

Fall Quarter 2003

I HAVE A NEWSLETTER!

by Colin J. Beck

The news of my arrest has been much exaggerated. Yes, it's true I was a fugitive from the law. Yes, it's true I've been booked and have since gone to court. But no, it was not for my links to Al-Qaeda. For the whole story, please refer to the cartoon inside which I drew to help me deal with the pain.

So I'd like to welcome you to a new year of the Soap Dispenser. First of all, let's all congratulate Brian Colwell on a job well done last year. And I'd like to thank all of the contributors to this quarter's issue. But I'd also like to say that there is a flaw in the ASGS

electoral system. Like a petty dictator, I ran for the office of newsletter editor unopposed and received 99.9% of the vote. So now I have a newsletter! And you're stuck with me for the whole year.

As always, the Soap Dispenser is a quarterly publication. This means you will see only three issues. And the next issue will be in January. Please consider submitting something. And always keep in mind our new slogan: We'll print anything!

By God, this is true.

And yes, we do have news from Victor's office.

VICTOR'S OFFICE

by Victor Thompson

Okay, so I guess it's time to work on another installment of my space filling column for the Soap Dispenser. I think I could write just about anything as long as it fills up a significant amount of space in the newsletter, which by the way is under a new reign of terror headed up by none other than Colin the Magnificent (at least that is what he has forced all of us to call him this year). If you ask me I would have to say this Soap Dispenser thing has gone to his head a little. He has taken to wearing press credentials and telling everyone "If it

bleeds it leads." Well, I don't know of any blood leading stories to add to what will surely be another fine edition of the Soap Dispenser, but I would like to hand out a few tips to people in the department. As always these tips are intended for your safety and should not be abused.

Tip #1—Discretionary funds are to be used for exactly what they were intended to be used for—brand new Dell laptops. I got my eye on one of those shiny new Centrinos if only I could come up with a good research related reason. Is "it looks cool" good enough? We'll see. I mean what

WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

by Mark Granovetter

My students know I am fanatical about expressing ideas in the fewest possible words. And it *kills* me when people exaggerate :)

So let me just truthfully say how exciting it is to welcome you back for our latest and greatest academic year ever, with a special welcome to our new cohort, one of the most diverse and exciting we have ever assembled. It is a remarkable quality of our program that a collection of people from so many different backgrounds and intellectual perspectives can be transformed into a community of individuals who inspire and care for one another.

Please let us on the faculty know how we can make your experience even better.

is the worst Suzi could tell me—"No!" I'll just try another reason next week. Besides, why would I waste it all on going to conferences or as some are fond of doing, purchasing copies of Stata? I can hitchhike to the conferences (itself a sociological treat) and as far as software goes, I thought that is what we have Kazaa for. For those of you

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NEWS FROM VICTOR'S OFFICE

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who don't know what Kazaa is, you didn't hear it from me. In addition to the above items, there are so many other things I have seen people wasting discretionary funds on—like stamps for job applications, books, and software manuals—all of which are noble causes, but let's get our priorities straight people—Buy Dell! (Maybe I can get a free laptop for advertising them twice already.)

Tip #2—Do not study in the computer lab. If you think you can actually go into the lab, get some studying done and come out a better person give it up. Chances are pretty good that you

will run into someone who has been hovering around the lab all day like a lost child waiting for someone to share their problems with. This is not something you want to happen to you. Trust me. I have heard some of the things people think are problems and it isn't worth wasting your time on them. If you want my personal advice, avoid the computer cluster like a plague. Besides, have you seen the list of rules in that place? I think there were less rules in the Cook County jail. At least we don't have to be deloused. So far!

Tip #3—Go to the speaker series and job talks! I know that

most of the things we are all working on are far more important than these things (like going to Napa to taste wine) but our attendance is a reflection on the department and can have an impact on future job candidate's decisions to come. More importantly you can see how different people think about the social sciences from us. For example, I learned that time order is not a necessary ingredient in a causal explanation, although I am still thinking about this one. Also, we are changing the structure of these things so that instead of having food that is guaranteed to make you feverish and weak for a month we will begin providing real lunches. Yes! You heard me right. Real food! Of course this means we will be having fewer talks, but the quality will improve significantly. We may even make you R.S.V.P. which is certain to make us all feel more important.

Tip#4—Do not email something to the entire group unless you run it by me first. This one should be obvious for some of you, less so for others.

Hopefully these tips will guide us all through the year as we walk down these beautiful halls of the Stanford Sociology Department. And more importantly, I hope I have fulfilled my duties as columnist for our great new editor—Colin the Magnificent!

NEED TO RESEARCH? TRY NASA

This note is to alert you to a potential research opportunity available in the department on the broad topic of human-computer interaction.

