
MEMBERS NEWSLETTER 2(4) MARCH 2007

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

Congratulations--you made it through the winter and now can think about spring and spring break!

We have some good news to share about student awards and plans for next year, which you can read about below. I also wanted to share the outcome of an exciting activity from this month, which was a meeting of Directors of STS centers, departments and programs.

Geof Bowker and I organized a retreat for STS directors in March and about 18 participants from across the U.S. attended. The purpose was two-fold: to discuss the various challenges in managing STS programs and to have a forum for discussing where the field was moving and how STS centers, programs and departments can best prepare to move in new directions. Among many contributions were the following: Donna Haraway (UC Santa Cruz) called for more work on "other ways of knowing." She feels it is time for STS to (finally) begin to work in comparative knowledges and explore more about non-Western frames. Barbara Allen (Virginia Tech) felt that STS needs to connect more with policy. Science policy scholars are increasingly engaging with STS literature and there are fruitful ways to connect without segregating the two fields. Steve Epstein (UCLA) suggested that identity politics, long a theme in sociology and anthropology, could be revisioned within STS frameworks. More specific topics were mentioned as representing intriguing intellectual problems for STS, including analysis of paramilitary & bioterrorism activities, the study of large-scale interdisciplinary assemblages of scientists & technologists (like the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery here or the Bio-X at Stanford), cyberinfrastructures, outsourcing of scientific work, and more. While each center is different, we all face similar issues, including recruiting and maintaining students (and funding them), fund-raising, working across departments and schools (including curriculum issues, faculty sharing, etc) and questions about what is the most effective governance structure. While our challenges were not all resolved, the group learned about some innovative ways that various groups are going about structuring undergraduate and graduate programs and finding funding for students. Finally, there was some discussion of trying to plan an STS summer

school, possibly on a regional basis, somewhat along the lines of the RPI-MIT-Cornell sessions.

– Linda Hogle, Director

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR FACULTY MEMBERS!

Call for nominations for the steering committee:

Any faculty member may nominate a candidate for the steering committee. Steering committee members should be involved in science, technology and society studies through their teaching, research or service and be willing to share in the responsibility for the governance of our several educational and scholarly activities. If you wish to nominate someone, please contact Edna Hutchcroft by **April 9**. The term of office is 3 years and we will fill 2 positions to begin next year (2007-08). The ballots will go out to the membership in mid-April.



Visiting Speaker Geoffrey Bowker and audience on March 20

OTHER CENTER NEWS:

Visiting Speaker Series: **Geoffrey Bowker** gave a fantastic talk on “Memory Practices in the Sciences” on March 20. We were excited to have 70 attendees from a number of departments across campus, including SLIS, Journalism & Mass Communication, Sociology, Rural Sociology, Geography, as well as Political Science and German. We even had a visitor from UW-Eau Claire.

STS Networking on Campus: Prof. Bowker’s talk was part of **Greg Downey’s** seminar series this semester on “Uncovering Information Labor”, sponsored by the Holtz Center. Students and faculty who have attended the series have begun networking as a result of their interactions in, and we encourage them to continue to do so!

STS Spring Brown Bag Series: **Holly Gibbs** (SAGE) will give a talk on April 12 entitled “Science Needs for Reducing Emissions from Tropical Deforestation and Degradation under the UNFCCC Framework. **Michael Oldani** (Sociology and Anthropology, UW-Whitewater) will speak April 26 on “Filling (Racialized) Scripts: Psychotropic Drugs, Aboriginal Children, and Proxies for the (Canadian) State”. The time for brownbag talks is 12:00pm in 8108 Social Science (a.k.a. the Havens Center Conference Room).

Environmental Film Festival in the Works: The Holtz Center is co-sponsoring “**Tales from Planet Earth**”—an environmental film festival to be held next fall. This should be an exciting event with some landmark documentaries and films. We’ll send you more information as we receive it.

New course on Engineering Ethics: A new course on **Engineering Ethics** has been approved by the Academic Planning Council. This course will be taught by **Sarah Pfatteicher** in Spring '08 and cross-listed with STS.

Additional Titles: **Doug Maynard** is chair-elect for the Department of Sociology for 2007-08. **Sarah Pfatteicher** has another new title to her now-long list: Honorary Fellow in History of Science. Congratulations to both!

THE 2007 HOLTZ GRADUATE SCHOLARS:

We are pleased to announce this year's recipients of the Holtz Graduate Scholar awards. They are **Richard Donohue** (Geography), **Mark Fleming** (Sociology), and **Tod Van Gunten** (Sociology).

Richard's research explores how the current digital transition in cartography affects mapping within a broader social context. Using ethnographic observation and interviewing as well as historical methods, he will use the award money to develop and pursue a pilot study of a community-based mapping program. The pilot study will investigate how cartographic techniques, distributed networks, and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) engender and constrain democratic possibilities for mapping. Richard remarks that "the pilot study is valuable because it allows me to field test the usefulness of various underdeveloped approaches to and explanations of GIS mapping before committing to a larger dissertation proposal."

Mark's project concerns the concept of 'the social' in affective neuroscience research. He will spend the summer conducting ethnographic fieldwork in a neuroscience laboratory, learning about the practices of neuroimaging experimentation both through observation and first-hand by participating as a researcher himself. Mark hopes to understand "how the practices of neuroimaging experimentation might relate to the production of particular conceptions of emotion."

As part of his interest in "taking an STS approach to applied economic knowledge," Tod will use his award money to conduct research in Mexico this summer that looks at the influence of economics on state economic policy. He will interview policymakers involved in economic policy debates on monetary and exchange rate policy, and also do some archival research. Tod says: "I think this is a relatively new area, and [it is] exciting to be carrying out research in this relatively uncharted territory."

Holtz Scholar Awards provide summer research funding for graduate level STS research. To be eligible, students must be PhD minors in STS. Awardees are expected to provide a formal report at the conclusion of their awarded research and maintain active participation in Holtz Center activities.

Congratulations Mark, Richard, and Tod! We look forward to hearing about the fruits of your research!

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEWS:

Hard to believe, but this year is the tenth anniversary of **Dolly the sheep**, who marked the beginning (well, the public beginning) of the age of cloning. Dolly, created at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, was actually born on July 5, 1996 although her arrival was revealed on February 21, 1997. A number of conferences and special editions of journals have been dedicated to this landmark event, but what have we learned about social, ethical or political issues that surround Dolly and the subsequent work?

Read about it here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/6359011.stm>



Your Holtz Center Staff caught by the camera after Geoffrey Bowker's talk