

8/8/08

Boston Retrospective and "Lost No More"

Hello All -- it's time for another edition of the Department's wildly popular Alumni Update. I am writing post-ASA and eager to get this note out while it's still fresh, so in a display of uncommon self-restraint I have resolved to limit coverage to just two items: our Boston reception and recently recovered "lost alums." That gives the note focus; however, as you are about to discover, "focus" doesn't necessarily mean brevity.

To Boston first. The event, our third consecutive and now something of a tradition, was held off-site at the Laurel Grille and Bar. As you can see from the attached photos, we had a private room, and the Laurel did a fine job with finger-foods and desserts. But people make the party, and there were folks galore. The three pix are: a crowd scene, our cake-cutter, and a hot off the presses PhD. with an infectious smile. The crowd scene is to elicit a bit of envy among those of you not there and to whet the appetite for next year in San Francisco. That's Pam (Cain) Stone (1979) in the foreground talking with Rick Rubinson (back to the camera), a faculty member from the 70's and into the 80's and now at Emory. Rick's wife Debbie Holtzman (1985) was there also, although I don't see her from this angle; and, if you have really good eyes, you can spot Dave Baker (1982) and Aaron Pallas (1985) all the way in the back toward the door (no doubt huddling over some cutting edge Sociology of Education issue, or, what is more likely, fine dining options in Boston). In between are a host of current and former students, a couple former post-docs (Amy Lutz) and visitors (Suet-ling Pong), and even a former undergraduate major (Kristen Plys, currently at Princeton doing research). And of course current faculty too. I believe half the faculty made the party, and the no shows all had iron-clad reasons -- Andy Cherlin was keynote speaker at the SRA dinner, which overlapped the reception, Joel Andreas, Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly Silver were out of the country, Steve Plank was off vacationing with family and Mel Kohn begged off owing to jet lag, having just returned from an extended visit to Germany. But the rest of us were there -- yours personally (behind the camera), Rina Agarwala, Pam Bennett, Stefanie Deluca (with gentleman friend Brendan in tow), Lingxin Hao, and Katrina McDonald. Rina (starting her third year in the department) is on sabbatical in New York at the moment and Stefanie (starting her seventh year) is in Chicago for the summer as a Spencer visiting scholar, so it was nice to be able to reconnect this way.

But back to our pix. The fellow cutting the cake is Roland Hawkes, who was elevated on-site to guest of honor. That's because his 1967 degree made him the most senior alum in attendance (the cake, btw, was a prequel to Department's celebration of its 50th anniversary, upcoming this spring -- more on that later as plans take shape). I was going to send a picture of the two of us, but I decided against as I didn't want to confuse anyone -- with us side-by-side it's hard to tell which is the retiree and which the current chair (sadly, for me at least, the years have been kinder to Roland).

Roland was a student of Jim Coleman's back in the day. After Hopkins, he was on the faculty at Iowa for many years, punctuated by several research excursions to Africa. He now lives a life of leisure in Maine, where his wife is on the faculty. Roland's pedigree alone would have warranted recognition, but what really touched my heart is that he took a bus down from Maine just for the occasion, and left for home immediately after – an 11:15 Greyhound. Now that's dedication!



My other photo centers on Bedelia Richards, who finished her degree just last year



(in the background are Ben Scully, current student, Phil Hough, who finished in 2007, and Stefanie Deluca. The other face belongs to Brendan). Pairing old and new seemed a nice touch, but there is a second reason for wanting to recognize Bedelia. Based in Boston, working at Jobs for the Future and teaching part-time at Wellesley, Bedelia scouted out the Laurel for us. We are grateful – good job Bedelia! And looking ahead, we'll need a Bedelia counterpart next year in the Bay Area. If you're there and willing, please let me know.



