

See You in San Francisco

Report from the Program Chair (2003)

Howard Hogan

As I promised, and with due respect to last year's SMRS program chair, Pat Cantwell, the 2003 ASA/JSM in San Francisco will be the best meetings ever.

Very much at the heart of our meetings will be the Invited Memorial Session honoring Charles H. (Chip) Alexander. We have scheduled this session for Monday at 10:30 and worked with other sections to minimize conflicts. This is a session on the American Community Survey that Chip was in the process of organizing before his death. Very much like Chip himself, we expect that this session will reflect both technical soundness and human warmth.

We also will have a memorial session on Survey Quality to honor Tore Dalenius, organized by Lars Lyberg.

In addition we are sponsoring or co-sponsoring invited sessions (with organizer) on:

- ❖ Cognitive Aspects of Web Survey Designs (Elizabeth Stasny)
- ❖ Calibration Estimation in Sample Surveys (Pat Cantwell)
- ❖ Promise and Reality of Survey Automation (Dan Cork)
- ❖ Was This the Best Census Ever? (Carolee Bush)
- ❖ Sampling in a Network (Steven K. Thompson)
- ❖ Small Area Estimation Using Information from Multiple Surveys (William W Davis)
- ❖ Small Area Estimation Using Survey Weights (Malay Ghosh)
- ❖ Small Area Estimation in Natural Resources Management (Loveday Conquest)
- ❖ How to Design a National Survey of the Homeless (David Marker)
- ❖ Issues Related to the Use of Administrative Records (Eloise Parker)
- ❖ Cross-Cultural Issues in Questionnaire Design (Gordon Willis)
- ❖ Integration of Demographic, Survey, and Modeling Methods (Juanita Lott)

As is traditional, the incoming program chair, Partha Lahiri, has organized the Roundtable luncheons:

- ❖ Issues Involved in the Modeling of Complex Survey Data with Danny Pfeffermann
- ❖ Statistical Confidentiality and Disclosure Limitation with Lawrence H. Cox
- ❖ Small Area Estimation with Narasimha Prasad
- ❖ Adoption and Diffusion of Statistical Methods in Survey Sampling with John Eltinge
- ❖ Collecting Biological Samples for Genomic Studies in Surveys with Judith Lessler
- ❖ Vote Over-Reporting and Errors in Behavioral Self-Reports with Allan McCutcheon
- ❖ Cognitive Issues in Web Survey Design with Roger Tourangeau



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- ❖ Current Record Linkage Practices with Bill Winkler, and
- ❖ Small Area Estimation for Production: Smoothing & Shrinking with Donald Malec.

By the way, for those who attended last year's roundtable luncheons, the association has apologized for the very expensive "box lunches," and promised not to let this happen again.

In addition, we have 20 Topic Contributed Sessions and 21 Regular contributed sessions. And don't forget the business meeting Wednesday evening. That adds up to 65 different things for you to do. If that doesn't keep you busy, well, I understand that there are other things to do in San Francisco besides the statistical meetings!

The online program is now available, just go to www.amstat.org and select "JSM 2003 Online Program." Better bookmark it!

Partha is already working on the invited sessions for the 2004 meetings in Toronto, with several good proposals already in. These need to be finished by early summer so that they can be discussed at this year's meetings. So the process has started again. It is not too soon to start thinking about topic contributed sessions for '04. <plahiri@survey.umd.edu>

It has been a fun year and I really appreciate the work and contribution of all the people who have organized sessions and otherwise helped to develop the program for August. See you all there!

Section News

Election Results

Congratulations to the following SRMS members for winning their respective elections! We look forward to your service and leadership in the near future.

For Chair-Elect

Sarah M. Nusser, Iowa State University

For Program Chair-Elect

Rachel M. Harter, NORC

For Secretary

Elaine Zanutto, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

For Council of Sections Representative

Stephen H. Cohen, U. S. Bureau of Labor of Statistics

ASA Fellows—SRMS Members

A well deserved ovation for the following new ASA fellows:

Alan R. Tupek	US Census Bureau
Robert L. Newcomb	Univ of California
Carol C. House	USDA/NASS
Lynn Kuo	Univ of Connecticut
Marilyn M. Seastrom	Nat'l Center for Education Statistics
Trivellore E. Raghunathan	Institute for Social Research
John L. Czajka	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
John M. Neuhaus, Ph.D.	Univ of California
Sarah M. Nusser	Iowa State University
Mary K. Batcher	Ernst & Young, LLP
Bal gobin Nandram	Worcester Polytechnic Inst.
Lawrence D. Brown	Univ. of Pennsylvania

SRMSNET

All postings should be sent to:

SRMSNET@listserv.umd.edu

To subscribe to SRMSNET, send a message to listserv@listserv.umd.edu and in the body of the message, type 'subscribe SRMSNET your name'. Please remember that if you click on 'reply', your answer will go out to everyone on the SRMSNET. So be sure to direct personal replies to the sender's own e-mail address.

