do things. Beyond swapping stories about traditional marriage ceremonies, exchange should be my framework for my position here as a foreigner doing development work.

As a Peace Corps volunteer I am working within a system that I do not and really cannot ever understand, with circumstances I have never personally encountered, and with people whose psyches are built from factors and values very different than my own. For these same reasons, development projects whose theories arise from different values are a misfit when imported because they assume different priorities and consequences than actually exist for the people they are intended for. For instance, putting Physical Education into an already overloaded school schedule, when so many pupils go through school without ever learning how to read. Or HIV/AIDS programs that do not take into consideration how people think of

themselves as husbands and wives, men and women, nor consider how people culturally approach death or their ability to alter death's course. It can be argued, is argued, even within my own internal debates, that this understanding gap makes development work mostly a lost cause.



But as an owner of a sociology degree, I remind myself and others that some level of understanding is possible, it just takes a lot more work to suspend your assumptions, ask a lot of questions, and listen to what people tell you about their own lives. I have found that sociological thinking always helps to interpret the complexities of why people make the decisions they do, but now working as a foreigner in a foreign context, it also helps me to remember that my point of view is not a center point but just one point among many.

It may be impossible to step out of your own context and on that point, but it is possible to enter into the conversation believing that both parties are valid, that the exchange is even. The beauty of a framework of exchange is that I enter the conversation not as a lecturer but as one more person with suggestions and ideas. Just as my contribution is anywhere, in my village my contribution is merely my participation, whether my suggestions and questions be used, dropped, or spark a better more appropriate idea. I believe that sustainable development is about helping people articulate and then accomplish the vision they already have for themselves and their community. I cannot bring anything except my part of the conversation, not offered as what should happen, but as simply another building block in the evolution of ideas.

Editor's Note: Keli's community in Zambia is building a library at the school and is raising money for the structure. If you are interested in learning more, go to lwimba.blogspot.com or donate on peacecorps.gov under volunteer projects, Zambia. K. Campbell.

Economic Development in Central Appalachia

by Melissa Fry Konty '95

Melissa Fry Konty earned a Master's degree in Sociology from the University of Memphis Center for Research on Women in 1997 and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Arizona in 2005. After two years as a professor at Auburn University, Melissa decided to move into applied Sociology in the hopes of having a more direct impact on communities in need. She joined a nascent policy



shop at the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) in Berea, Kentucky in August, 2007. Melissa does policy and program research, legislative advocacy, and evaluation work. MACED's approach to community economic development allows Melissa to continue work in her specialty areas: social inequality,

public policy, and organizations. She is married to a fellow sociologist, who is a professor of Criminology at Eastern Kentucky University's College of Crime and Safety. They have two sons (Jackson, 7 and Trevor, 5) and enjoy living in the Appalachian foothills.

Melissa returned to Grinnell in April to visit Chris Hunter's Nonprofit Organizations seminar for a discussion of finance and operations in nonprofit organizations, and she also gave a public talk on MACED's work as it relates to concerns around global climate change and the coal industry in Central Appalachia. The following is an excerpt from her talk:

Central Appalachia must be a priority for any plan to effectively manage the energy crisis, slow climate change, and alleviate poverty in some of America's most destitute communities. Eastern Kentucky is home to 29 of America's poorest 100 counties. The boom and bust cycles of the coal industry have underdeveloped Appalachian Kentucky's human and social capital in ways that have stymied economic progress for generations. Nearly 50% of U.S. electricity comes from coal-fired power plants. Ninety-seven percent of Kentucky's electricity comes from coal, making Kentucky responsible for far more than its share of carbon and other green house gas emissions. In addition, the environmental impacts of current Appalachian coal mining and processing practices are substantial, and they affect the integrity of the water supply for much of the eastern United States.

Not only blowing the tops off mountains to more easily access the coal seams that lie beneath. The practice involves stripping mountains of vegetation and wildlife (literally scraping them raw) and exploding the rock beneath, filling nearby valleys and headwaters, polluting the air, and poisoning ground water supplies with toxins including arsenic, mercury, and selenium. The process destroys homes, damages community and residential wells, and creates significant flooding problems and landslide dangers. After the coal companies mine the coal, scrubber facilities clean the filthy rock for use by power plants. The scrubbing process produces significant toxic waste called sludge or slurry. This liquid waste is stored in slurry ponds that often sit above communities on mountaintop removal sites. Billions of gallons of toxic waste are stored in more than 700 of these ponds across the region. Four of the ten largest dams in the United States contain slurry impoundments in the Appalachian Mountains. In 2002, Martin County, Kentucky experienced the largest toxic waste disaster in U.S. history—larger than the Exxon oil spill—when one of these dams failed.

The Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) is a 31-year-old nonprofit organization that works to empower people and create environmentally and economically sustainable alternatives to the coal industry in Central Appalachia. MACED invests in locally-owned businesses with a focus on working landscapes, community services, arts, and culture. We provide technical assistance and training for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and we demonstrate innovative programs in community financial services, sustainable forest management, and energy efficient enterprises.

Central Appalachia is a region rich in natural resources with a level of bio-diversity second only to the tropical rain forest. The region is also home to strong cultural traditions and pockets of successful entrepreneurship. But the region continues to be one of the most persistently poor and economically distressed in the country. Coal mining, the timber industry, and low-wage service jobs define the economy in the 90 core counties of Central Appalachia. The result is too few economic drivers to meet people's needs. Historical investment defines the region—the market has not worked, so little investment flowed, and because little investment flowed, the market worked less well. These dynamics support the coal industry's stranglehold on the land and the people as they discourage viable economic alternatives in the highlands.

In addition, ineffective local government and coal-driven politics prevent effective state regu-

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Economic Development in Central Appalachia

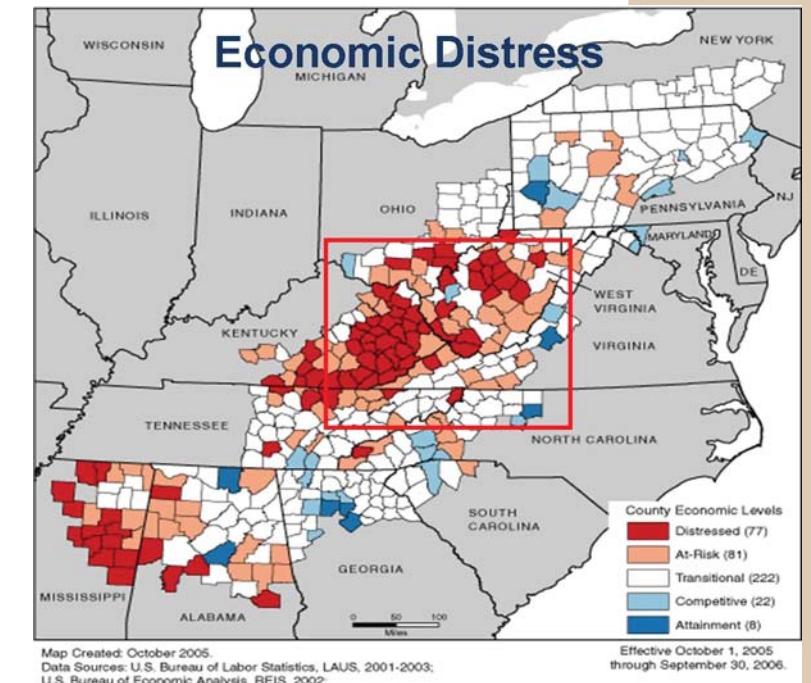
lation and support for healthy markets. These conditions collide today to create poverty, economic dependency, disenfranchisement, and environmental damage. MACED believes that the undervalued and overused resources of the region—natural and human—can be at the center of regional renewal.

