

Grand Challenges and Small Wins

Presidential Message, Sandra Nettles, 2008-09 Division 34 President



The November 5, 2008 editorial in The New York Times listed the problems that the newly-elected President faced. Among them, global climate change is an urgent one, and as the Times wrote, “this country must take the lead on addressing it.”

Human behavior has created this crisis, and the work of psychologists will be critical in addressing it. Many of Division 34 psychologists have already contributed to theory, research, and advocacy in tackling one of “society’s grand challenges,” one of APA President Alan Kazdin’s themes of the 2008 annual convention in Boston. Division 34 was the cosponsor of a presidential program, “Psychological Research to Meet the Challenges of Climate Change and Sustainable Development: An International Symposium.”

In a July email message to the Division listserv, Susan Clayton summed up a lively conversation on directions for the division that underscored our concerns. Three major themes emerged, including the clinical significance of environmental problems, the consequences of population growth for environmental issues, and adaptation in the face of climate change. Candidates for the position of 2008 APA President-elect have developed statements detailing their plans for addressing this topic, and James H. Bray, 2009 APA President and Division 34 member, will address global climate in his initiatives. To provide input on Division 34 interests, I have appointed Past-President Susan Clayton to the Central Program Committee of the “Convention-Within-a-Convention” and President-elect Alan Stewart as listserv liaison to the Future of Psychology Practice Summit.

While the Division works in concert with the larger Association, our members continue to engage in research and theoretical efforts that span, as our website notes, “contextual theories and methods, human responses to natural and technological hazards, conservation

psychology, AIDS, teenage pregnancy, environmental perception and cognition, loneliness, stress, and environmental design.” I think of the steady, incremental application of the tools of psychological science as one example of Weick’s (1984) strategy of “small wins.” Weick wrote that this strategy could not only produce positive outcomes, but might also appeal to potential allies.

My goal for my term as President is to build on the small wins of the Division’s past leadership. I want particularly to honor the efforts of Past-President Susan Clayton, who was instrumental in working to heighten the salience of global climate change and other topics in conservation psychology. Gary D. Gottfredson, 2006-2007 President, strengthened the Division infrastructure, and the Division is grateful to Sae Schatz, who served as Bulletin editor.

Louise Chawla, member of Division 34 and renowned developmental and environmental psychologist, gave the invited address in Boston. Her topic, “Growing up Green: The Development of Responsible Environmental Behavior,” was an excellent keynote for highlighting one of ways in which I will direct my efforts toward furthering the work of past leadership. For most of my career I have taught, conducted research, and developed theory on community and neighborhood influences on child and adolescent outcomes. For example, this fall I conducted a graduate seminar on environmental influences on school-related student outcomes for public school administrators and in-service teachers. As President, one of my priorities will be working with the Education Directorate to identify opportunities for Division 34 members to engage in outreach to pre-college teachers.

Collaboration with other Association initiatives will be another focus upon which I will build. With contributions from Division members, the EC (executive committee) has already contributed to interdivisional efforts, such as co-sponsorship of two CODAPAR proposals. I invite Division members to suggest additional ways in which

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we can encourage APA members in other divisions to join us in work that crosses divisional lines. On my wish-list is the development of special issues on topics in population, environmental, or conservation psychology in divisional journals.

I invite you to welcome new EC members. Alan Stewart is President-elect and Sally Augustin, newly elected Member-at-Large, will also serve as our bulletin editor. With others on the EC and with the commitment and involvement of our members, we can continue to focus attention on the contributions of psychological science to urgent problems related to global climate change and other challenges that that fall within the purview of our Division.

Reference:

Weick, K.E. (1984). Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems. *American Psychologist*, 39, 40-49.

What Do We Do at the Zoo? The Significance of a Wild Urban Setting

Presidential Address, Susan Clayton, The College of Wooster

by Sally Augustin, Division 34 Bulletin Editor



On August 16, Susan Clayton delivered the Division 34 president's address at APA's annual meeting. In a lively and informative presentation, she outlined the psychological ramifications to humans

of visits to zoos. Susan pulled from her years of experience researching people visiting zoos in her remarks as well as information gathered by other respected scientists.

Susan discussed how zoos can be a source of resilience to human beings through emotional experience, social interaction and cognitive restoration. People at zoos generally seem to learn about the animals that they visit at the zoo and zoos are trusted sources of information about environmental issues as well as about animals. Zoos, university scientists, and museums enjoy equal levels of public trust, and are more trusted than political figures and mainstream media.

