

Soc & SocWorkTalk

December 2008

***A Semi-Annual Newsletter of the Department of Sociology & Social Work
(Initial mailing to 1,400 alumni!)***

**Check out our webpage at <http://www.hope.edu/academic/sociology/>
and drop us a note on your own activities.**



*Welcome to the first issue of the **Soc&SocWorkTalk** newsletter. With the urging of some of our esteemed alumni, we decided to put together this communiqué to update you on our recent involvements. It is our hope that we can reconnect and share with you the excitement of our department's growth and vitality.*



Luidens Nemeth Swanson Sturtevant Piers
That was then!

This is now!



*Piers Luidens
Nemeth Sturtevant Lampen
Koch Swanson Villarreal*

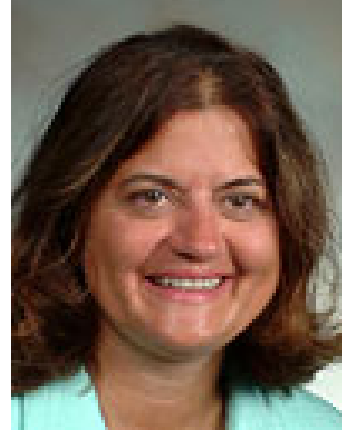
This issue will (re)introduce you to the faculty and to our roles in the department. We trust that you'll be energized by all that is happening and that you'll join in the conversation. In coming issues, we hope to hear from you! We intend to include a KvetchKletz section recounting your post-graduate lives. Send your notes by snail mail to the Sociology and Social Work Department, Hope College, Holland, Michigan 49423 or via e-mail to luidens@hope.edu. Enjoy!

Deb Sturtevant and husband Denny, circa. 1976



**Deborah Sturtevant (MSW, PhD)
Professor of Social Work
Department Chair
(joined our department in 1988)**

“Every Child Deserves a Family” is the title of Deborah Sturtevant’s global research on world orphans. For ten years, this work has taken Deb to orphanages and NGOs in Eastern Europe and Central American. Last summer, student Katie Kelly worked with Deb to offer a conference in China on child development and attachment with a focus on foster care system development. Deb plans to spend some of her sabbatical this spring in Costa Rica and Africa. In Costa Rica, she will work to develop an international program at UNELA, an evangelical university with programs in child welfare and community development. She will finally take Spanish! In Africa, she will evaluate a program called Milk and Medicine with student assistants David Dethmers and Bethany Braaksma and alumnus Bethany Metters-Stob. “It is exciting to consider the globalization of the social



work program and profession in child welfare policy and practice.” Son Josh completed an MA and is living in NYC where he works in global communications and continues to play his music. Daughter Sarah is living in Washington DC and recently left her work in politics to pursue an MA in Urban and Community Planning. Husband Denny continues his social work in community development with a passion for neighborhood revitalization, providing low income and market rate housing in unique historic hotels, rural landscapes, and urban art spaces in GR and surrounding areas.

Debra Harvey Swanson (MA, PhD) **Professor of Sociology** **(joined our department in 1989)**

Having studied mothers of preschool children, Debra Swanson is in the middle of a new research project on the relationship between college students and their parents. Given the media attention to the millennial student, she is curious if Hope sociology and social



work students, and recent graduates, are as tolerant, hopeful, friendly and dependent on parents as they seem to be portrayed on *60 Minutes*. (She may have already called you to ask!) The media have given these parents the title of “helicopter parents” for constantly hovering over their kids! She continues to love teaching Introduction to Sociology, Race and Ethnic Relations, and Sociology of



Gender and is looking forward to developing classes in the study of Social Movements and a history of families. She teaches a First Year Seminar on Walking and Urban Design, which is a sneaky way to schedule a walk into her already

hectic family/work schedule. Both of her children are in middle school, with all the car pooling to sports and friends that implies, while husband Todd just ran a sub-4 hour marathon.

**Don Luidens (MDiv, MA, PhD)
Professor of Sociology
(joined our department in 1977)**

Don Luidens continues to enjoy teaching after 31+ years on Hope's faculty. He is grayer than before, but no less enthusiastic. This semester he has taken on the exciting (!) task of teaching Cultural Anthropology -- an adventure which is much like walking on a familiar trail but not recognizing all the surroundings. His research has morphed somewhat from sociology of religion (where he keeps one foot) to sociology of sport (where his footing is not quite so sure). He's intrigued by the apparent parallels between the two. For many families, sport plays the



Donald Luidens



unifying role that religion once played. It crosses generation lines and provides a common discourse for parents and kids -- and even grandparents.. Don continues to give periodic lectures on the changing realities in the Middle East. Daughters Sara and Martha are grown and married (Sara) or soon to be (Martha), so Don and his wife, Peg, are movin' on to a new stage in life on that front, as well. Peg, continues to run her own educational consulting business, more hectic now than ever. Life is good.

