

This is the first article in a series that focuses on an area of interest mentioned in the SRMS mission statement given on the last page of this newsletter. This article falls into the category of theoretical foundations of sampling. Thanks go to David Binder and Georgia Roberts for their contribution.

Can Informative Designs be Ignorable?

by David A. Binder and Georgia R. Roberts

We would like to thank the editors of the SRMS Newsletter for inviting us to contribute this article. We were allowed to choose our own topic so we decided to write about a subject that we often find perplexing.

In the literature, discussions related to the interaction between models and survey designs frequently refer to terms such as *ignorable* sample designs and *informative*

(Continued on p. 2)

Leslie Kish's Contributions to Survey Statistics

by Graham Kalton and Jim Lepkowski

Leslie Kish, one of the founding fathers of survey sampling, died on October 7, 2000 in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the age of 90. The many obituaries for Kish that have already appeared, including one in the December issue of *Amstat News*, have provided a broad overview of the warm and engaging human being who was Leslie Kish, with his many varied interests and accomplishments. This appreciation of his life attempts to provide a somewhat different approach, focusing on his extensive and wide-ranging publications that have advanced our field in many important directions.

Kish worked at the U.S. Bureau of the Census from 1939 to 1941, and then moved to the Division of Program Surveys at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which he left in 1942 for war service. He returned to the Division briefly after the war, before moving in 1947 to Ann Arbor with a group of USDA colleagues to set up the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. He remained at the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan until he retired in 1981. After retirement, he continued to be fully active professionally and at the time of his death he was working on a new edition of his famous *Survey Sampling* book (Kish, 1965c).

When Kish started at the Survey Research Center, probability sampling methods were still in an early stage of development, as illustrated by his first publication. At the time probability sampling was replacing quota sampling for households, but quota sampling was still being used for sampling persons within households. To remedy that situation, Kish invented what is now widely known as the Kish selection table for the random selection of persons within households (Kish, 1949).

In the early years of Kish's career, it was recognized that the computation of sampling errors for estimates from stratified multi-stage samples should take the complex

(Continued on p. 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Can Informative Designs be Ignorable?
- 1 Leslie Kish's Contributions to Survey Statistics
- 3 Rounding Round-Up
- 6 Section News
- 7 Executive Committee Reports
- 10 Focus On . . .
- 13 Past Conferences
- 14 Upcoming Conferences
- 15 Awards
- 15 Announcements
- 16 Obituaries
- 18 Executive Committee Members

(Continued from page 1)

sample designs when explaining the possible impact of ignoring the sample design information in a model-based approach to the analysis of survey data. These terms are often used loosely without reference to a formal definition.

A simple example of an ignorable sample design for a variable of interest is as follows. We are interested in estimating the coefficients from a regression model where the observed values of the dependent variable from the selected units satisfy this model universally, regardless of which sample was actually selected. Here, there is no information contained in the model about the sample design beyond what is explicitly specified in the model. We note that the definition of an ignorable sample design (discussed in more detail below) allows for design variables, such as stratum identifiers in the case of a stratified sample, to be part of the model specification. Therefore, if all the relevant features of the sample design are correctly incorporated into the model, the design is ignorable. If, on the other hand, there are features of the design which would make the regression model invalid for at least some observations, the design may be *non-ignorable*. For example, suppose that the sample design is based on clusters of geographic areas, that, within these clusters, the regression error terms are correlated and this correlation is not part of the model specification. In this case the standard method of analysis, ignoring the cluster effects, may lead to incorrect inferences.

As an aside, when we refer to the sample design here, we also include a probability mechanism for nonresponse. The specification of this nonresponse mechanism is necessarily based on model assumptions, since the inclusion of a given unit in the sample of respondents is not completely controllable by the survey designer. For this reason, there has been much written on whether or not the nonresponse is ignorable.

Essentially, a sample design is said to be ignorable for a variable of interest if the inference based on all the known information, including the sample design information, is equivalent to the inference based on the same information, excluding the outcomes of the random variables corresponding to whether each unit is in the sample. Of course, since this definition refers to inference on the variable of interest, the definition of ignorability depends on what is being inferred and the method of inference being used. What is ignorable for a Bayesian may not be ignorable for a frequentist. (A simple example of this occurs in the classical literature on sequential analysis where the stopping rule may be relevant to the frequentist but not to those using inference based on the strong likelihood principle.)

We now turn to the general notion of informativeness of a sample design. Here, the emphasis shifts from inferences on a variable of interest to a comparison of the probability distribution of a variable of interest for the sampled units to another “standard” distribution. This standard distribution is the one that emanates from an assumed model. Of course, it may be possible to change the model in such a way that an informative design becomes uninformative. For example, in a case-control study, we select a sample of cases and a sample of controls. If our model ignores the information about whether we have a case or control, and the distribution of the variable of interest among the cases is different from the distribution among the controls, then the design is informative. If, on the other hand, the model accounts for whether we have a unit that is a case versus a control, the design may be uninformative.

Both ignorability and informativeness have much in common. They both depend on the sample design, the available design information, the variables of interest and the assumed model. This model may be conditional or marginal. For inference, ignorability is the more useful concept. On the one hand, designs that are uninformative are also ignorable, so that being uninformative is sufficient for ensuring ignorability. On the other hand, it is possible for the design to be both informative and ignorable for a particular variable of interest. For example, in a case-control study – an informative design as mentioned earlier – if our inference is conditional on whether we have observed a case or a control, the design may be ignorable for that inference.

We now give a more formal definition for these concepts of ignorability and informativeness. We assume we have a finite population given by units (U_1, \dots, U_N) . Associated with each unit, U_i , we have variables of interest, possibly vector-valued, given by y_i , and we denote these variables for all the units in the population by $\mathbf{Y} = (y_1, \dots, y_N)$. We also have vectors of auxiliary variables associated with all the units in the population denoted by $\mathbf{Z} = (z_1, \dots, z_N)$. These variables may include variables that are used in the model or in the survey design. Finally, we have the vector of indicator variables, $\mathbf{I} = (I_1, \dots, I_N)$, where $I_i = 1$ if the unit U_i is in the sample and $I_i = 0$ otherwise.

There are two stages of randomization. The first is the randomization associated with selecting the units in the sample (including any nonresponse mechanism). This is given by the probability distribution for \mathbf{I} . (To avoid complexities of notation for partial nonresponse, we consider the simple case where the variable of interest is univariate. Extensions to the multivariate case are straightforward.) The second stage of randomization is that emanating from the conditional model, given \mathbf{I} , which generates the observed values $\{y_i : I_i = 1\}$. Both probability

distributions are assumed to be conditional on \mathbf{Z} . Recall that \mathbf{Z} may include design variables.