We employ multiple strategies and collaborate with diverse organizations and communities to produce meaningful social change. We seek to directly empower and support enterprising people and institutions, help people build wealth to increase control over their lives, change ineffective and unjust policies and institutions, and demonstrate, document, and communicate ideas that work and build hope.

Our Save It Loan provides an alternative to predatory payday lenders and helps low-income workers access credit without putting them further in debt. The Forest Opportunities initiative helps low- and middle-income forest landowners gain earnings from sustainable forest management practices by aggregating credit for stored carbon and trading these credits on the Chicago Climate Exchange. Energy Efficient Enterprises provides energy assessments, conservation plans and loans for nonprofits and small businesses—helping them reduce costs by improving energy efficiency and use of renewable energy. The High Road Initiative supports all of the other programs by working for policy change to support sustainable economic development practices that help people in need.

MACED develops innovative ways to build a sustainable economy that honors the people, the culture, and the beauty and rich natural resources of the Appalachian Region. The Appalachian people,

their culture and their land, have paid a huge price for our fossil fuel-based economy. MACED is looking for ways to ensure that (1) society moves away from the most destructive aspects of our dependence on coal, before it is too late, and (2) the people of Appalachia benefit from the shift away from a fossil fuel economy.



Editor's Note: For more information, visit www.maced.org. Additional resources on mountaintop removal can be found at www.kftc.org and www.ilovemountains.org

Staveteig Returns to Grinnell as Alumni Scholar

Sarah Staveteig '98 visited campus in late spring, 2007, as an Alumni Scholar. Sarah spoke in various classes, including Kent McClelland's "Conflict and Conflict Resolution" course, about the research interests she has been developing as a Ph.D. candidate in the joint Ph.D. program in sociology and demography at the University of California, Berkeley. Sarah has already earned masters degrees in demography and sociology at Berkeley and has compiled a distinguished record in graduate school, earning a National Science Foundation graduate fellowship and an outstanding student instructor award.

A key part of Sarah's visit was her public presentation on "Reproduction in the Wake of Genocide: Contemporary Fertility Trends in Bosnia and Rwanda." As Sarah described it, her current intellectual project seeks to understand the relationship among violence, political instability, and fertility, thus combining her interests in African politics, human rights, demography, and international development. Sarah brings her quantitative expertise

to bear on such questions as whether civil wars and political instability lead to higher fertility. In part, her interests in Africa stem from Sarah's off-campus study in Namibia while she was a student at Grinnell College.

Before starting graduate school at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C., where she began to hone the quantitative skills she first developed majoring in sociology and concentrating in computer science while at Grinnell. At the Urban Institute, Sarah studied demography and poverty and published several national reports. Her active research program continues at Berkeley, and we were delighted she could come to Grinnell and share some of it with us.



David Cook-Martín

David Cook-Martín (Ph.D., UCLA) joined the Sociology Department in the summer of 2007. He teaches Introduction to Sociology, International Migration, Research Methods, Citizenship Matters, and Racial, Ethnic and National Formations. He is a former Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Latin American Sociology Mellon (UCLA) and National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellow (UC Irvine). David is a political sociologist whose work on migration and nationality policies in Latin America and Europe has been published in the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, and *Citizenship Studies*. He also has published chapters on transnational religious networks, ethnic return migration, and Latin American migrations to Spain. He is currently completing a book entitled *The Elusive Citizen: Statecraft and Belonging in Argentina, Italy, and Spain*. He is involved in a major collaborative project entitled *Race, Immigration and Citizenship in the Americas* (RICA) that studies the links between political liberalism and racialized preferences in the immigration and nationality laws of 22 countries in the Americas since 1850. At Grinnell, David serves as a member of the College's Center for International Studies Advisory Board.

So that's his formal profile. What makes this guy get up the morning, besides his two kids and a dog? Simply put, he's curious about what makes the social world tick and especially about the unequal relations that characterize most of its domains. How do people and institutions get their way or exercise power? What are the consequences of the exercise of power? He examines these questions through the prism of international migration and citizenship because changes in political jurisdiction and country membership often lay bare

Kesho Scott - This has been a strange and productive year for me. Strange, in that I was full of energy and remained that way until the last day of class. My Tutorial: "Black Men in Higher Education" debated the "endangered species" theory applicability in the 21st century, and teaching "Race and Ethnicity" had a more expansive set of discussions about being "raced" white and "doing white ethnicity" as a segue way to discussions about privilege, capitalism, and globalization. In the "Social Movements" course students dissected the strengths and weakness of the Green Revolution, new strategies for the Social Justice and Environmentalism movements as well as the new challenges of linking sociology to the study of popular culture. My 24 interviews on the "habits of survival" of African American male graduates from Grinnell College, 1950-2005 is now complete. I am sifting through the themes that will make this work redefine and

what is not self-evident about power when viewed from a single national perspective.

The flipside of this preoccupation with power is how to bring it into the learning process. In the classroom, this has meant the use of case studies that illustrate political dynamics and generate meaningful explanations. Case studies are presented through narratives, movies, and visiting speakers. It also has meant original research by students in standard courses or in Mentored Advanced Projects (MAPs). This past fall, David supervised a MAP by Sarah Fowler '08 that explored the affective costs of female migration from Ecuador to Spain. Sarah complemented fieldwork that she had completed in Ecuador with interviews of immigrants and of David's academic colleagues in Madrid. This summer David will coordinate Mentored Advanced Projects with four Grinnell students who will work on RICA.

Finally, what's the dirt on this seemingly mild-mannered and perennially flustered professor. Football – the kind you play with your feet – is a life-long passion. He has coached soccer for several years in Los Angeles and now works with his younger son's team in Grinnell. He has many a heated discussion about strategy and technique with his adolescent son who plays with the Des Moines Menace. If you want to see David in an altered state, come over during an important match or watch him on the sidelines at his kids' games. David has of late neglected this passion to train Marley, a rambunctious black labrador pup. Claudia, David's partner, says he spends way too much time playing with Marley in the backyard, reduced to a bumbling semblance of his former adult self. What does this portend for the future of sociology at Grinnell? Only time will tell, but in what concerns David, it may literally have gone to the dogs.

transcend traditional models of American and African American leadership in an Obama moment/election year. And, finally my research on sexual harassment in African universities morphed into a more intensive search of the ways that harassment is challenging inherent heterosexist/homophobic traditions in Africa. I also am collecting data on the early "sheroes" of the Gay and Lesbian movements in Ghana and Ethiopia. It has been a productive year overall, and I look forward to my sabbatical next year, which will result in the completion of a manuscript and several smaller works.