Research by Susan has shown that

people feel happier observing animals through an observation window than they do after just learning about the animals. Viewing animals is also interesting. Visiting animals at the zoo, in general, is a positive emotional experience.

A study conducted last summer examined the ways that viewing animals in a zoo can promote social interactions. Most often (89% of the time) this occurred when a person called another person's attention to an animal, and in most groups (76%), there was some discussion of the animal being watched. The predominant responses to the animals were: positive comments (47%), giving information (43%), and using the pronoun "he" to refer to the animal (33%). In 31% of observations, people expressed physical affection for each other while looking at the animals.

Time at zoos seems to increase the psychological links between zoo visitors and the natural environment. People try to make a connection with viewed animals' experiences. They construct identities that define a relationship between themselves and the animals. In addition, perceptions of similarity between people and the animals they

are viewing have been linked to the viewers' interest in protecting animals. Specifically: the more similar the animal visited was rated to humans, the more likely people were to say they wanted to help animals.

Zoo members score higher on a measure of perceived interconnectedness with nature than non-members. During a 2007 project, Susan learned that there were no differences between zoo members and nonmembers in compassion for animals, nor were there differences in emotional response or perceptions of the animals, but zoo members scored significantly higher on conservation behavior, environmental concern, and environmental identity than nonmembers.

Susan's research indicates that zoos provide humans with an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be human and our associated environmental responsibilities. Zoos may enable the socially shared development of values for animals, and the expression of a position regarding human responsibility towards the animals, through the creation of personal and collective identities that encourage care for nature.

Promoting Graduate Student Membership/Involvement in Division 34

Data collected by Jake Benfield and Will Szlemko; reported by Jake due to Will's untimely death after he was struck by lightning, Colorado State University

Overall, undergraduate courses in Environmental Psychology are somewhat common and a more recent addition of purely conservation psychology courses have added to student exposure. However, this exposure doesn't seem to be related to an increase in student interest in graduate involvement. As teachers, Will and I often felt that Environmental Psychology texts lacked some of the 'extras' that tend to engage students (video sets, activities/demonstrations, etc.). Perhaps Drs. Gifford and Bell will pursue that in the future. Those students that do gain exposure then face a considerable hurdle when focusing on graduate study.

At the graduate level two main obstacles stood out in our investigations. First, EP programs are small and they are not as numerous as other fields. This seems to slow the growth of graduate students joining the division because in many ways there appears to be a very small

'carrying capacity' for graduate study in EP. The second problem was related to this with several of the established EP graduate programs having senior faculty that are no longer accepting students and the department hiring initiatives being in other fields (for example, health psychology has been a priority at CSU).

As for the original question ('how to promote graduate student membership/involvement in Division 34?') we brainstormed some ideas but generally felt that without larger field recognition and graduate programs, student involvement would struggle. Here's what we decided would work best based on the data collected by the task force and a comparison to other organizations:

1. Friend/peer recommendation promotes membership
2. Advisor recommendation promotes membership
3. Incentives such as awards, travel grants,

and vita items (task force opportunities) promote membership and increases longer term involvement

4. Cost is a huge factor for membership decisions but it is offset by access to important resources (journals, databases, other societies/divisions)
5. Undergraduate involvement in societies/divisions translates to graduate involvement.

In sum, the Division should create/bolster both undergraduate and graduate incentives to promote involvement. This could be in the form of research/teaching/travel awards or opportunities to serve. Those incentives need to then be well advertised, especially to existing members that have the exposure to friends/colleagues/advisees. A campaign specifically targeting members to promote the field through encouraging membership/involvement should be effective if they have something to promote.

Division 34 Name Change?

Susan Clayton, The College of Wooster, 2007-2008 Division President

There has been some dissatisfaction with the current name of Division 34 – the *Division of Population and Environmental Psychology* – for years. This year we voted on the appropriate name for Division 34, and three name choices were up for consideration: the current name; “Society for the Study of Population and Environmental Psychology;” and “Society for Environmental, Population, and Conservation Psychology”.

A wide-ranging debate about the division name ensued on the listserv. One member wrote in to suggest we drop population psychology from our name and use “Society for Environmental Psychology.” Many people objected to that, noting that population psychologists had been instrumental in establishing the division and that population and environmental psychology were both distinct and interdependent. Because dropping “Population Psychology” had never been on the ballot, this question was in some ways a red herring. Nevertheless, it was useful to have many reminders that population psychologists are still an important part of the division.

