

CHAPTER CHATTER

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James J. Cochran, Editor

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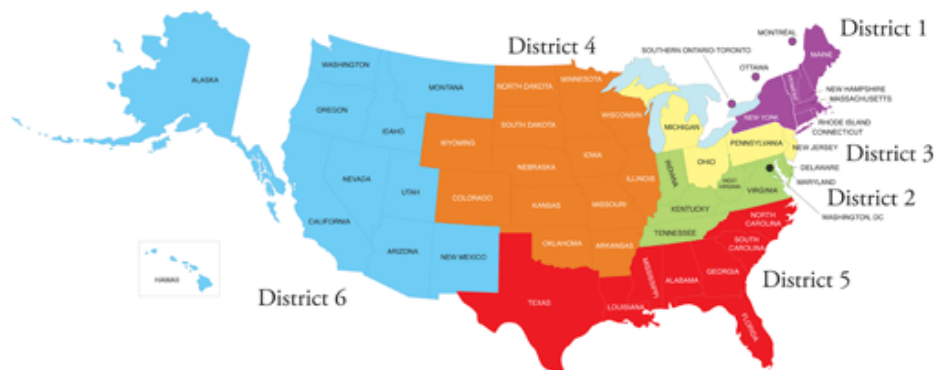


TABLE OF CONTENTS (WITH HYPERLINKS)

- [***A BRIEF INTRODUCTION***](#)
- [***THE 1st WORLD STATISTICS DAY APPROACHES***](#)
- [***COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS HOLDS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AT 2010 JSM IN VANCOUVER***](#)
- [***COC CHAIR V. A. SAMARANYAKE PRESENTS 2010 CHAPTER SERVICE RECOGNITION AND COC SERVICE AWARDS***](#)
- [***ASA PRESIDENT PANTULA ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS***](#)
- [***ASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RON WASSERSTEIN SPEAKS TO THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS***](#)
- [***ASA SCIENCE POLICY DIRECTOR STEVE PIERSON ASKS THE COC TO ENLIST CHAPTER SUPPORT FOR A STATISTICAL LITERACY BILL***](#)
- [***ASA MEMBERS EVALUATE APPLICATIONS OF STATISTICS AT THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR***](#)
- [***ASA MAKES PLANS FOR 2011 TRAVELING COURSES***](#)
- [***COC HOLDS WORKSHOP AND RECEPTION AT 2010 JSM IN VANCOUVER***](#)
- [***COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS GOVERNING BOARD***](#)

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Hello to all and welcome to the first issue of *Chapter Chatter*, the newsletter for and about ASA chapters. The COCGB has undertaken this publication to foster improved communications i) between the COCGB and the chapters and ii) among the chapters. We expect this newsletter to provide a forum for spreading news throughout the statistics community about initiatives and activities undertaken by ASA chapters.

I look forward to working with the other members of the COCGB and members of ASA chapters to improve the flow of information across chapters during my

term as COCGB Communications Officer. Please let me know if you have any suggestions about this newsletter (its content, format, distribution, etc.). I am also interested in suggestions on how to facilitate more effective communication between chapters and enable you to use the COCGB as a resource. Finally, please send me information about guest speakers, short courses and seminars, symposia, and other exciting events that are planned for by your chapter so that I can inform other chapters about your activities through this newsletter.

THE 1ST WORLD STATISTICS DAY APPROACHES

As many of you may know, the United Nations has declared October 20 (10/20/2010) *World Statistics Day* (WSD, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/>) to celebrate the many social and economic benefits from the global statistical system at national and international levels, and to strengthen the awareness and trust of the public in government statistics. The COCGB encourages you to plan chapter activities to commemorate WSD (I am

aware that some chapters are already planning activities for that day or week). Ideas and available resources for chapter observances of WSD, many of which go beyond WSD's original scope to broadly celebrate statistics, include:

- Hosting a social event. One possible activity is showing one of the Distinguished Statistician Videos the ASA will have available on its web site that week. To add a continuing

education component to the event, you could also show one or more of the LearnSTAT OnDemand recorded webinars for \$60 per webinar:

<http://www.amstat.org/education/learnstat/index.cfm>.

