



WSSA NEWS

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Scholarship - Service - Collegiality

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Volume 42, Number 2

FALL 2010

Reno, Revisited

*Gil Fowler,
Arkansas State
University
WSSA President*



Entertaining Research

Well for at least a week last April, Reno was the “Biggest Little WSSA City in America” when more than 750 guests gathered in the desert to share their research.



Following the conference theme “Social Sciences: Addressing the World’s Challenges,” researchers from around the world gathered to exchange ideas, build friendships, and add a little sight-seeing and handle-pulling at the 52nd meeting of the Western Social Science Association, held at the Sierra Grand Resort, April 14-17, 2010.

In all, more than 700 papers and presentations were made in the 140-plus sessions, with topics ranging from “Rednecks, Revivalists, and Roadkill: The Performance of Identity in an Appalachian Town” to “What is the Role of Arts Education in China ...” to “Tobacco Smuggling

along the Canadian-U.S. Borders in the 1990s ...” to “Tattooing in the Modern Age.”

Several sections continued their work by providing special movie showings, which were SRO (standing room only) activities. And the printed program included “mug shots” for the first time so attendees could - hopefully - recognize their section coordinators.

The American Indian Studies section held a screening of “Canoe Way: The Sacred Journey”, which documented the annual Tribal Journeys of Pacific Northwest Coast Salish People, and “The Chief’s Prophecy: Survival of the Northern Cheyenne Nation”, filmed on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in southeastern Montana, directed by Leo KILLSBACK from the University of Arizona American Indian Studies Program. The Association for Borderland Studies shared “389 Miles: “Living the Border”, which examines the daily lives of those caught up in the rusty steel wire separating the United States

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What’s Up (or Down) with the Economy?

*Betsy Rankin, Centenary College of Louisiana
Council Member*

That’s the question economists are constantly asked and one that does not have as short an answer as most people want. The economy is continually going through business cycles:



periods of expansion, a peak, periods of contraction, and a trough. As you might remember from your undergraduate economics course, economic textbooks usually define a recession as two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth in GDP, but the organization that puts official dates

on the phases of business cycles, the National Bureau of Economic Research (a private, nonprofit research institute), uses a broader array of economic data to determine when the economy starts a recessionary period. The two most recent recessions prior to the current one lasted only 8 weeks, one week short of two quarters! The official start of this latest recession is December 2007 and as of their last announcement in April 2010, the NBER is not yet ready to say whether or not we have hit the trough and if we have when that was. Many economists though are convinced the recessionary

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Waiting to be Published, or, What Happens after the Social Science Journal has Accepted Your Paper

*N. Prabha Unnithan, Colorado State University
Editor, SSJ*

The paper you submitted to the Social Science Journal (SSJ) was not rejected internally or after being sent out to reviewers, as happens to 75% of the submissions received. You worked hard



revising, polishing, and resubmitting it and, in your mind, have seemingly achieved the impossible (e.g., satisfied the conflicting demands of two SSJ reviewers; one who wanted more details and the other who required you to be succinct; one who wanted more theory and another who wanted more policy implications). You just received an email from me stating that your revisions have been responsive to the comments from reviewers and that your paper has been accepted for publi-

ments from reviewers and that your paper has been accepted for publi-

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Maneuvering the Conference

Board Actions

Spring 2010 meeting

- The Women's Studies section has changed its name to Women's and Gender Studies.
- Jack Hou, Gil Fowler, and Vic Heller will consult with the section coordinators about establishing guidelines for cross listing sections.
- Since Prabha Unnithan's appointment is nearly finished, WSSA is will a search for a new editor of the Social Science Journal.
- The Council decided not to stop publishing the WSSA News in paper format, and will continue to post it online on the website, as well.
- Section Coordinators will be encourage to look for papers among their section participants that would be good fits for the newsletter, in condensed form.
- Given the outstanding success of 2010's recruiting efforts in Reno, it was decided to continue the practice. Jack Hou, Vic Heller, Gil Fowler, Larry Gould, and Kate Herke will go to Salt Lake City one or two days before the fall meeting to visit area schools, urging faculty to encourage their colleagues and students to participate in the 2011 conference.
- The new Constitution mandates operations manuals defining the roles and duties of Executive Council members. The Council will begin work on them at the Fall meeting.
- WSSA will present a panel discussion on publication ethics during the 2011 conference. This panel will include the journal editor, at least two reviewers and several people who have recently submitted papers.

SSJ Editor Search

Prabha Unnithan, the current editor of the Social Science Journal, having served his term faithfully and well, will soon step into well-deserved retirement from that role.

The Western Social Science Association (WSSA) is beginning its search for a new editor for the Journal. Doug Nord will chair the search committee. Chris Brown, Prabha Unnithan, and one or two past presidents will serve as members. The committee has been charged with writing an announcement of the job opening that could be posted on the web site and mailed to the membership.

Candidates for the editor position need to submit a letter of interest, a vita and letters of support from their Department Chair, Dean and Provost. Candidates are strongly encouraged to contact the current editor for information about the kind of institutional support needed, and about work load and other relevant issues.

WSSA NEWS

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THE WESTERN SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION is a professional educational organization committed to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship, service, and collegiality. The Association's mission is to foster professional study, to advance research, and to promote the teaching of social science. Founded in 1958 as the Rocky Mountain Social Science Association, WSSA draws on scholars and others in some 30 disciplines, or "sections," from across the United States, Canada, and Mexico; convenes an annual conference; conducts research competitions for faculty and students; and publishes *The Social Science Journal*, a juried, quarterly research journal, and *WSSA News*, the Association's newsletter, two times a year. WSSA annual membership dues are \$40 (individual); \$50 (includes spouse); \$25 (student); \$25 (retired). For information, contact Larry Gould, Executive Director, WSSA, c/o Northern Arizona University, Yuma Branch Campus, P.O. 6236, Yuma, AZ 85366-6236 (Phone: 928-317-6475; Fax: 928-317-6419; E-mail: larry.gould@nau.edu)



WSSA News is published two times a year by the WSSA. Editor: Kate Herke. For more info on *WSSA News*, contact Larry Gould, Executive Director, WSSA, c/o Northern Arizona University, Yuma Branch Campus, P.O. 6236, Yuma, AZ 85366-6236 (Phone: 928-317-6475; Fax: 928-317-6419; E-mail: larry.gould@nau.edu).



