

Research Up-To-Date

The Newsletter of the Urban Appalachian Council Research Committee

March-April 2008

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The Research Committee was created at the founding of the Urban Appalachian Council thirty years ago and has always informed the council through active research. To be notified of future research committee meetings, which are open to all, please contact msullivan@uacvoice.org or phone 251-0202.

CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME!

Please send your article, announcement, or website link to Roberta Campbell at campberm@muohio.edu.

From the Editor: The UAC's focus on Health is a Long-Standing Effort

The Urban Appalachian Council has always been concerned about the well-being and the access to health care of its constituency. The Research Committee has also been a source of information for the Council as it attempts to assist individuals and families in gaining access to health care. These efforts involve connecting people to services or advocating for better health solutions in the neighborhood.

The Urban Appalachian Council Research Committee continues to develop the strategies that were generated at its "Research into Action" mini-Conference in April, 2007. (You can find the conference proceedings online at <http://uacvoice.org/research.html> or in the [July-August, 2007 Newsletter](#). That conference resulted in the creation of three separate task forces on health, education, and employment. In

this issue space is given to highlighting the research efforts and the continuing problems that affect urban Appalachian communities. You will find the latest minutes of the Health Task Force and a summary of Working Paper 16, [Appalachian Health Status in Greater Cincinnati: A Research Overview](#), by Phillip J. Obermiller and M. Kathryn Brown. In addition, in the short brief on the Research Committee's presentations slated for the upcoming Appalachian Studies conference, take note that some of them are presenting on health issues. Check out the research notes from the latest Research Committee meeting to read additional information about our persistent concentration on researching the health status among urban Appalachians. Lastly, the Appalachian Studies Association chose to honor one of our own for his outstanding commitment to the well-being, physical or otherwise, of the UAC's constituency as well as Appalachians in general.

Obermiller Captures Well-deserved Award

Dr. Phillip J. Obermiller, long –standing research committee member and renowned urban Appalachian scholar and activist, received the Cratis D. Williams/James D. Brown Service Award at the 31st Annual Appalachian Studies Association meeting at Marshall University.

Of the many awards given at the conference each year, this is the most prestigious and serves to recognize Dr. Obermiller's service to ASA, the Urban Appalachian Council and urban neighborhoods in the greater Cincinnati area and beyond.

Dr. Obermiller has served the ASA as the president in 2006, and on the organization's steering committee. He has led additional conference efforts, written and edited many books, and advised many newer scholars in the area of Appalachian studies. Much of Dr. Obermiller's service is also indirect. Those of us who have known him for awhile know that he often contributes to others' efforts without expecting acknowledgment and that he frequently collaborates with his peers. We view him not only an outstanding professional but a giving friend as well. For additional information on Dr. Obermiller's accomplishments, see the upcoming edition of the Appalachian Connection (<http://www.uacvoice.org/AppalachianConnection/apdec06.pdf>).

Health care professionals will find useful suggestions in Working Paper Number 18

Phillip J. Obermiller and M. Kathryn Brown recount the research into health issues facing Appalachian neighborhoods and individuals in the city up until 2002. Their paper "Appalachian Health Status in Greater Cincinnati: A Research Overview", (Working Paper #18) is a thorough description of what urban Appalachian

residents still experience regarding health status and health care.

Obermiller and Brown divide the research into three phases: the earliest studies, recent research, and contemporary studies. After summarizing and describing the thrust of the first two, they focus on the last one in detail. Early studies in Appalachian health care outlined a process by which many regional Appalachians came to mistrust the health care system, a distrust that helped to shape the experience of migrants to the urban Midwest. In the 1990's, two surveys and two examinations of hospital records generated comparative data on the health status of various ethnic groups, including Appalachians, in the greater Cincinnati area. The data quantified the health care beliefs, access to information, and disparities in health status of Appalachians in Cincinnati. The issue of children's high rates of exposure to environmental pollution in the Lower Price Hill neighborhood was a finding that played a significant part in the design of later research.

Most recently, the Community-based Children's Health Survey was a collaborative and participatory-research effort on the part of the UAC and other entities. The survey grew out of focus groups of neighborhood women. One of these entities, the Environmental Leadership Group, participated directly in the design and implementation of the survey. The results showed sometimes alarming rates of several health issues: lead poisoning, respiratory distress, learning and development problems, allergies, and more. Numerous efforts arose in response to these findings that were aimed at informing and educating residents of the Lower Price Hill neighborhood. A woman's health survey was planned (and subsequently carried out in 2004.)

The Regional Adult Health Survey and a Regional Child Health Survey further revealed the continuing health issues experienced by urban Appalachians, particularly high rates of cancer and allergies among adults and behavior and learning problems among children. The research also revealed the significance of the environmental impact on the health status of residents of several Appalachian neighborhoods.

The thorough overview and summary of the research provided by Obermiller and Brown in this paper can inform health care providers in terms of what the most important issues are for urban Appalachians and how best to interact with this population. More importantly, Obermiller and Brown generate several important research questions that still need to be answered. (To read the full paper go to <http://uacvoice.org/wpindex.html>.)

Research Committee Members Bring Latest Insights to the Appalachian Studies Conference

Maintaining a long-standing involvement with the Appalachian Studies Association, several members of the

UAC Research Committee will be presenting their latest research to the ASA conference at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, March 28-30, 2008.

Following are the presentations by research committee members:

Rebecca Bailey:

"The People's Memoirs vs. the Paradigm: The Retelling of the Matewan and Williamson Thacker Strike."