It was an evening of good conversation and good fun. I believe I've mentioned all the Pd.D. alums but Willie Jasso and Ho-Fung Hung. If I'm not mistaken, Willie (1975) has an unblemished record of attendance at these events – loyal to the core! I was one of Willie's dissertation readers, but I can hardly take credit for her many lofty accomplishments. Peter Rossi was turning out so many PhDs back then it seemed almost like an assembly line, and I had the good fortune of serving as a "warm body" reader on a host of them. Ho-fung (2004), now at Indiana after a time in Hong Kong, is of more recent vintage. And Phil Hough, I should mention, covers the southern tier from his position at Florida Atlantic. Filling out the attendance was a goodly representation of current students and a smattering of friends.

Some of you will recall that the Department started hosting its own reception after years of disappointment with ASA's Department Alumni Night. Year after year we dutifully anted up our \$50/\$100 and lofted the Hopkins pennant, but hardly anyone drifted over. And considering the atmospherics, that hardly surprises. But we knew from the program and paths crossing in hallways that Hoppies were there in abundance and we determined to do better. Well, indeed we are doing better! The receptions have been a great success and for me personally it's a special treat when "old-timers" like Roland make the effort to attend. I've been at Hopkins since 1972 and I know personally the vast majority of the Department's alums. But those who came and went before I arrived are mostly just names and reputations. Through these events I've been able to attach faces to some of those names, but more than that, to connect personally. Last year it was Sy Spilerman (1968) and Ben Zablocki (1967); this year Roland. I hope next year we'll add to the list.

The ASA reception is one way the Department has tried to strengthen its sense of community. These alumni mailings are another, and just like the excitement when I meet a Roland Hawkes, it's a real thrill when we break through and re-establish contact with long lost alums. Honestly, it's a good thing I have tenure, because I put way too much time into this! Well, no, that's not right. It's not too much time at all, or I wouldn't be doing it. But I do allow myself to get sucked in, and some days the hours just fly by googling away at the keyboard!

With that said, you'll understand my excitement at a host of recent breakthroughs. Dogged persistence accounts for some (e.g., I found a picture of Cindy Truelove (1989) in a local newspaper leading a homeowners association fight against the construction company of her housing development out in California -- more on that below); others, I have to confess, are more of the "duh" variety: 1) the "revelation" that not everyone was on a supposedly complete spreadsheet, so some addresses we already had weren't being used; and 2) the "inspiration," two years into this (!), to see if the Hopkins Alumni Association could help. We didn't pick up any good email addresses from them, but they had a dozen or so mailing addresses, and our stamped letters (tracking the old fashioned way!) indeed elicited a number of replies.

I think my favorite story is how we got to Sarane Boocock (1966). I knew Sarane was retired from the School of Education at Rutgers, but for the life of me I couldn't find an email or snailmail address. So I sent a note off the Dean's office at Rutgers explaining we had lost track of Sarane and asking if they would please forward along to her the letter I had enclosed. What's the likelihood of that working? Well apparently pretty high, at least if you're dealing with the good folks at Rutgers, because while wandering through the Boston Commons with wife Kathy an email appeared from you guessed it, Sarane! It was a lovely day to be out and about in Boston (for those keeping tabs, we went up a couple days early for a bit of R & R, so I was officially off-duty), but what made it really special was getting that note! Sarane is now Emeritus at Rutgers and still going strong. Here's an excerpt from her note: "Retirement has freed me from the things I didn't enjoy about academic life (faculty meetings, trying to find a parking place, listening to students' excuses for why they didn't take an exam or finish a paper on time) and given me the time I needed to write the book on sociology of children and childhoods I'd been thinking about for years and finish (almost) a co-edited book on the education of Japanese minority children. I'm now gearing up to update the cross-national review of research on the long-term effects of early childhood care and education policies and programs I began in the 1990s." Life indeed is sweet when you can do what you want to do and not do what you don't want to do!