Now, the informativeness of the sample design is a statement about the joint distribution of $\{y_i : I_i = 1\}$ conditional on \mathbf{I} and \mathbf{Z} . The design is defined to be informative if this distribution is not the same as the joint distribution of $\{y_i : I_i = 1\}$ conditional only on \mathbf{Z} . This is equivalent to saying that $\{y_i : I_i = 1\}$ is not conditionally independent of \mathbf{I} given \mathbf{Z} . A simple example of an informative design is one where \mathbf{Z} does not include the y -variables, but inclusion of a unit in the sample does depend on the value of the y -variable for that unit. (This is a commonly used example for describing an informative nonresponse mechanism.)

On the other hand an ignorable sample design is defined to be one where the inference based on the distribution of $\{y_i : I_i = 1\}$ conditional on \mathbf{I} and \mathbf{Z} is the same as that based on the distribution of $\{y_i : I_i = 1\}$ conditional only on \mathbf{Z} .

Note that both ignorability and informativeness are defined under an assumed model; so, the statement about the ignorability or informativeness of a design under an incorrectly specified model may be different from the statement under the true model. Those who advocate pure design-based inferences suggest that these inferences are more robust to model misspecification than model-based inferences. But to discuss these subtleties would require yet another separate article.

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Rounding Round-Up

by Jill Montaquila

It began with a seemingly innocent question posed by a colleague who is an anthropologist: How would you round each of the following numbers? I knew it was a trick question, though, because each of the numbers ended in the digit 5. But I immediately gave my response, in each case rounding the digit preceding the 5 up to the next integer. Most anthropologists might have been satisfied with that answer, but not this particular one. She had been taught the “round 5 to even” rule: If the last digit is a 5, the previous digit is rounded to an even number. So, for example, 3.5 rounds to 4, but 4.5 also rounds to 4. I had heard of this rule once before, but had quickly dismissed it. But this time, I decided to pursue it further, to investigate its merits and get a sense of whether it is used in “real” applications.

My investigation began with an e-mail survey to other statisticians. I received 30 responses to my informal poll. Among the 30, fifteen had heard of the “round 5 to even” rule and 13 had not. (You may impute the remaining two as you wish!) Among those who had heard of the rule, one person reported always using it, 5 said they sometimes use it, and 9 reported that they never use it. I also learned that some statistical agencies have rules governing the rounding of numbers for publication. In fact, the statistical standards of at least one agency state that the “round 5 to even” rule should be used when tabulating numbers for publication.

A quick-and-dirty literature review turned up a few articles on the topic, published mostly in physical science journals. The issue of how numbers are rounded is particularly relevant in those fields, where measurements of continuous variables are common and rounding must occur at the unit level (rather than at the end of data processing when computing, for example, an estimate of the proportion having a particular characteristic). In such cases, the positive bias that might be introduced by rounding numbers ending in 5 up could be a major concern.

So, I'll close with the original question. How would you round the following numbers to the nearest tenth: 1.45, 5.65, 1.95, 4.75, 3.25?*

(Continued from p. 1)

design into account, but without computers this was difficult. Kish (1957) performed some early calculations of sampling errors for such designs and developed methods to simplify the computations (Kish and Hess, 1959a; Kish, 1968). His dissertation at the University of Michigan (Kish, 1952) had been on the differentiation of the population in areal units (see also Kish, 1954, 1961a), and that led directly to his model for the effect of sample clustering on the precision of survey estimates. He coined the term “design effect” to reflect the overall effect of a complex sample design on the precision of survey estimates, and retained an interest in this subject throughout his career (Kish, 1982a, 1984, 1995a; Kish, Groves and Krotki, 1976; Kish, Frankel, Verma and Kaciroti, 1995).

As computers entered the picture, he took the lead in developing one of the early software packages to compute sampling errors for estimates for complex sample designs (Kish, Frankel and Van Eck, 1972) and also extended the range of estimates for which such sampling errors could be computed. With his doctoral student, Martin Frankel, he turned from the Taylor Series linearization method to replication methods (balanced repeated and jackknife repeated replications), at least for complex analytical statistics. Kish and Frankel (1970, 1974) carefully evaluated these methods and demonstrated their applicability for complex samples.

Kish’s range of interest in survey sampling spanned all aspects of the subject, including: effective stratification and controlled selection (Goodman and Kish, 1950; Kish, 1961b; Anderson, Kish, and Cornell, 1976; Kish and Anderson, 1978); noncoverage (Kish and Hess, 1958); unit and item nonresponse (Kish and Hess, 1959b; Kish, 1992; Kalton and Kish, 1984); sampling rare and elusive populations (Kish, 1965a, 1991); sample designs for subgroup and domain estimates (Kish, 1969, 1988); sampling organizations of unequal sizes (Kish, 1965b); and retaining units in continuing survey operations (Kish and Scott, 1971). It also extended to measurement errors (Kish and Lansing, 1954), including the effect of interviewer variance on the precision of survey estimates (Kish, 1962). Building on his research, his *Survey Sampling* text (Kish, 1965c), now a Wiley Classic, contains an encyclopedic treatment of survey sampling practice.

Kish’s interests in research design extended from descriptive surveys to the design of studies to examine causal connections. His early paper on this subject (Kish, 1959) has been widely cited and reproduced in a number of different places. He applied his sampling expertise effectively to research design, for instance in his work with doctoral student Dallas Anderson and co-advisor Dick

Cornell in relating stratification and matching (Anderson, Kish and Cornell, 1980). He focused attention on the appropriate balance to be employed in research design between the three R’s – randomization, representation and realism (Kish, 1975) – and on the analytic uses of survey data (Kish, 1984). His book *Statistical Design for Research* (Kish, 1987a) contains many novel insights.

Kish recognized early on that the demand for estimates for small domains, particularly small areas, would expand (see Kish, 1987b, for a classification of domains by sizes). Decennial censuses are a major source of small domain estimates, but census data become out-of-date as the decade progresses. The need for current small area estimates led Kish to his research on the use of model-dependent estimates (Purcell and Kish, 1979, 1980), and the need for small domain estimates in general led to his research on the design of data collection methods to produce such estimates.

As early as 1979, Kish proposed the replacement of population censuses by rotating or rolling samples, in order to produce more up-to-date estimates (Kish, 1979a,b). He wrote many papers on this topic (Kish, 1981, 1983, 1986, 1990, 1997, 1998; Kish and Verma, 1986), and on the related topic of the cumulation of surveys over time and the combination of surveys (Kish, 1999). In line with Kish’s reasoning, in 2003 the Census Bureau is planning to introduce a large-scale continuous survey, the American Community Survey, that will replace the long form in the 2010 Census.