WSSA: Coming Soon To A Campus Near You (with your help)

By Gil Fowler, President

WSSA

If you attended the 52nd WSSA-Reno conference you likely noticed a large number of UNR faculty and students in attendance and participating in the conference. This was not a chance occurrence but the direct result of actions taken by your executive council. WSSA has taken great strides to broaden its membership base and its conference registration numbers by promoting its work to institutions near its convention site.

PRESIDENTIAL SOAPBOX



This past year (and considerable thanks go to Past President Jack Hou) personal invitations were extended at the University of Nevada at Reno to

encourage its faculty, students and administrators to support the 52nd Annual Conference held in the institutions' hometown of Reno.

During the WSSA Friday-Saturday planning conference held in September 2009, the WSSA President and President-elect came to the conference site a day early to meet with UNR officials. Prior coordination had been established with faculty on the UNR campus who helped arrange meetings with selected deans, faculty, and the UNR Provost where we discussed the opportunities that accompanied holding an academic conference in an institution's hometown.

- Travel expenses for academic conference attendance would be minimal, allowing a potentially large number of faculty and students to participate;
- Groups of students, faculty, or a combination of both could present projects and/or make panel presentations at the conference;
- Time away from campus would be minimal;
- Students and junior faculty could attend an academic conference for a minimal cost to learn what academic conferences were like, how presentations are made, and how to be prepared to participate in the future; and
- Certainly the sharing of ideas, and learning that

one's work can be of a quality that meets presentation quality is of significant value.

As a result, a large number of Reno academics supported the conference with their presence and their financial backing. And this experience should pay benefits to WSSA in the future.

Today is another day and a new year, but the spirit of sharing ideas and building membership continues. In September, prior to the two-day convention planning conference, members of your WSSA executive committee met with academics from institutions in and near Salt Lake City. Visits were made with officials from Weber State, the University of Utah, Utah State University, and Brigham Young University asking that they promote and encourage their faculty and students to participate in the spring 2011 conference. It should bear considerable fruit.

But this preliminary work needs your support as well. I ask you to make a concerted effort to reacquaint yourself with friends and faculty at institutions near our conference site in Salt Lake City this year; in Houston in 2011-12; Denver in 2012-13; and all future conference sites. Take the opportunity to have them join you at the conference. Take a moment and give them a call now in case they don't know about the conference, while they still have time to prepare their papers and/or panels. It's a great way to strengthen your section and broaden the spirit of academic thinking in our organization.

I look forward to seeing you and your colleagues in Salt Lake City this April.

Newly Constituted

Kate Herke
Newsletter Editor

At the 2010 conference, the Executive Council of the WSSA presented a new Constitution to the membership for their approval. At the annual business meeting at the conference, the members present approved the proposed Constitution unanimously and without amendment. The new Constitution is available on the "Announcements" page of the Association's website, at <http://wssa.asu.edu>.

The Executive Council's next task is to develop a policy manual for the Association, setting forth the specific tasks and areas of responsibility of members of the Council, as mandated by the Constitution.



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Western Social Science Association



CALL FOR STUDENT PAPERS

WIN FOR WRITING !

**BOTH UNDERGRADUATE AND
GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE
ELIGIBLE**

You can win **\$500**, a free one -year subscription to the *Social Science Journal*, free conference registration at the April 2011 WSSA conference in **Salt Lake City, Utah**, and the opportunity to present your paper at that conference.

HOW TO WIN

Papers are judged based on a) advancement of knowledge, b) appropriateness for a broad social science audience, c) quality and implementation of research design, d) definition and significance of topic, e) analysis of findings and discussion of their implications and f) clarity and cogency of writing. Undergraduate and graduate papers are evaluated separately. Authors of excellent papers that are not chosen for the award are eligible to receive a certificate of honorable mention.

Paper Requirements

- **Papers cannot exceed 25 pages (which include bibliography, tables, figures, appendices and other supporting materials).** Abstracts and cover sheets do not count as part of the 25 page maximum.
- **Papers longer than the 25 page maximum will not be read (strictly enforced).**
- All pages must be double-spaced and in 12 pt Arial font.
- Papers may not be theses or dissertations previously presented or published.
- **Submissions must be endorsed in writing by a professor in the entrant's field of study.**
- Authors may wish to consult the *Social Science Journal's* style guide for formatting information.
- Papers must be received on or before **January 15, 2011**. Please clearly indicate (**on the COVER page ONLY**) **undergraduate or graduate status**, institutional affiliation, address, phone number and e-mail address. Send an e-mail copy (Word or rich text) to:

**Dr. Thomas D. Isern, Professor
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Kudos, Laurels, & Milestones

Kudos Prabha Unnithan (Colorado State University), with his colleague, Michael Palmiotto, has just published a new book : Policing & Society: A Global Approach. Information about the book can be found at http://www.delmarlearning.com/browse_product_detail.aspx?catid=34315&isbn=0534623433 submitted by *Shelley Esposito, Delmar, Cengage Learning*

Milestones Gil Fowler (Arkansas State University) is the new Chair of the ASU Department of Journalism. submitted by *Sandra Combs, Arkansas State University*

Kudos Heather Powers Albanesi (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs) recently published a new book : Gender and Sexual Agency: How Young People Make Choices about Sex with Lexington Books, a division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Information about the book can be found at <http://www.lexingtonbooks.com/Catalog/Flyer2.shtml?SKU=0739134981>.