Ann McCracken (with Kelly Firesheets):

"The Heart of Appalachia: Cardiovascular Problems in White Appalachians in the Greater Cincinnati Area."

Phillip Obermiller and Robert Ludke: "Identifying Appalachians: Perspectives from the Ground."

Phillip Obermiller and Thomas Wagner:

"A Hot Ball Rolling: The Catholic Church and Main Street Bible Center in Cincinnati, 1962-1972."

Maureen Sullivan (convener) and Michael Maloney (panelist): The Appalachian Action Coalition (AAC): Forming a Regional Coalition of Community Development Organizations.

Research into Action Health Task Force Develops Strategies

The task force met on January 17 and discussed the following items:

- Marianne Beard shared opportunities for free materials and curricula which are available for health promotion and disease prevention in respect to both cancer and cardiovascular disease. The American Cancer Society also has Community Investments Grants that are around \$5,000 and due in September. For cardiovascular disease, there are a group including the Lung Association, tobacco monies and others.
- There are a variety of potential collaborators in the community. There are churches, schools, Santa Maria Center and others. Approximately, 100-150 people attend the annual UAC Health Fair. There is the UAC Women's Wellness Group. UC has students and faculty who could collaborate. It is possible to link some of these things together. Keith King has had experience with community coalition building.
- The Public Health Sciences Department has been approved at the University of Cincinnati. We would like to cooperate with them as a population for research to add to the body of knowledge about urban Appalachian health. We need a conceptual framework before we can advocate in areas of opportunity.

Following prioritization of the opportunities, the committee created the following action plan:

- Develop a conceptual framework for the work. The conceptual framework can be shared at state levels, the universities and others. It will be used to guide overall health work and will be completed by mid March. Explore Community Investment Grant. Deadline is September.
- Community Building around health opportunities for community collaboration with Health Promotion and Education and others (may follow conceptual framework).

The health task force will again soon to discuss the first draft of the conceptual framework.

New Wikipedia Article on Urban Appalachian Council

An entry on the Urban Appalachian Council has been placed in the Wikipedia, the popular Internet-based encyclopedia. It can be accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_Appalachian_Council.

Written by members of the UAC Research Committee and vetted by the Council's staff and board, the entry was posted by UAC website manager Kristin Zeller. It accompanies a recent Wikipedia posting on urban Appalachians by the Research Committee (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_Appalachians).

Research Notes

March 14, 2008 (From the Research Committee: Debbie Zorn, Chair)

Introductions, Announcements, and Research Updates:

John Besl continues to work on the Childhood Obesity Project using data from the 2003 National Survey of Health. Roberta Campbell announced that she would be the convener of a panel on "Feminist Appalachian Studies" at the June, 2008, National Women Studies Association. Maureen Sullivan is on the panel presenting issues of Urban Appalachian women. Roberta has been asked by a student at Miami University-Hamilton to advise a student Appalachian organization that he is organizing. Ryan Shadle is still working on the Community Literacy Project and has nearly finished an article analyzing the Americorps involvement. Robert Ludke is working on the Oral Health Literacy Project and will begin a book on

Appalachian Health soon. He is also working With the Center for Closing the Health Gap on a survey of health disparities. Mike Maloney reported getting many hits on the 2000 Social Areas Study Report and the many uses to which it's been put. Ann McCracken's article on cardiovascular health is ready to submit for publishing. Ann is also one of two keynote speakers at the Ohio Program Evaluators Group on May 16 in Columbus, Ohio. The theme of the meeting is "Policy Evaluation: The Baby and the Bathwater".

Debbie Zorn announced that Robert Ludke will become the next chair of the Research Committee

Health and Education Task Force updates:

These task forces are part of the research committee's continuing process of examining the needs of Urban Appalachians. The Health Task Force has met and developed some strategies. (See the minutes published in this newsletter.) The Education Task Force will meet Wednesday, March 19, under the leadership of Michael Overbey, Jr. One of the items being considered is to develop a pilot project in a local school to test best practices.

UAC Planning Process:

The Urban Appalachian Council has been exploring strategies for the next few years. The research committee discussed events associated with that process. Ann created a framework for listing UAC's knowledge, service delivery and advocacy policies in several areas.

The next meeting of the Research Committee will be at 10 am at UAC on May 23, 2008.

Additional Links:

Center for the Study of Gender and Ethnicity in Appalachia
<http://www.marshall.edu/csega/index.asp>

The Appalachian Connection (newspaper)
<http://www.uacvoice.org/AppalachianConnection/apcondec07.pdf>

East Tennessee State University Center for Appalachian Studies and Services
<http://www.etsu.edu/cass>

The University of Kentucky Appalachian Center
<http://www.research.uky.edu/Appalcenter/index.html>

Berea College Appalachian Center

<http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/>

The Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University

<http://www1.appstate.edu/dept/appstudies/>

Appalachian Studies Association

<http://AppalachianStudies.org/>

Social Areas Report of Cincinnati

<http://www.socialareasofcincinnati.org/>

Appalachian Women's Alliance

<http://www.appalachianwomen.org>

Appalachian Studies at Miami University-Hamilton

<http://www.ham.muohio.edu/appalachian/index.htm>

Oral History of Appalachia Program, Marshall University

<http://www.marshall.edu/sociology/Oralhist/ohap.html>

Appalachian Regional Commission

<http://www.arc.gov/index.jsp>

Highlander Research and Education Center

<http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

Friends of Appalachia

<http://friendsofappalachia.org>

“Regional Study and the Liberal Arts”, Summer Institute for University and College Teachers

<http://www.ferrum.edu/NEH/>



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