Proshansky-Newman Award

Given to Robert Sommer, University of California, Davis at the annual APA Convention 2008

by Bob Gifford, University of Victoria

Robert Sommer is truly one of the great pillars of environmental psychology. He began his work in the field about 50 years ago, about 10 years before the field even had a name. A part of an interdisciplinary team, he helped design a mental hospital addition that explicitly took into account the perceptions and behaviors, and needs of the patients, as they were then called. His initial studies into personal space, first published in the late 1950's, led to the classic book, *Personal Space: The Behavioral Basis of Design* (1969). Sommer soon realized there was more to design than personal space and wrote *Design Awareness and Tight Spaces: Hard Architecture and How to Humanize It* in the 1970s, followed by several editions, with his wife Barbara Sommer, of the down-to-earth classic, *A Practical Guide to Behavioral Research*.

However, Robert Sommer has never

An uncontroversial part of the proposal was to change from a “Division” to a “Society”. The latter seemed to better represent the organization as more than a branch of the APA, and there are no legal or structural implications of this particular change.

The more complicated part of the proposal was to include the term “Conservation” in the title. The argument for this change is as follows: many psychologists, across subdisciplines, have been drawn to question how they can use their professional skills to understand and address growing environmental threats. Taking conservation biology as a model, they have begun to self-identify as conservation psychologists. These psychologists need a home within APA, and division 34 seems like the logical place for them. Establishing conservation psychology as an identity announces that there is a group of professional psychologists explicitly devoted to promoting the health of the natural environment; this might allow these individuals to be more effectively heard on this topic.

The counterargument is that environmental psychology already encompasses conservation psychology so it is not necessary to include the additional term, and that this distinction further divides an already-small field. As Robert Gifford said on the listserv, “To use names other than

been able to cling to the halls of academe. His mantra has always been that scientists should also write articles in the journals and books that applied professionals, such as airport executives, school principals, or prison wardens, actually read, so that the message reaches the audience that could actually effect the needed changes. He has written scores of such articles himself. Beyond all that, Sommer is perhaps the father of bike paths in North America, has extensively studied (and volunteered in) cooperative stores and a variety of other proximal behavior settings from gas stations to funeral homes, and is a serious mycologist and a talented visual artist whose paintings and sketches are legendary among his students and many admirers.

Nominations for the 2009 Award are being accepted now. This Award will recognize outstanding contributions in Population or Environmental Psychology for a current or emeritus member. Nominations should include the name and current address of the person nominated, a description of the contributions underlying the nomination, and a brief account of the person's career. Send nominations to James M. Richards, Jr. at bonniemacrich@aol.com

environmental psychology is to overlook the contributions of conservation-oriented pioneers in environmental psychology, and undercut what little “brand image” this tiny field has been able to amass in its 40-year history.”

At any rate, the vote on the division's name was held and the winner was “The Society for Environmental, Population, and Conservation Psychology”. However, the division bylaws require a 2/3 majority vote of members to change the name of the group, which was not received. The division officers decided to reprint some of the name-related arguments in this edition of the division newsletter in the hopes that people would have a chance to give more sustained thought to the name of the division. For now, the status quo remains: dissatisfaction with the current name, but a lack of consensus about an alternative.

Have an opinion about Div34's name? Post your opinion to the listserv!

Email division secretary Britain Scott at bascott@stthomas.edu to join the division listserv.

Student Paper Competition Award Winners 2008

A committee of Division 34 members reviewed submissions for the student paper awards, and awarded prizes to three papers. Committee members were Carol Werner (chair), Peter Kahn, and Susan Ledlow. The 2008 winners were:

- First Place. Dereck G. Chiu, John R. Aiello, & Jason M. Glushakow. **The Permanent Home Office: A Telework Case Study.** Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey.
- Second Place. Jessica M. Nolan. **Creating a Culture of Conservation: Willingness to Sanction.** University of Arkansas.
- Honorable Mention. Gretchen Nurse Schorre & Paul A. Bell. **Effects of Presence of Wild and Domestic Animals on Landscape Preference.** Colorado State University.

If you would be interested in reviewing proposals for presentations at the 2009 convention, please contact Sandra Nettles (srmurraynettles@gmail.com).