- Downloading the WSD graphic

20.10.2010 World Statistics Day



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(<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/Resources.aspx>), posting it on your chapter's website, and registering your chapter's activities at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/wsd/>.

Please send us this information so we can add it to the ASA WSD web page and mention it in any relevant media contact.

- Reaching out to local schools to promote statistics and/or careers in statistics on WSD. Support material on statistics careers is available from the ASA (in a PowerPoint

presentation) at

www.amstat.org/careers/Stat_Career_s.ppt.

- Encouraging newspapers to profile a local statistician on WSD to illustrate to readers the important work done by statisticians. The ASA's Rosanne Desmone (Rosanne@amstat.org) can provide you with a mini-press kit and a template of a press release (you only need to fill in the pertinent details of your chapter's activities and send the completed release to your media contact). Alternatively, you could provide your media contact's information to Rosanne and she will make the contact.
- Informing your local newspaper about your chapter's participation in the ASA Statistical Literacy Grassroots Campaign (and noting whether local members of Congress have sponsored the bill).
- Downloading and displaying the WSD poster that ASA communications is producing (in association with other organizations) that will soon be available from the ASA website.
- Utilizing material in the ASA's Statistical Significance (StatSig

series to document the many important contributions statisticians have made in areas such as health care & policy, energy, business, national security, drug & device development, and the environment; you can find these at www.amstat.org/outreach/statsig.cfm.

Watch the ASA homepage for news about the association's World Statistics Day activities (which will be held throughout that week), and please send me a summary of your chapter's WSD activities (with photographs!) for inclusion in a the next *Chapter Chatter* newsletter (to be devoted to ways that ASA chapters observed WSD).

COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS HOLDS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AT 2010 JSM IN VANCOUVER

The COC held its annual business meeting on Tuesday, August 3 at the Fairmount Waterfront Hotel in conjunction with the 2010 Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver, British Columbia.

After the minutes from the JSM 2009 were approved, Tim Hesterberg proposed to circulate the minutes of future COC meetings to the chapter representatives earlier and get approval by email; Past COC Chair John Hall indicated that the COCGB will consider this proposal during a COCGB conference call in fall 2010 and will report back to the COC.

COC Chair V. A. Samaranyake (Sam) reported that the COCGB has discussed

the possibility of joint webinars between council of sections and some webinars organized by COCGB alone.

Sam also reminded everyone that the COC Nominations Committee is composed of six members who serve two year terms, and that every year three new members are selected. Members of the committee nominate two individuals for each of the following positions: Board Representative, Chair-Elect, and two District Vice-Chairs (in rotation). Sam urged chapters to recommend candidates for the positions and help the Nominations Committee.

COC Chair Elect Kathleen Morrissey reported that the COC Planning Committee has discussed a 2011 theme

of how to bridge the gap between chapters and the COC? She hopes to increase the number of ways to communicate and initiate projects i) across chapters and ii) between chapters and sections. Kathleen solicited ideas from the COC.

Finally, Sam announced the Chapter Service Recognition awards (given to one-third of the chapters in a three year rotation). He reminded all that if a chapter misses the opportunity to nominate a member in its year of eligibility, it can nominate a member in the following year rather than waiting for the next rotation in three years. Sam distributed the awards to the following recipients (or a chapter representative if the recipient was not present):

- John Boyer (Kansas/Western Missouri Chapter)
- Michael P. Cohen (Washington Statistical Society)
- Dennis C. Gilliland (Mid Michigan Chapter)
- Anwar Hossain (Central Indiana Chapter)
- Marcia Levenstein (New York City Metropolitan Chapter)

- Bani K Mallick (South-East Texas Chapter)
- Jill Montaquila (Washington Statistical Society)
- Xufeng Niu (Florida Chapter)
- Joan S. Reisch (North Texas Chapter)

Sam also distributed Awards to outgoing Vice-Chairs Bonnie LaFleur and Duane Steffey, Board Representative Susan Hilsenbeck, and Past Chair John Hall.

Finally, Sam reminded all that the Past-Chair of the COSGB is the liaison between Sections and Chapters. Tim Hesterberg added that the Council of sections Governing Board is creating a template of an officers' manual for all sections to use, and suggested that chapters adopt a similar approach.