Milestones Rick Kurtz (Central Michigan University) was appointed Interim Associate Dean of the College of HJumanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences effective August 1, 2009. The college is the largest at CMU, housing eight academic departments. Prior to that date, he served as Political Science Department Chair. submitted by *Kate Herke, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance*

Kudos Les Alm (Boise State University), with colleagues Ross Burkhart and Marc Simon, has just had a book published by Praeger Press, titled Turmoil in American Public Policy: Science, Democracy, and the Environment. Information about the book can be found at <http://www.praeger.com/catalog/A2985C.aspx>

Upcoming Journal Article

*Prabha Unnithan, Colorado State University
Editor, Social Science Journal*

The lead article in Volume 47, 3 of the SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL is by Dr. Yonn Dierwechter and Dr. Brian Coffey of the University of Washington-Tacoma, entitled, "Assessing the effects of neighborhood councils on urban policy and development." The article summarizes the debate on neighborhood councils and describes the authors' findings regarding the activities of, and issues faced by, these organizations in Tacoma, Washington. We asked the authors how the research project came about, how it was carried out and what they learned from it. They respond:



"The idea for this research project came about because of a rather unique course on urban government which we offer in close cooperation with the City of Tacoma. In one session each week, city officials meet with the class to discuss issues. Usually three or four individuals appear together, forming a panel that deals with one or two topics from that week's syllabus. At various times, individuals from neighborhood councils have been invited to participate. The issues and topics they raised in presentations piqued our interest about

the relationship the councils have with the city and the internal workings of the councils themselves. In looking into this a bit more, we found limited literature on the roles of these organizations and, hence, decided to explore this further with a formal research project.

The approach included examination of expenditures made by the councils using data available through the city's financial records. However, more interesting and more telling information came through extensive interviews with neighborhood council members, city officials, and members of the Tacoma City Council. We found neighborhood council members very open to discussing how they viewed their roles and how they viewed their relationship with the city. 'Brutally honest' might be one way to describe those conversations. City Council members were perhaps a little more guarded in their conversations but they too were willing to share detailed and frank insights.

The results revealed a system which most felt was important to maintain but one which the City felt needed some repair and which neighborhood councilors felt had an undercurrent of friction. Our findings add to the literature on this topic and the work helps to meet the need for more research on so-called "second tier" cities. Urban research seems primarily focused on major urban centers such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Often left out of this picture are smaller, somewhat more provincial cities such as Tacoma, Omaha, Cincinnati, and Mobile. Such places often operate on a different plane than the larger metropolitan centers and we hope the work contributes to a greater understanding of their inner workings."



Science, Democracy, and the Environment

*Leslie R. Alm, Boise State University
WSSA Recruitment & Retention Coordinator*
&
Ross E. Burkhart, Boise State University

The impact of science on environmental policymaking is profound. To be more exact, solving our environmental problems, locally or globally, is not possible without the guidance of scientists. Whether acting as hidden participants, active citizens or outright policy advocates, it is scientists who provide the parameters of our search for the solutions to our most vexing environmental problems. It is true that scientists cannot provide all of the answers, and sometimes the complexities and uncertainty ingrained in scientific analysis make policymaking even more confusing than it need be.

However, the one thing scientists can do is point us in the right direction. And this is no small thing. In the end, there is simply no way to avoid the requirement for scientists to shine the light on nature and its wonders and allow us to better judge what tarnishes them.

If environmental questions are fundamentally questions of science—as posited by many scholars—then scientists should be playing a much larger role than generally occurs. While science plays a critical role in the environmental policymaking process, the task of defining the meaning of scientific findings has not been carried out—for the most part—by scientists. This task has been left to other interested parties: e.g., policymakers, journalists, lobbyists, and interest groups, among others. We think this should change. The time is past when scientists can just inform the public and policymakers, and then go on with their lives.

Scientists must be more proactive. If science is going to have any chance of providing meaningful input into the policy process, scien-

tists are the ones who will have to make stronger efforts at interacting with and talking to policymakers. Policymakers are perfectly happy to maintain their position of picking and choosing the science that fits their particular ideological beliefs. Who can blame them? Moreover, why would we want to change the democratic system that has served us so well over the years? To ask policymakers to abide by the rules that govern science is unrealistic and unwise. Hence, it is left to the scientific community to lead the charge, to manage science in a way that fits more comfortably in the policy world. In short, scientists must do a better job of translating their scientific findings into a format that is more readily understood by both policymakers and the public. This means scientists must do a better job of educating the public and policymakers alike about the scientific process, including delving into the assumptions of science and the importance of (and reasoning behind) such concepts as probability and peer-review.

While this is no easy task, we think the effort should be made. Scientists should start every one of their public talks with a brief explanation of the elements that make up the scientific process, and then allow for questions. Surprisingly, and sadly, most people do not know that the scientific process is based on severe criticism and constant checking and re-checking, trying to prove something is not correct. Most ordinary people understand the constant criticism by scientists of other scientist's work as part of the give and take of politics and partisanship, as part of America's adversarial system. However, people simply do not know that the scientific process is built on the idea of regular and routine critiques as a means to determine where the truth lies. People do not understand that science is a dynamic, continuous, and contentious process by design; that putting things in the form of probabilities does not mean that we know nothing. It means we never know the entire, absolute truth.

Scientists must explain this to the public every chance they get because no one else will. Policymakers have no incentive to explain probabilities. As we have witnessed time after time, policymakers want answers in absolutes. They do not want probabilities. The political world is built on values, the idea that things are right or wrong, and that absolutes do exist. That is the way of democracy. But scientists have to take the time to make sure their audience, whoever it is, knows the difference between following the scientific process and its assumptions and following the rules on the policy side. People must come to

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Attendees Are Now Members

*Kate Herke
Conference Manager*

Beginning with the 2011 Conference in Salt Lake City, all registrants for the WSSA's annual conference will automatically join the WSSA membership. There are several reasons for this change. The advantages include:

1. Attendees are more likely to be able to recover the full cost of the conference from their institutions.
2. Members who choose to wait until they register on-site for the conference to renew their memberships will no longer miss the March issue of the *Social Science Journal* and the Spring issue of the *WSSA News*.
3. Removes the appearance of a "penalty" in terms of cost for those who were both members and conference registrants.
4. More importantly, it removes the feeling of being an outsider for attendees who were not members.
5. Reduces the confusion on our webpage from multiple links for on-line pre-registration.
6. Should increase awareness the Association through the wider distribution of the *Social Science Journal* and the *WSSA News*.
7. Makes it easier to track conference attendance and account for expenses.

"A Front Porch for Social Scientists"

Victor L. Heller, Ph.D.
WSSA President-Elect



In Ray Bradbury's classic social science fiction work, *Fahrenheit 451*, he posited that people could be made to feel like they were helpless in the face of information overload and overwhelming complexity, by simply keeping them busy and denying them access to front porches. Under these conditions their spirit to question would be dampened. Caught in the academic and practitioner webs of information overload, and the day to day challenges of our disciplines, possibly some of us feel like we are living in the Bradbury trap: over-extended and without a "front porch" where we can listen, learn, exchange ideas and make their voices heard.

