

December 8, 1998

**TO: EVERYONE ON SPIRIT OF 1848 EMAIL BULLETIN BOARD & MAILING LIST**

**FROM: SPIRIT OF 1848 COORDINATING COMMITTEE (Nancy Krieger, Cecilia Zapata, Anne-Emanuelle Birn, Cathy Cubbin, Cheryl Merzel, Marion Fass)**

**RE: REPORTBACK FROM THE 1998 APHA CONFERENCE**

Greetings to all! The Spirit of 1848 Caucus is happy to say we organized one amazing extravaganza, two powerful sessions, and a very productive business meeting at the 126th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (Washington, DC, November 15-19, 1998). In this reportback, we summarize highlights of our sessions and provide detail on decisions we made at our business meeting. We are sending this reportback by email, via our electronic bulletin board, posting it on our web site, and we are also sending it by regular mail; nearly 1,000 people are now on our mailing/email list!

NOTE: If you are receiving this reportback by regular mail and would like to be subscribed to our email bulletin board, PLEASE send your name and email address, by email, to:

## **I. Spirit of 1848 sessions at APHA**

### **a) Politics of Public Health Data**

Our session was on "**INEQUALITY IN CONTEXT: STUDYING EFFECTS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL POLICIES ON SOCIOECONOMIC AND RACIAL/ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN HEALTH**". The purpose was to encourage people to consider connections between neighborhood context and social inequalities in health, including use of methods new to public health (e.g., multilevel models), so as to inform policies and organizing to increase social equity in health. About 150-200 people attended the session. The line up was:

\*Introduction--**Catherine Cubbin and Oliver Fein**

\*Historical setting--**Nancy Krieger**

\*Public housing and racial differences in death due to homicide in the United States--**Felicia B. LeClere, Catherine Cubbin**

\*Individual SES, economic segregation, and their effects on urban mortality: a multi-level analysis--**Ken R. Smith,**

**Norman J. Waitzman**

\*Examining the dependence of inequality on level of aggregation: effects on morbidity--**Mah-jahbeen Soobader, Felicia**

### **B. LeClere**

\*Ecosystem approaches to analyzing changing neighborhoods--**Deborah Wallace, Rodrick Wallace**

\*Socioeconomic deprivation and AIDS incidence in Massachusetts--**Sal Zierler, Nancy Krieger, William Coady, Yuren**

**Tang, Erika Siegfried, Alfred DeMaria, John Auerbach**

\*Resource Guide on multilevel analyses and studying health in context--**Catherine Cubbin**

NOTE: if you did not receive a resource guide (on multilevel/contextual analysis) and would like a copy, please contact Cathy Cubbin at:

**Primary Sponsor:** Spirit of 1848 Caucus

**Co-Sponsors:** Sections--Epidemiology; Maternal and Child Health; Medical Care; Occupational Safety and Health; Public Health Education and Health Promotion; Social Work; Caucuses--Academic Public Health Caucus; American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Caucus; Asian Caucus; Black Caucus; Caucus on Homelessness; Caucus on Refugee and Immigrant Health; Health Equity & Public Hospitals Caucus; Latino Caucus; Peace Caucus; Public Health Student Caucus; Socialist Caucus; Women's Caucus; SPIGs--Alternative and Complementary Health Practices; Health Law Forum.

### **b) Curriculum**

Our session was on "**PEDAGOGY WITHIN CONTEXT: BROADENING PUBLIC HEALTH CURRICULA TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**". Over 120 people attended and engaged in lively dialogue--starting at 8:30 in the morning! The line-up was:

\*Introductory Remarks--**Babette J. Neuberger (Presider)**

\*Teaching community organizing for health: integrating perspectives from political economy, community building, and Friere's pedagogy--**Meredith Minkler**

\*Teaching public health within a political, economic, social, and historical context: a critical and interdisciplinary approach to health policy--**Carole Schroeder**

\*Teaching undergraduates about social class, racism, and other social determinants of health--**Martha Livingston**

\*Course evaluation tool to measure whether the influence of social position on health is adequately covered within the School's curriculum--**Andrea Acevedo, Shalini Ahuja, Hannah Cooper, Melissa Dimond, Rochelle Tucker, Phuong Vo, and Connie Young**

NOTE: if you want copies of any of the syllabi or related materials handed out at this session, contact Babette Neuberger and she will send them to you.