Together with Cliff Nass and others in the Department of Communication, Cecilia Ridgeway is involved in a co-sponsored project with NASA on the social implications of human-computer/robot interaction. NASA is currently involved in the development of several different robot/computer prototypes from which there are many available opportunities for hands-on research, observation, and evaluation. This research may be particularly applicable to those interested in social psychology and small group interac-

tion, but there are many socio-logically substantive applications to this research. Stanford/NASA Hum-Bot research projects are currently in the formulation stages and can range from article to dissertation-length studies and beyond. There is ample room for graduate student involvement in this project, and because it is just starting, this is a particularly good time to get involved. Importantly, dissertation and other project funding will most likely be available for this research.

Sound interesting? Need more information? Get in touch with Kjersten Bunker (bunker@stanford.edu) for more details about the project.

PUT YOUR WORDS IN ACTION! GET INVOLVED!

by Antony Yiu

Before I start, I need to introduce myself to everyone in the department so that I can claim the full responsibility of this article. In case you don't know me, I am Antony, the 4th year Ph.D *Candidate* (Yes, I did pass my second year paper.) who is energetic at times but lethargic at most times. I rarely work in my basement office but I do most of my work in the library. So, if you want to catch me and give me a rebuttal, find me at CoHo or in the library.

After spending three good years in the department, I realize that there is a discrepancy between what we study/research and what we do. Honestly, I am very disappointed by the low level of civic participation from our department. We are supposed to be the group of students who know most about any social problems, ranging from social movement, race/ethnicity, discrimination, economic sociology, organization behavior, and criminology. We even teach people "How to win friends and influence people." (Ask Alex Gerbasi if you don't know anything about this. She taught a class on this topic this past summer.) However, many of us end up spending hours read-

ing, doing research, trying to finish all method assignments but we never step outside of our little cubical/office/apartment to see what actually is going on out there. I am not opposing people spending time on research, which I think it is crucial if you want to graduate and get a job. However, you will not know what exactly is like to organize a protest, to face a discrimination, to interact with other people if you do not step out of your comfort zone.

I was encouraged two years ago when some of the students in my cohort went out to organize an anti-war protest in White Plaza. I admired the work that they did. They really put what they learned and what they knew in action. This is what sociologists are supposed to be. We did it this year with the graduate funding issue. I was shocked to see how involved our graduate students were in this "social movement." Well, I stepped aside and pondered upon it: If the issue were not about YOUR funding, would you go out to protest against it? None of us (including myself) was involved in the protest in June about the unfair compensations of janitorial workers and staff of the Stanford dining services. I guess many of our undergraduate

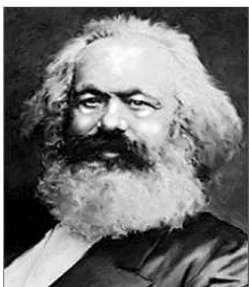
students know more about the "real" sociology than we do. I am not asking everyone to be a social activist or a social worker. We study so much, read so much, and do much more research than any other groups of graduate students on campus on social issues. We ought to be the ones to play key roles in our society.

To understand the social issues, you need to be involved in it. Literature reviews, theories, and statistical analysis are the fundamental tools that we need to use when writing a paper or doing a research. However, if you do not interact with people and observe that interactions, how could you be another Erving Goffman? We need to be proactive and get involved in the "real" business in our world.

I highly challenge every one of you to join at least one campus organization, sit on one ASSU committee, or get involved in some community organization. This is the only way that you can really learn what is going on in the world. This is the only channel for you to find your purpose in the world. So, get out of your office, get out of your cubical, get out of your apartment. Be proactive.

I do not mean to criticize anyone in this article. I want to raise the awareness of everyone in our department that we need to get involved instead of just complaining what is wrong in the world. If you don't want Bush, go and vote next year (I cannot do so because I am not a citizen.). I am no superman but I am someone who dares to challenge every one of you.

KARL MARX SAYS: " Go to the speaker series"



HE WON'T BE THERE, BUT OTHER COOL PEOPLE WILL

**THURSDAYS, 12:30 PM
IN ROOM 21/59**

Free Food!

DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

Free Food!

Colin's Big Night Out

Francois broke up with his girlfriend and was feeling sad.



I offered to buy him a drink.

We went to the Northhouse and played pool.



I lost and bought Francois a shot of Tequila.

Then we decided to leave. Outside my car was missing. Was it stolen?



No. It was impounded for an expired registration.

To get the car back, I needed to register. To register I needed documents from the impounded car.

Catch-22

So we went to the police station to get the release form to get stuff from the car.

There we waited...



and waited...

Finally a police officer came. He told us something disturbing.



I had a warrant for my arrest.

8 months ago, I got a ticket for not having a bike light.



I had got a bike light at the same time as the ticket. 'Chickenshit' the Palo Alto officer called it.

I had also gotten the citation waived at the Stanford Police station.



But somehow this didn't work, so now I have to go to court..

October 14th...



So I'm eating Ramen until December.



That was my big night out.

The End.