Susan Hilsenbeck presented the Board reports from April and August meetings. Susan reported that the ASA is financially healthy but does not want to undertake expensive projects such as an online statistical portal until the economy improves, and that the ASA is considering outsourcing its publishing activities. She also informed everyone that the ASA Board approved five

member initiative projects, including two that were proposed by chapters. She also reported on the fee increases approved by the Board and provided a handout with the new tagline and the brand for the association.

Chapter Representatives were reminded that the Annual Report provides vital information to the COCGB in its efforts to help chapters run more effectively and identify and address problems. Chapters were urged to update their websites regularly, provide updated lists of officers to the COCGB through Monica Clark (monica@amstat.org), and inform the COCGB about the number of events they have held each year through the annual reports that are due on January 31st (the report form will be accessible online from December 1st through January 31st). The COC also announced that it intends to have a table at the ASA booth in the Expo Hall during the 2011 JSM in Miami. It was suggested that chapters create handouts that include information on the chapter, its activities, and contact details for chapter officers; these handouts could be distributed at the Council of Chapters table during the 2011 JSM to raise member awareness of chapters.

The COC also announced that it intends to have a table at the ASA booth in the Expo Hall during the 2011 JSM in Miami. It was suggested that chapters create handouts that include information on the chapter, its activities, and contact details for chapter officers; these could be distributed at the Council of Chapters table during the 2011 JSM to raise member awareness of chapters.

John Hall announced the time and location of the COC sponsored invited session “Big Science: Opportunities for Statisticians in the World’s Most Massive Projects.” John thanked Kary Myers for organizing the session and recruiting several sections (Biometrics Section, CHANCE, IMS, Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts, Section on Bayesian Statistical Science, Section on Government Statistics, Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences, Section on Statistical Computing, Section on Statistical Graphics, Social Statistics Section, and WNAR) to co-sponsor the session. He also confirmed that the COC will continue to sponsor one invited session per year and that the host chapter will continue to be allocated one session.

COC Chair V. A. Samaranayake Presents 2010 Chapter Service Recognition and COC Service Awards



Anwar Hossain
Central Indiana Chapter



John Boyer
Kansas/Western Missouri Chapter



Marcia Levenstein
New York City Metropolitan Chapter



Susan Hilsenbeck
3rd Year COC Representative to the ASA
Board of Directors



Bonnie Lafleur
District 5 Vice Chair



John Hall
Past COCGB Chair

During the ensuing floor discussion Monica Clark (Chapters and Sections Coordinator for the ASA) explained that the ASA had assessed usage of various online documents during the recent process of redesigning the website, and that some documents that were used infrequently may no longer be available through the ASA website. Monica also indicated that these documents have been stored and can be retrieved and distributed (or reestablished on the ASA website) if there was a need.

Sam briefly mentioned the classification scheme used to designate the activity level of chapters; chapters that are active and report regularly to the COC; chapters that are active but do not report regularly to the COC; and chapters for which the COC has no indication or knowledge of activity. COC Board Representative David Marker asked about ways of contacting the officers of those chapters with which the COC has no ongoing communications. In response to a question about the percentage of chapters that are inactive, David stated that the COCGB has no knowledge of activity for approximately 10% of the chapters; the COCGB knows that approximately 5% of the chapters

are active but do not submit reports to the COCGB; and the COCGB believes that another 10% of the chapters are active but do not file reports with the COCGB.

Various individuals mentioned that chapter officers change frequently and that the ASA needs to find a more effective means of tracking chapter leadership (perhaps through the registration process).

Vice-Chair Nicholas Horton announced that the *AMSTAT NEWS* maintains a section devoted to reports of chapter activities and invited the council members to submit information on their chapter activities. Jim Cochran added that he was considering several possible ways to disseminate news about chapter activities. Sam noted that ASA chapters are making great contributions through their activities and that it is imperative that ASA members learn of these activities and opportunities.

A representative of the Nevada chapter shared that the chapter had recently lost the space devoted to its chapter webpage, and asked how other chapters manage their website. Steve

Porzio volunteered that the ASA provides webpage space for chapters, and that utilization of this service not only ensures uninterrupted availability of chapter websites but also simplifies the task of managing the flow of information.

