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## Message from the Section Chair

Steven Cohen



How fast the last 6 months has passed as your chair of the SRMS section! I am amazed at the amount of work SRMS officers have accomplished over the last 6 months for our members. We have:

- developed an exciting JSM program
- sponsored webinars which have been well received
- started a mentoring program
- completed the 2011 JSM student paper competition

to name a few highlights. This list doesn't include on-going activities such as newsletters, maintaining the web site, and maintaining the SRMS sponsored JSM papers on-line. These all take volunteers.

I want to reflect a little on why you should consider volunteering to help the section out, run for a section office and/or attend the business meeting at JSM on August 3 at 6 pm (only about 100 members attend annually). In a nutshell, it will be a rewarding professional experience for you.

I joined ASA when I began my career further back than I am willing to admit. I joined sections much later. I still remember my first JSM experience in Washington DC in 1979. The technical sessions were great, but I felt overwhelmed by the number of attendees I didn't know---almost everybody except for some attendees from my own statistical unit. Today, having served twice as an SRMS section officer, an officer in another section and on ASA committees, I find going to JSM and other section-sponsored conferences completely different. I find myself engaged with statisticians from around the country. It can be on a technical problem, just catching up on what my colleagues are doing, or finding out about the latest research I had not heard about. When I now have a problem I can't solve, I know who I can e-mail or call up to help beyond my agency colleagues.

Just call or e-mail me or one of the section officers about what you could do. If you are at JSM corner me to talk about volunteering. Any SRMS officer would be glad to help you find an activity that matches your interests. You will not be sorry!

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## Report from the Assistant Editor (AmStat On-line)

Tony An



Since 2008, ASA has made the JSM proceedings available online in the “**Members Only**” section (under *My Resources & Opportunities/Online Archives*). For example, the JSM 2010 proceedings CD can be accessed at <https://www.amstat.org/membersonly/proceedings/2010/>. However, its user interface and usability still needs to be improved for easy accessing and searching for papers. Therefore, the SRMS section continues to provide the SRMS online proceedings at our section Web site as a service to our members: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/Proceedings/>. Please check the sessions where you presented your paper at the JSM. If you find any errors, please contact me at [Anthony.An@sas.com](mailto:Anthony.An@sas.com). As always, if you have any item you would like to be posted at the SRMS Web site, please send it to me as well.

It has been a great pleasure to serve the section as the Assistant Editor (aka Web master) for more than 10 years (I have just now realized how long it has been). I think it's time for me to hand the duty to other members.

In order to serve as the Assistant Editor, you need to have the basic knowledge about Web design/programming, as well as managing files to the ASA server via FTP program. The main responsibilities of the Assistant Editor include

- update section information, announcements, communication at the SRMS Web site;
- manage and publish the SRMS's online proceedings from JSM;
- attend SRMS executive committee meetings and conference calls;
- communicate with ASA regarding Web site initiatives.

If you are interested in serving the section as the Assistant Editor, please contact me or any of our section officers (<http://www.amstat.org/sections/officers.cfm?txtComm=SSRMS>).

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## Report from the Publications Officer

John M. Finamore

As the incoming SRMS Publications Officer, I would first like to thank Jean Opsomer for taking the time to walk me through the duties and responsibilities associated with this position. Jean continued the excellent work performed by his predecessors in this position. I am indebted to them and to the advances in technology that allow me to see and use their past articles as a template for the work I need to complete.

As the SRMS Publications Officer, I am responsible for ensuring that the SRMS members (as well as those considering SRMS membership) are aware of the ongoing SRMS activities and the work we are accomplishing. While I will do my share of work over the next two years, publicizing the SRMS activities is certainly not a one-person job. Most of the SRMS officers do some type of outreach throughout the year as part of their standard SRMS duties. In fact, a few SRMS members deserve special recognition for the publication responsibilities they provide to our section. Tony An maintains the SRMS website and oversees the posting of the SRMS-sponsored proceedings papers to the website. And the fancy newsletter you are currently reading is the result of the hard work put forth by the SRMS Newsletter Co-Editors, Steven Pedlow and Ting Yan. Thank you, Tony, Steven, and Ting!