To unsubscribe, in your message to listserv@listserv.umd.edu, type in the body of the message 'unsubscribe SRMSNET'.

Business Meeting

The SRMS Business Meeting will be held in the Hilton-Union rooms 19 & 20 on Wednesday, August 6, at 5:30pm to 8:00pm during the Joint Statistical Meetings in San Francisco. All members are welcome!

Newsletter on the Web

This newsletter and past SRMS newsletters can be read on the web. The address for the Survey Research Methods Section web site is <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/>.

Section Charter Proposed Revision Approved

A change to the SRMS charter was approved by the SRMS voters recently. The revision adds an Education Officer to the list of section officers to be elected by membership. The term of office is two years and the officer is eligible immediately for re-election to the same office when the term is completed.

Executive Committee Reports

Report from the Assistant Editor

By Tony An

Now members can access our mailing list SRMSNet on the web:

<http://listserv.umd.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=srmsnet>

It makes it easier for people to manage their subscription settings and search the archived posts. To find out more about our mailing list, please visit our SRMS web site at:

http://amstat.org/sections/srms/srms_net.html

In the past, this mailing list had not been actively managed for a long period of time, as is common with mail lists typically self-managed by sending email to the list server. Many list subscribers voiced concerns about the increasing spam. However, none of our SRMS committee members had management control over this mailing list, so we could not do anything about the mailing list settings. Recently, we found our list manager Adam Kelly at the University of Maryland. With his help, we immediately made some changes to the mailing list. The changes include the following:

- ❖ New subscribers are subject to approval by the list manager to prevent harvesting of e-mail addresses from the mailing list.
- ❖ The e-mail addresses and archived posts are only available to list subscribers.
- ❖ You will need to set a password to search, read, post, or reply on the SRMSNet web site (not to be confused with SRMS web site). When you enter the

SRMSNet web site for the first time, or if you have forgotten your password, you will need to click on "Get a new LISTSERV password first" to get a new password via the e-mail you used to subscribe to the list.

- ❖ If you reply to a post, it now only goes to the sender of the post, instead of going to the entire list as in the past. This change will prevent personal e-mail messages from accidentally going to the whole list, as happened sometimes in the past. If you would like to follow up a post to the entire mailing list, you can simply use the "Reply All" option (button) on most of the mail programs you use.
- ❖ In order to avoid spreading computer viruses, no attachments are now allowed on the mailing list. If you have something other than a plain text message to send, then you might want to put it on a web site, or simply convert it to plain text before you send it.
- ❖ We added a custom message to each post with the web link for our web site, which hopefully will reduce the e-mail messages sent to the whole list for subscription requests.

If members have any suggestions or concerns regarding our web site or mailing list, please let me know.

Publications Officer Report

By Mike Cohen, BTS

This is my first report. I thank Al Tupek for turning the program over to me in such excellent shape; and Tom Krenzke, Leslie Wallace, and Tony An for their continued very able service as newsletter editors and webmaster.

If you have not already done so, take a quick look at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/Proceedings/>. It is really wonderful having these past *Proceedings* of our section so conveniently available. The section is ahead of the others in doing this. Al and his team from last term deserve our gratitude for their fine work.

The major components of the job of the Publications Officer are (1) the newsletter (2) the web (3) the *Proceedings* and (4) the section's space in the *Amstat News*. Please let me know if I left something out!

The *Amstat News* space provides us with an opportunity to reach out to people who are not members of our section. I would particularly like to lure folks who may have a

secondary interest in survey methods (and a primary interest in some other field) into joining the section. We have much to offer these people. Suggestions (or, even better, submissions!) for the *Amstat News* space are very welcome.

A subcommittee consisting of Tony An, Lars Lyberg, and me has begun meeting (by conference call, of course) on formalizing the criteria for what goes onto the web. I will have more to say about this in future reports.