Kish had long standing interests in the use of probability sampling methods in developing countries. He had a particular interest in demographic and family planning surveys (Kish, 1982b), and he was instrumental in the design of national demographic surveys in many countries, including the People’s Republic of China where he helped design the first national fertility survey, the largest sample design in his career (Kish, 1989a). He wrote *Sampling Methods for Agricultural Surveys* for the FAO with the interests of statisticians in developing countries primarily in mind (Kish, 1989b). For many years he wrote a Question/Answer column for the *Survey Statistician*, the newsletter of the IASS, giving practical advice on difficult survey sampling problems, particularly those from developing countries. His column was so successful that it was compiled and published separately (Kish, 1995b).

Throughout his career Kish devoted considerable efforts to training statisticians and others in the use of practical but statistically rigorous survey sampling design. In 1961 he established the summer Sampling Program for Foreign Statisticians at the University of Michigan that still

continues to thrive. He strongly believed in training in statistical practice. In his presidential address to the American Statistical Association in 1977, he was critical of the then growing trend toward more theoretically oriented statistical training (Kish, 1978). He often emphasized to international audiences at the IASS and ISI the need for training survey samplers around the world (see, for example, Kish, 1989c). Significantly, he chose this subject for his 1994 Morris Hansen Lecture (Kish, 1996).

The preceding selection of Kish's publications provides an indication of how important he was to survey sampling. There is hardly an area in survey sampling to which Kish did not contribute through inventive new methods, careful and novel extensions of existing methods, or sound counsel. Many contributions were seminal for new areas of statistical investigation. Statistics and survey sampling have lost a creative and prolific scientist of the first order.

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Section News



ASA Fellows (SRMS Members)

Congratulations to the nine members of SRMS that were elected Fellows of the American Statistical Association and were inducted at JSM 2000.

Lynda T. Carlson
Nancy M. Gordon
Barry I. Graubard
Timothy G. Gregoire

Sharon L. Lohr
John D. McKenzie, Jr.
Anthony R. Olsen
John H. Thompson
Preston J. Waite

Thanks go to Mary Mulry (Chair) and the SRMS Committee on ASA Fellows for their efforts on behalf of our outstanding members.❁

Changes in SRMS Officers

On behalf of the membership of the SRMS, we thank the following section officers for their service to SRMS, as their terms have ended:

Robert Groves (Past Chair), John Eltinge (Program Chair), Sharon Lohr (Publications Officer), Keith Rust (Treasurer), and Ralph Folsom (Council of Sections Representative).

New Section Officers on the Executive Committee are:

Lars Lyberg (Chair-Elect), Pat Cantwell (Program Chair-Elect), Alan Tupek (Publications Officer), Sarah Nusser (Treasurer), Rachel Caspar (Council of Representatives).

Two new positions have been created: SRMS Historian and Assistant Editor AmStat Online. The Historian position is in the process of being filled. Sharon Lohr will continue to serve as the Assistant Editor AmStat Online through 2001 and will be Past-Assistant Editor AmStat Online for 2002. Assistant Editor AmStat Online-Elect will be appointed in 2001. If you are interested in serving in these positions, please contact the SRMS Chair.

Congratulations to the new officers, and good luck to other executive committee members in their new or current positions.*

SRMS Spring Business Meeting

There will be a spring meeting for the SRMS Executive Members. SRMS members can contact Daniel Kasprzyk at daniel_kasprzyk@ed.gov if there is an issue they feel the Board needs to address.*

Call for JSM Roundtables

Are you interested in leading an SRMS luncheon roundtable at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Atlanta this August? Over lunch (between the morning and afternoon sessions) you can direct a discussion in your area of expertise with other interested statisticians – as many as ten to a table – and the meal fee is waived for the group leader! The specific format is left to the leader.

The roundtable program has to be ready by early February. If you're interested, please send the following information to patrick.j.cantwell@census.gov by January 15:

- ◆ your name, affiliation, telephone number, and e-mail address;
- ◆ the topic or title of your discussion; and

- ◆ a brief description of what you want to cover (about two sentences is good).

If you have suggestions for a luncheon roundtable but cannot lead it yourself, feel free to contact Pat or others who are knowledgeable about the topic.

Pat Cantwell
Bureau of the Census
(301) 457-8105
patrick.j.cantwell@census.gov*

Newsletter on the Web

This newsletter and past SRMS newsletters can be read on the web. As mentioned in Sharon Lohr's Publication Officer's report, the address for the Survey Research Methods Section web site is <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/>*.

SRMSNET

If you haven't signed on yet, join now. If you aren't on the list, you aren't in the know! SRMSNET offers people the chance to ask questions or submit announcements relating to survey methods to a group of users through the use of e-mail. To sign up, send a message to listserv@umdd.umd.edu and, in the body of the message, type subscribe SRMSNET your name. Users, please remember that if you just click on "reply", your answer will go out to everyone on the SRMSNET – be sure to direct personal replies to the sender's own e-mail address! To unsubscribe, in your message to listserv@umdd.umd.edu, type in the body of the message unsubscribe SRMSNET.*

Executive Committee Reports

SRMS Program in Atlanta

by Jim Lepkowski

The SRMS Program for the Joint Statistical Meetings August 5-9 in Atlanta is already starting to take shape. There are three types of papers that will be presented (invited, topic contributed, and regular contributed), and the invited papers and sessions are already set.

SRMS is allotted five invited session slots for the Atlanta meetings. We have also been given one additional memorial session in honor of Seymour Sudman. Given that this will be

the first meeting following the 2000 Census at which results will be available, there are a number of sessions on the Census among the SRMS invited sessions.

1. Automated Model Building Techniques, an invited paper session examining applications of the recent advances in software to survey research methodology. The session was organized by David Judkins at Westat, with speakers Jerome Friedman, Stanford; Paul Zador, Westat; and Peter Spirtes, Carnegie Mellon.
2. Census 2000 Population Coverage, an invited paper session reviewing the completed program of measuring and correcting for the undercount in the 2000 Census. The session was organized by Carolee Bush at the Bureau of the Census, with speakers Howard Hogan, J. Gregory Robinson, Donna Kostanich, and Raj Singh, from the Bureau of the Census, with Steve Fienberg, Carnegie Mellon, as discussant.
3. American Community Survey Planning, an invited panel discussing the revolutionary features of the ACS and its impact on federal statistics. The panel was organized by Al Tupek at the Bureau of the Census, with panelists Nancy Gordon, Bureau of the Census; Katherine Wallman, Office of Management and Budget; and Joseph Salvo, New York City Department of Planning.
4. Generalized Survey Processing Systems and Generalized Modules – The Way of the Future? This invited panel was organized by Paula Weir, Energy Information Agency, with panelists Carol House, Department of Agriculture; Shinn Ahmed, Bureau of the Census; and Mike Weeks, Research Triangle Institute. Nancy Kirkendall, Energy Information Agency, will be a discussant.
5. Household Survey Nonresponse, an invited paper session organized by Nancy Bates, Bureau of the Census. Speakers will include John Dixon, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Pei-lu Chiu, National Center for Health Statistics; Greg Diffendal, Bureau of the Census, and Ward Kay, Bureau of the Census. Robert Groves, University of Michigan, will be the discussant.
6. Seymour Sudman Memorial: Issues in Sample Design and Response Effects, an invited paper session organized by Johnny Blair, University of Maryland. Speakers in the session are Graham Kalton, Westat; Norbert Schwarz, University of Michigan; Roger Tourangeau, University of Michigan; and Norman Bradburn, National Science Foundation. Monroe Sirken, from the National Center for Health Statistics, will be the discussant.