The Power of a Pledge

From Neil Wollman, Ph. D.; Senior Fellow, Bentley Alliance for Ethics and Social Responsibility; Bentley University;

The Graduation Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility states: “I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work.”

Students define for themselves what it means to be socially and environmentally responsible. Students at over a hundred colleges and universities are using the pledge at some level. The schools involved include liberal arts colleges (e.g. Whitman, Macalester, and Grinnell); state universities (such as Vermont, Colorado, and Indiana); private research universities (including Harvard, Stanford, and Pennsylvania); and schools outside the U.S. (e.g., Taiwan, India, and Canada). The Pledge is also now found at graduate and professional schools, as well as high schools.

Graduates who voluntarily signed the pledge have sought employment reflecting their values and visions, turned down jobs with which they did not feel comfortable, and worked to make changes once on the job. For example, they have promoted recycling at their organization, removed racist language from a training manual, worked for gender parity in high school athletics, and helped to convince an employer to refuse a chemical weapons-related contract.

The Pledge was initiated at Humboldt State University in California, Manchester College in Indiana coordinated the campaign effort for ten years, and Bentley College near Boston took over the reigns during 2007-08. The project has taken different forms at different institutions. For example, at Manchester, students sign and keep a wallet-size card stating the pledge, the pledge is printed in the formal commencement program, and students and supportive faculty wear green ribbons at commencement. (At a few schools, a different color ribbon is used.). At Bentley College the pledge is a “capstone” of its four-year Civic Leadership Program; at MIT there is a Pledge Ambassador program; and at Humboldt State, student government funds a student pledge coordinator internship.

Depending upon the school, it might take several years to reach this level of

institutionalization. If one can get a few groups/departments involved, and get some media attention on (and off) campus, it will get others interested and build for the future. The project has been covered by newspapers (e.g., USA Today); magazines (e.g., Business Week); national radio networks (for instance, ABC); and local TV stations (such as Ft. Wayne, IN).

The Pledge operates at three levels: students and graduates making choices about their employment; schools educating about values and citizenship rather than only knowledge and skills; and the workplace and society being concerned about more than the bottom line. The impact is immense if only a significant minority of the millions of college graduates each year sign and live out the Pledge.

The Graduation Pledge Alliance has a web site for campus organizers and pledge signers (www.graduationpledge.org) and one under construction for graduates seeking employment or those already in the workforce (www.e-xplore.org). Please keep us informed of any Pledge efforts you are considering. Contact GPA@Bentley.edu for further information, questions, or comments.

Beautification

From Mary Gregerson, PhD

In October 2008, a community exterior landscaping project that I spearheaded in Alexandria, VA at the Jefferson Houston school, won a city wide award for beautification. This school is a magnet for the arts, and serves many students from the surrounding housing projects since those with means tend to attend private schools. It's the most deserving and, til now, the least served school within the city public school system. We are so proud! Wendy Sparrow was the school system rep and Kim Graves the principal with whom I worked through the auspices of the Upper King Street Neighborhood Association Campus Improvement Committee, which was co-lead by UKSNA President Trey Hanbury. Ashley Spencer, who painted the 50 foot long teaching mural, is a locally renowned artist. The mural illustrated ecological concepts that are included on the Virginia Standards of Learning tests. Competition entries were judged on several criteria including aesthetics, creativity, and contribution to the surrounding area.

The UKSNACIC has a five year plan with this project the second year. The first year, the city installed with our oversight a new modern

playground with accessible equipment. Future years will see improvements to the perimeter fencing, more outdoor classrooms defined and activated, and more art installations like the graffiti ball in the playground, and the aspects included in the garden installation.

The Center for Health Systems and Design

From Louis G. Tassinary, PhD, JD, Professor and Associate Dean, College of Architecture - TAMU

The Center for Health Systems and Design operates under the auspices of the Colleges of Architecture and Medicine to promote research, teaching, and communication in an interdisciplinary program that focuses on health facility planning and design. Research interests of faculty associates range from the effects of environmental stress on patients' well-being and health to evidence-based design of hospitals, nursing homes, neighborhood clinics, healing gardens, accessible communities, and healthy cities.

The Center supports an annual research colloquium, weekly lecture series, and biannual newsletter. CHSD also helps to fund graduate student research and travel, and manages the interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Systems and Design. The Center is supported by the Health Industry Advisory Council, a group of professional organizations, founded in 2002 to support the activities of the Center for Health Systems & Design and Texas A&M students with an interest in health design and research.