The front porch is a powerful metaphor that invites us into a neglected way of being together in genuine conversation. It can be a place to take in a deep breath to balance the constant exhaling of life's day-to-day busyness, to remember what we share in common and to reflect on academic possibilities not yet imagined. But most of all it is a place where we can engage with peers in a spirit of honest inquiry and learning around the questions that matter, and not be expected to have all the answers. The WSSA 53rd Annual Conference is such a "front porch."

As social scientists, each of us sees the world through the ques-

tions we ask, and we may become blind to the questions we don't ask. The "how" questions we ask in order to meet the daily challenges of practicing our disciplines tend to have this quality. They assume that the "what" and the "why" questions have been successfully addressed. On a front porch, in a more open and relaxed setting, the more powerful "what" and "why" questions naturally come to the surface and call us true inquiry and a dialogue into possibility.

If we visualize the power of each level of questions through the metaphor of a tree, we can see that for every social issue there are branch questions, trunk questions and root questions. Too often we assume that everyone has a common understanding of the root and trunk questions, and we can therefore focus on the "how" branch questions and on finding their answers. But what are the root questions from which differing opinions about social issues have emerged? And at the academic level, what are the root questions about our disciplines and academic communities? What are the questions that matter?

For fifty-three years the Western Social Science Association's annual conference has been a leader in inviting academicians and practitioners to a "front porch" that offers a time and place to explore imaginatively the questions that matter to us. Paper presentations at the conference are a place to examine the root, trunk and branch questions that matter. These questions challenge us to explore: What if we were to begin to see through a different set of "eyes" or questions? What if our various disciplines could better understand each others' mindsets and see constructive synergies through the lens of interdisciplinary teaching, research and service opportunities? What if through the WSSA's "front porch" we could grow a more vibrant and healthy social science community? What more can you be?

Come join us for the 53rd Annual WSSA Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 13-16, 2011 and explore your questions that matter on our "front porch."

Occasionally, one of our members makes an appearance in their local newspaper. Because we're proud of them, when such articles come to our attention, we may reprint them -- with permission of course! Below is such an article.

PROFILE: Pratt holds own as UTC professor

By Amy O. Williams
Times Free Press
Chattanooga, TN

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Laila Pratt never dreamed of being an economist, and she doesn't think many people do. Most people don't really have an idea what economics is, she said. I guess kids in high school these days take economics, but back in the dark age when I went to high school, they didn't.

So in her principles of microeconomics classes at UTC, Dr. Pratt initially tells her students they are about to learn something akin to a foreign language and directs them to the glossary of terms at the back of their textbooks.

As the first and only female economics professor at UTC, Dr. Pratt, 60, is a well respected and well liked presence, according to her colleagues.

Catherine Middleton, an instructor in the department, said Dr. Pratt is very knowledgeable and also extremely approachable, which makes her popular with students. Ms. Middleton, 34, took a class from Dr. Pratt during her

undergraduate studies and remembers visiting her often.

I found her very willing to help students, and I still see students wandering in and out of her office, she said.

Earlier this month, Elinor Ostrom became the first woman to win the Nobel Prize for economics. The achievement by Dr. Ostrom, a political science professor at Indiana University, is positive for the future of women in economics, Dr. Pratt said.

I think it is great that a female economist has been recognized for the work she has done, she said. I think it will let college and high school age women and girls know economics is a field they can succeed in, and that is important.

Dr. Pratt joined the faculty at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 1974 after completing her masters and doctorate degrees at Virginia Tech. At the time, 4 percent to 6 percent of economists were women. Today, that number is much higher, between 20 percent and 25 percent, she said.

The job offer came at a perfect time for Dr. Pratt, who grew up in the Mobile, Ala., area. One sister was living in Knoxville and the other was attending college at the University of the South.

Dr. Pratt started college at Auburn University as a math major, but found she was drawn to economics because of the unique perspective it gave to social and political issues. She took a class in econometrics - math, statistics and economic theory - in her senior year and she was intrigued.

For the first time, it gave me a way to look at social and political problems in the context of statistics and math, and I thought it was really fascinating, she said.

She confessed there are some hazards of being an economist these days, the inevitable questions about the economy will get better.



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Social Science Researchers Can Make News Around the World

Sandra L. Combs

Department of Journalism

Arkansas State University, Jonesboro

What is all the news that's fit to print?

That's the focal question in most basic journalism news reporting and news writing classes. It also should be the question when a Social Science researcher wants



to decide whether to pursue getting the research results published or broadcast in the news media. Knowing what news is will enable the researcher to get the desired press coverage.

So, what is news? "News is information about a break from the normal flow of events. News is information

people want to know or information people need to know to make sound decisions in their lives."

Based on the above definition of news, can Social Science researchers make news? Well, some can and some can't.

Those who "can" usually make news because they simply have presented information that is either a break from the normal flow of events, or information people need to know or want to know.

There are more than a dozen news values that make something worthy to be printed in the newspaper, news magazine or specialty publication; broadcast on television or radio stations; or published online. All of the news values do not have to be present at the same time to make an event newsworthy but in most cases, it takes more than one or two news values to make an event (research results) newsworthy.

Three main news values that can make research results newsworthy are proximity, appropriateness and timeliness. When Social Science researchers want to get news coverage in print, online or on the air, the topic should be relevant to the circulation area of the publication or station, appropriate for the media outlet's audience and timely. If the research is related in some way to the circulation or distribution area, then it has a better chance of getting publicized.

For instance, research results about "The Impact of Ethnicity on Attitudes Toward Health Care Reform in New Mexico" should be a topic that easily could interest journalists throughout the state of New Mexico. New Mexico is a natural target audience. Health care reform is a controversial and important state and national issue (two more news values – controversy and importance) and even though the research is focused on New Mexico, it is information that probably can be applied in part to other states in the United States.

Regardless of the research subject, the first place to start when trying to attract the interest of a journalist would be to start with the media outlets near the institution where the research was conducted.