In addition to these allotted sessions, several competitive sessions will be of interest to SRMS members. These include sessions on the decision on the release of statistically

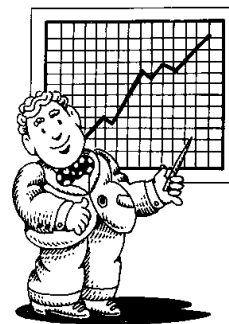
corrected redistricting data from Census 2000, large scale scientific data mining, selection bias in randomized clinical trials, robust statistics for correlated data, and recent developments in capture-recapture methods.

You should also have seen an announcement concerning topic-contributed paper sessions in the November issue of AmStat News. Now is the time to organize and submit such sessions. These are ideal forums for a particular topic, since they have five 20-minute slots available for papers on the same topic. The regular contributed paper sessions have as many as seven 15-minute papers, and may not be as well organized thematically. Please contact the SRMS Program Chair, Jim Lepkowski at jimlep@umich.edu, if you would like to develop a topic-contributed paper session for Atlanta. He'd be happy to help.*

Treasurer's Report

by Keith Rust

As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, the Section Executive Committee is continuing to look for constructive ways to use our cash balance, which stands at \$75,019 as of September 30, 2000.



The section has also sponsored a new annual award, announced in the last Newsletter, for Innovation in Survey Research Methods. As was also indicated in the last Newsletter, and has since been publicized elsewhere, we are sponsoring a student paper competition for 2001, in conjunction with the Social Statistics Section, with plans to expand this in future years. By the way, should you be approached to help in judging the competition submissions, I hope that you will be able to help out with the worthy cause – it should even be quite interesting and enjoyable.

The section continues to be involved in sponsoring conferences, and has provided funding for the upcoming International Conference on Questionnaire Development, Evaluation and Testing (QDET), to be held in the fall of 2002. We are also sponsoring an international conference on small area estimation. The conference, funded by the United States Postal Service, is being held at the USPS conference center in Potomac, Maryland, from April 11 to 14, 2001.

The Executive Committee and the ASA are holding ongoing discussions with Fritz Scheuren and the Urban Institute, concerning plans to develop the "What is a Survey?" series into a published book. The intention is for the section to

provide partial funding for this effort, which will lead to the book being offered to members at a reduced price, at least initially. As the legal and financial arrangements are novel, negotiations have progressed cautiously, but those of us involved do believe that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

The section is also pursuing the idea of using funds to develop an electronic archive of past section proceedings. The cost, and therefore the feasibility, of this are not yet clear. This effort is seen as providing a potentially valuable service to section members, as much of the valuable research carried out by section members is published only in the section proceedings.

On January 1, 2001, Treasurer-elect Sarah Nusser will take over as Treasurer. I believe that she will inherit a sound financial position, but will have plenty of opportunity to crack the nut of how to prepare an appropriate and useful section budget! Sarah will serve as Treasurer for 2001 and 2002. I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve the section as Treasurer and a member of the Executive Committee. I guess I will be remembered, if at all, for having cut my own job in half by arranging that the section have a secretary (Elizabeth Zell) as well as a Treasurer.*

Publications Officer s Report

by Sharon Lohr

There have been several developments relating to section publications. At the Joint Statistical Meetings in Indianapolis, it was proposed that starting in 2001, proceedings of all sections would be combined and produced on one searchable CD. This proposal was approved by the Survey Research Methods Section at the business meeting on August 16, 2000.

There are still details to be worked out on production costs and other matters, but as of this writing it appears that plans are moving ahead for a joint CD-ROM Proceedings for all the sections.

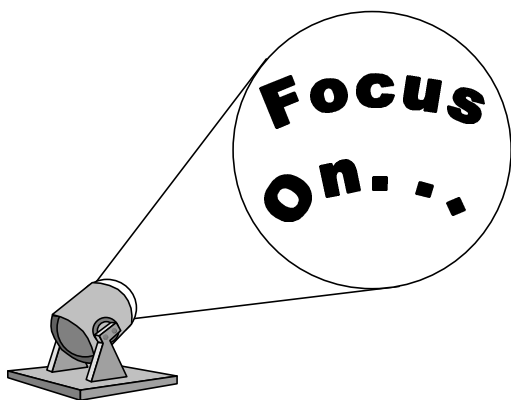
The web site for the Survey Research Methods Section has been revised, and now lives on the ASA server. The address is <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/> so please check it out if you have not done so already. Contributions, ideas, and suggestions for material are welcome. Please send me e-mail at sharon.lohr@asu.edu; Al Tupek is taking over as Publications Officer in January 2001, but I am continuing as editor of the web site through December 2001. Note that the "What is a Survey?" series, which was edited and coordinated by Fritz Scheuren, is now on the web and is a wonderful resource for students and community members interested in survey sampling issues.*

Summary Notes from SRMS Executive and Business Meetings

This section summarizes key decisions or discussion points from the August 2000 Executive Committee Meeting and Business Meeting. For more information, contact the Chair or attend the next Business Meeting (August 2001 in Atlanta).

- ◆ Efforts will increase to get information and updates from SRMS standing committees. There was a suggestion to put the mission statements and rules for each committee on the web site.
- ◆ 1-2 new members are needed for the Fellows Committee.
- ◆ The Continuing Education committee reported SRM's joint sponsorship of the JNK Rao short course in the 2000 JSM. There was discussion about sponsoring additional short courses. Efforts are being considered to spread the opportunities for survey research methods outside of the JSM to ENAR and perhaps AAPOR. There is a need to advance the discipline and to improve the quality of survey research methods being used and such courses might assist. For next year, a short course proposal is being submitted by SRM.
- ◆ The Innovation in Statistics Committee needs to be populated. It was written up in the July 2000 newsletter.
- ◆ There is a possibility of a SRMS standing committee for awards.
- ◆ SRMS is a nonmonetary co-sponsor of the Small Area Conference being held in April 2001. The International Conference for Establishment Surveys II was a big success with 35 countries represented by more than 470 people. There is a push for the conference to continue every five years. A book is in progress for the International Conference in Survey Nonresponse. Watch for upcoming conferences: International Conference on Questionnaire Development, Evaluation, and Testing Methods (QDET) in Fall 2002, the conference on Quality in Official Statistics in Stockholm in May 2001, and the upcoming international symposium on Achieving Data Quality in a Statistical Agency: A Methodological Perspective in Ottawa, October 2001.
- ◆ The committee would like to attract more students to SRMS sponsored conferences by subsidizing their expenses. The Executive Committee voted to allocate \$10K to the QDET to partially support students and participants needing assistance.