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### **c) History**

We organized a major extravaganza, entitled: "**150 YEARS OF THE SPIRIT OF 1848: AN EVENING OF POLITICS, PASSION, AND PUBLIC HEALTH**". This event marked the 150th anniversary of the political, social, and public health movements in and around 1848, and included music, poetry, dramatizations, photography, and academic presentations to stimulate reflection on and commitment to public health activism. We drew between 500 to 700 people to this event, for a night that moved many to tears and which--according to some of the feedback we've received--created an unparalleled camaraderie in the room, at once social, intellectual, spiritual, political and sensual. We were able to make a video of this event and are planning to place on our website: (a) clips from the video of the evening and (b) information on how to order a copy of the video (for a small fee, to cover costs of making & mailing the videos). The video will probably be available in early 1999. We are also responding to requests from Pacifica radio to organize excerpts for broadcast. We will keep you posted as to when the video & radio broadcast versions of our extravaganza are available! The line-up was:

\*Opening: **Anne-Emanuelle Birn and Nancy Krieger (moderators)**

**Cedar Tree Drum Group**

**American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Caucus**

**Songs--Rafiki na Dada**

\*The 1848 Movements for Socialism and Justice--**Elizabeth Fee**

\*Caucus & Section Presentations: **Occupational Safety and Health Section; Women's Caucus; Social Work Section; Refugee & Immigrant Health Caucus; Latino Caucus**

**\*Songs--Rafiki na Dada**

\*Race, Racism, and Public Health, 1848 Onwards--**Vanessa Gamble**

\*Caucus & Section Presentations: **Maternal and Child Health Section; Public Health Student Caucus; Epidemiology**

## **Section; Sigerist Circle; Human Rights Committee**

### **\*Songs--Rafiki na Dada**

\*The Implications of 1848 for Current Struggles over Health Equity and Social Justice in the United States--**Steffie**

### **Woolhandler and David Himmelstein**

\*Caucus & Section Presentations: **Black Caucus; Medical Care Section; Asian Caucus; ISMCH/Physicians Forum;**

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Caucus; Labor Caucus; Socialist Caucus**

\*Closing: "**Jerusalem**" & "**Public Health Anthem**" (everybody sang!)

**Primary Sponsor:** Spirit of 1848 Caucus.

**Co-Sponsors** (in addition to participants): Caucuses--Academic Public Health Caucus; Caucus on Homelessness; Peace Caucus; SPIGs-- Alternative and Complementary Health Practices; Health Law Forum.

### **d) Other:**

We co-sponsored several sessions, following our policy of reviewing & approving all requests for co-sponsorship through the Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee. These sessions were (in alphabetical order, by primary sponsor):

--**Alternative & Complementary Health Practices SPIG:** "Taking Alternative and Complementary Medicine to Rural and Underserved Populations"

--**Caucus on Refugee & Immigrant Health:** "Effects of the US Immigration and Welfare Reform on Immigrants' Access to Health Care"; "Innovative Research Methodologies for Immigrant and Refugee Populations"

--**Environment Section:** "Children's Health and Environmental Justice"

--**Health Equity & Public Hospitals Caucus:** "Local Political Challenges to Corporate Healthcare"

--**HIV/AIDS SPIG:** "Research Methodology in HIV/AIDS Research"

--**International Health Section:** "Globalization, Inequality and Health"

--**Medical Care Section, Women's Caucus, and Spirit of 1848 Caucus (joint co-sponsors):** "The Annual P. Ellen Parsons Memorial: Class Analysis and Health: From Research to Policy to Action"

--**Peace Caucus:** "Marginalization"; "The Violence of Poverty: An International Epidemic"

--**Socialist Caucus:** "The Living Wage Campaign: What Role Can the Public Health Community Play?"