Chris Hunter - As the 2006-2007 school year ended, I was delighted that I was no longer serving on the Executive Council as the Social Studies Division Chair, and no longer chairing the Board of Directors of MICA. I was even more delighted to be heading off to teach in Grinnell-in-London

Elizabeth Erbaugh

Betsy Erbaugh is in a two-year faculty appointment at Grinnell College, replacing Susan Ferguson, during her sabbatical in 2007-2008 and Kesho Scott, during her sabbatical in 2008-2009. Erbaugh's research focuses on the dynamics of gender, race, social class, and sexuality in social movements. As the basis for her doctoral research, she conducted fieldwork with queer women engaged in community organizing to address intimate partner violence in New Mexico from 2002-2006. This project has led to multiple papers and conference presentations on the construction of collective identity and social problems in community organizing. It also has provided fodder for writing and teaching about the "queering" of social movements and of domestic violence as a social problem.

More broadly, Erbaugh's research and teaching interests encompass community organizing, intersecting identities, violence in multiple forms (personal, cultural, structural and beyond), the U.S. welfare state, queer theory, and qualitative research. She has a passion for ethnographic research methods and enjoys sharing her experiences of participant observation and in-depth interviewing with Grinnell College students.

Erbaugh grew up in Minneapolis and comes to Grinnell by way of Boston and Albuquerque. She completed her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of New Mexico (UNM) in May 2007. The delivery

Hunter, continued...

with Judy. We had a great time in London, marked by good students, nice weather, wonderful theater, and time to do some reflecting and writing. The only down side was the terribly weak dollar, but we survived thanks to our love of walking, the newly free museums, and the visits from all our friends and family. Returning to campus was a bit of a shock, in fact, given the terrible winter and my heavy course load. Still, I had the pleasure of teaching my NGO seminar again (with alumnae visitors, which is always fun), and could incorporate more international material, thanks to London. I will devote the summer to writing and planning for next fall's NGOs seminar and a Deviance course, and what may be my final tutorial, on community organizing again, before I take senior faculty status in a few years.

Karla Erickson - I am delighted to have finally completed the manuscript based on my dissertation. *The Hungry Cowboy: Selling Service, Smiles, and Community in a Neighborhood Restaurant* will be published by the University Press of Mississippi early in 2009. Over the years, this manuscript has been improved greatly by the advice of my colleagues, and especially by the editorial wisdom of Judy Hunter and a sociology student, Brock Webb.

With that project complete, I am looking forward to committing myself to my next research project

of her dissertation was followed two weeks later by the delivery of her first child, Oscar, and two months later, by a move to Grinnell to begin her two-year teaching position. Since joining the Sociology faculty Erbaugh has taught courses on research methods, gender, and queer theory, as well as Introduction to Sociology.

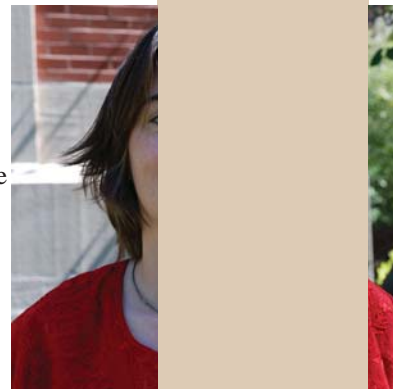
Right from her first year at UNM, Erbaugh also served as the student advisor for Peace Studies and on the Women Studies Executive Committee. Her courses at UNM included Research Methods Lab, Deviant Behavior, Women in Contemporary Society, and Dynamics of Prejudice.

Erbaugh earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in International Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame. To earn this degree, she was selected to participate in a one-year intensive interdisciplinary program of study with scholars from over twenty different countries, focusing on transnational community building, conflict resolution, and social change.

In her second year at Grinnell, Erbaugh will teach a new course in social inequality, begin to write scholarly articles, and begin work on her first book. She plans to remain active in the Early Career Faculty group, the Gender and Women's Studies program, and the Queer Studies Cluster.

on care and community in paid end-of-life elder care. The College awarded me a Harris Junior Faculty Leave for the upcoming 2008-09 academic year to pursue this project. I will use the time away from teaching to launch the next stage of my ethnographic research. Along with sociology students Alyssa Penner, John Burrows, Margie Scribner and Kate Howard, who will be conducting Mentored Advanced Projects (MAPS) with me, this summer, I will begin my regular observations at the Mayflower Nursing Home in Grinnell. The College also awarded senior sociology student Madison Van Oort a competitive post-baccalaureate research assistant position. Madison will use the position to assist me with my research on producers and consumers of elder care, as well as conduct her own original research in Des Moines at a comparative research site. In addition to these ongoing projects, parts of my research on gender and labor in the new economy were published in Michael Kimmel's *Gendered Society Reader* (Oxford, 2007), and an anthropological anthology entitled *The Restaurants Book* (Berg, 2007). I also wrote a chapter on representations of work in film, which will be part of a new text entitled *Sociology Through Film* (Sage, 2008).

This was just sociology, the professional newsletter for the Midwest Sociological Society. That editorial position will last for the next three years. This year I worked on the search committees for Gender and Women's Studies, Sociology, and the Office of the Registrar.



Mentored Advanced Projects (MAPS)

by Sarah Fowler '08

During my semester abroad in Ecuador, it seemed like everyone I met had a family member living in Spain. The phenomenon struck close to home when my own host parents began to plan their move to Spain, and I witnessed the fights and tearful conversations between them and my host siblings. Keeping in mind that I needed to choose a topic for my Latin American Studies senior MAP project, I decided to do a little more research. I worked with a professor from the study abroad program to develop a very basic questionnaire about how people felt about their family members living in Spain. I walked around Otavalo, the small city where I was living at the time, and easily found people who wanted to talk about their far-off relatives.



I discovered that a sociology professor, David Cook-Martín, specialized in migration issues, and I immediately asked him to work with me on this project. He agreed, and I began meeting with him and Professor Silva (Department of History) to develop my thesis. While compiling my preliminary research, I realized that I could only tell one side of the story—that of the Ecuadorians who were left behind. Wouldn't it be better, I thought, if I could talk to the migrants themselves? I submitted a proposal to the MAP committee, and I spent the week of fall break in Madrid, the capital of Spain and the center of the Ecuadorian immigrant community. I visited

Ecuadorian immigrant associations and conducted in-depth interviews. Later, I transcribed and translated these interviews, and they formed the basis of my final paper.

I found that both migrants and those they leave behind greatly underestimate the affective costs of migration. Research in sociology and other disciplines has tended to focus on the decision to migrate as a cost-benefit situation—potential migrants weigh the costs of leaving their families behind against the benefits of earning wages in a different country, and invariably, they decide that the benefits outweigh the costs. However, most individuals underestimate the difficulties of staying in touch, believe that they will be able to send home more remittances than is actually possible, or do not realize the emotional toll and the infrequency of visits back home. In the short term, it appears that the affective costs of migration are quite high, but in the long term, the benefits of education and higher standards of living brought about by remittances could outweigh the costs. Ecuadorian migration to Spain is a very recent phenomenon, so researchers must wait to fully understand the implications of this vast movement.

Working with Professor Cook-Martín was a very rewarding experience. He always had suggestions of other authors or papers that I should read, and his enthusiasm for my project kept me motivated. He was very generous with his time, and his door was always open to me. He always had great ideas for my paper and my presentation, and he gave me great opportunities, like the chance to present my research to his class. I am very grateful for the chance to work with David, and I know that I will always be able to count on his support in the future.