Cindy Truelove was another challenge, as she is out of academic sociology and despite the pretty newspaper photo I couldn't locate contact information for her. I thought I had a lead on Cindy previously when I found her name on a report about desert conservation through some government office in Nevada (was that you Cindy?), but the office there never replied to my inquiry. Thankfully, the Alumni Association came through on this one too! Cindy is settled comfortably in sunny Emeryville, California, and yes, that was her picture in the paper. Here's what she has to say about life today: "Indeed, you did find me in the news working as the President of our Homeowner's Association leading a large construction defects suit which I'm delighted to report we settled quite favorably for \$13.5M in November of 2007. I listen to the jack hammers repairing our courtyard plaza as I write! Life has been good to us, and my partner, JaNell Cook, and I had the opportunity to move from Las Vegas to the San Fran. Bay Area in

2004 so that she could open her civil engineering company's San Fran office. Our defects woes began very soon afterwards in our brand new building, and as a sort of thank you to the Universe for sparing us leaks and mold in our unit, I have volunteered countless hours to help build this nascent HOA while shepherding the suit. After many years working as an urban planning and environmental conservation executive in the public sector in Las Vegas [see, Nevada – I knew it!], I had some tools to bring to this fray and so I did! In a few short days, I'll join the California Public Utilities Commission as a senior policy analyst working on water issues which is among our biggest challenges in the west, and indeed, around the world. I have been working in one way or another on distinct issues of regional planning, water resource development and management, as well as on ecosystem conservation throughout the Lower Colorado River Basin in Nevada, Southern California and the Mexican Border region for a decade or so." Sounds like a very important, very rewarding kind of applied Sociology – good for you Cindy, and welcome back into the fold! I picked up Cindy's note in Boston also, btw.

Our friends at the Alumni Association also helped me reconnect with Desiree Gran (1992), now Childress. Desiree was especially frustrating for me, in that over dinner with Binnie a month or so ago, she mentioned that Desiree had stopped by the Department some years back, but at the time Binnie didn't think to get contact information – grrr! My last recollection is of Desiree heading off to Paris for a post-doc with, as I recall, her physicist husband (although I'm not sure they were married at the time). Seems it was a very successful excursion for them: "Jeff and I are married almost 16 years. We left France after the post-doc and went to Florida where he had a faculty position at UF. I stayed at home with the kids and did a bit of consulting work on a distance learning program for UF. After four years, we moved to San Jose where my husband is currently a manager for a group that does basic research on the heads used by hard drives at HGST. My daughter was on the US National Rock Climbing team for three years. We traveled quite a bit. She is now a sophomore in high school, a great student, and runs cross country. My son is in 7th grade, also a great student, and an avid year-around soccer player. We just came back from a trip to France, Italy, and Greece [Desiree's note included a picture of her with two of her children in Santorini]. I have done some consulting work with the International Rescue Committee and then decided to work part-time for Apple. I am thinking about trying to get a full time position at Apple at their corporate headquarters now that the kids are bigger. They are a great company to work for and I love the people." And that's a great report from Desiree! As you know from previous Alumni Updates, our graduates have followed a host of different life paths, many to uncommon applications of Sociology and others outside of Sociology altogether. Desiree has put family first, and I'm willing to bet a bit of Sociology still comes into play even in that role! It's great to be back in contact Desiree!

Keith Smith (1977) used to drop by the office every once in a while just to say "hi," so I assumed he was local and would be easy to find. Not so, but our Alumni Assn. helpers again came through. Keith is retired, and lives a quite full life in retirement. Here's an excerpt: "My wife and I have been living in the Maryland countryside for some thirty years now, and we will shortly be celebrating our 65th wedding anniversary. I'm 86 years old and in reasonably good health. For several years now I've put out "Legislative Watch" messages which analyze specific legislation before the US Congress and the Maryland legislature which involve a social justice issue. They go out to an e-mail network of members of the congregations of our denomination throughout Maryland, for the purpose of inducing them to communicate with their legislators concerning the legislation. I also sit on the board of a statewide interfaith legislative advocacy group and on the board of a denominational legislative advocacy group. As a hobby, I propagate

rhododendrons to set out on our wooded lot. We have set out about 150 so far." I did a double-take at those numbers – 86 and 65. Truly remarkable, and I thought unbelievable, until I took a peek back at Keith's application materials and determined that he indeed was a "mature student" when in the program. Hearty congratulations Keith. I wrote back telling him I might want a consultation some day on how to find fulfillment in retirement. I'm not sure we'll get around to that, but I'll be happy if I'm half as successful as Keith in giving back using the tools at my disposal.

