

Media Advisory -- July 28, 2010

Thousands of Statisticians Descend on Miami Beach for Joint Statistical Meetings; Many Available for Interviews on Various Topics

Statisticians from 52 countries will share research, views on topics including climate change, sports, statistical humor, gender issues, immigration, and forensic science

Statisticians from the U.S., Canada, and around the world are arriving in Miami Beach beginning today to attend the 2011 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM), the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians. The conference, which begins Saturday at the Miami Beach Convention Center, will bring approximately 5,500 statisticians to the city.

Representing 52 countries, the registered statisticians attending the conference will participate in the more than 2,500 oral presentations, panel sessions, roundtables, poster presentations, continuing education courses, career placement activities, business meetings, social activities and networking opportunities from July 30—August 4. The oldest speaker, 87 is the keynote speaker from England, while the youngest is a 17-year-old high school senior from Maryland.

The theme for the 2011 JSM is "*Statistics: An All-encompassing Discipline.*" ASA President Nancy Geller will deliver an address by that title on Tuesday afternoon. Complete information about the conference is available at the JSM web site at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2011/>.

***** Media Registration**

Members of the media are invited to participate in any or all of the sessions at JSM. Media registration is required; call Rosanne Desmone at 703.946.3820 or use the form at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2011/index.cfm?fuseaction=pressregistration>. Press credentials can be picked up, and also may be requested, at the Special Assistance Desk in the registration area of the conference.

*****Topics of Interest**

Statistics enhances our understanding of and plays a critical role in the decisions that impact our daily lives. Sessions at JSM will provide a glimpse into the ways in which statisticians contribute to a broad range of disciplines important to everyone. The rich variety of contributions made by statisticians will clearly be on display this week. JSM news releases contain information on many of the subjects under discussion; you can view the releases at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2011/index.cfm?fuseaction=newsreleases>

Many of the JSM presenters are available for interviews, and many of ASA's media experts also will be available. In addition, there are a number of presenters from **Florida colleges and universities**. Please contact Rosanne Desmone (contact info above) if you are interested in interviewing any of the participants.

Of particular interest (and not already publicized):

Statistical Humor: An Oxymoron? (Activity 182)

Presenter: Harry James Norton, Carolinas Medical Center

Saul Bellow wrote in Herzog, "An utterly steady, reliable woman, responsible to the point of grimness, Daisy was a statistician for the Gallup Poll." Does Bellow's stereotype of statisticians ring true? Is the field without jokes, cartoons, statistical heroes or tales about statistics saving the day? Keeping undergraduate biology students and medical residents interested in statistics when the majority of the students are taking the class as a requirement can be challenging. I will present examples of jokes, stories, cartoons, poems, and one-liners about statistics, statisticians and teaching that I use in my classes to lighten the mood. I will pose Jeopardy style questions to the audience challenging them to identify quotes on the subject of statistics from famous people both real and fictional. ***Participants will learn why there is no Noble Prize for Mathematics and Statistics,***

discover who was the most evil mathematician of all time, and hear about the short story where a man uses his extraordinary knowledge of statistics to charm a woman into marriage.

Current Issues in Forensic Science (Activity 167)

Panelists: Constantine Gatsonis, Brown University; Sarah Chu, Innocence Project; and Clifford Spiegelman, Texas A&M University

This panel discusses several **recent developments in forensic science**. First, former NRC panelists discuss two recent NRC reports: a just released report on the 2001 anthrax attacks NRC (2011), and the recently released NRC report "Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward" (2009), which John Holdren, the President's Science Advisor, described as a "blockbuster." Then, members of the Innocence Project discuss proposed legislation responding to recommendations in the 2009 NRC report. Finally, a member of the statistical community discusses the state of firearm toolmark evidence in courts post the 2009 NRC report.

*****Attendees**

The JSM participants represent academia, business & industry, and federal, state, provincial, and local governments. While the majority of participants are from the US, Canadians also are well represented, since the Statistical Society of Canada is one of the groups that participates annually in JSM. International participants represent the continents of Australia, Europe, Africa, Asia and South America. The attendees are approximately 60 percent male, and 40 percent female.

About the Joint Statistical Meetings

JSM, which has been held annually since 1974, is conducted jointly with the American Statistical Association (ASA), the International Biometric Society (ENAR and WNAR), the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS), the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC), the International Chinese Statistical Association, and the International Indian Statistical Association. JSM activities include oral presentations, panel sessions, poster presentations, continuing education courses, exhibit hall (with state-of-the-art statistical products and opportunities), career placement service, society and section business meetings, committee meetings, social activities, and networking opportunities. JSM is open to members of all participating associations, as well as non-members and has special pricing for students, seniors, K-12 teachers; one-day registrations also are available. Complete JSM program information is available at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2011/index.cfm>

About the American Statistical Association

Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, the American Statistical Association is the world's largest community of statisticians and the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For 170 years, the ASA has supported excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through meetings, publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Its members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information about the American Statistical Association, please visit the ASA web site at <http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

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