**James Piers (MSW, PhD)
Professor of Social Work
(joined our department in 1975)**



James Piers

Jim Piers, like Don Luidens, is continuing to mature...moving into his 34th year of teaching at Hope. Unlike Don, his hair seems more interested in falling out than in graying. For some years, Jim's major research interest was the

relationship of student violence exposure and post-traumatic stress symptomatology. More recently he has been enamored with the examination of variables related to levels of marital adjustment and satisfaction during the retirement transition. Lest you believe that

this research belies his intent to retire in the near future, you are incorrect. He recently told the Provost that he planned to take two more sabbaticals (14 more years) before pulling the professorial plug! Though he did hear someone mumble in



the background, "In your dreams." Jim continues to enjoy the presence, support and tolerance of his wife Dee Dee, their recently married son Christian, and Carter a second son who is now a Hope sophomore.

Lisa Lampen, Office Manager (joined our department in 1999)

Now in her 10th academic year as the office manager for the Sociology & Social Work Department (as well as the Academic Support Center), Lisa Lampen continues to enjoy her work with both the professors and the students that she employs at the office's front desk. The ever-changing world of administrative support has kept her on her toes as more and more elements of the job evolve and nowadays are done on-line (which at this time includes things like student time



Lisa supervising one of "her" students

cards, scheduling appointments and working with departmental budgets). Lisa has also ventured into the realm of elementary school parenting as her son Trent began kindergarten this past fall. Her evenings now include the phenomenon of helping a 5 year old reproduce letters and numbers over entire sheets of paper – against his will, --singing a myriad of rhyming songs about things like frogs, and playing shape Bingo and losing gracefully.



Melissa Villarreal (MSW, PhD pending) Assistant Professor of Social Work (joined our department in 2001)

*Melissa as a
Hope undergrad*



Melissa Villarreal continues to work on her her Ph.D. in at WMU in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences and is in the process of completing her comprehensive exams prior to beginning her dissertation. Melissa's social work career has taken her to a wide variety of positions in 18 years. Currently, Melissa very much enjoys teaching and her role as Field Director for the Social Work Program. Her secondary responsibility as a part-time Domestic Violence Therapist at the Center for Women in Transition consists of



performing initial assessments and diagnosing mental illnesses, preparing behavioral treatment plans, and conducting psychotherapy with adult women.

In regards to her personal life, Melissa spends a lot time with her family members, especially her two nephews – Troy (10 years old) & Carson (9 years old) and a 5 year old niece, Ashley. Marriage is still not in sight, but she does have a significant friend, Paul, in her life that resides out-of-town.

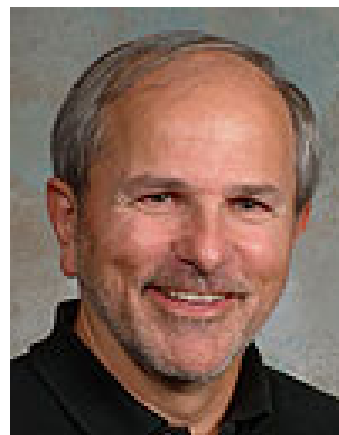
Roger Nemeth (MA, PhD) Professor of Sociology Acting Chair during Spring 2009 (joined our department in 1983)

Entering his twenty-sixth year at Hope, Roger Nemeth continues to teach medical sociology, social research methods, and urban sociology. In addition to these long-standing courses, he also teaches the department's Capstone course and a new environmental sociology course. He remains actively engaged in student-faculty collaborative research projects, some of which have recently taken him

and his students to far away places to study such diverse topics as the role of NGOs in Romania and elderly care in Japan. He and his wife Kathy continue to enjoy their annual wilderness canoe excursions and spending time with their children and grandchildren. (Editor's Note: Roger is regularly voted "the Grandfather everyone wishes their kids had.")



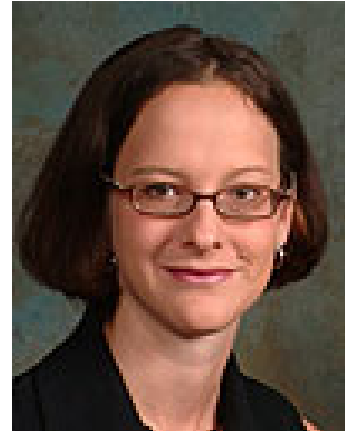
Roger Nemeth



Introducing our newest colleague!

**Pamela R. Koch (MPA, PhD)
Assistant Professor of Sociology
(joined our department this fall)**

Pamela joins us following extensive tenures in the south – South Dakota (where she was reared) and South Carolina (where she went to graduate school). She brings expertise in sociology of the family and education, and has jumped whole-heartedly into teaching intro to sociology. While in grad school, Pam was honored by the Society for the Study of Social Problems for the outstanding grad student paper of the year (2006). We look forward to her contributions to the department and to our students for years to come. Husband John is a lawyer who recently served in the JAG Corps in Tikrit, Iraq. And then there's Oliver the Dog. . . .



**Old Friends hangin' out.
Jim, Don, and Deb at a
recent Hope Graduation
(caught by Tom Renner).**



**Roger and Don all dressed up, waiting
for a new batch of students to join
our illustrious ranks!**