Linda Pinkow (1993) was a different kind of challenge. She's all over the web as a progressive voice in local media outside Boston, but hitting the right email address felt like throwing darts. I sent off notes to several of the non-profits she affiliates with and -- bullseye! – one elicited a reply. Linda works for the Economic Affairs Bureau Inc., publisher of Dollars & Sense magazine and progressive economics textbooks. You can catch some of her weekly radio program, "What's Left," in the archives section at wabr.org. I was hoping to entice Linda into the big city for our reception, but she was vacationing at the time.

Lynne Burkhart (1975) is another "long lost" alum who is lost no longer – the Alumni Assn again. Lynne says she keeps in touch with Willie Jasso, but wondered about Bill Sampson's (1973) whereabouts. You may recall from an earlier Note that I was able to bring Bill and Chris Bose (1975) together and I hope I've been able to do the same for Lynne and Bill. Lynne reports she is "still consumed with the narrow and broader issues of racism but have done no traditional academic work since leaving my position at Colgate to work for Jimmy Carter and publishing my dissertation around the same time. Still hoping before I leave this earth to write my "25 (almost 30) years later in Columbia, Maryland" saga. Did two years of fieldwork there in 2000-02, but nothing forthcoming yet. Obama's prominence has provided lots of new data -- it's amazing what people will "say" when blogging. Back to Columbia for a little more data gathering in August, from my "retirement" in the Adirondacks." While searching I was amazed at the number of google hits to her Columbia book and if the reprise attracts anything like the same attention, Lynne will have done a very good job indeed. Good luck with the project Lynne!

Patricia Arregui (MA, 1977) claims she wasn't really all that lost, in that she keeps in touch with many from her cohort, but she was lost to me until I tracked her down in far away Peru. Patricia reports that she is working very hard, enjoying grandchildren and life in general while working at GRADE, which stands for Grupa de Analisis para el Desarrollo (<http://www.grade.org.pe/eng/index.asp>), an independent research center focused on the design and implementation of sound social policies and large scale assessments throughout Latin American. I think I've mentioned before that I am struggling to teach myself Spanish. It is therefore both humbling and frustrating to have to admit that I went to the English language version of GRADE's website to get a sense of their work. Incidentally, Patricia was writing from Buenos Aires, where she was attending a workshop for evaluators of a multi-national Ford Foundation project. Her work also brings her to the DC area occasionally, and I hope next time she'll have the time to drop by.

Like Patricia, Sam Bedinger (MA, 1991) concluded he didn't need the "doctor" title to get where he wanted to go, and history, it appears, has proven him right. And like the others mentioned, Sam had disappeared for much too long. But unlike the others, it seems he's been right in my backyard all along! I found Sam at NORC's Bethesda office, just down the road -- clearly a visit

is long overdue Sam! Two large projects command most of Sam's time. He provides technical support on a contract with the Persian Gulf state of Qatar and while not on the road he serves as Project Director on an analysis contract with the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Postsecondary Ed's TRIO program, a federally funded set of programs to get disadvantaged students into and through college.

I have less to report about several others, although maybe this note will extract a chitty-chatty from some of them. We fixed a glitch in Eileen Rudert's (1984) work email at the US Commission on Civil Rights, Mary Conklin's (1983) at Point Loma College, and Tom Brown's (2003) at the Alamo Community College District. I found Saul Feinman (1973) in retirement from Wyoming and Richard Mantovani (1973) pretty clearly thought he was beyond my reach working off the Sociology circuit at Macro International, but he was wrong!