And we had brightly colored posters up just about everywhere ....

## **II. Spirit of 1848 Business meeting**

Attended by: Nancy Krieger, Cecilia Zapata, Anne-Emanuelle Birn, Babette Neuberger, Gail Gordon, David Ramsey, Sal Zierler, Sam Harper, Estina Thompson, Laura Montgomery, Cheryl Merzel, Olle Bygren, Kaveh Khoshnood, Paolo Contu, Marion Fass, Viva Delgado, Ellen Stewart, Lisa Moore, Phyllis Sims, Robin Bunton.

At our business meeting, we reviewed the history and accomplishments of Spirit of 1848, including our new Caucus status in APHA (as of June 1997). In accord with our mission statement (included at end of this report), we reaffirmed that we are a voluntary network with no dues, and with projects and accountability structured through four committees: (a) politics of public health data committee, (b) curriculum committee, (c) mentoring/networking committee, and (d) public health history, which is a liaison to the Sigerist Circle, a progressive organization of historians of public health and medicine. Each committee has a representative on the Spirit of 1848 coordinating committee, which additionally has two co-chairs (Nancy Krieger and Cecilia Zapata). All activities carried out in the name of Spirit of 1848 are approved by the coordinating committee, which communicates regularly by email (and occasionally by conference calls). Other items of general discussion concerned:

## **1) APHA resolutions:**

During the past year, the question was raised--by some folk active in our email bulletin board--whether Spirit of 1848 should directly sponsor or endorse resolutions proposed to APHA. The Coordinating Committee agreed to take up this question at our business meeting. Noting that resolutions can be offered by individual members of APHA, and do not require sponsorship by caucuses, we decided that (a) given the broad principles of unity defined in our mission statement and (b) given the large amount of work required to lobby for and make practical use of an APHA resolution, Spirit of 1848:

a) should NOT, in general, directly sponsor APHA resolutions; exceptions would be resolutions drafted by and directly pertaining to the work of our sub-committees;

b) should encourage individuals active in APHA who are on our bulletin board to use the bulletin board to announce plans for developing or sponsoring resolutions related to our mission statement, accompanied by identification of a contact person for additional information, so that all work and organizing related to the resolution is conducted by interested individuals without formal sponsorship by the Spirit of 1848 Caucus and also NOT on the Spirit of 1848 email bulletin board.

## **2) Connections to other caucuses & sections:**

a) Gail Gordon reported on the meeting she went to, along with Carles Muntaner, to represent Spirit of 1848 at the EHOc meeting (Equality in Health Committee), which brings together all APHA caucuses. Gail noted that EHOc has a voice, but not yet a vote, in the APHA Governing Council. To improve communication and coordination between APHA caucuses, folk at the meeting proposed there be a mid-year meeting of caucuses, with APHA providing funds to sponsor such a meeting. Other proposals included a call for a mentoring/leadership conference, improving email communication between caucuses, and developing a web page with links between caucuses. All of this would fit well with activities Spirit of 1848 currently is organizing. In addition, participants at the meeting emphasized the importance of caucuses, in terms of bringing up important issues from the frontlines and developing public health leaders, but many said that the dominant mentality in APHA--which needs to be changed--is that caucuses represent a "minority" position in APHA, with such viewpoints sufficiently articulated by "token" members of the APHA executive board. Finally, Gail suggested we invite the chair of EHOc to attend our business meeting next year, at APHA.

b) David Ramsey suggested that all members of APHA sections or relevant professional organizations (e.g., SOPHE) who are also active in or linked to Spirit of 1848 should notify these groups of our existence and encourage them to know more about the kinds of work we do and framework we present.

c) Cheryl Merzel suggested that Spirit of 1848 advertise our sessions in the Socialist Caucus (SCAPHA) newsletter, as well as actively co-sponsor SCAPHA sessions.