My main task during my first six months in office has been developing monthly articles for Amstat News and occasional posts for the ASA social network sites to publicize the ongoing SRMS activities. Some of the activities featured in these articles and posts include the SRMS-sponsored webinar series, the SRMS student travel award, the SRMS-sponsored JSM roundtables and sessions, and the annual business meeting. As a quick reminder, the annual business meeting is set for 6pm on Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Miami Beach Convention Center (Room C224). We hope to see you there!

Since it is my responsibility to publicize the work that you and all the other SRMS members do throughout the year, I encourage you to send me ideas for future Amstat News articles or Facebook/Twitter posts. In addition, if you have any ideas or suggestions for improving our publication activities, please let me know. I can be reached by email at [jfinamor@nsf.gov](mailto:jfinamor@nsf.gov).

Have a great summer!

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## Report from the Council of Sections Representatives

Rachel Harter and Tony An



One of the activities of the Council of Sections Governing Board is to review section charters periodically. Our section's charter was reviewed in 2010, and the SRMS executive committee recommended updates consistent with the ASA model. This year the section membership voted and approved the updated charter, which can be viewed on the ASA website at:

<https://www.amstat.org/sections/pdfs/SRMSCharter.pdf>.

Congratulations to the newly elected section officers! For your benefit, the duties of section officers are summarized online at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/2011NewSectionOfficersOrientation.pdf>. New members might also review the duties and let your current officers know if you are interested in being nominated for a future election.

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## JSM 2011: Report from the Program Chair

Paul Beatty



The Survey Research Methods Section looks forward to welcoming you to a great variety of interesting and timely sessions at the 2010 Joint Statistical Meetings! The Section is the primary sponsor of 38 sessions, including 4 invited, 15 topic-contributed, and 19 contributed sessions. Invited sessions will address new developments in total survey error, paradata, the use of administrative data to supplement surveys, and a session on links between survey methods and Bayesian inference in honor of Joseph Sedransk. Topic-contributed and contributed paper sessions will also cover a variety of applied and theoretical ground. Whether your interests lean toward sample design, data collection methods, data quality, survey participation, weighting and estimation, or disclosure avoidance, there is something on the program for you. Our section has also co-sponsored an additional 19 sessions with our colleagues from other sections, most prominently (but not limited to) the Section on Government Statistics and the Social Statistics Section.

Don't forget to stop by our poster session on Tuesday August 2 at 2 pm. Not only will you be able to peruse topics at your leisure and speak with the authors, but you will get a chance to see first-hand the winning contribution to our fourth annual poster competition. Also, feel free to take advantage of the four roundtable luncheons covering paradata, U.S. Census research, survey quality indicators, and the General Social Survey—if you're interested, sign up now as these fill quickly. Also, don't miss the opportunity to hear about the latest initiatives of the Section and mingle with colleagues at the Business Meeting and reception on August 3 at 6 pm.

All in all, we think you'll be very pleased with the opportunities for advancing your knowledge and enjoying the camaraderie of old and new friends at this year's JSM. We look forward to seeing you in Miami!

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## Redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Survey

Kathy Downey, Jennifer Edgar, Jeffrey Gonzalez, and Adam Safir

The Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) program consists of two surveys—the quarterly Interview survey and the Diary survey—that provide information on the spending habits of American consumers, including data on their expenditures, income, and consumer unit (families and single consumers) characteristics.

The overall mission of the CE is to collect, produce, and disseminate information that presents a statistical picture of consumer spending for use by government agencies and private data users. In particular, consumer expenditure data supplied by CE are a critical component in the calculation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and are used to estimate the cost weights for the CPI's consumer goods and services classification structure.

The CE program initiated the Gemini Project, a multi-year survey redesign effort, in early 2009. The mission of the project is to improve expenditure estimates in the CE by reducing measurement error. During the course of the project, the CE program will evaluate and implement survey design changes with the goals of improving overall data quality, increasing the analytic value of the data to users, and supporting greater operational flexibility to respond to changes in the data collection environment. Papers, presentations, and other project materials are available from the Gemini website at <http://www.bls.gov/cex/geminimaterials.htm>.

### **Motivation for a Redesign**

The CE faces a number of issues that affect the quality of the data collected. These issues include evidence of measurement error in the survey data, changes in consumer spending behaviors, and the need for greater flexibility in the mode and method of data collection. All redesign changes proposed will be subject to budgetary constraints, and implementation decisions will be considered in terms of priorities and trade-offs. To allow for an unpredictable budgetary environment, both a complete redesign of the CE as well as more limited modifications to the current design will be investigated.