Other Mentored Advanced Projects (MAPS)

Irby, Alvin -- with Chris Hunter - Fall 2006
"The Causes of School Dropout"

In the first MAP, Alvin reviewed high school dropout research and successfully isolated important risk factors which would help identify at risk students for a summer dropout intervention and leadership development program. In the second MAP, "Case for a Summer Dropout Prevention and Leadership Development Program" -Spring 2007, Alvin explored specific implementation, efficiency, evaluation, and sustainability challenges dropout intervention programs have faced. Additionally, it focused on two main questions: What has been done to address the dropout? What lessons can be learned from the successes and failures of intervention or prevention programs? Using these guiding questions, Alvin designed a dropout intervention program called "Journey America," wrote a grant proposal, and developed part of an implementation plan.

Liz Carrier --with Chris Hunter - Spring 2007
"Non-Heterosexual Athletes at Grinnell: Issues of Identity, Community and Diversity Surrounding Sexual Orientation and Athletic Teams"

Liz interviewed 27 student athletes at Grinnell College to investigate whether Grinnell's relative acceptance of difference in sexual orientation, compared to other colleges, extends to athletic teams at Grinnell. More narrowly, she examined whether sexuality affects whether athletes embrace an "athlete" identity, how close athletes are to their teammates, whether other identity differences besides sexuality are or are not accepted, and what things the most accepting teams on campus have in common. Her one-sentence version of her findings was "Their experience wasn't perfect, but it was a lot better than it would have been anywhere else."

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Alternative Spring Break

by Chris Neubert '08

There is no experience at Grinnell that brings people closer, creates more communal solidarity, than Alternative Break. Billing itself as a two-week intentional community, Alt Break succeeds by sending several groups of ten students throughout the United States to fulfill service goals they have established and explore topics of interest in that location. My own personal Alt Break experience was relatively recent. This last March, my group traveled to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation of South Dakota, where we spent time tutoring and playing with children in an elementary school, helped construct a house for a descendant of Chief Red Cloud, hand fed a herd of bison, and put up a series of tipis that we later slept in.

There is a collective sense of sadness and desolation on the reservation that is caused, in part, by its relative isolation that almost forces people to form communities in order to survive. Communities, wherever they exist, are a source of hope, and on the reservation, our 10-person community from Grinnell was able to make a difference, however small, because we were bonded to each other and connected to the people on the reservation. Instead of seeing only the poverty---which is obvious and prevalent---we were able to work with locals who were actively engaged in healthy community development. For a brief period, we became a part of this positive change, and we were able to see the people of the reservation as much more than poverty-stricken inhabitants of a desolate land.

Of course, if our communal isolation didn't bring my group together, then the unusual circumstances of our life on the reservation certainly did. It is true that each Alt Break program has limited resources to work with and often must rely on the generosity of alums, parents, or local organizations, but, at times, it seemed like our group had almost nothing to start with. We spent almost every night sleeping on the gym floor of an elementary school, and more than once were awakened by

Filial Piety and Feminism: The Intersection of Traditional Chinese Culture and Second Wave Feminism on the Social Class Status and Social Class Mobility of Chinese American Women

by Madison VanOort '08

During the summer of 2007, I analyzed Professor Susan Ferguson's interviews of 30 never married Chinese American women. I began my research by examining the social class status of the respondents. After completing a literature review, as well as conducting both qualitative and quantitative data analyses, I discovered that this group of Chinese American women was unique in their extremely above-average socio-economic status. I argue that this phenomenon can be partially attributed to the respondents' social locations,

the sounds of lunch tables being moved into our temporary bedrooms. We ate most of our lunches in their locker room and at one point a second grade teacher surprised us while having dinner. After joining us for our nightly meal of PB&J, she invited us back to her home to play Pictionary. A little unusual, yes, but the absurdity of our situation brought us closer together, and linked us to a community with its own unique stories to tell.

There were a plethora of similar moments, a little crazy, ridiculous perhaps, but always fun and always bringing us closer together. The climax of our two-week adventure came near the end of our time on the reservation, when we were invited by one of our contacts to participate in a sweat lodge ceremony. The sweat lodge is one of the most sacred objects in Lakota culture, and the opportunity to be included in the ceremony is an honor that many outsiders do not receive. We arrived at the sweat lodge around sunset and spent the next several hours in silent contemplation in absolute darkness. As the burning rocks in the central pit pushed temperatures past 100 degrees, our new friends continued chanting loudly near the opening of our lodge. I realized then that to an outsider this moment might seem a little odd, but for us it was an emotional and spiritual moment where everyone in the group realized that we were changed, connected to each other, and connected to the land and the people who live there.

Not every Alt Break group has the chance to sweat so profusely with the people they work with, but whether they are trailblazing in the forests of Washington or organic farming in California, each group returns to Grinnell closer to each other, with new ideas, and connected to new friends in different places. Fundamentally, the Alt Break program is premised on the idea that in order to do good in a community, it is first essential to understand and become a part of that community. For many, this experience not only connects them to people and places very different from their own homes, but also strengthens their bonds of community with fellow Grinnellians.



specifically focusing on the influence of the second-wave feminist movement and on the influence of Chinese cultural values. I presented my results at the 2008 Iowa Sociological Association Annual Meeting at Grinnell College and at the 2008 Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.



In Search of "It"

by Alisha Saville '09

Plates filled with macaroni and cheese cluttered the table as I listened to my friends laughing and talking.

I had just come back from study abroad and was delighted to see my friends again. Jokes bounced around the table, and as each friend added his or her opinions to the mix, our discussion slowly morphed into musings about life after Grinnell — Peace Corps, culinary school, volunteering in Ecuador, working on an Alaskan barge, working at the Smithsonian. I thought, "Wow. My friends are going to have amazing adventures." Not one

had misgivings about the lack of a definite path. They had faith that their ideas and passions would lead them to new and unusual experiences. A spark of excitement radiated from my friends as they explained their ideas. Their fervor reaffirmed my thoughts: That's it, that's what I want. I want to feel that excitement, that passion for life, exploration, connection, creating change.

That's the feeling I believe in.

Looking for "it" hasn't been easy. I didn't recognize that "it" was missing from my life until a friend jokingly said, "Alisha, you're starting to sound like us now — jaded!" I thought, "He's right. I do sound jaded." It was a feeling I'd had for quite awhile. I saw my fellow Grinnellians enthusiastically engaging with their passions. I wondered why I wasn't engaged in the same way. I had so many ideas and interests, but somehow my passions had dulled and were shoved into the corner of "someday." The inner wellspring of enthusiasm had faded.

Current Senior Plans

Allison Amphlett

Next year I will be working as the activity coordinator at Rachael's Women's Center, a day shelter in Washington, D.C., with the Lutheran Volunteer Corps.

Allison Berger

Next year I plan to be working for an AmeriCorps program to provide health services to underserved populations in the Washington, D.C. area while I apply to medical school.