Ron D'Amico (1978) wasn't exactly lost, but he was out of touch until recently. Ron reports that after working as a senior researcher at SRI International for many years, he left to join a start-up firm, Social Policy Research Associates, where he now is President. They conduct policy studies, quantitative and qualitative, largely funded by the federal government (primarily USDOL), state and local governments, and private foundations. Ron's currently working on a national multi-year experimental evaluation of USDOL's major job training program for disadvantaged workers. Sounds like good, exciting work, and we appreciate Ron's checking in.

John Packham (1992) extends an invitation to all when passing through Reno. He is Director of the Nevada Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (www.unr.edu/flex), a health services research and technical assistance program for rural hospitals and communities in Nevada based at the University of Nevada School of Medicine. And as current President of the Nevada Public Health Association (www.nphaonline.org), congratulations are in order! That's an unexpected turn from his interests here as a student, but John says he happily moved in the direction of medicine and public health ten or fifteen years ago **and** still utilizes his Hopkins-nurtured "sociological imagination" on a daily basis. Living what he preaches, John still plays softball at 47 (doesn't seem all that old to me!) and reports proudly that his youngest son, Tim, is starting catcher and star slugger of his team, the Orioles! The Orioles bit threw me at first, until John clarified that's his son's little league team!

John Benoit (1975) wasn't exactly lost either, but it was a delight nonetheless to hear from him from distant Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. Still, a "hello" note without of bit of context simply whets the appetite and I'm eager to hear more!

We knew where Luis Guarnizo (2005) was, but were having technical problems getting through to him (you need to clear out your inbox more often Luis!). Luis has achieved the lofty status of Full Professor in the Department of Human and Community Development at UC-Davis and this upcoming year will start a term as Chair -- hearty congrats on the first Luis; my sympathy on the second!

Claudia Schulz (2005) is at Trinity University, where she works as sponsored programs officer and director of undergraduate research, but her really exciting news is on the home front. She and her husband have two foster children living with them (since just before Christmas) and they are working toward adoption. When she wrote back in Mary they were hoping that would happen this summer -- hope all went well; please let us know. Claudia included a link to pictures of

Maria (age 4) and Diego (age 2) and I am pleased to pass it through:
<http://www.flickr.com/gp/23472348@N00/60oexh>

Let's see, what else do I know? Just a couple more items.

Salvatore Babones (2003) has relocated "down under" from Pittsburgh. It's a big change for Salvatore, and I'm sure will be a big adjustment, but it seems he's slipped in comfortably. Here's his preliminary report: "Here at The University of Sydney I've found a Hopkins-like intellectual environment where the school motto perfectly captures my own journey: "Sidere mens eadem mutato" ("Though the constellations may change, the life of the mind remains the same"). My colleagues here are incredibly passionate scholars who all seem to understand that our profession should be more an avocation than a vocation, and I find myself after work at the local pub discussing social policy or epistemology at least once a week. Of course, the harsh winters are a downside (it only reached 62 degrees today), but I'm coping by staying home and swimming in the indoor pool until summer comes." I'll pass on the "harsh winters" dig thank you, but many of you know I am a true-believer when it comes to swimming – been doing it religiously for 25+ years as part of my back maintenance plan. So I commend Salvatore for taking the plunge. I mean that literally, and not just for the back – it ought to help cushion fallout from all those Pub gabfests as well! Good for you Salvatore, and good luck.

Finally, David Bell (1977), who has been away some 30 years, teased me with an RSVP to the Boston reception, but he never showed. For shame! I know David is at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, but little more. Maybe David should do penance for standing us up with a quickie note on how those 30 years have played out.

There's more that could be said, but I am a man of my word and I'll stop here. My next Alumni Update will focus on happenings in the Department (including news of our receipt of the IES predoctoral training grant mentioned as "pending" in my last mailing – whoopee!). Of course, there's always room for alum news, so please keep it coming. And too, do feel free to drop me a line for contact information on any of the folks in this note – karl@jhu.edu.

Fuerte abrazo, and warmest regards in peace and solidarity.

Karl

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