Kathleen Morrissey announced the availability of an online payment system for chapter activities; this alleviates

chapter treasurers of the burden of collecting money at chapter meetings and functions. Members can use credit cards, and 123 SignUp will enable chapters to learn how many members have registered and paid for a function at any given time. Under the request of COCGB, the ASA entered into a contract with 123 SignUp (which charges a nominal fee for the service).

ASA PRESIDENT PANTULA ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

Sastry Pantula, President of the ASA, spoke to the COC during its 2010 annual meeting. Sastry thanked the chapters and council members for the good work they are doing to promote our profession and the practice of

statistics. He also asked for grassroots level support from the chapters to increase membership, and he offered to assist in any way he could with such efforts.

ASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RON WASSERSTEIN SPEAKS TO THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

Ron Wasserstein, Executive Director of the ASA, reported to the COC that the candidates for the 2011 elections for office of President are Marie Davidian of North Carolina State University and Jane Pendergast of University of Iowa, and the candidates for Vice President are Fred Hulting of General Mills and David Morganstein of Westst. Ron

thanked the members of the Nominations Committee for their hard work and specifically cited Bob Mason for his contributions.

Next, Ron informed us that a copy of the magazine *Significance* will be in every member's mail box very soon. He asked the council members to pass it on

to a non-statistician after reading it to increase the exposure of our discipline.

Ron then explained that the ASA has developed a public awareness plan and adopted the tagline “Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics.” He wrapped up his comments by letting everyone know that the ASA has two versions (one formal and one informal) of an “elevator pitch” (now available on the ASA web page) members can use to explain the ASA and its mission to nonmembers. The formal version (to be used as a succinct description of the association where appropriate in ASA written materials such as websites, business cards, etc.) is:

The American Statistical Association is the world’s largest community of statisticians. The ASA supports excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through meetings,

publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Our members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare.

The informal version (which is a more conversational and less formal version that can be used to answer the question, “What is the ASA?”) is:

The ASA is the largest community of statisticians in the world. Our members work in industry, government, and academia, doing research and promoting high-quality statistical practice. We support the development and use of statistics through publications, education, meetings, and advocacy. Good use of statistics leads to better informed public policy and improved human welfare.

ASA SCIENCE POLICY DIRECTOR STEVE PIERSON ASKS THE COC TO ENLIST CHAPTER SUPPORT FOR A STATISTICAL LITERACY BILL

Steve Pierson, ASA Science Policy Director, reminded those in attendance at the recent COC Annual Business

Meeting that the objective of the ASA Science Policy efforts is to raise the profile of the profession and increase its

visibility, and he asked the council to bring local matters regarding statistics to his attention. He then revealed that a “Statistical Literacy Bill” is expected to be introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives later this year. This initiative builds on the ASA’s successful effort in 2009 to schedule meetings between chapter members and their members of congress during the JSM in Washington, D.C., and it represents another exciting opportunity for each chapter and its members to get involved in the Science Policy initiative

The ASA is enlisting chapters and members to visit the Representatives of their home districts to ask them to support and consider co-sponsoring the “Statistical Literacy Bill.” This effort should raise the profile of statistics education among the members of Congress and hopefully also serve to inform the public about the importance of studying statistics. The ASA’s ultimate objective is inclusion of ASA statistical literacy in the reauthorized “Elementary and Secondary Education

Act.” Steve announced that a session during which participants would receive training for Congressional visits was scheduled during the JSM, and he also distributed two handouts: “Join the ASA Statistical Literacy Grassroots Campaign” and “ASA Science Policy.” He also disclosed that post-JSM training sessions will also be scheduled; during these sessions participants will learn how to request meetings with members of Congress, how to conduct effective meetings, and how to make a convincing case for statistical literacy

The COCGB urges chapters to join these critical efforts (thanks to the Boston, Colorado/Wyoming, Hawaii, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and San Francisco Bay Area chapters for already signing up!); if you haven’t signed up yet, please do so at www.amstat.org/outreach/statliteracy/. You can also email Steve at pierson@amstat.org or call him at 703-302-1841 for more information or to discuss issue.