Chevon Chapman

In June, I will be moving to Jackson, Mississippi. While there, I will intern with (trustee member and alum) Chief Justice Henry Wingate of the Southern District of Mississippi, attend trade school,

Then things began to change. I met a medley of people with a verve and vivaciousness that astonished me. They laughed themselves silly over the state of a kitchen, were invested in their community, and exuded such fervor for life — I couldn't help but admire and secretly envy their passion. I wanted to know what motivated them. I wondered where they got "it," and why "it" hadn't struck me with a love-tipped arrow yet.

The summer and winter beliefs through their determination to look at life and laugh, and the way they took pleasure in life's details. For some reason I just didn't feel the same way.

They couldn't escape their anti-city lifestyles.

Group meals on the porch, intense discussions, and bike rides over gorgeous rolling hills flavored my summer. For the first time, I felt part of a true community. These Grinnellians had known me a short time, yet they treated me with familiarity and warmth. They seemed to believe in my ideas and encouraged me to explore them.

When summer ended, I sensed a personal change taking place. I hoped my re-emerging belief in life's possibilities would still be present once I returned from study abroad.

After my first week back in Grinnell, I became convinced that my perceptions and beliefs had truly changed. As I listened to my friends, I realized what "it" was — a passion for creating change and a belief that they could have a positive impact.

College is about Grinnell with Grinnell of intelligent, complex, and passionate people, and the College provides opportunities to actively engage our passions. Grinnell's strength is fostering a connected community of people inspired to take their smarts, passions, and ideas to the world. I have been inspired to continue building community by becoming actively engaged in it.

and finish applying for law school. By the end of next spring through the summer of 2009, however, I plan to go abroad for service work either as a teacher or as an assistant at a women's shelter or something of that nature. I am currently undecided about the exact location, but I would like to be in either west or southern Africa or in Latin America. Then, I will return to the States to attend law school in fall of 2009.

Haddie Dowson

I will be spending the summer in Argentina with my family. I will be living in Buenos Aires, which is supposed to be amazing. In the fall, I will begin a teaching fellowship in Pasadena, California at the Polytechnic School as a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade math teacher. (Continued on page 9)

Current Senior Plans, cont.

Rachel Engh

Next year I will be working at Lifelong AIDS Alliance in Seattle for Lutheran Volunteer Corps.

Erica Garrecht-Williams

I will be doing a year of Americorps service at Community Homestead in Wisconsin, which is an intentional community and organic farm, working with people with disabilities.

Hanna Hakim Quezada

I will be a Service Coordinator for Los Niños, a social service agency in New York City that works with children with developmental problems.

Steven Johnson

Next year I will be working on my master's degree in Urban Policy at The New School, with a possible concentration in Economic and Community Development.

Medora Kealy

This summer I will be working for Proteus, a nonprofit in Des Moines, doing pesticide education for migrant farm workers (in Spanish!). After that the future is wide open.

Allie Kossoy

I'm planning to travel after school! A week after graduation I will be flying to Israel and exploring the country by bike on a free 10-day Birthright Trip. The day I get back from that adventure I will be meeting 30 other crazy college students to bike across the United States on a program called Bike and Build. Bike and Build is a nonprofit that sends students biking across the United States to bring awareness to the affordable housing crisis and to help build housing with programs such as Habitat for Humanity. My specific route is from Boston to Santa Barbara and will take two months! Finally, from there I move to Thessaloniki, Greece, where I will participate in the Grinnell Corps, working with boarding school students at Anatolia College.

Fiona Martin

I am attending the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute for 12 weeks, after that I will be a union organizer with the state workers union, AFSCME.

Christopher Neubert

I have accepted a job with Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement in Des Moines beginning June 16th.

Raji Manjari Pokhrel

The plan as of now is, starting in July, I will be working as an organizer in training with the Service Employee International Union (SEIU).

This work will take me all over the United States! Alternatively, I might end up with an internship doing refugee resettlement-based community work (which is what I really want to do!) and hopefully, land a job in that field.

Amy Rothbaum

My application to the Peace Corps has earned me a nomination to the Caribbean, working with Youth and Business Development, as well as the privilege of participating in the arduous "clearance process." Translation: the Peace Corps has not yet extended an official job offer and anything may change between now and when I am supposed to leave in August!

Emily Sipfl

I will be working as an Americorps volunteer at the Chicago Rehab Network, an advocacy group for low-cost housing in Chicago.

Michael Tran

For the next two years I will be serving with the Peace Corps in a health extension program in central Asia. I will be working as a Health Promotion Specialist in the Kyrgyz Republic.

April Tripp

I plan to become a middle school teacher in my hometown of Jackson, Mississippi while pursuing a Master's of Education degree at Mississippi College.

Irina Usherenko

I am doing an Americorp type program called AVODAH (a Jewish program), and I will be working in New York with the Medicare Rights Center in Brooklyn. I'm very excited. I will also be applying to Medical School and hopefully that is where I'll be in the near future.

Madison Van Oort

I have accepted a Post-Baccalaureate Research Assistant position funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. I will be conducting original research alongside Professor Karla Erickson on the topic of hospice care.

Jeffrey Witz

I am moving to Chicago and, although I do not have anything in particular that I am going to be doing there, I am going to eventually get my real estate license.

Lindsay Young

After graduating I will move back home to Kansas City, spend three weeks in Sweden swing dancing, look for a job in Kansas City (maybe with a nonprofit), and get married to the love of my life, Brad Browne, in May 2009.

Graduating Seniors 2008

Allison Amphlett

Leslie Aquino

Allison Berger

Colette Boilini

Katrina Brooks

Chevon Chatman

Lindsay Dowson

Rachel Engh

Evelyn Gandara

Erica Garrecht-

Williams

Abigail Griffith

Hanna Hakim

Quezada

Steven Johnson

Matthew Johnson

Medora Kealy

Christopher Knap

Alexandra Kossoy

Fiona Martin

Lauren Matsuo

Caitlin Morley

Christopher Neubert

Michelle Pham

Raji Pokhrel

Katharine Randall

Emily Reiersgaard

Amy Rothbaum

Benjamin Schragger

Emily Sipfl

Sarah Smith

Sara Thomas

Mike Tran

April Tripp

Irina Usherenko

Madison Van Oort

Jeffrey Witz

Lindsay Young



Number of Current Sociology Majors

Seniors 36

Juniors 23

Sophomores 23



Sociology Department Newsletter

Tributes to John H. Burma (1913-2006) ---

---Doris Schmidt '45

I had Dr. Burma as a Sociology professor for two years. My major was Sociology, but I had had no classes in it, and he helped me with beginning sociology and second year—I made it through. Graduated with a degree in Sociology. He was very patient and encouraged me through my two years at Grinnell.



---Lou Frank '51

I appreciated the article in the Sociology Newsletter memorializing John Burma. When you asked for anecdotes regarding him, the enclosed letter came to my mind. My sister found

GRINNELL COLLEGE
GRINNELL, IOWA

DIVISION OF
SOCIAL STUDIES

May 29, 1950

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kurth
2048 Fifth Avenue S.E.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Kurth:

Having come to know Lou well during this year, I'd like to drop you a note to tell you that I think she is a very fine, sweet girl. It seems to me that she has matured very considerably during the year, intellectually as well as in personality, and I am expecting much from her next year. She has been a real help to me in the office, and I am looking forward to having her help me next year. I have personally been pleased at the growing affection between Lou and Bill Frank. It seems to have been good for them both. Unlike a few of our couples, Lou and Bill stay well within the bounds of good taste, which not only is pleasing, but speaks well for both of them. In short, it has been a pleasure to have Lou, I'm glad she's coming back, and I wanted you to know it.