## **3) Themes of APHA conferences**

a) Cecilia Zapata is representing Spirit of 1848 at the APHA planning meeting for the 1999 APHA conference. The "theme" of this conference is supposed to be "100 Years of Progress" in public health (presumably because of the upcoming year 2000); reflecting the discussion at our business meeting, she will request a "?" be inserted so that the title is "100 Years of Progress?".

b) Gail Gordon said that she believes the theme for the conference 2 years from now will be "social inequalities in health"; if so, we should find out more about who is involved in planning events & plenaries for this conference, so as to make sure our viewpoints are represented.

## **4) Call for Abstracts**

a) Spirit of 1848 Caucus, for the 1st time, is having a call for abstracts which will be included with the call that AJPH prints for all other caucuses & sections

b) Our "call" describes our caucus & sub-committees, and states that session themes will be decided at the Spirit of 1848 business meeting, with abstracts invited to address these themes on our email bulletin board; folk organizing the sessions may also solicit abstracts. We will also post our call on our web page.

## 5) New web page

a) Thanks to the hard work of Michelle Murrain (a former member of the Spirit of 1848 coordinating committee), our web page is now making its debut. The address is:  
<http://www.progressivehn.org>

If you have any questions about our web site, or want to help out in developing it, please contact Michelle Murrain at. b) We STRONGLY encourage EVERYONE to check out--and CONTRIBUTE TO--our web page!! As you will see, we would love for you to include information about courses you are teaching and instruments that you are developing, to promote understanding of links between social justice and public health. In addition, to foster mentoring and connections, we also encourage you to include yourself in our list of progressive public health folk seeking to build networks, as well as suggest more links that we can make to other relevant web pages.

So, do check out--and spread the word about--our web page!!

## 6) Plans for each committee (and contact persons for each project) are as follows:

### a) Politics of Public Health Data Committee

Representative to Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee = **Cathy Cubbin**

[NOTE: Cathy was unable to attend the business meeting, due to being scheduled in a conflicting session)

--The main project for this past year has been the Data Tool kit, which will be a feature of our new web page. The purpose of this project is to provide information on instruments that researchers have used to measure various aspects of socioeconomic position, race/ethnicity and racism, gender, sexual identity, etc. By doing so, we hope to encourage use and development of instruments that can be used in a variety of studies, facilitating comparison of results and furthering investigation of social determinants of health. If you want to become involved in this project, or have ideas for instruments that would be good to include, contact the new coordinator for our Data Toolkit:

### Sam Harper

--We also discussed plans for a possible session for next year. After lively discussion of various aspects of measuring social inequalities in health, including a proposal by Vicente Navarro for a session focusing on implications of growing economic inequality for health, we decided to organize a session along the lines of "Monitoring Inequalities in Health: Setting Priorities, Dealing with Politics" (though we clearly need a better title). Specific ideas included: (a) deepening our understanding of the use of--and concerns about--the construct of DALYS ("Disability Adjusted Life Years") that are increasingly being used to set health resource allocation priorities in 3rd world countries and which also are being considered for use in the US by the CDC, and (b) including presentations from different US cities & other regions about how they monitor social inequalities in health to guide policy decisions. Historical perspectives on these issues would also be solicited. The goal would be to further discussion of what kinds of data should be gathered to improve monitoring of & interventions to address social inequalities in health. Prior to the business meeting, Cathy Cubbin said she would be interested in helping organize the session; if you have ideas for this session, please contact her. Also, following our custom, we will schedule the data session for the Monday afternoon of APHA. The call for abstracts will be posted by mid-December on our email bulletin board and also our web page.