- ◆ SRM has been asked to fund the undergraduate data analysis contest.
- ◆ The web page is up and running. There will be no electronic proceedings this year. The Executive Committee decided to have PDF files constructed at the time of printing for the next proceedings. Starting in 2001, proceedings of all sections will be combined and produced on one searchable CD. This proposal was approved in the Business Meeting by the Survey Research Methods Section.
- ◆ Sharon Lohr was appointed Webmaster through the end of 2001 and Past-Webmaster through the end of 2002. Dan Kasprzyk will appoint the Webmaster-Elect during his term as Chair. The title of the webmaster is Assistant Editor of AmStat Online. A position for SRMS Historian was created.
- ◆ Work is in progress to develop the pamphlets in the "What is a Survey?" series into a booklet.
- ◆ Ideas to promote membership are welcomed.*



Standing Committee Reports

Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

by **Mary Grace Kovar, Past Chair of BRFSS Working Group** and **David Nelson, Former Branch Chief for BRFSS**

Accomplishments of the BRFSS Working Group from 1996-2000

The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Behavioral Surveillance Branch (BSB) requested assistance in 1995 from the American Statistical Association (ASA) Section on Survey Methodology to provide methodologic and analytic guidance to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The ASA's BRFSS Working Group was formed in

1996. Since then, the ASA Working Group has met with Branch staff annually to provide invaluable guidance and advice. This summarizes the accomplishments resulting from the ASA Working Group over the past four years.

Development and Use of Improved Quality Measures

Prior to the creation of the ASA Working Group, response rates were the primary measure of state data quality. BSB now uses a series of measures suggested by the ASA, (e.g., respondent sex distribution, item nonresponse) which provide a much broader and more informed assessment of data quality. In addition, states' call history files are now monitored more closely and provide valuable information about adherence to CDC protocol that is shared with state coordinators and contractors.

Revision of Operations Manual

BSB had an operations manual for states that had last been revised in 1989. The ASA Working Group strongly recommended that BSB complete the revision of the manual as soon as possible to reflect the many changes in survey operations that had occurred over time. A revamped Operations Manual with current protocols was prepared and disseminated to all states in 1997 and is now available on the BRFSS web site.

Relaxation of Monthly Interviewing Periods

BSB previously had a strict protocol that required states to conduct interviews only during a prescribed two-week period each month. The ASA Working Group recommended relaxing this period and allowing interviews to occur throughout the entire month; this change in policy was implemented in 1997 and has resulted in improved scheduling and interviewing within states.

Improved Documentation of the Data Files and Data System

Based on ASA Working Group recommendations, BSB improved their documentation and labeling of data files, the data system, and products (e.g., summary prevalence reports). This has resulted in improved efficiencies in programming and processing of data.

Changes in Sampling Designs

Prior to the creation of the ASA Working Group, the vast majority of states used a Mitofsky-Waksberg sample design that was developed in the 1970s. The Working Group confirmed that newer designs such as those based on list-assisted methods were appropriate sampling methods for the

BRFSS, and had the added benefit of reducing survey costs in most areas. Nearly all states now use a list-assisted design, resulting in improved survey efficiency.

Question Design Improvements

The ASA Working Group recommended that BSB improve the process for evaluating questionnaire items. Based on this recommendation, BSB now requires all new or substantially revised questions to undergo cognitive testing prior to use; the revised 2001 questionnaire layout will be cognitively tested.

To further improve BRFSS questions, BSB also contracted with a research organization to institutionalize a process for state and Federal employees to create and evaluate their own questions through a question appraisal system training guide. The guide was finalized in 1999 and is widely used to assist with question development.

Input on the BRFSS Redesign

Members of the ASA Working Group have regularly attended BRFSS annual conferences, and two members participated in the BRFSS Summit meeting in 1998. Members have provided important input into the redesign of the survey instrument for the next decade.

Recommendations for Methodologic Research

The ASA Working Group has played a key role in advising the Branch about methodologic research. Specific areas addressed include evaluation of call history data, the 1 percent evaluation project examining pooled BRFSS data as a source for national estimates, and the current study of the effects of eliminating zero block phone numbers on representativeness of samples. To carry out additional methodologic research, BSB now has a contractual relationship with a major survey research organization.

Analytic Guidance on Age-adjusting and Small Area Analysis

Recent efforts of the ASA Working Group have focused on analytic issues. Based on recommendations of the Group, BSB staff are developing guideline documents for states and other CDC programs on selected issues, e.g., age-adjusting BRFSS data and recommendations on small area analysis.

Increased Visibility of BRFSS at Nationally-Sponsored Conferences

Characteristics and utility of BRFSS are not widely known in certain academic, government, and non-governmental institutions. The ASA Working Group suggested that BRFSS information and issues be more prominently featured at national meetings. Based on these recommendations, the Branch has sponsored BRFSS sessions at the American Statistical Association and American Public Health Association national meetings, and for the past five years has exhibited information about the BRFSS at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association.

Improved Availability of Data to Users

The ASA Working Group encouraged more widespread dissemination of BRFSS data, and have been supportive of Branch efforts to make data available to multiple users through the BRFSS web site and CD-ROMs.*

Research Industry Coalition

by Warren Mitofsky, President

The web site for the Research Industry Coalition (RIC) is: <http://www.researchindustry.org>. All the member organizations are listed there. What you will see there is a series of statements about research. They are grouped in different areas. These have been prepared and agreed to by many of the survey organizations during the last few years. This year my term is just starting as president of RIC. What I hope to accomplish is seeing if we can establish a general position on what constitutes survey quality. If anyone at ASA would like to suggest industry-wide research topics that should be discussed or written about, I would look forward to offering the ideas to RIC for consideration in this year's agenda. For example, one goal could be to develop a statement outlining what the impact of market research can be in many different areas for a firm (or a government agency), and how the short term and long term value of research might be measured.