Most cordially,

John H. Burma

JHB:jl

it when she was going through my parents' papers. It is now beautifully framed and was presented to Bill and me on our 50th anniversary five years ago. I do not recall ever having seen the letter, but evidently John Burma was watching Bill and me more closely than we realized. I send it to you as a testimony to the concern he had for his students.

---Raymond Rymph '57

John would have loved the students of today with their involvement with women and minorities in the "real world". Did you know, by the way, that his second wife had to resign her faculty position at Grinnell College when she married John? Also, that Grinnell denied admission to the daughter of the very distinguished sociologist Donald Cowgill (a close friend of John's) because she was epileptic. Times have changed!

---Murry Nelson '69

I was a sociology major and Ben Nefzger was my adviser, but John Burma provided a lot of the insight and inspiration for my later academic success. His strength in Hispanic groups and their integration into American society was a revelation to me and that, along with interest in other under-represented minorities, led to my focus on those groups as my academic interest area. My senior thesis/project work focused on societal exploitation of homosexuals, something that was difficult to pursue because of the lack of information available at the time. My biggest source of research material in 1968 was the Playboy Library in Chicago. Despite the nature of the work and its seeming lack of academic rigor, Burma was supportive and encouraging. He pushed me to present my work at the Midwest Sociological Association meeting in 1969 in Omaha, and he took a Grinnell car and drove three other students and me to Omaha. They stayed in the hotel; I stayed in a Creighton dorm room with a friend of a friend from Grinnell. Burma also assured me that he could get me a graduate assistantship to a graduate program at Tennessee, but I chose to go to law school. Ultimately, I left law school, went into teaching, got some other degrees and have been at Penn State for 32 years. My public school and American Studies teaching still reflects much of what I got from Burma in content, academic structure, and patience. I was saddened by his death, but always enjoyed his gruff compassion. I also loved his brush cut, which belied his liberal thought and teaching.

---Cynthia C. Maier '70

I was sad to read the "In Memoriam" for Dr. Burma in the Sociology Department Newsletter, but it does not surprise me. I had exchanged Christmas cards with Dr. and Mrs. Burma until just a couple of years ago, and then I heard nothing. Since I knew that Dorothy had sent out the cards, I figured that she must have passed away, but reading about Dr. Burma's Alzheimer's disease explained why my cards were not returned and yet were not answered.

(Continued on page 11)

Tributes to John H. Burma, continued

The Truth Telling Hour

by David Hagstrom '57

"Dave, my most significant learnings in life (the events that have made the most positive difference in my life) - have all come as a result of failures." These surprising words were passed along to me by my academic advisor---as I questioned why I'd received a grade of D on my mid-term exam.

My professor, John Burma, greeted me as I arrived at his office with a broad smile, and this invitation: "I know why you're here. Thanks for coming to see me. Let's take a walk. I have a gift and a promise to present to you." We proceeded down the hall and entered a completely empty auditorium. In the balcony of that auditorium, as we sat side by side, Dr. Burma shared the "incidents of difficulty" from his life, the traumas that became (as he put it) "terra firma for every future success." He asked me to listen to his whispered admission: "Dave, I've learned practically nothing from my successes," he explained quietly, "all of the learned progress that has come to me has come from incidents like getting a D in a sociology exam."

Truthfully, my advisor's stories of failure didn't offer much comfort during that time of anguish. I was devastated! I thought that I would soon be Grinnell College history! Was Dr. Burma just giving me a way out, an invitation to move on to whatever was next?

As it turned out, however, John Burma's failure stories weren't a way out; they were "a way in." With each passing day (over the 50 years since that hour-long time of truth telling), Dr. Burma's quiet moments with me have---more and more---filled the self-confidence places in my heart.

Over time, I've discovered the truthfulness of Maier, continued...

Dr. Burma was the main reason I became a soc major, although I had always had a leaning that way. He taught the courses that were in fields of interest to me, such as Minorities and Criminology rather than Theory, and he is surely the reason why I did the ACM program in Costa Rica during my junior year, since he had been down there just a couple of years before. I got to know him particularly well because I was his department secretary for three of my four years, and it was a very special friendship and mentorship. He even let me use the department's electric typewriter to type my personal papers instead of my old manual Olivetti-Underwood!

Since Grinnell made (Temple) M.S.Ed. and special education respectively, and I currently teach dyslexics at a 13-year-old school, where I was a founding teacher. In the middle of my

John Burma's stories for myself. Without question, my most significant learnings in life have come from my failures. My successes haven't taught me much. But my failures... they've given me very strong direction. They've been my "ticket up and on" (Dr. Burma's expression). As a matter of fact, that mid-term D led to my kicking rote memorization out of my life, and to my embracing (loving) - the very process of learning. Since graduate school, I've had a fascination with the way I learn (with the ways we all learn). Because of that sociology grade (and its aftermath), I sink myself deep into whatever I feel passionate about, and I invite myself into what's to be learned. I lose myself in the moment of the task, the speech, the writing (or the whatever), and I experience the joy of being a learner.

So, in my life, I think what's described here says about that hour, except as I was about to pull out of my auditorium seat, John Burma stopped me with these final thoughts: "Dave, there's one more thing that I have to pass along to you this afternoon. I've given you a gift, and now I want to give you a promise. Here is my promise to you: I will always believe in you. I believe in you, unconditionally, right now! And, I will always believe in you. If you will please, remember always my promise to you."

Well, I have never forgotten the gift or the promise. Just as with his failure stories, Dr. Burma's promise has become an integral part of who I am. I am a product both of my failure launchings and of John Burma's promise to believe in me.

What a fine hour of truth telling that was, for him, and for me. John Burma, I thank you.

teaching career I used my sociology skills for five years as a medical researcher helping doctors write research protocols, editing their journal submissions, and collecting field data. Those soc courses came back to haunt me after all, and I loved those five years!

All this is to say that Dr. Burma had a profound effect on how I view the world and how I have raised my children. My daughter, who is just finishing her junior year as a French major at Haverford, was almost a soc minor, but she can't fit in the right courses to meet the requirements. She, too, was greatly influenced by one soc prof at Haverford who sparked her love of the subject. And so, the legacy of sociology professors lives on.



Alumni Updates

Elizabeth Beck Shank '43 is a retired worker from the American Red Cross (Atlanta and Washington, D.C) and the Children's Center (Oakland, CA and Sacramento, CA. Elizabeth spends her time now doing volunteer work and keeping up with nine grandchildren and two great grandsons.

Doris Schmidt '45 is retired and lives in Sacramento, California.

Orly Edelist Burg '78 has a masters of social work degree from the University of California at Berkeley. Orly works as a consultant (licensed social worker) for two agencies that deal with the elderly population. One agency provides consultation to social workers in nursing homes and adult day health care agencies and the other provides care management to help frail seniors remain in their own home.

Diem-My Bui '97 is a visiting professor at University of Illinois at Chicago.