### b) Curriculum Committee

Representatives to the Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee = **Cheryl Merzel**  
([cm449@columbia.edu](mailto:cm449@columbia.edu)) & **Marion Fass** ([fassm@beloit.edu](mailto:fassm@beloit.edu))

--The committee had an animated discussion of how to organize next year's critical pedagogy session for APHA. The major theme concerned the APHA's designated conference focus on "progress", specifically as related to "progress" in teaching. The Spirit of 1848 curriculum session accordingly will focus (critically) on: new technologies for teaching, web-based learning (and who has access to such learning), as well as presentation of courses with a progressive public health perspective; historical perspectives on these issues will again be solicited. The session will, per tradition, again be on the Tuesday morning of APHA. If you have ideas or want to be involved with organizing this session, contact either Cheryl Merzel or Marion Fass. The

call for abstracts will be posted mid-December on our email bulletin board and our web page

--The committee also wants to continue the project of soliciting contributions to our web page for syllabi of courses addressing issues of social justice, social inequality and health. If you are interested in submitting your syllabi, or know of other syllabi to include, contact Cheryl Merzel or Marion Fass.

### **c) Mentoring/Networking Committee**

Representative to the Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee = **Cecilia Zapata**

--This committee did not meet separately this year, as a committee, during our business meeting. It will continue to keep alive the mentoring spirit, possibly by continuing with organizing sessions at APHA, definitely by encouraging people to reach out and ask for mentoring-and offer to provide it--by means of our Spirit of 1848 email bulletin board and our new web page. Specifically, we will include a field in our web-page list of public health folk who either: (a) want a mentor, or (b) want to mentor, and we will also post information concerning resources about mentoring. If you want to help with building networks to improve mentoring, contact Cecilia Zapata.

--In addition to promoting mentoring, a major task of this committee remains that of keeping our bulletin board going. We see this bulletin board as a way for sharing information and resources, as well as raising questions relevant to our work promoting social justice & public health. Our bulletin board also facilitates making connections between folk with shared interest & activities. We encourage people to use the Spirit of 1848 bulletin board, so as to make new and also deepened connections between folk with shared interest & activities pertaining to connections between social justice & public health. To find out more about the bulletin board, or to suggest additional persons as possible subscribers, contact Cecilia Zapata.

### **d) History Committee: Liaison to the Sigerist Circle**

Representative to the Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee = **Anne-Emanuelle Birn**  
([aebirn@newschool.edu](mailto:aebirn@newschool.edu))

--This committee was instrumental in planning our extravaganza on 150 years of the Spirit of 1848. It does not plan to organize another such extravaganza any time soon ....

--Ideas for incorporating history into next year's sessions included:

a) making sure at least one presentation in each of the other Spirit of 1848 sessions explicitly addressed historical themes

b) seeing if Spirit of 1848 Caucus can become an official sponsor of the Medical Care Section's Wednesday afternoon session on public health & medical history

c) organizing a radical history walking tour of Chicago, for the Sunday afternoon of next year's APHA meeting, in conjunction with existing tours in the city and also the Socialist Caucus and other relevant Caucuses. Work on planning this session is already underway, with the time slot designated as 3:00-5:30 pm. Please forward ideas of where to go, what to visit, and any relevant background readings as well as names of local Chicago radical history tours to Anne-Emanuelle Birn.

And, to be involved with any or all of the activities of this committee, likewise contact Anne-Emanuelle Birn.

And FINALLY, if any of the activities and projects we are reporting to you grab you or inspire you--**JOIN IN!! We work together based on principles of solidarity, volunteering whatever time we can, to move along the work of social justice and public health. We look forward to hearing from you.**

Onwards! ....

The Spirit of 1848 coordinating committee:

--Co-chairs: Nancy Krieger ([nkrieger@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:nkrieger@hsph.harvard.edu)), Cecilia Zapata

--Data Committee: Cathy Cubbin ([ccubbin@leland.Stanford.EDU](mailto:ccubbin@leland.Stanford.EDU))

--Curriculum Committee: Cheryl Merzel (cm449@columbia.edu), Marion Fass (fassm@beloit.edu)

--History Committee: Anne-Emanuelle Birn (aebirn@newschool.edu)

--Mentoring Committee: Cecilia Zapata (Zapata@sou.edu)