Standing Committee Report

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Working Group

By Jim Lepkowski

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a state-based health survey established in 1984 by the Centers for Disease Control and the state health departments. It is, from a sample size perspective, the largest telephone survey in the world, collecting data each year from more than 200,000 respondents (see www.cdc.gov/brfss for details).

The Survey Research Methods Section has a working group that meets annually with CDC staff to discuss methodological issues facing the BRFSS. The working group met in May, 2003, with the director and staff of the Behavioral Risk Factor Branch that oversees the BRFSS.

The BRFSS continues to face methodological challenges. A few highlights of the discussion at the May 2003, meeting include:

1. The Branch is continuing to search for a survey methodologist to add to the staff. The staff has recently been expanded, and a slot is open for someone to fill this important role in the Branch.
2. The BRFSS has an expanded set of result codes, and these are being used to publish several different rates to capture the range of cooperation and response encountered in the individual state surveys.
3. The BRFSS has contracted with Research Triangle Institute to conduct tests of alternative data collection methodologies to increase response rates. Ongoing experiments include testing the impact of an advanced letter on response rates, and the use of toll free numbers and scripted messages to be left on answering machines. BRFSS staff is exploring the

feasibility of testing incentives payments to respondents.

4. The BRFSS has also completed an investigation of the nature of telephone households located in so-called 'zero 100 banks', banks of 100 consecutive numbers with no listed numbers. The investigation confirmed that this stratum has low hit rates, a very small proportion of all telephone households, and a younger and slightly more highly educated set of households. Given the small proportion of households in the zero banks, the BRFSS is directing state surveys to exclude them from future samples.

If you'd like to learn more about the working group, or the BRFSS, contact Jim Lepkowski, current working group chair, at jimlep@umich.edu.



Winners of the 2003 Student Paper Competition

**By Susan Schechter, Social Statistics,
Nancy Bates, Government Statistics Section, and
Howard Hogan, Survey Research Methods Section**

The Social Statistics, Government Statistics, and Survey Research Methods Sections are pleased to announce the five winners of the student and postgraduate paper competition.

These papers will be presented at a specially organized Topic Contributed Session sponsored by the three sections. This session is #319 in your JSM program, and is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, August 6, at 8:30 a.m. Each of the following winners will receive a subsidy of \$800 to cover JSM 2003 expenses:

- ❖ Jessica Kohlschmidt, Ohio State University: Handling Missing Data: Union Formation Issues and Those Lost to Follow-Up.
- ❖ Markus Prior, Stanford University and visiting fellow at Princeton University: *More Than a Thousand Words? Visual Cues and Visual Knowledge.*

- ❖ Xiang Ling, Ohio State University: *A Bayesian Hierarchical Approach to Modeling Spatial Variation of the Ohio Debt Stress Index with Missing Addresses.*
- ❖ Guanglei Hong, University of Michigan: *Causal Inference for Multi-level Observation Data with Application to the Kindergarten Retention Study.*
- ❖ David Friedenber, Miami University: *A Multivariate Statistical Analysis of the Free World.*

We received excellent papers this year and selecting the winners was a challenge. We encourage all students to watch for the Competition 2004 announcement and apply. To be eligible to participate in the competition you must be a current undergraduate or graduate student at any level or be a 2003 graduate who presents research conducted as a student.

Thanks again to all the students who submitted papers to this year's competition. Let's show support to our JSM '03 winners with good attendance to their Special Contributed Topic Session on August 6.



Waksberg Paper Winner

The journal of *Survey Methodology* has established an annual Invited paper series in honor of Joseph Waksberg to recognize his contributions to survey methodology. Each year a prominent survey statistician is chosen to author a paper that reviews the developments on a significant topic reflecting a mixture of theory and practice that characterizes the work of Waksberg.

The winner of the 2004 Waksberg Paper is Norman Bradburn. Norman has made many fundamental contributions to the field of survey methods research and public opinion research, particularly in the areas of questionnaire design, respondent behavior, response and measurement errors, and modes of data collection. His paper will be entitled "The Science of Questionnaire Construction."

Previous winners are Gad Nathan, Wayne Fuller, and Tim Holt.

The committee to select the next winner (2005) will be chaired by Michael Brick <mikebrick@westat.com>.

