

December 11, 1997

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

FROM: SPIRIT OF 1848 COORDINATING COMMITTEE (Nancy Krieger, Cecilia Zapata, Cathy Cubbin, Babette Neuberger)

RE: REPORTBACK FROM THE 1997 APHA CONFERENCE

Spirit of 1848 organized three successful sessions and had a very productive business meeting at the 125th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (Nov 9-13, 1997, Indianapolis, IN). In this reportback, we summarize decisions about plans for projects and sessions that we made at our business meeting, and also highlight aspects of our different sessions. We are sending this reportback by email, via our electronic bulletin board, and we are also sending it by regular mail, to the now over 600 people on our mailing list.

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

I. Spirit of 1848 Business meeting

Attended by: Nancy Krieger, Cecilia Zapata, Anne-Emannuelle Birn, Bhakta Apuri, Eileen Lourie, Olle Bygren, Andru Ziwasiiman, Kaveh Khoshnood, Sam Friedman, Babette Neuberger, Amanda Birnbaum, Martha Livingston, Rachel Krause, Gail Gordon, Cathy Cubbin, Gilbert Gee, Cynthia Ronzio, Oliver Fein, Rebecca Flournoy, Mary Lou Finley, Dick David, Arlene Bierman, Ellen Shaffer, Estina Thompson, Danielle German, Danni Lentine, Ramon Castellblanch, David Ramsey, Patricia Antoniello, Naomi Kistin.

At our business meeting, we reviewed the history and accomplishments of Spirit of 1848, including our new Caucus status in APHA (as of this past summer). We reaffirmed that we are a voluntary network, with no dues, 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). 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

--The main project involving members of this committee last year was a survey of all US state health departments about what socioeconomic data they do and do not collect and report as part of their routine vital statistics. The survey was just published, as follows:

Krieger N, Chen JT, Ebel G. Can we monitor socioeconomic inequalities in health? A survey of US Health

Departments' data collection and reporting practices. Public Health Reports 1997; 112:481-491.

with the following commentary:

Williams DR. Missed opportunities in monitoring socioeconomic status. Public Health Reports 1997; 112:492-494.

We encourage you to see how your state fares in the list, and turn up the volume accordingly!

--We also discussed plans for a possible session for next year. Cathy Cubbin has volunteered to work on this session with Oli Fein. At the business meeting, we agreed that the topic of the session would focus on neighborhood context and social inequalities in health. Subsequently, three potential presentations were suggested to examine neighborhood context: an application of multilevel modeling, measuring the effects of income inequality, and an investigation of the effects of neighborhood change. A brief introduction putting neighborhood context in historical perspective will also be included. We are expecting the speakers to include a conceptual

framework, offer implications for social justice and public health, and present results in a didactic manner so that the audience will understand that the methods are widely applicable and accessible. We also expect to provide information on available data sources that lend themselves to studying the neighborhood or regional context of health. To find out more about the session, contact Cathy Cubbin. The session will be scheduled for the Monday afternoon of APHA.

--We also are continuing plans for getting a Data Toolkit up and running on the Web page that Spirit of 1848 is developing. The Data Toolkit will contain instruments that researchers have used to measure various aspects of socioeconomic position, race/ethnicity and racism, gender, sexual identity, etc. The idea is to provide a resource, and to encourage people to share instruments that they develop, so that we can popularize these measures and also have more of us using comparable measures, so that we can compare results across studies. If you want to become involved in this project, or have ideas for instruments that would be good to include, contact the two new coordinators for our Data Toolkit:

Cynthia Ronzio

Amanda Birnbaum

b) Curriculum Committee

Representative to the Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee =Babette Neuberger

--The committee agreed to continue organizing a session on curriculum about social inequalities & social justice and health. The theme will most likely be "Teaching public health within a political, economic, social and historical context" (or, "What your teachers never told you ..."). Babette Neuberger will be organizing the session, which will be on the Tuesday morning of APHA. If you have ideas for the session, please contact her (by email) by January 7 with your ideas. The committee will then decide on which presentations to include, and formal APHA abstracts will be requested for those presentations (these abstracts are due on Feb 10).

--The committee also agreed to develop a part of the web page that will have syllabi for 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 Babette Neuberger.

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.

--The 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 raising questions relevant to our work (for public health & social justice), for sharing resources and ideas, and for making connections between folk with shared interest & activities. We encourage people to use the Spirit of 1848 bulletin board, and to introduce other people to it. Again, to get on the bulletin board--or to be involved with mentoring activities--contact Cecilia Zapata at:

d) History Committee: Liaison to the Sigerist Circle

Representative to the Spirit of 1848 Coordinating Committee = Anne-Emanuelle Birn.

--This committee started planning for next year's historical session commemorating the movements of 1848 (since 1998 will be the 150th anniversary of 1848!!). The as-yet-unnamed session will examine worldwide public health, democracy, and revolutionary social movements in and around 1848, the continuing struggles in the US for public health equity in the late 19th and 20th century, and the implications of 1848 for current health and social justice movements. We will invite our sister and brother caucuses to participate by contributing 6 minutes (per caucus) of dramatizations, music, photos, poetry, ... , on people and movements of the public health past. More ideas and drama/techie expertise are welcomed! Contact Anne-Emanuelle Birn if you are interested! This event will be scheduled for the Tuesday night of APHA (probably from 6 to 8 pm), with a dress rehearsal on the Sunday night of APHA.