If that's not a viable option for a project like the one above in New Mexico, then send news releases about the thorough research to newspapers, news magazines, online news publications and radio and television news stations based in or near the state capitol. (On this particular subject, acknowledgement of census information about the number of people in the various ethnic groups in the state of New Mexico also would be helpful in getting the result results published in the media. This year being the counting of Americans for the U.S. Census Bureau makes those ethnic numbers more important and a natural attention-getter for journalists.)

Another news value is trends. News media outlets are highly likely to publish trends that are going on in society. Read any metropolitan newspaper for a month and many stories you read will have to deal with trends. For instance, you will likely read about fashion trends, technology trends and even fitness trends. (Have you heard about the exercise trend called Zumba? What about touch screens only on cell-phones and electronic readers?)

A Social Science research project about "Body Art, Deviance and American College Students," could be the basis for a trend story. Couple the research results with information about area tattoo parlors frequented by college students in that area and it can make a great story with plenty of art and video for print, online or broadcast. (On many college campuses it is quite easy to find numerous students with at least one tattoo and many of them were inked while in college, away from home, at the tattoo parlor near the school.)

Prominence and impact/importance are two more news values that can help information from a Social Science researcher get published. If the topic is prominent, has some kind of celebrity status, or if it is deemed important enough

that it impacts a large part of society, then its chances of being published increase.

Meanwhile, human interest might be the only news value that's necessary to get media outlets in union towns and union states interested in publishing research results about "Workers' Relationships to their Union."

Historically, unions have been a driving force that helped get the majority of the country's labor force safer working environments and livable wages. Unions also have resulted in work policies about the number of hours in a workday, minimum wages, health insurance benefits, vacation time, pensions, life insurance benefits, promotions and even whether work uniforms were appropriate, necessary or mandatory.

Nevertheless, other news values that spark interest for journalists can include the elderly, sex, humor and oddity. An example from today's news pages could read something like this, "another old celebrity caught in an extra-marital relationship signs up for a three-month-long alcohol rehabilitation clinic but stays less than a week and goes on several talk shows to explain why it will never happen again, even though this is already the second or third time for a short rehabilitation stay."

At the same time, how unusual is it to read research results about "Smoking, Drinking and the Distribution of Adult Body Weight" that provides information that can be used by health care professionals and people who smoke, drink and may have weight problems? It just might be the odd topic that can interest journalists in to reporting and writing on the issue.

Another example of a research project that is out of the ordinary and possibly newsworthy is, "An Examination of the Effect of Race on the Value of Basketball Trading Cards." There is much discussion about how the NBA is heavily populated with African Americans and other persons of color, rather than with the majority population, white males. (There recently was a sports story about a white male who wanted to start an all-white basketball league to combat this phenomenon.) So, there especially could be a lot of interest in this research in an area where there is an NBA team close by.

There are a few other news values that come into play when journalists make decisions whether to report and write on the subject including; children, pets or animals, an ongoing topic of interest, progress or disaster and controversy or conflict. Social Science research focusing on any of these could be news.

Finally, if at all possible, do not send blind news releases about your research and research results. Find out the name of the person assigned to cover the particular topic. "To Whom It May Concern" isn't a good contact person in this instance. At the very least, find out the correct department that might be interested in publishing the research project results. Also find out how the journalist or department prefers to receive the information. Telephone contact? Fax? Twitter? Facebook? U.S. mail? E-mail? If a journalist wants information or news releases delivered via e-mail, then he or she is more inclined to check and respond via e-mail rather than opening a package delivered by a U.S. mail.

At the same time, developing a professional relationship with a journalist also helps a Social Science researcher know on a personal level what a journalist expects from a news release before reporting and writing a story for print, broadcasting or online. Even in the age of electronic networking, nothing beats a personal exchange when dealing with journalists.

(Sandra L. Combs was a full time journalist for 22 years and still freelances while being an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro.)

What makes Social Science research newsworthy?

Appropriateness	Prominence
Proximity	Sex
Elderly	Children
Pets/Animals	Oddity/The Unusual
Currency/Ongoing	Impact/Importance
Progress/Disaster	Timeliness
Controversy/Conflict	Human Interest
Humor	Trends



“Chance Encounters”

Andrea Mott
Presidential Doctoral Fellow
North Dakota State University

Good things happen when you attend meetings of the WSSA. And at last April’s annual conference in Reno, Nevada, I made some unexpected, and much appreciated, acquaintances. My main reason for attending the conference was to present my paper, “Friend or Foe? Efforts to Protect the Wild Horse,” which is based on my dissertation.

However, I went to Reno with a secondary purpose in mind, and that was to conduct field research. My first excursion took me to the Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Center, which is located approximately 20 miles north-east of Reno. This holding facility cares for the horses after they are caught in federally mandated roundups. One afternoon at the PVWHBC piqued my interest in these roundups, many of which are done with the use of helicopters. Little did I realize that my luck was about to take a turn for the better.

In WSSA’s Fall 2009 Newsletter, Cynthia Klima had published an article titled “Basques in Reno” in which she recommended Louis’ Basque Corner restaurant. On the evening of April 15, 2010, a small group of us decided to test the local Basque cuisine. This restaurant defines the family dining experience. The dark paneled walls and small dining area give the place a cozy, if somewhat loud, atmosphere. Groups of differ-

ent sizes are seated next to one another, and it is common for people you don’t know to sit down beside you. Since our group of five did not fill up an entire table, two older couples soon occupied the four extra seats.

The conversation flowed as large bowls of salad and soup changed hands. We sat there enjoying our juicy steaks and tender lamb chops when the gentleman sitting diagonally across from me began telling us about the time he shot coyotes from a helicopter to protect his sheep. This prompted me to say something about horses. I turned to the grizzled cowboy across the table and asked if he worked with wild horses. At first he looked shocked, but he answered me with a nod and an emphatic yes. It turns out that Cliff Heaverne, our dinner companion,

was a helicopter pilot who had contracted with the federal government to fly the helicopters in wild horse roundups. There are very few people who can successfully round up horses with a helicopter, and Cliff did it for several decades.

The evening was full of laughter and conversation. As I told Cliff and his wife Sally about my dissertation, they gave me two business cards. He said he knew a lot of people in the business and that he could grease some wheels for me. It was all I could do to contain my excitement. Paula Morin, author of *Honest Horses*, interviewed Cliff and wrote about him in her book. Sally told me they kept videos, photographs, and other resources at their ranch and that I was welcome to look at them. This means I could have a

treasure trove of information at my fingertips! This particular chance encounter was both fortunate and informative. Not only did I get the chance to pursue my research, but some arrived to me family-style at the dinner table. Thank you WSSA!