ASA MEMBERS EVALUATE APPLICATIONS OF STATISTICS AT THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR

Teri Utlaut reported that students from all over the world who win regional Science and Engineering competitions are invited by the Society for Science & the Public (www.societyforscience.org/) to participate in the annual International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). Approximately fifteen hundred students participate each year, and the ASA gives awards for the best use of statistics in these student projects. Teri noted that statistics is not a separate category in this competition, and so judges must review *all* projects quickly to select top one hundred projects in terms of the statistics use during the first day of judging. On the following day, judges have opportunities to interview student participants and narrow the list of projects under consideration to approximately ten finalists, the top three of whom are ultimately awarded prizes. This year the finalists who did not receive ASA awards were awarded JMP

software donated by SAS. Teri talked about the outstanding quality of the top three projects from the most recent competition, expressed her appreciation for the hard work by Bay Area chapter members who helped organize this effort (specifically mentioning David Czerwinski and Jacky Shaffer), and called for volunteers to help with future competitions.

Teri noted that the winning projects included an analysis gene expression data through data mining; a more effective methodology for predicting incidence of lung cancer, and development of a superior random number generator. Finally, she announced that the 2011 ISEF will be held in Louisiana, and that the Society for Science & the Public has decided to rotate the fair among three cities (Los Angeles, Pittsburgh and Phoenix) over nine years beginning in 2012.

ASA MAKES PLANS FOR 2011 TRAVELING COURSES

Traveling Course Committee Chair Glenn White reported that in 2009 traveling courses were requested by the

Oregon, Hawaii, Kentucky and Cincinnati (joint application), Northwest Texas, San Diego, Milwaukee,

Philadelphia, San Antonio, and Central Indiana chapters. The ASA was able to accommodate six of these requests. *Data Mining* by Dick De Veaux was awarded to the Hawaii and Kentucky/Cincinnati chapters; *Applied Mixed Models* by Linda Young was awarded to the Northwest Texas and San Diego chapters; and Mike Daniels' *Missing Data in Longitudinal Studies* was awarded to the Milwaukee and Philadelphia chapters. Glenn reminded COC meeting attendees that the ASA makes the honorarium and travel

arrangements for a presenter, the host chapter is responsible for local arrangements, and the cost of a short course for host chapters is \$25 per person (with a minimum \$500 payment to the ASA). Finally, Glenn reminded all that the deadline for applications by chapters to host short courses is January 31st of the year in question (but exceptions may be made pending availability of the short course instructor), the available courses for 2011 and names of the presenters will be announced by December 2010.

COC HOLDS WORKSHOP AND RECEPTION AT 2010 JSM IN VANCOUVER

Kathleen Morrissey, Chair-Elect of the COC, chaired the COC workshop and reception on August 3. Agenda items included "Finding Speakers" by Ananda Jayawardhana of the Kansas/Western Missouri chapter; "Connecting the ASA to Young Statisticians through Outreach to High School Statistics and Mathematics Teachers: A First Step" by Elizabeth Koehler of the Middle Tennessee Chapter; "Enhancing K-12 Statistical Education" by George Divine of the Detroit Chapter; and "LearnSTAT on Demand" by Rick Peterson of the

ASA Headquarters. Of particular interest to attendees was the information on how to use LearnSTAT OnDemand to make recorded sessions available (for a one-time fee) to those who are unable to attend a webinar. Rick explained that LearnSTAT OnDemand currently has thirteen offerings, including webinars from the Biopharmaceutical, Survey Research Methods, and Quality and Productivity sections and a webinar on statistical education developed in conjunction with the American Mathematical Association

of Two-Year Colleges. Each recorded webinar is roughly two hours in length and features top statisticians discussing their areas of expertise; new webinars will be added two to three months after they are presented live, and LearnSTAT OnDemand offerings are listed under the Continuing Education tab (along with descriptions of the webinars and presenter biographies). Questions and

suggestions on LearnSTAT OnDemand can be addressed to Rick Peterson, ASA education programs associate, at rick@amstat.org.

During this workshop Rebecca Nichols of the ASA also discussed the ASA's Member Initiatives program and encouraged chapters and their members to submit proposals for future Member Initiatives.

COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS GOVERNING BOARD (COCGB)

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