Bryant Scholarship to be Awarded

Each year an outstanding graduate student in Survey Statistics is awarded the Edward C. Bryant Scholarship to help support the student's graduate education. Westat established the Edward C. Bryant Scholarship Trust Fund in 1995 to honor its co-founder and long-time leader. Under Dr. Bryant's leadership, Westat, an employee-owned statistical firm established in 1961, grew into what is now one of the world's leading statistical research firms with a full-time permanent staff of 1,500. Selection of the scholarship recipient is made by the ASA Bryant Scholarship Award Committee. The selection criteria include potential to contribute to survey statistics, applied experience in survey statistics, and performance in graduate school. The award consists of a certificate and a \$1,500.00 cash prize.

The 2003 winner will be presented at the Presidential Address at the JSM in San Francisco.

For more information about the 2004 scholarship including an application, see www.amstat.org/awards/bryant.html.

An additional contact is Jean Opsomer, the Committee Chair at jopsomer@iastate.edu or (515) 294-0212. Applications and letters of recommendation must be received by April 30, 2004 for consideration.

Announcements



New Editors Needed



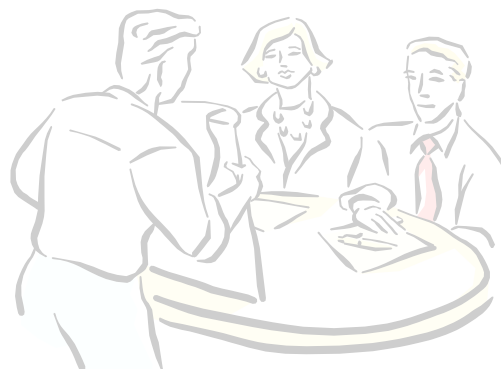
Tom and Leslie have decided to step down as newsletter editors after the January 2004 issue, after four years of service. We are currently seeking volunteer(s) to be in training for the January 2004 issue and begin as editor with the July 2004 issue. The current editors have lots of information to share that will help the transition go smoothly. If you are interested in serving the Section in this manner or have any questions about the position, please contact us as soon as possible, or by September 1.

This newsletter was formatted by Mary Ewald and printed by Laurie Logan, 1315 Yellow Tavern Court, Herndon, VA 20170. FAX: (703) 430-3430. Phone: (703) 430-0234. The editors wish to thank Laurie for her contributions.

Request for Comments Regarding the Statement on Interviewer Falsification in Survey Research

The Section on Survey Research Methods is soliciting comments on a draft statement of "current best methods" regarding the prevention, detection and remediation of interviewer falsification. The draft statement <http://www.aapor.org/interviewfalse.pdf> was developed by a broad-based committee representing various survey organizations including SRMS and AAPOR. Please address comments or queries to Dan Kasprzyk at dkasprzyk@mathematica-mpr.com by Friday, August 29.

information can be obtained from Tathagata Banerjee at btathaga@yahoo.com.



Upcoming Conferences

Joint IMS-SRMS Mini Meeting on Current Trends in Survey Sampling and Official Statistics, Calcutta, India, January 2-3, 2004

The Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) and the SRMS will jointly sponsor a mini meeting on *Current Trends in Survey Sampling and Official Statistics* to be held near Calcutta, India, during January 2-3, 2004. This will be co-sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau, Gallup Research Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Department of Statistics, the University of Calcutta. The mini meeting is intended to serve as a bridge between mathematical statisticians and practitioners working on sample surveys and official statistics either in government or private agencies. The following researchers have tentatively agreed to present their papers:

Arijit Chaudhuri (India), William Bell (USA), Heleno Bolfarine (Brazil), Jay Breidt (USA), Daniela Cocchi (Italy), Stephen E. Fienberg (USA), David Findley (USA), Marco Fortini (Italy), Wayne Fuller (USA), Malay Ghosh (USA), J.K. Ghosh (India/USA), Pilar Iglesias (Chile), Michael Larsen (USA), Brunero Liseo (Italy), Viviana Lencina (Argentina), Michel Mouchart (Belgium), S. James Press (USA), J.N.K. Rao (Canada), Stuart Scott (USA).

The meeting webpage <http://www.jpsm.umd.edu/ims> contains relevant information (e.g., registration, program, etc.) about the meeting. If you are interested in presenting your paper at the meeting, please contact Partha Lahiri at plahiri@survey.umd.edu. Local

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Jim Lepkowski, Betsy Martin, Donna Brogan, Paul Lavrakas, Sarah Nusser, Michael Elliott

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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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