*Wild Stallion at Palomino Valley
Wild Horse and Burro Center*

Waiting to be Published, or, What Happens after the Social Science Journal has Accepted Your Paper

N. Prabha Unnithan, Colorado State University, Editor, SSJ

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cation in a future issue of the journal.

Congratulations! Now, please be patient.

First, I should clarify that “future” issue does not mean the very next issue. Although these days, your copy edited paper is likely to first appear online, we still think in terms of four print issues every year per volume of SSJ. Typically, these issues are published in March, June, September and December. The Journal Manager and I work with Elsevier (our publisher) months ahead of those publication dates to ensure that the issues appear on time. Thus, the issue that appears in September was likely to have been put together in March and April.

Second, there is always a line of papers waiting to get into a particular issue. While I sometimes move papers ahead, there is usually a compelling reason for doing so (e.g., a Comment and a Reply based on an article that recently appeared in SSJ; a particularly timely paper that deals with a vital issue of immediate relevance to the social sciences; wanting to maintain balance between longer articles and research notes).

Third, authors often have compelling reasons for why a paper should be published sooner. These often revolve around tenure clocks, promotion dossiers, and merit pay cycles. Unfortunately, while I understand and sympathize at a personal level, I am usually reluctant to move publication dates ahead for these reasons alone. Others have been waiting their turn too and “first come first served” is a powerful social norm, even in academic publishing.

Fourth, we have dramatically reduced our publication backlog at SSJ. It used to take 15 to 18 months between the acceptance of a paper and its eventual appearance in one of our issues. We have reduced that time lag to between 9 and 12 months. Committees (tenure, promotion, merit, awards) are generally (or should be) willing to recognize letters of acceptance from journals for what they are: an understanding that the editor will publish the paper in a future issue of the journal.

So, enjoy the acceptance of yet another flawless gem of research from your scholarly mind just a little longer. Your paper will be appearing in research databases, the SSJ, and in the discourse of the social sciences soon enough.

Social Networking, Social Sciences, and the WSSA

Donna Lybecker, Idaho State University
Council Member

Social networking is a relatively new computer-based service that focuses on building and reflecting networks among people who share interests and activities. Facebook, one of the popular social networking websites, consists of “profiles” or representations of each user—a page that lets users notify friends about themselves (via “posts”), and allows users to join networks created by an organization, institution, or other entity.



Although controversial due to what some people view as privacy issues, many people (particularly the younger generations) are using social networking sites to share ideas, activities, events, and interests. The power of these sites was made clear over the past few years. Facebook in particular is frequently used to inform individuals of issues and events, including such activities as protests. Today Facebook is a hotbed for political and social causes, from raising

visibility for initiatives such as local campaigns and fundraising events, to energizing activism and organizing massive public protest against organizations such as Colombia’s Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) (Perez 2008) and election results in Iran (Gross 2009).

Undoubtedly the majority of activity on Facebook is benign and consists of updates interesting mainly to friends and family. However, social networking can also be used as a tool to connect people and help stimulate interactions around common interests. The social sciences can utilize social networking as a tool for connecting people with similar research agendas, and to draw attention to publications, conferences or other areas of interest. With this in mind, the WSSA is now on Facebook. Our page can be found by searching “Western Social Science Association” within Facebook search. Take a look at the page to see photos from the 2010 Annual conference, links to sections, and comments posted. In addition, the page is open for comments, so feel free to add to the wall. This Facebook page will be a source for information in the future and can connect you with WSSA friends and colleagues. Check it out.

Gross, D. “In Iran protest, online world is watching, acting,” CNN web page, June 19, 2009. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/06/19/iran.internet.protests/index.html>

Perez, M.C. “Facebook brings protest to Colombia,” New York Times, February 8, 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/08/business/worldbusiness/08iht-protest11.html?_r=1

What’s Up (or Down) with the Economy?

Betsy Rankin, Centenary College of Louisiana, Council Member

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period is over. GDP has experienced positive growth for the past three quarters with an average of 3.5% growth, and unemployment has begun its decline yet it has only declined to 9.5% in June 2010 from its peak of 10.1% in October 2009.

Unemployment is a tough indicator to understand – it is actually a lagging economic indicator, meaning that it usually does not start increasing until the contractionary period is well under way. Why? Well, businesses are slow to let go workers whom they have invested in training until they are sure the downturn in their business is going to last for a while. Generally business will reduce the hours their employees work first to try to get through a short-lived decrease in demand as opposed to letting them go because it is more efficient. Once the recessionary period is definite to continue for a longer period of time, businesses eventually have to reduce their workforce to control costs. During the first year of the current recession, unemployment increased only by about 2%. It was not until the second year of the recession that it increased significantly, doubling from its pre-recession level. Now after reducing their workforce, businesses are slow to add back jobs because the costs of hiring and training new workers but also during recessionary periods, businesses seek to become more efficient which leads to the ability to increase output with fewer workers due to increased productivity. There is also uncertainty about whether or not the growth we have experienced will continue.

Part of the hesitancy to declare ourselves in full-fledged recovery is due to the fact that the U.S. economy is so dependent on the rest

of the world and in the world economy, uncertainty abounds. The financial crisis that rocked the world has led to huge amounts of government debt as nations tried to keep the financial industry from collapse as well as stimulus plans to help consumers cope, especially in our European peers. Now governments are searching for ways to control their rising debt loads. There are only two ways to do that: reduce government expenditures or raise taxes. As you remember from ECON 101, both of these cures have contractionary effects on the economy! Fear of stifling the turnaround is a valid fear.

But let’s look at the positive side! In a recent meeting of the largest 20 countries in the world, leaders agreed to reduce government deficits at a “growth friendly” pace that will not undermine the recent growth in the world economy. Another positive initiative recently announced is that China has agreed to allow their currency to appreciate against the U.S. dollar which means our goods will be more attractive to the 1.3 billion Chinese consumers. The Chinese government had for many years pursued a policy that artificially made their goods more attractive to U.S. citizens and our goods less attractive to the Chinese. By allowing their currency to increase in value against the dollar and to respond to market forces, U.S. producers should see a boost in sales to China, the world’s largest market!