WORKING AT TOP LIBERAL ARTS SCHOOLS

by Stephanie Mollborn

A few weeks ago I talked to a faculty member at a top-ranked liberal arts college. I wanted to find out what the job was like and how it differed from a career at a research university. She told me that like at research universities, faculty members at top-tier liberal arts colleges divide their time between teaching and research. In fact, the course load of two classes per semester at her school sounded quite similar to the load at a place like Stanford. Classes tend to be small, and students are motivated. During breaks and using her remaining time during the school year, she carries out her research. While it can be a drawback not to have a ready supply of graduate students as research assistants, she said that she

recruits help from PhD students at nearby universities and employs responsible undergrads. Her department does not provide a research budget for each professor, but research funds are readily available both from the college and from other sources. Faculty are expected to be active researchers.

In terms of tenure decisions, she told me that your teaching record matters much more than at most research universities. While you do not need to be an award-winning teacher to get tenure, teaching evaluations should be good. In terms of research, you should demonstrate that you are an active scholar through conference presentations and a published article or so a year. Time to tenure is similar to research universities.

However, working at a liberal arts college that is not highly ranked is likely to be a very different experience from what she describes.

Having worked at an Ivy League university before moving to a liberal arts college, she recommended that graduate students at Stanford and elsewhere think about applying to jobs at liberal arts colleges. She is surprised that students from top-tier universities do not consider this career path, since it may be as attractive as a university job or someone who enjoys both teaching and research. She said that competition for tenure-track positions is not as fierce as at research universities, and that the environment is supportive and pleasant. To be a successful candidate, you should have a solid research and teaching record and show enthusiasm for teaching.

SOCIOLOGY PUZZLE #4

by Jen Van Stelle

Fill in the grid below using the letters in the columns - the letters in each column belong (in some order) to the empty squares vertically below them. When you've completed the puzzle, you will find a sociological quotation. If you'd like an extra challenge, tell us to whom the quotation is attributed, and you'll be mentioned in the next issue of *The Soap Dispenser*.

A		E		C	E	A				D	
E		I		E	I	E		C	A	E	F
L		L		I	N	L		K	O	L	N
O	B	R		U	N	L		S	L	N	T
R	R	S		V	N	R		R	S	O	O
T	U	T		W	O	S		S	S	R	Y
				I	N	D		I	V	I	D
L											
	,			G	E	N		E	R	A	L
A	R	T									

Answer:

SOCIOLOGY PUZZLE #3: WORD FINDER

1) What is Brian Colwell's least-favorite candy?

Candy C O R N

2) What is the name of James Evans' sister who teaches bio-chemistry in Kansas?

S A R A H

3) In what New Jersey city was Kjersten Bunker-Whittington born?

M O R R I S T O W N

4) What is the name of the university from which Lu Zheng, Songhua Hu, and a certain first-year student all received their undergraduate degrees?

R E N M I N University of China

5) The Stanford Axe was most recently stolen back from Cal at what Palo Alto restaurant?

M I N G S

6) In what month is Stefanie Bailey-Mollborn's birthday?

M A R C H

7) Where did Brian Colwell get his first tattoo?

In a P U B L I C R E S T R O O M

8) What is the name of Justine Tinkler's twin sister?

T E S S A

9) The Stanford Department of Transportation's new bicycle safety superhero is:

S P R O C K E T Man

10) What instrument did James Evans play in high school?

T R O M B O N E

11) What is the last name of Songhua Hu's office-mate?

S O L O T A R O F F

12) Where did Jen van Stelle go for spring break this year?

D A L L A S, T X

13) What sport did Kjersten Bunker-Whittington play competitively in high school?

T E N N I S

14) In what Escondido Village building do Shinichi Tanigawa, Lu Zheng, and a certain first-year

sociology grad student all live?

B L A C K W E L D E R

15) What is the first name of the first-year sociology grad student referenced in questions 4 and 14?

W E I W E I

16) What is the name of Stefanie Bailey-Mollborn's brother?

J U S T I N

17) A nickname for Stanford University?

The F A R M

W	H	A	B	T	R	W	A	F	E	N	U	J	P
S	T	H	L	H	E	E	N	A	A	M	E	U	D
W	O	F	A	D	T	T	N	R	H	E	B	S	A
F	E	R	C	I	O	E	G	M	R	L	S	T	L
T	A	I	K	S	O	W	K	E	I	C	I	I	L
S	O	L	W	O	G	T	N	C	N	N	I	N	A
G	H	C	E	E	B	S	R	W	O	G	T	T	S
N	O	B	L	E	I	E	A	O	I	R	H	P	T
I	P	O	D	A	S	S	E	T	M	T	P	I	X
M	O	N	E	T	E	N	N	I	S	B	H	S	S
I	N	G	R	A	V	I	T	Y	P	R	O	B	E
T	S	O	L	O	T	A	R	O	F	F	E	N	D
A	O	T	S	T	C	A	M	A	R	C	H	N	E
M	O	R	R	I	S	T	O	W	N	F	O	R	D