RIC also is considering a modification of its mission. In its new role it would act as a means for the member associations to (1) inform each other of their goals, plans and progress, (2) coordinate their activities to minimize redundancy and maximize the effective utilization of limited industry resources, (3) encourage supportive or joint initiatives.*

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Donna Brogan: 2001 - 2003
Paul Lavrakas: 2001 - 2003
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Paul Biemer: 1998-2000
Lynne Stokes: 1999-2001
Clyde Tucker: 1999-2001

Research Industry Coalition

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What follows was adapted with permission from an article by G. David Williamson that was published in the November Amstat News.

JSM 2000 in Indianapolis

Now that attendees of the 2000 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) have had time to reflect, it is appropriate to look back at the Indianapolis meetings and the changes implemented this year, as well as to look forward with recommendations for JSM 2001 and beyond. I will begin with new ideas implemented this year, positive comments we've received, then address "lessons learned" through suggestions for future meetings.

For JSM 2000, we continued the tradition of implementing new ideas in response to suggestions from attendees and in striving to better meet the needs of JSM participants. This was the first JSM in which the American Statistical Association (ASA) did not manage the registration process. There were corporate sponsors for the opening-day mixer, and the exhibit hall simultaneously housed exhibitors in booths, the Invited Technical Exhibits, and the mixer. Responsibility for organizing and implementing the Invited Overview Lectures (IOLs) was transferred to the Program Committee this JSM. Other meaningful changes regarding the IOLs were that they were presented in time slots exactly coincidental to times for other sessions and on several days throughout the meetings. Those employers paying a premium enjoyed, for the first time, executive interview areas complete with conference tables and lamps. The popular walk-in "marketplace" debuted, at which one could purchase various ASA and JSM souvenirs. And let us not forget that the JSM was, for the first time, hosted in Indianapolis.

There was much to be happy with at this year's JSM. Let us start with a general consensus that Indianapolis was an outstanding host city with much to offer, including a first-class convention center (and preeminent minor-league ballpark, among other attributes). The Sunday evening mixer was a huge success. With the opportunity to simultaneously

visit exhibitors and see the Invited Technical Exhibits in the same area, participants had to be forced out of the area at night's end by turning out the exhibit hall lights. The IOLs continue to be an overwhelming success, a tribute to the idea and to the topics and speakers selected to present them. Also of special note are the high marks that the plenary session speakers received. The presentations by George Box, Dennis Gillings, Mike O'Fallon, and Ingram Olkin were not only thought-provoking as they challenged our notions regarding statistics, but were visionary in their suggestions for leading statistics to a higher plane, including increased visibility and appreciation by the general populace.

As part of the Program Committee for JSM 2000, it would be easy to focus on the positives of our Indianapolis assembly, but we should lend our perspective of experience now to the challenges we faced, and suggestions for a strengthened JSM. Potential areas for improvement include ASA-related training of onsite contract registration staff, improving the online meeting registration and hotel reservations capabilities of the JSM web site, and minimizing scheduling conflicts in which sessions with similar topics were scheduled coincidentally. There were also suggestions to move the poster sessions and Invited Technical Exhibits to a more visible space, something ASA staff are already working on for next year.

It was my good fortune to have an outstanding and dedicated Program Committee and ASA staff. Thanks to each organizer, chair, presenter, exhibitor, the Local Arrangements Committee, and all others who in some way shaped JSM 2000. And now I close with a thank you to a very special individual who is an institution at ASA, and who has left an indelible mark on JSMs through her vigilance and tutelage to constantly improve the meetings. Thanks to my friend and colleague, Lee Decker, who is retiring before the next JSM. Thanks for the memories, Lee, and our best always! ❁

What follows was adapted with permission from an article that was published in the October Amstat News.

ICES II

A major strength of the Second International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-II) was the strong international presence, both on the program and in attendance. About 470 people from 35 countries took part in the Buffalo, New York, conference from June 17-21. Among those attending were larger groups from Italy, Sweden, and England, as well as participants from Indonesia, Surinam, Finland, Slovenia, New Zealand, and many other countries. The conference enjoyed the support of the ASA Sections on Survey Research

Methods and Government Statistics, the Statistical Society of Canada, and many government and private statistical agencies.

On Sunday afternoon, the organizing chair John Kovar of Statistics Canada welcomed everyone to Buffalo, while Susan Linacre from the Office for National Statistics in the U.K. kicked off the conference with the keynote address. Susan looked back at the problems facing establishment surveys at the time of the first ICES, observed how they have gradually evolved in the intervening years, and discussed important issues to be addressed in the coming years.

The program included 33 invited sessions, 26 contributed sessions, 28 software demonstrations, and three short courses. The smooth operation could be attributed to the fine work of staff from the Census Bureau, Statistics Canada, the American Statistical Association, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, and the Adams Mark Hotel, all under John's direction.

Many topics were the focus of sessions and software demonstrations, including nonsampling error, technological improvements for collecting and disseminating establishment data, classification, school sampling frames, the use of administrative records, generalized estimation and processing systems, coordinated sampling, and time series. Because of the strength of the presentations relating to agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has sought permission to publish them in a separate volume.

Around the beginning of 2001, invited papers from the conference will be available in a hard-cover proceedings book. The conference proceedings will be dedicated to Seymour Sudman, who died just a short time before the conference. Invited and contributed papers will be included on a CD-ROM. For purchase information, contact Statistics Canada at kovar@statcan.ca. The book and the CD-ROM will be sent to all conference attendees.*



2001 Joint Statistical Meetings, Atlanta, Georgia

August 5-9, 2001. To be held at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis and the Atlanta Hilton & Towers. Sponsored by ASA, ENAR, WNAR, IMS, and SSC. For more information contact: Lee Decker, ASA, 1429 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3415, phone: (703) 684-1221, meetings@amstat.org.*

International Conference on Small-Area Estimation and Related Topics



Potomac, Maryland, April 11-14, 2001

The United States Postal Service will sponsor an international conference on small-area estimation and related topics in Potomac, Maryland, during April 11-14, 2001. The National Center for Health Statistics, Gallup Organization, Research Triangle Institute, U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and survey research section of ASA have tentatively agreed to co-sponsor the conference. There will be both invited paper sessions and a poster session on different theoretical and applied aspects of small-area estimation and related problems.

Information on presenting a poster and on registering for the conference can be found on the conference web page at the University of Chicago: <http://galton.uchicago.edu/~larsen/sa2001>. The conference will be held in the USPS Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland. Some accommodations will be available at the center. Student registration will be discounted.

The conference organizer is Stephen Woodruff, The United States Postal Service. The scientific advisor for the

conference is Partha Lahiri, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The program committee consists of William Bell (U.S. Bureau of the Census), John Eltinge (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), Michael Larsen (University of Chicago), Jane Meza (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), and Louise Ryan (Harvard School of Public Health). Invited speakers include individuals from academia, industry, and government.*

International Conference on Questionnaire Development, Evaluation, and Testing Methods (QDET)

November 2002

13-17 – Site not yet determined, but probably will be in the southeastern United States.