--The committee also announced that the Sigerist Circle is planning its next scholarly session on "Progressive Health Politics in Canada", to be held in Toronto, Canada, May 7, 2-6 pm

--Also, this year the first book based on a Sigerist Circle Scholarly Session was published:

Making Medical History: The Life and Times of Henry E. Sigerist, edited by Elizabeth Fee and Theodore Brown.

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

e) Web page

--Finally, Spirit of 1848 is in the midst of setting up a Web Page for progressive public health folk. Plans include having a site for our Data Toolkit, a database of researchers and course syllabi, and other resources, including links to other relevant Web sites. Our page will also give a description of Spirit of 1848 and how people can get on our email bulletin board.

The URL for the website is: <http://www.progressivehn.org>

The site is still under construction, but please visit and give comments! The person in charge of the Website is: Michelle Murrain

If you have any ideas, or want to help out, please contact her!

f) Lecture in the memory of P Ellen Parsons

The Medical Care Section is taking the initiative in creating an annual lecture in the memory of P Ellen Parsons, who was a founding member of Spirit of 1848 and also very active in the Women's Health Caucus (among other groups). They have invited Spirit of 1848 and the Women's Health Caucus to co-sponsor this lecture and we agreed to do so. The person in charge of the session from Medical Care is Ellen Shaffer; the two people from Spirit of 1848 who will be involved are: Nancy Krieger and Gail Gordon. If you have any ideas, or want to know more, contact Ellen Shaffer.

g) Spirit of 1848 Prize for Community Action for Public Health

We raised the idea of Spirit of 1848 developing an award that would go to a group (as opposed to an individual) embodying the spirit of 1848 in their public health advocacy. Open to question would be whether this would be an award given to a group in the city where APHA is meeting (in the HealthPAC tradition) or to any group, regardless of geographic location. We ran out of time to discuss this issue fully or to create a subcommittee that would consider it further. If you like the idea of developing this kind of award, and would be willing to work on a committee to get it conceptualized and organized, please contact: Cecilia Zapata.

II. Spirit of 1848 sessions at APHA

a) Politics of Public Health Data

Our session was on "Socioeconomic inequalities in health: the political economy of welfare repeal and documenting disparities in health by class, race/ethnicity, immigrant status, gender, and age". It was attended by at least 250 people, and many others tried to attend but couldn't fit into the room [!]. We dedicated the session to P Ellen Parsons. The line-up was:

*Introduction--Nancy Krieger and Oliver Fein

*Welfare Repeal: Who Loses, Who Gains--Ruth Sidel

*Urban Polices, Job Loss, and Growing Inequalities in Wealth: What are the Connections?--Yvette Marie Alex-Assensoh

*Implementing Welfare Reform in the Pacific Northwest: Implications for Public Health--Mary Lou Finley, Clarence Spigner

*Can We Monitor Socioeconomic Inequalities in Health? A Survey of Socioeconomic Data and Vital Statistics Collected by US State Public Health Departments--Nancy Krieger, Jarvis T. Chen, Gregory Ebel

b) Curriculum

Our session was on "Curricula in social inequalities in health: critical epidemiology and public

health advocacy". It was attended by over 40 people, at 8:30 in the morning! The line-up was:

*Presider--Carles Muntaner

*Issues in Health Advocacy--Ramon Castellblanch

*Controversies in Epidemiology: Teaching Causality in Context--Donna L. Armstrong

*Maternal and Child Health in the Urban Environment--Robert Aronson, Patricia O'Campo

*The Use of Allegory in Teaching about Race and Racism--Camara Jones

c) Mentoring/Networking

Our session was on "Who will be the public health leaders and who will mentor them: facing the challenge". About 30 folk came and had the opportunity to learn how the different caucuses mentor new members and the caucuses also got to connect with and learn from each other (since some have been around since the late 1960s, starting with the Black Caucus, and others are quite new). The line-up was:

*Presider--Cecilia Zapata

*American Indian, Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian Caucus--Linda Burnisstapov

*Asian Caucus--[unable to attend]

*Black Caucus--Michelle Davis

*Health Equity & Public Hospital Caucus--[unable to attend]

*Caucus on Homelessness--Beth Weitzman

*Latino Caucus--Dennis Lopez

*Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Caucus--Cynthia Gomez

*Peace Caucus--Patrice Sutton

*Caucus on Public Health and the Faith Community--Rueben C. Warren

*Public Health Student Caucus--Deborah Sues

*Caucus on Refugee and Immigrant Health--Sherry Riddick

*Socialist Caucus--Susan Moscou

*Women's Caucus--Shauna Hecker

*APHA Staff Liaison--unable to attend

d) History

We co-sponsored a session jointly sponsored by the Medical Care Section, Forum on Bioethics, and the Sigerist Circle, on "Social movements and public health". The line-up was:

*The influence of politics on Henry Sigerist's work--Ted Brown

*Minimal care for mothers/marginal care for workers: the dilemma of working mothers in the mid-twentieth century south--Patricia Hill

*Advocacy, Objectivity, and industrial health: the discovery of industrial radium poisoning--Claudia Clark

*Commitment and memory: an oral history of physicians and AIDS: 1981-1997--Gerald Oppenheimer

The session was chaired by Elizabeth Fee, who was also honored with the Viseltear Award.

e) Other:

--We co-sponsored several sessions sponsored by the Caucus on Homelessness, and also a session sponsored by the

Caucus on Refugee and Immigrant Health

--Finally, we co-sponsored a memorial for Rachel Fructher, where several of us also spoke to P Ellen Parson's memory. ---And we had brightly colored posters up just about everywhere

Again, 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.**