Overall, the U.S. economy seems to be in a position to continue the upward movement, but on a road that still has some ruts and potholes that need to be navigated carefully. Now when will the Dow Jones get back to 1400?



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Reno, Revisited

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and Mexico.

Thea Luig of the University of Alabama was recognized with the Best Graduate Paper for her work "Critical Investigation of Adaptability and Vulnerability Studies of Northern Aboriginal Communities." And graduate students Victoria Springer from the University of Reno, Daniel Poole of the University of Utah, and Tracie Hanson from Northern Arizona University received Honorable Mentions.

The Best Undergraduate paper went to Jeremy Hein from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington for his work "Partisan Effects on State Level Unemployment Rates." Honorable Mentions went to Ryan McKnight of the University of Northern Colorado, Joel Anguiano from the University of Nevada-Reno, and Ian D. Mosley of Boise State University.

A number of important actions were taken which laid foundation for upcoming years.

Goodbye's were said to a number of

section coordinators, but welcomes were accorded to several new coordinators for 2010-11: Karen Jarratt-Snyder, American Indian Studies; Heather Nicol, Association of Borderland Studies; Denver Lewellan, Canadian Studies; Frederic Lee, Economics (Association for Institutional Thought); David Matkin, Public Finance and Budgeting; and Suzanne Kelley, Rural Studies. A com-



Entertaining Research

plete listing of all section coordinators for next year can be found at the WSSA website,

<http://wssa.asu.edu/sections/default.htm>.

A new revised constitution was approved unanimously. The revised Constitution addressed membership issues, terms of office, succession and elections of officers, governance structure and duties, management of academic and business affairs, affiliate, associates and sections, and ways to adopt and amend the constitution, and dissolution and fund distribution should the association terminate in the future.

And starting with the 2011 conference, the WSSA membership period will change from our current calendar membership year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) to a conference based year, running from April 1 through March 31 annually, and, starting with the 2011 conference, all paid attendees at the WSSA Annual Conference will automatically receive WSSA membership with their registration payment.

Well, bags are now unpacked and laundry has "for the most part" been done, but preparations are well underway for hosting an even larger conference in Salt Lake City in April 2011.

Your executive committee meets in Salt Lake City in September.

Call for Nominations

Jack Hou

Immediate Past President

In accordance with the WSSA Constitution, the President "shall appoint, with due regard to geographical distribution and professional interest, five members to a Nomination Committee," and traditionally the out-going President (me, this year) assumes the role of the Chair of the Nomination Committee.



The offices open for election include the President-Elect, the Vice-President, and three Board members of the Executive Council. With the exception of the President-Elect, it is the custom to nominate two candidates for each open position. Since the 2010 Annual Conference in Reno, the current Committee has been working hard at seeking quality candidates to fill the open Council positions.

The WSSA depends on the dedicated voluntary service of its members. Serving on the Council is a time-consuming but rewarding experience. While the slate for the 2011 election will have been set by the time you read this, it is by no means too early to start thinking about the next one. If you are interested in serving, please contact next year's Past President at your earliest convenience after the 2010 meeting, as the Committee is required to submit the nomination slate to the Executive Council for approval at the fall meeting in September. If you would like to nominate someone other than yourself, please make sure you have their consent first.

Science, Democracy, and the Environment

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understand the part that chance plays in the scientific world, and more important, to understand that it is all right for scientists to speak in such terms. It does not show weakness and it does not mean we cannot act. The science may muddy the waters, but that is the nature of science.

Scientists have every right to fear for the loss of their scientific credibility as they enter into the policy world. Despite all the calls for finding a way to link scientists to the policy world in a constructive manner, the fact remains that in the American policymaking system, there does not exist a way for scientists to independently portray their science as they see it. If they participate, it has to occur within the rules already established, and those rules are defined with primacy given to political and cultural values. Moreover, once a scientist is cast as an advocate, his or her reputation for producing good science is greatly diminished within the scientific community. We need to change the rules. We need to make prominent the call for developing a way for science to enter the policymaking process that does not denigrate the scientists who produced the science.

Maneuvering the Conference

Sandra L. Combs

Arkansas State University, Jonesboro

Maneuvering the annual Western Social Science Association conference with its 29 divisions can be as difficult as finding a diamond in the 37-acre Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro, Ark. But it doesn't have to be that way.



After attending two conferences (Albuquerque 2009 and Reno 2010), there are a few lessons learned that will help me better maneuver the April 13-16, 2011 conference at the Hilton Salt Lake City Center in Utah. And there are several desired outcomes that will enable me to have a positive experience at future conferences. (This is not about selfishness but about seizing

all of the available opportunities at the conferences that will help me further develop into a productive, creative and collegial member of the Academy.)

The first thing to consider so I (we) can get the best out of the conference is economics, of course. At many institutions of higher learning across the country money is tight and travel and conference budgets have been cut substantially. Gone are the days when a conference date plus an attractive location equaled high attendance for all divisions in the conference. Today, for most conference attendees, every dollar expended has to be documented and justified. (In actuality, that is being fiscally responsible.)

In the light of the tough economic times, there are a few tips a financially constrained conference attendee can embrace and be able to attend the conference.

- Register early. (On-site registration should never be the first choice.
- Share a room with a colleague to split the cost of the hotel expenses.
- Investigate alternative transportation. Train? Carpool?

Second, meet the paper proposal and panel presentation deadlines

for the desired division. Being a part of the conference program, of course, better positions a person for financial support from the home institution.

Third, if at all possible, be prepared to stay from the beginning to the ending of the conference. You can benefit from the total conference experience not only by sharing your expertise but also by taking advantage of and learning from the work of others. Being present for the entire convention includes attending the opening and closing receptions and attending at least one luncheon, if you can afford it.

Fourth, step outside of the comfort zone of your school and division colleagues and meet and interact with others from the various schools and divisions that make up the conference. When you see someone with a WSSA conference nametag, don't be shy. Introduce yourself and find out why that person decided to attend the conference. You might make an academic connection. Be open to collaborating with others. Why reinvent the wheel when you don't have to? Why start a research project from scratch when there might be some credible research out there that you can expand upon?