Even at the outset of the survey redesign process, a number of challenges were evident. Reconciling diverse user needs into a cohesive set of survey requirements is a non-trivial task. Despite identifying the needs of varied users and reconciling competing interests, there are certain to be some users with unmet needs. Additionally, it is a challenge to gather, respond, and act on stakeholder concerns and suggestions while maintaining forward project progress. Finally, because of time constraints and uncertainty over the direction and nature of forthcoming redesign recommendations, the CE program must a priori and concurrently investigate several redesign topics; research that will be used to support or reject some forthcoming proposals. Ultimately, however, the redesign process is constrained by two overriding

factors: the final survey design must fulfill the survey objectives while maintaining operational survey costs within specified budget levels.

### **Completed Activities**

In 2009 and 2010, CE completed a number of activities under the Gemini Project. These included a report which outlined definitions of data quality for CE and the creation of a research tracking system for the many CE methodological and cognitive issues tests informing plans for the redesign. In addition, several events have been held to collect information about key issues related to the redesign: a Survey Redesign Panel Discussion (January 2010), a Data Capture Technology Forum (March 2010), and a Data Users' Needs Forum (June 2010). In December 2010, CE and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) held a CE Methods Workshop where five key topics central to the redesign were discussed: global questions, interview structure, proxy reporting, recall periods, and split questionnaire designs.

BLS has also contracted with the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) to assemble a Consensus Expert Panel, coordinate several research events, and produce a report with redesign recommendations based on the event discussions and other outside independent proposals. In early June 2011, CNSTAT held a household survey data producer workshop designed to identify common challenges and best practices relevant to CE's redesign plans.

### **Current and Future Activities**

Through 2012, the Gemini Project will continue to synthesize findings from information gathering, summarize results from completed research, and plan future research studies. Current research projects or special analyses include: frequency of interviewing, global questions, interview length, recall periods, reconciliation of reported expenditures and income, split questionnaire methods, use of respondents' records, and use of web diaries. In addition, CNSTAT will coordinate a Redesign Options workshop in late 2011 to discuss options for the CE redesign, based on internal CE research, external design proposals, and input from the CNSTAT consensus expert panel. Planned CE research studies include the feasibility of respondent record use, improved expenditure groupings, increased telephone survey administration, and the exploration of data capture technology and financial software.

By early 2013, the project plans to have an approved roadmap in place for the development and implementation of a redesigned CE. The development, testing, and implementation of a redesigned survey will occur in 2013 and beyond.

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## **SRMS Section News**

### **Incoming Section Officers Elected**

We congratulate the new elected SRMS officers who will take their positions on January 1, 2012:

Section Chair Elect: **Jill Montaquila**, Westat

Program Chair Elect: **Frauke Kreuter**, University of Maryland, College Park

Councils of Sections Representative: **Chris Moriarity**, National Center for Health Statistics

Secretary: **Rebecca Andridge**, Ohio State University

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## Announcements

### 2011 JSM Student Travel Award Winners

We also would like to congratulate the four student travel award winners for 2011:

1<sup>st</sup> Place: **David Dail** from the Department of Statistics, Oregon State University

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: **Soeun Kim** from the Department of Biostatistics, University of California at Los Angeles

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: **Sahar Zangeneh** from the Department of Statistics, University of Michigan

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: **Yang Li** from the Department of Statistics, Iowa State University

Look for their talks in Miami!

### Fourth International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-IV)

The Fourth International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-IV) will be held in Montréal, Québec, Canada, June 11-14, 2012. ICES-IV will explore the current state of the art of establishment surveys. This will build on the cross-national interdisciplinary research cooperation on the unique features of establishment surveys started at ICES-I in Buffalo, NY in 1993, and continued at ICES-II in 2000 (Buffalo) and ICES-III in 2007 (Montréal). The SRMS section is a supporter of this conference.

Submission of proposals for topic contributed, contributed, and poster sessions opens on **June 1, 2011**. The deadline for submission is **August 31, 2011**.

For more information on these types of sessions review a flyer at:

[http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2012/pdfs/FINAL\\_ICES2012TopicContributedFlyer.pdf](http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2012/pdfs/FINAL_ICES2012TopicContributedFlyer.pdf)

or go to the conference website at:

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2012/index.cfm?fuseaction=main>



# International Conference on Methods for Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach Populations

October 31–November 3, 2012

Marriott New Orleans at the Convention Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A.