Alice Gates '97 is using her Joseph Wall Award to fund: "Advancing Leadership for Worker's Rights," an ongoing project in Michigan. Project objectives include training and supporting a core team to lead the Wastenaw County Worker's Center (WCWC). The WCWC's mission is to provide advocacy and "a safe space for low-wage workers to organize to find collective solutions to workplace problems." Gates, a founding member of WCWC, acted as project director last summer. The group has made significant progress toward its goal of establishing a voice for low-wage workers in Wastenaw County. Gate's Wall Award supports training of community leaders in basic organizing skills. The award also supports training for the board of directors to encourage the sustainability of the organization. Gates says, "Developing a base of trained, confident leaders will help us create a power base prepared to advance workers' rights, improve wages and conditions, and guarantee a meaningful voice in the conditions of work."

Aaron Wagner '99 has applied to an M.A. program at the School of Consciousness and Transformation at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Tina Wildhagen '02 completed her Ph.D. in sociology in May at the University of Iowa. In July, Tina will assume a tenure-track position in the Department of Sociology at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Tina says her interest in inequality in education was piqued at Grinnell, and this interest has continued to guide her research agenda ever since. After living in Iowa for the last ten years, Tina and her partner look forward to moving to a different

region of the country. Though Tina is a vegetarian, her partner looks forward to sampling some fresher seafood! Still, Tina says she will miss Iowa, the place that she has come to know as home.

Julie Dona '03 is a J.D. candidate at New York University School of Law.

Ann Mogush Mason '03 writes: "Since I graduated in 2003, I spent a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the University of Minnesota Literacy Initiative, and then stayed on as their Graduate Assistant while I completed an M.Ed program in elementary education. After that, I taught third grade and served as Pedagogical Coordinator at a bilingual elementary school in Guatemala. All the while, I've cultivated myself as a writer with the ultimate dream of doing participant observation research in public schools. With my combined nonprofit, education, and international experience, I grew certain that my next step should be a Ph.D. in Comparative and International Development Education (CIDE). There are similar programs in a couple of other U.S. cities, but since my husband just started graduate school in Minnesota, I'm only applying here for now."

Alison Williams '03 writes: "I am independently contracted by individuals and companies teaching yoga and Zumba-latin-dance fitness. I also teach theatre and tutor to young students. I am a full-time graduate student at UNC-Greensboro working on my dance performance and choreography MFA. I am a TA for the dance department."

Keli Campell '05 is currently living merrily in the African bush with her cat Garbanzo. She is serving her second year in the Peace Corps in Zambia as a Rural Education Development Volunteer working with community school teachers, adult education, and the local women's group.

Louis McGinty '05 sent the following update: "Well after I graduated from Grinnell in 2005, I spent my summer in Anchorage, then in the fall of 2005 I began attending Drake University for my MPA. I finished my classes at the end of December 2006 and I graduated May 12th, 2007. I'm currently enlisted in the Americorps Vista program helping Iowa Great Places (community development program), a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs."

Mollie Ruth '05 has been accepted into the Masters of Social Work program at Eastern Washington University. Mollie will move from Seattle to the Spokane area in late summer with her boyfriend, Hillel.

(Continued on page 13)

Alumni Updates, continued

Abigail Hagel '06 writes "Since September, I've been working as a bilingual nanny (speaking only French to the kids I work with). While I enjoy it, it's not my dream job. I've been applying here and there for interesting jobs but, assuming these don't pan out, I anticipate continuing to work with this family for the immediate future and applying to graduate school for Fall 2009. I still have some work to do in terms of refining my goals for school. I hope to find a program through which I can study socio-economics (more theoretical/research-oriented), but also I want to obtain a teaching certificate, perhaps with a special education endorsement. I would then be seeking a job as a reading or math specialist within the public schools, so that I could work more one-on-one with students within the context of their greater academic plans."

Rachel Allison '07 began a Ph.D. program in sociology this past year at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Rachel writes, "Grad school is going really well so far, I am definitely enjoying it but I also find it very challenging! I'm taking courses in statistics, theory, and methods this year, which are not always the most interesting, but are definitely useful. I'm starting to be able to understand the statistical models used in a lot of the articles I have read, so that is a plus! There are 13 other students in my cohort, which I've heard is an unusually large number, but I really enjoy having so many other people around in the office. I've made a lot of friends and hopefully will have a lot of close colleagues one day! I've also been a teaching assistant for classes in race and ethnicity and in social problems, and I've discovered that I really

like working with undergraduates and definitely want to make teaching a priority in the future. Right now, my main interests are pretty much still gender, marriage and the family, and qualitative methods, although I've started to add race and ethnicity and feminist scholarship as interests, too. I'm also involved in the Chicago Area study this semester. We're doing a telephone survey in Chicago asking about race and political attitudes, opinions, and behaviors that will most likely end up being the data for my M.A. paper."

Liz Carrier '07 is a Construction Manager for the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana's Office of Disaster Response Rebuild Program. Liz coordinates with the subcontractors that do work in the houses that are being rebuilt, and she also performs various duties (e.g., running crews of volunteers as needed, ordering supplies, etc.) that keep the Program running smoothly.

Sollie Flora '07 says that she will be interning for Judge Scott Wright (United States District Court, Western District of Missouri) and Justice Carol Beier (Kansas Supreme Court) this summer and then continuing into her second year of law school at the University of Michigan in the fall.

Meredith Hughey '07 was accepted in the School of Nursing at the University of Kansas in early April. Meredith says she is thrilled and will begin her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in mid-August. The masters' portion of the nursing program begins next spring. Meredith says that she only lives about a mile or so from the Medical Center so she will still be living at home.

Gandara '08 Receives Jeanne Burkle Award

Sociology senior Evelyn Gandara was awarded the Jeanne Burkle Award for 2008 in the amount of \$1,000. The Gender and Women's Studies Committee awarded Evelyn this prestigious prize to recognize her service to women and children in the Grinnell community, including Spanish translation for Hispanic clients at the Mid-Iowa Community Action program (MICA), which serves low-income families. Evelyn also was recognized for her work in medical clinics in Ecuador. Both of these activities demonstrate her deep commitment to women's causes. The selection committee unanimously agreed that Evelyn exemplifies the character and sense of courage and hope that the Jeanne Burkle Award is intended to honor. Congratulations, Evelyn!



Grinnell Hosts the Iowa Sociological Association Conference

by Chris Neubert '08

On April 4, 2008, the Sociology Department brought together over 23 students from Grinnell College, Simpson College, Luther College, and the University of Iowa to participate in the annual Iowa Sociological Association conference. The conference gathers students from across the state of Iowa to present their research to peers, parents, and professors. It is a unique opportunity that gives undergraduates the chance to defend and discuss their work in an academic forum. Papers this year were divided into several topics, including environmental and social policy, inequalities of gender and social class, immigrants and immigration, work and labor, race and racial attitudes, and issues of sexuality.

Professor Kent McClelland, who has been honored as ISA president in the past, who gave the conference with remarks stressing the importance of un-

dergraduate participation in public discussions of their research. In addition to the previous awards for best Junior/Senior and Freshman/Sophomore papers, McClelland announced the creation of a new award honoring past ISA President Steve Wieting for the best paper that integrates theory and research. This award was given to Grinnell College student Meredith Drake for her paper, "Linguistic Assimilation, Racialization and the American Identity."