Along this same line, fifth, junior professors and graduate students shouldn't be shy about approaching full professors for advice. Learn from the best. Take all of the advice and constructive criticism as that which will only make you a better faculty member and researcher. Don't take the critiques as personal attacks. Surely they aren't meant that way.

Sixth, attend at least one session in another division to get to know others in another division and to see what other divisions are doing.

For instance, if you didn't get to see at least one of the three scheduled documentaries during the Reno conference, you missed a treat and you missed an opportunity to learn a lot from the research presented in the films. The films were: "The Chief's Prophecy: Survival of the Northern Cheyenne Nation," "389 Miles: Living the Border," and "Canoe Way: The Sacred Journey."

Finally, talk about the conference and its benefits during a faculty meeting when you return from the conference. That conversation might spark the interest of other faculty members (including graduate students) to attend the next conference. It also gives you a chance to share the progress of your work presented at the conference.

Well, I hope to see you in Salt Lake City for the 53rd WSSA Conference. I'll be the one shaking hands, taking names, taking notes from various divisions and just taking care of business to make sure I have the best conference experience ever.

Call-For-Papers: Special Issue on China's Economy

Over more than three decades, China has experienced rapid economic growth that has become the envy of the world. Yet, the gains of economic growth have not been fairly shared among Chinese citizens. The causes and consequences of this change imply a multitude of serious challenges for China that are pressing and immediate.

The *Social Science Journal* will publish a special issue on China's economy. This Call-For-Papers is aimed at soliciting quality papers that address various issues related to the topic.

Authors interested in contributing papers should submit papers online to the Elsevier Editorial System. The deadline for submission is December 15, 2010. All articles will go through the full review process. We plan to have the review completed by April 1, 2011. The journal plans to schedule the special issue as Number 3 (September issue) of the 2010 volume.

For inquiries, please contact Dr. Shunfeng Song, the guest editor of the special issue, at song@unr.edu or (775) 784-6860.



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Call for Papers

Western Social Science Association

PROPOSAL FOR PRESENTATION OF PAPER

53rd Annual Conference
Western Social Science Association

"The Social Sciences: Addressing Questions that Matter"

April 13-16, 2011
Hilton Salt Lake City Center
Salt Lake City, Utah

Submission Deadline is Friday, December 3, 2010

We at the WSSA would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in the Spring 2011 meeting of the Association. As an organization, the WSSA is committed to multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship, service, and collegiality.

Each year in April, 1,000 or more social scientists gather for the Association's annual conference. At a typical conference, held over three and one-half days, participants organized in 30 sections and affiliated groups present over 900 papers in 300 disciplinary and interdisciplinary panel sessions. Some of the larger affiliates include: Association of Borderland Scholars, Canadian Studies, the International Sociological Association, Association for Institutional Thought and Women's Studies. It is important to note that while membership in the Association is encouraged, it is not necessary in order to present.

In addition to the academic activities at the conference, we offer several social venues that allow you to continue discussions started in the sessions, meet new colleagues, renew old acquaintances or simply relax.

We know that you have many choices of which conferences to attend in the upcoming year; however, we believe that no other academic conference offers the discipline related focus, while at the same time offering the diversity of the WSSA.

For accommodations reservations call 1-800.HILTONS, and ask for the WSSA rate of \$149.00

For further information about the conference, to submit an abstracts on-line directly to section coordinators, or for conference registration information and for membership information, please visit our website at <http://wssa.asu.edu>.



Western Social Science Association

Pre-Registration Form
53rd Annual Conference
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
April 13 - April 16, 2011

**PLEASE
PRINT
CLEARLY**

Name _____
As you want it shown on your namebadge

Mailing Address _____
street address

street address, line 2, if needed

city state postal code country,
if not USA

Affiliation _____
your college/ university, agency, or other organization, as you want it shown on your namebadge

E-mail address _____
members: this is required, if you want on-line access to The Social Science Journal

Phone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____

Make check payable to: Western Social Science Association (*Prices are in U.S. Dollars*)
Mail form and check to: WSSA, c/o Larry Gould, NAU-Yuma, Box 6236, Yuma AZ 85366-6236

Pre-Registration forms must be received by March 24.
Later registrations must be made online at <http://wssa.nau.edu>

<p style="text-align: center;">Conference REGISTRATION</p> <p>Membership Year April 1, 2011, through March 31, 2012.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full Member - Includes Conference Registration, Journal Subscription, & Newsletter - \$105</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Student Member - Includes Conference Registration, Journal Subscription, & Newsletter - \$55 <i>(Refers to full-time students -- send copy of student ID)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Retiree Member - Includes Conference Registration, Journal Subscription, & Newsletter - \$55 <i>(Refers to an individual no longer employed in field)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-Presenting Guest -- \$25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> President's Luncheon & Awards Ceremony -- ticketed event - \$25 # of tickets _____</p> <p>TOTAL \$ _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Membership Only</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Does not include</u> <u>conference attendance</u></p> <p>Includes Journal & Newsletter subscription</p> <p>Membership Year April 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full Membership - \$40</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership - \$25 <i>(Refers to full-time students -- send copy of student ID)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Retiree Membership - \$25 <i>(Refers to an individual no longer employed in field)</i></p>
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Western Social Science Association
c/o Larry Gould, Chief Executive Officer
Northern Arizona University - Yuma Campus
P.O. Box 6236
Yuma, AZ 85366-6236
SBS 1100

Congratulations on Revitalized Sections

*J. Gary Linn, Boise State University
Recruitment and Retention Coordinator*

The role of the WSSA section coordinator at times can be challenging. This is certainly the case when the coordinator is trying to put together a strong program when university travel budgets are underfunded or eliminated. Nevertheless, even in these economically trying times, five of our sections have shown remarkable growth in participation. WSSA wishes to congratulate and recognize the following section coordinators for expanding participation in their respective areas: **Stephen Brown and Theodore Ransaw, African and African American Studies; Brant Short and Dayle Hardy-Short, Human Communication, Victor Heller and Nathan Heller; Public Administration; Evguenia Davidova, Slavic Studies; and James Richardson, Social Psychology.** Their leadership and hard work is much appreciated. We hope that their upward trend in section participation is sustained through 2011.



FUTURE	2011	Salt Lake City
CONFERENCE	2012	Houston
SITES	2013	Denver
	2014	San Francisco