Office Ergonomics Review to be Published

From Jay Brand, PhD; Haworth, Inc.

A book chapter I authored was published in November by a “sister” organization, the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, in Volume 4 of the series, Reviews of Human Factors and Ergonomics. Ray Nickerson is series editor, and C. Melody Carswell is editor of vol. 4.

Intended for an international audience, the chapter, “Office Ergonomics: Pertinent Research and Recent Developments,” seeks to place traditional office HFE topics within their broader organizational

News Bites from Division 34 Members (Continued)

contexts. It thus attempts to integrate, at least to some degree, the interests of environmental psychologists with office ergonomics. I will let your readers decide how successful I was at achieving that goal.

Book on Research Methods in Person-Environment Interactions (in Portuguese) From Hartmut Günther, University of California- Davis

Title: Métodos de pesquisa nos estudos pessoa-ambiente [Research methods in person-environment studies]
Organizers: José Q. Pinheiro & Hartmut Günther (Eds.)
Year: 2008
Publisher: São Paulo, SP: Caso do Psicólogo [www.casadopsicologo.com.br]
ISBN 978-85-7396-574-2
396 pages

This collection of twelve articles about research methods in person-environment studies is meant for students and researchers in this multi-disciplinary field. At the same time that the chapters present different manners of researching person-environment

interactions, their authors have multiple intellectual origins, academic trajectories and study distinct environmental realities within Brazil. Thus, the methods presented should be of interest to anyone dealing with social and behavioural aspects of the interaction between humans and built and natural environments, such as anthropologists, architects, biologists, environmental educators, geographers, industrial and landscape designers, psychologists, sociologists, urban planners.

Over the past 40 years, the field of person-environment interactions has made enormous advances in North America, Europe and, especially, Latin America. This advance, no doubt, is due in part to the acceptance of diverse theoretical approaches and, hence, the use of varied methodological strategies. While this may explain the virtual absence of research manuals dedicated to the field since the 1987 publication by Bechtel, Marans & Michelson, this lack has also contributed to researchers using methods of their respective fields, contributing to a certain lack of dialog among the fields that deal with person-environment relationships. The aim of the book is to facilitate interactions that transcend specific methodological languages and, thus, to strengthen multi-method approaches.

The chapters cover the following topics: methods of ecological experimentation;

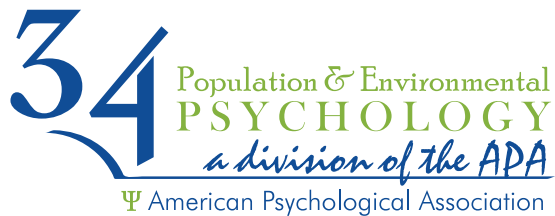
interview techniques; observational techniques: trace measures and behavioural mapping; questionnaire development; evaluation of environmental perception; perception and representation of the environment: research in environmental education; auto-biographical approaches; affective cognitive mapping; use of the personal diary method; collaboration between psychologists and designers; preparation of research reviews; multi-method approach.

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- Sally Augustin, Member-at-Large, Bulletin Editor

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About Division 34

Division 34 members explore the interactions between human behavior, cognitions, and emotions, and environments or populations. Typically, this research is subdivided into three areas:

1. *Population: The psychological consequences of population, such as affects of population density.*
2. *Built Environments: Research regarding human interactions with built environments, such as the influence of school facilities on learning.*
3. *Conservation and Natural Environments: Human interactions with natural environments (including Conservation Psychology), such as how individuals' identities are affected by natural settings.*

Division 34 invites all APA members to join. There is no membership charge at the time you join—Your first year is free!

THIRD CLASS MAIL

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Highlights from this Issue:

On page 1, Division 34 President, Sandra Murray Nettles, Ph.D. discusses the current state of the Division and shares directions for the future.

From the annual APA Convention in Boston on page 2, Past President, Susan Clayton, Ph.D. shares information from current research being conducted in 2008. Also from the Convention, on page 3, Bob Gifford, Ph.D. gives praise for Newman-Proshansky award winner Robert Summer, Ph.D.

Page 3 includes a summary of the recent discussion on the name of Division 34.

Have news you would like to share with the rest of Division 34? For information on submitting to the Division 34 Bulletin email Sally Augustin at sallyaugustin@placecoach.com.

Are you current with your membership? Are you a member of the Division 34 listserv? To find out or to join email Division 34 Secretary Britain Scott at bascott@stthomas.edu