The goals of the first international conference devoted exclusively to questionnaire development, evaluation, and testing are to bring together researchers and survey practitioners working in this area, to stimulate research papers that contribute to the science of reducing measurement error through questionnaire evaluation, to provide documentation of the current practices, and to stimulate new ideas for future practices. Both invited and contributed sessions are planned. An integrated volume representing the theoretical, methodological, and statistical contributions to the field will be produced after the conference. Abstracts for proposed monograph papers are due by May 1, 2001. This conference is sponsored by ASA/SRM, AAPOR, IASS, CASRO, and CMOR. For more information please visit the conference web site at: www.jpsm.umd.edu/qdet or contact Jennifer Rothgeb, Organizing Committee Chair, U.S. Census Bureau, FB4-Rm. 3125, Washington, DC 20233; e-mail: jennifer.m.rothgeb@census.gov*

Awards

Bryant Scholarship for Students in Survey Sampling Deadline March 31, 2001!



Congratulations to...Lynn Ybarra of Arizona State University, the 2000 E. C. Bryant Scholarship recipient for outstanding graduate work in survey statistics!

The E. C. Bryant Scholarship is sponsored by Westat and given annually to an outstanding graduate student in survey

statistics. The scholarship winner receives \$1,500 toward further graduate study.

All application materials must be received by March 31, 2001. To get an application quickly, visit the Bryant Web page on the ASA Web site at <http://www.amstat.org/awards/bryantap.html> where you can download the forms on the spot. For more information about the E. C. Bryant Scholarship, contact Jean Opsomer, Chair of the E. C. Bryant Scholarship Committee, at jopsomer@iastate.edu or awards@amstat.org.

The award will be presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2001.*



Free Section Membership for New Members

Who says you don't get anything for free these days? Effective January 2001, ASA is giving NEW MEMBERS one free section membership. The first section membership for NEW MEMBERS is free for the first year. Additional section memberships are charged at the usual rates. This offer applies to NEW MEMBERS only, not current members.*

CPS Technical Paper Link

Technical Paper 63: Current Population Survey (CPS) – Design and Methodology was published and issued March 2000. The CPS is the primary source of labor force statistics for the U.S. population. It is sponsored jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This technical paper describes the many changes made to the survey since the publication of the previous technical documentation (*Technical Paper 40*) over two decades ago. While the basic approach to collecting labor force and other data through the CPS has remained intact, many changes have been made to the survey, including the improvement of

numerous questions and the computerization of the survey instrument, both introduced January 1994.

The document describes the CPS design and methodology as of December 1995. Appendices cover updates that have been made to the survey since then. The document is available via the Internet at the CPS web site at <http://www.bls.census.gov/cps>. Future changes to the survey will be documented at this site.*

University of Illinois Survey Research Newsletter

Published three times each calendar year by the Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) at the University of Illinois, *Survey Research* newsletter serves as an instrument of communication among and about academic and not-for-profit survey research organizations, listing current research and announcing conferences, calls for papers, job openings, personnel changes, and other items of interest. The newsletter also announces new publications in survey research, with an emphasis on methodological research. Subscription information and PDF versions of some past issues are available at SRL's web site at <http://www.srl.uic.edu/publist/srvrsch.htm>. Questions about the newsletter can be directed to (217) 333-4273 or survey@srl.uic.edu.*

We welcome announcements from SRMS members that are of general interest to survey research professionals.

Contact the editors at LeslieWallace@Westat.com or TomKrenzke@Westat.com.

This newsletter was formatted by Angelia Murphy, and printed by:

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The editors wish to thank Angelia and Laurie for their contributions to the newsletter.*

Obituaries

John W. Tukey

The following article is adapted with permission from an article published by Princeton University.

John Wilder Tukey, an emeritus Princeton professor considered to be one of the most important contributors to modern statistics, died July 26, 2000. He was 85. Tukey developed many important tools of modern statistics and introduced concepts that were central to the creation of today's telecommunications technologies. In addition to his formidable research achievements, Tukey was known for his penchant for coining terms that reflected new ideas and techniques in the sciences and is credited with introducing the computer science terms "bit" (short for binary digit) and "software."

Tukey, Princeton's Donner Professor of Science Emeritus, actively applied his mathematical insights to real-world problems in engineering and social sciences, serving as staff researcher and associate executive director for research at Bell Labs, now the research and development arm of Lucent Technologies. For decades, he was an active consultant to such companies as Educational Testing Service and Merck & Co., and contributed to such areas as military operations in World War II, U.S. census-taking strategies and projecting the election-day results of presidential contests for national television. "He probably made more original contributions to statistics than anyone else since World War II," said Frederick Mosteller, retired professor of mathematical statistics at Harvard University. "I believe that the whole country – scientifically, industrially, financially – is better off because of him and bears evidence of his influence," said retired Princeton Professor John A. Wheeler, who is a major figure in the history of physics and the development of the atomic bomb. "He had a penetrating understanding of so many areas in the field of statistics and was happy to share those insights with anyone who engaged him in a discussion," said David Hoaglin, a statistician at the social research firm Abt Associates who co-authored books and papers with Tukey. "It's hard to find an area that he did not work in or have a significant impact on." Among Tukey's most far-reaching contributions was his development of techniques for "robust analysis," an approach to statistics that guards against wrong answers in situations where a randomly chosen sample of data happens to poorly represent the rest of the data set. Tukey also pioneered approaches to exploratory data analysis, developing graphing and plotting methods that are fixtures of introductory statistics texts, and authored many publications on time series analysis and other aspects of

digital signal processing that have become central to modern engineering and science.

In addition to his research achievements, “John was a very lively presence on campus,” said Princeton Professor of Mathematics Robert Gunning, former chairman of the mathematics department and dean of the faculty. In one commonly told anecdote, Tukey worked out the seemingly intractable complexities of arranging times for classes and exams as chairman of the Faculty Committee on Schedule. “He would lie flat on his back on a table and people would list the scheduling difficulties and he would reel off solutions,” Gunning said. “He did it quickly and quietly in his head.”

Tukey was born in New Bedford, MA on June 16, 1915. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in chemistry from Brown University in 1936 and 1937 before coming to Princeton for graduate work in mathematics. He earned his Ph.D. in just two years. After spending wartime years in the government’s Fire Control Research Office in Princeton, Tukey rose to the rank of full professor by 1950 at age 35. Building on a foundation laid by statistician Samuel S. Wilks, Tukey helped found a department of statistics, which split from the mathematics department in 1966, and chaired the department until 1970. The department later became today’s Committee for Statistical Studies. Among many awards and honors, Tukey received the National Medal of Science in 1973 and an honorary doctorate from Princeton in 1998, and was a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of England.