## Calls for Submissions

February–March 2011:  
Invited Call for Submissions

April–May 2011:  
Contributed Call for  
Submissions

The H2R 2012 conference will bring together survey methodologists, sociologists, statisticians, demographers, ethnographers, and other professionals from around the world to present new and innovative techniques for surveying hard-to-reach populations.

Addressing both the statistical and survey design aspects of including hard-to-reach groups, researchers will report findings from censuses, surveys, and other research related to the identification, definition, measurement, and methodologies for surveying and enumerating undercounted populations.

### Identifying, Defining, and Measuring the Hard-to-Reach (HTR)

- Defining HTR populations
- Measuring undercounts for HTR groups
- Improving measurement with administrative records
- Sampling HTR populations

### Techniques and Methodologies

- Recruitment methods
- Targeting the HTR
- Use of social marketing and outreach campaigns
- Overcoming language and literacy barriers
- Use of community-based organizations
- Dealing with complex living and housing situations
- Tracking and tracing HTR populations

### HTR Subpopulations

- Racial minorities
- Immigrant populations
- Indigenous populations
- Highly mobile and migrant populations
- Homeless and refugee populations
- Sexual minorities
- Populations affected by natural disasters
- Populations in zones of armed conflict
- Stigmatized populations
- Cross-cultural similarities and differences in HTR populations
- Linguistic and cultural minorities

For information, visit [www.amstat.org/meetings/h2r/2012](http://www.amstat.org/meetings/h2r/2012) or email [H2R2012@amstat.org](mailto:H2R2012@amstat.org).

**H2R|2012**  
Survey Methods for Hard-to-Reach Populations



## 2011 International Methodology Symposium

Statistics Canada November 1-4, 2011 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

### Strategies for Standardization of Methods and Tools

#### - How to get there

**Early-bird registration until September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Statistics Canada's 2011 International Methodology Symposium will take place at the new Ottawa Convention Centre (located in the heart of downtown Ottawa) from **November 1-4, 2011**.

The Symposium, entitled "**Strategies for Standardization of Methods and Tools – How to get there**", invites members of the community from private organizations, governments or universities, particularly those who have a special interest in statistical or methodological issues resulting from the standardization of statistical methods and tools. Symposium highlights include:

- Full-day **workshops**
  - *Statistical Disclosure Control: A Risk-Utility Framework*  
**Natalie Shlomo**, University of Southampton
  - *Record Linkage Methods: Theory and Application with G-Link*  
**Antoine Chevrette** and **Abdelnasser Saïdi**, Statistics Canada
  - *Developments in Small Area Estimation: Methods, Applications and Software Development*  
**Mike Hidioglou**, Statistics Canada, **J.N.K. Rao**, Carleton University and **Victor Estevao**, Statistics Canada
- More than 60 **invited and contributed presentations**
- **Susan Linacre**, Australian Bureau of Statistics, as the keynote speaker
- **Danny Pfeffermann**, Hebrew University, as the Waksberg Award speaker.

Visit our internet site regularly to obtain further details about the program, workshops, registration, accommodation, tourist activities and more. Go to

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/conferences/symposium2011/index-eng.htm>



Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

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## SRMS Mission Statement



SRMS has 1500 members, of which over 100 are based outside of North America, and is one of the largest ASA Sections. The SRMS mission 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.

**Not a member yet?** Here is how you can join:

- If you are not an ASA member, go to the membership page of the ASA and fill the application at [www.amstat.org/membership/index.cfm?fuseaction=becomeamember](http://www.amstat.org/membership/index.cfm?fuseaction=becomeamember). Then sign up for the SRMS section as part of your membership.
- If you are already an ASA member, just call customer service at 1-888-231-3473 to add SRMS membership.

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The SRMS has produced material and resources that are available on our website including:

- ❖ The “What is a Survey?” series for non-specialists, free of charge
- ❖ The SRMSNET Mailing List
- ❖ List of other related associations
- ❖ Survey Analysis Software (under *Links and Resources*)
- ❖ Universities and Laboratories
- ❖ ...and much more.

For more information, including links to specific officers, check out the SRMS website at: [www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html](http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html)

There is also a link from the ASA website at [www.amstat.org](http://www.amstat.org).