The conference concluded with a keynote address by OSU Professor Dr. Peter Hennen titled "Faeries, Bears and Leathermen: A Research Odyssey." Hennen used his own experiences conducting research in queer communities to encourage students to pursue their own interests and persevere throughout the sometimes difficult and tedious process. (See related article on page 15).

Notes from the Chair. . .

by Kent McClelland

In 2007-08, my 26th year at Grinnell College, I completed a number of milestones: my 7th tutorial, my 14th class in introductory statistics, my 30th section of introductory sociology, and my 14th (and, hopefully, last) year as Chair of the Sociology Department.

Among the highlights of the year for me was being selected once more to go to London as a Grinnell-in-London faculty member in the fall of 2009 (my fifth semester in London, if you want to keep count). This spring, the big event for me was spearheading the effort by the Grinnell Sociology Department to organize and host the annual meeting of the Iowa Sociological Association (for the very first time).

As I have done in the last several years, I again offered my course on "Conflict and Conflict Management," a course which challenges students to examine the conflicts in our lives and think about how to handle them, from the everyday tensions and disputes of our personal lives to the deadly conflicts that are currently simmering or erupting around the world. I also have continued to be actively involved in the Peace Studies Program at Grinnell, and I was pleased this spring to have led a successful interdisciplinary search to bring

a young scholar in Peace and Conflict Studies to campus as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow for the next two years. He will be teaching two courses a year, one each year on Peace Studies, as well as one in Political Science, which will be his home department.

The big family event for me this year was the birth of a third grandson. Some alums may remember my son David, an '02 alum of Grinnell. He and his wife, Karen Fisher, also a Grinnell alum, are living in Portland, Oregon, where their son, Lewis, was born last summer. Some alums may also remember my daughter, Laura, who is living in Hamburg, Germany. She and her husband have two boys, ages five and two. My wife, Katherine, continues as the Director of the Math Lab. We are all looking forward to spending time together on an island in Maine this summer.

As has been true throughout my career, my greatest pleasures as a professor have come from working with students individually, getting to know them, and seeing them develop academically and in their confidence and maturity. I also find great pleasure in working with my excellent colleagues in the Sociology Department. We have added top-notch new professors—Karla Erickson, David Cook-Martín, and Betsy Erbaugh—to what was already a dynamic department, and interest on campus in sociology this year has been as strong as I've ever seen it in all my time here. As I look forward to semi-retirement in a couple of years (senior faculty status, when I'll cut back to teaching maybe one course a year), I feel like the future of the Sociology Department is in good hands.



Editor's Corner

by Susan Ferguson

Greetings to all of you Sociology alumni and friends of the Department! Thank you for sending to me your Tributes to John Burma and the updates on your lives. Please take a moment now to fill out the form on the opposite side of this page or e-mail me an update on your life. As you can see from the contents of this newsletter, Sociology alumni are doing fascinating things with their lives. We want to hear from you!

One exciting thing that has happened since we started the newsletter in 2002, is the development of two awards for sociology majors. The Judith Louise McKim Scholarship in Sociology was established in 2003 due to a generous gift from the estate of Judith L. McKim, a Grinnell alumna, and an additional gift from a retired sociology professor at the University of Iowa, Dr. Lyle W. Shannon. Each year the Judith Louise McKim Scholarship in Sociology is awarded to a sociology junior or senior who has demonstrated excellence in course work generally at Grinnell College and in sociology in particular; has financial need; has demonstrated a commitment to the sociological perspective and to social justice; and has demonstrated a capacity for leadership. The 2007-2008 recipients of the Judith Louise McKim Scholarship in Sociology are: Christopher Neubert and Madison Van Oort. Congratulations to them both!

The other award the Sociology Department has created, using the Designated Funds alumni and faculty donate to Sociology, is the Sociology Book Award. This award is given to the Sociology Junior with the highest academic G.P.A. The recipients receive a gift certificate at the College

Dr. Peter Hennen, Keynote Speaker at ISA

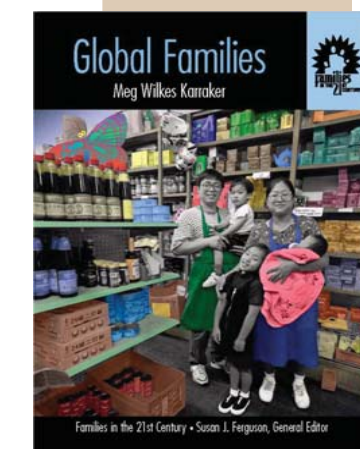
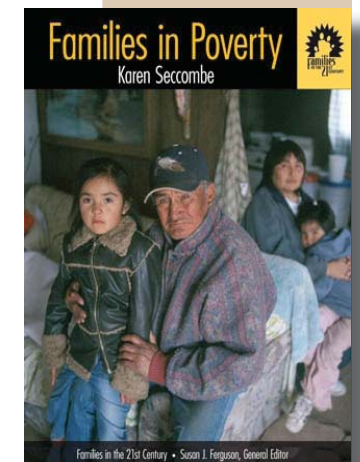
by Karla Erickson

One of the highlights of the Iowa Sociological Association conference was the visit by keynote speaker, Dr. Peter Hennen. In the fall of 2007, when the Grinnell Sociology faculty were considering who we would like to invite to give a talk for sociology students in Iowa, Hennen was our clear choice. His devotion to teaching undergraduates, his insights into ethnographic research and the politics of knowledge, his passion for his research subjects, and his masterful demonstration of the sociological imagination at work are all qualities we hope to foster in ourselves and in our students. Hennen's keynote lecture, titled "Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: A Research Odyssey," focused on the joy of discovery in the research process. His talk not only provided insight into the gendered processes through which gay men express and define their desires, but also

inspired students and faculty alike to embrace their own research journeys.

My Faculty Update

This past year I have been on sabbatical, and I have enjoyed my time away from teaching. The year off enabled me to spend more time with my two girls (Alana is 4-years-old; Gillian just turned 7-years-old). I also worked on remodeling a house, took piano lessons (for the first time), and spent much time in my garden. Of course, I also did research. The major project of my sabbatical year was recontacting the 62 never married Chinese American and Japanese American women I interviewed 10 years ago. This was a challenge because I never planned to do a follow-up study, and many of my respondents had moved, changed jobs, changed their names, and a few had married. These follow-up interviews are part of a book manuscript I am working on titled: *Voices from the East and West: Never Married Chinese American and Japanese American Women*. This past year, I also have written several articles, presented two conference papers, and supervised two MAP students using these data. As Series Editor of *Families in the 21st Century*, I have been working on several book manuscripts, including the two most recently published monographs (Allyn and Bacon), which are pictured at right. This fall I return to teaching, and I will be Chair of the Sociology Department.



Let Us Know What You Are Doing Now

Send to: Susan Ferguson, Department of Sociology, Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA 50112-1690, or e-mail to: fergusos@grinnell.edu

Name _____ Year of Graduation _____ Degree(s) _____

Home Address: _____
street city/town state zip

Telephone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Present Occupation: _____

Employment Address: _____
street city/town state zip

Other News: _____

(Please attach sheets if you need more room)

*** Visit the Grinnell Sociology Department website at <http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/sociology/>**

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