Tukey’s survivors include two first cousins, three nephews, a niece, his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, four great nieces

and a number of second cousins. His wife of 48 years, Elizabeth Rapp Tukey, died in January of 1998.☼

Wray Smith

Wray Jackson Smith died May 19 at age 75 in his home in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Smith had an 18-year Civil Service career and a 30 years of experience in research and analysis fields. He was a Fellow of the American Statistical Association. Survivors include his wife Dolores Silva Smith, their daughter and her spouse, four daughters from his first marriage and their spouses, ten grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. For more information, including tributes from friends and colleagues, please see <http://www.smdi.com>, or the August 2000 issue of Amstat News.

Sam W. Greenhouse

Samuel W. Greenhouse died of cancer September 29, 2000, in Rockville, Maryland at the age of 82. Sam enjoyed a long and distinguished career at the National Institutes of Health and taught full time at George Washington University upon his retirement from government service. He also was a past president of the Washington Statistical Society. He is survived by two sons, two daughters, and 11 grandchildren. Tax deductible donations may be made to the GWU Sam Greenhouse Memorial Fund, care of the Biostatistics Center, 6110 Executive Blvd., Rockville, Maryland 20852. Memorial sessions in Sam’s honor are being planned. An obituary detailing Sam’s many accomplishments appeared in the December 2000 issue of Amstat News.☼

Executive Committee Members

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Executive Committee Bios

Rachel Caspar, SRMS Representative to the Council of Sections (2001-2003), is the leader of the Survey Methods Group at the Research Triangle Institute (RTI). She has worked at RTI for 12 years. Prior to joining RTI, she received her Master's degree in Applied Social Research from the University of Michigan. Her areas of interest include: automated data collection, developing improved methodologies for collecting sensitive data, and survey nonresponse. She served on AAPOR's Council from 1997 -

1999 as Chair for Membership and Chapter Relations. She currently serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Official Statistics. She is also a member of ASA's Advisory Committee on Continuing Education.

William Kalsbeek is a fellow and member of the American Statistical Association, and member of the American Public Health Association, Biometrics Society, American Association for Public Opinion Research, and the Institute for Research in Social Sciences. He is also a fellow of the Carolina Population Center, and has been a research fellow with the Sheps Center for Health Services Research. His

primary research interests and practice applications are sample design in health research, nonsampling error in surveys, sampling elusive populations, and cost optimization in survey design. The origin of these interests is his broad exposure to population-based research through the dozens of major local, state, national and international sample surveys for which he has provided the direction, design, or significant statistical consultation. He has been prominent in contributing to the development of important national health data gathering systems, including CDC's behavioral risk factor surveillance system as well as major surveys done by NCHS, AHCPR, and the Census Bureau. He has made significant contributions to his profession by serving on important nationally prominent panels, boards, and committees tied to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Statistical Association, etc. He has served as referee for virtually all statistical journals in which survey research methods are published. He has also served his department, school, university, and state well by his active involvement in countless committees. He is widely sought for teaching short courses on topics tied to survey research methods. Much of Dr. Kalsbeek's efforts since 1990 have been in connection with UNC-CH's Survey Research Unit, which he founded and currently directs. This laboratory was created to provide survey research services to health researchers at UNC-CH and elsewhere, as well as to foster survey methods research and to provide a research environment in which students can receive mentored hands-on experience to supplement the classroom training they receive in the classroom.

Dan Kasprzyk, SRMS Chair, works at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in U.S. Department of Education. At NCES, he is the Program Director for Education Surveys and is responsible for NCES' Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a system of surveys that obtains data from school districts, schools, principals, libraries, and teachers in both the public and private sectors. He is also responsible for developing a universe of private schools in the nation through NCES' Private School Survey and the development of statistical data products that provide Decennial Census data on the nation's school districts. Prior to his tenure at NCES, he spent over ten years working in various capacities on the Survey of Income and Program Participation. He has been active in the Social Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association, holding several elected positions over the years. He has also been active in the local chapter of the American Statistical Association, the Washington Statistical Society, and is the current Scientific Secretary of the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS). As a member of the U.S. Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, he is the chair of an interdepartmental committee reviewing the practices of

statistical agencies in "measuring and reporting the quality of survey data." He has been a member of the section for over twenty years and was the chair of the organizing committee for the first international conference sponsored by the section – the International Conference on Panel Surveys – held in 1986.

Sarah M. Nusser is professor-in-charge of the Statistical Laboratory Survey Section and an associate professor in the Department of Statistics at Iowa State University. Her research interests are in survey methods for natural resource surveys and in computer-assisted data collection for mobile field environments. She is currently an ASA/NSF/BLS research fellow, and working with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to investigate the use of geospatial data in mobile computing environments for sample survey applications. She has a BS in Botany from University of Wisconsin-Madison, a MS in Botany from North Carolina State University, and a Ph.D. in Statistics from Iowa State University.

Alan R. Tupek, SRMS Publications Officer, is the Chief, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, U.S. Census Bureau. He also serves as Associate Editor for AMSTAT online for Governments. Previously, he was Deputy Director, Division of Science Resources Studies, National Science Foundation, and Chief, Statistical Methods Division, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. He received an M.S. degree in Statistics from the University of Connecticut. His areas of interests are sample survey methodology, automated data collection methodology, nonsampling error measurement and control, and metadata & electronic dissemination of statistical information. He has authored or co-authored articles in Survey Methodology Journal, Journal of Official Statistics, Springer Lecture Notes in Statistics Series, Proceedings of Joint Statistical Meetings, Proceedings of the Census Annual Research Conferences, and Statistical Policy Working Paper Series. He chaired the interagency task force that created www.FedStats.gov.

Elizabeth Zell is a mathematical statistician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, where she has worked for the past 20 years. She currently works in the Division of Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases. Previously she worked in the National Immunization Program where she was responsible for launching the National Immunization Survey. She has a Masters in Statistics from North Carolina State University. Her areas of interest in survey research include nonsampling errors and public health applications.✻



Mission Statement

The mission of the Section on Survey Research Methods is to promote the improvement of survey practice and the understanding of survey methods by encouraging both theoretical and applied research on survey-related topics and by disseminating information on survey methods.

Areas of interest for the Section include all that employ survey methodology as a focus or as a prime tool of investigation. Of special interest are:

- ◆ Theoretical foundations of sampling;
- ◆ Sample design and estimation;
- ◆ Nonsampling errors and data collection methods;
- ◆ Analysis and presentation of survey data;
- ◆ Education of the public and students on the importance of scientific survey research;
- ◆ Publication and dissemination of survey research findings; and
- ◆ Ethics related to survey conduct and standards for survey practice.

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