

# SRM Newsletter

SECTION ON SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS

ISSUE 3 ■ APRIL 1995



## HIGHLIGHTS

Start planning that summer vacation now .... in Orlando! ASA technical sessions for the 1995 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Orlando, Florida, will begin at **4:00 PM on Sunday, August 13**, and run through mid-day on Thursday, August 17. The Section on Survey Research Methods has put together a very full program -- over 160 papers have been organized. For more details, see the Preview, below.

Our International Conferences are thriving...! The Buffalo International Conference on Establishment Surveys was a great success. Its monograph has just been released by John Wiley & Sons -- look in the next *Amstat News* for details on how to order it. This April SRM co-sponsors the International Conference on Survey Measurement and Process Quality, in Bristol, England -- over 300 have already registered. Now plans are underway for an International Conference on Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection -- InterCASIC '96. (See page 2 for more information about both of these conferences.)

## A Preview for Orlando



The SRM Program is already shaping up for the 1995 Joint Statistical Meetings in Orlando, August 13-17. The following invited paper sessions are planned:

- Gibbs Sampling Applications to Survey Sampling
- Panel on PC Software for Computing Sampling Errors from Complex Surveys
- The National Crime Victimization Survey Redesign: New Methods Measure Substantially Higher Levels of Crime
- Panel on Teaching Survey Sampling and
- The American Travel Survey: New Directions in Travel Survey Methodology.

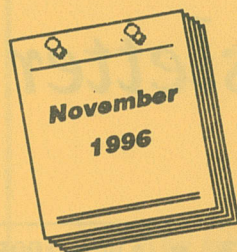
In addition to the five invited paper sessions, 12 special contributed paper sessions are scheduled. There

will also be 20 regular contributed paper sessions, 5 poster sessions, and 5 roundtable luncheons. Lunch group topics and discussion leaders are shown on page 3.

## SRM Bulletin Board

The SRM Electronic Bulletin Board is coming! The Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland, College Park, has offered to help set up an Electronic Bulletin Board for the Section, to enable subscribers to post messages to a news group of fellow survey researchers. Details are still in the works and should be available shortly. We hope this will greatly expand communication among Section members and between the Executive Committee and the membership.





## INTERCASIC '96

Mark your calendars! Planning is now underway for the next in the series of focused conferences on issues of survey methodology, sponsored in part by the Section on Survey Research Methods. The conference will deal with the highly topical issue of Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection (CASIC) and is tentatively scheduled for November 1996 at a site in the southwestern United States -- possibly San Antonio, TX. The meeting will look back at past accomplishments in the automation of survey data collection and related processes and focus attention on future research and development needs in the field. CASIC is broadly defined to include not only computer-assisted interviewing (CATI and CAPI) and other data collection methods -- such as touchtone data entry, voice recognition entry, electronic data interchange, etc. -- but also, more generally, the application of computer technology to the entire process of collection, capture and preparation of survey data.

InterCASIC '96 hopes to follow in the excellent tradition of previous conferences in this series -- on Panel Surveys, Telephone Surveys, Measurement Error, and Establishment Surveys -- and this month's conference in Bristol on Survey Measurement and Process Quality. An edited monograph of invited papers is planned, representing the state of the art in the field of CASIC research and development, and contributed presentations and demonstrations on new and innovative applications of technology to survey information collection will be encouraged, as will research findings on the impact of CASIC on the data collection process and the quality of data.

Look for the final details in *Amstat News*. In the meantime, for more information, contact Mick Couper, Chair of the Organizing Committee, by e-mail at [MCOUPER@SURVEY.UMD.EDU](mailto:MCOUPER@SURVEY.UMD.EDU).

## Survey Measurement and Process Quality Conference



Well over 300 people registered for the International Conference on Survey Measurement and Process Quality, just held in Bristol, UK, on April 1-4, 1995. The meeting, organized by SRM and co-sponsored with the American Statistical Association, the International Association of Survey Statisticians, the Market Research Society, the Royal Statistical Society, and the World Association for Public Opinion Research, focused on quality in survey data collection and subsequent processing.

This conference is the latest in a series initiated by the Section, designed to advance the field of

survey methodology. For the first time, the conference was held outside of North America, in recognition of the international contributions to the field. The symposium covered such topics as sources of error, cost-effective approaches to achieving quality, quality measurement and control, and the impact of error on survey data and analysis. Two Workshops were also offered, on "TQM in Statistical Organizations" and "Multilevel Analysis for Survey Research," each drawing over 30 participants. The conference aimed to document the current state of the field, to report the findings of new research, and to encourage inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural exchanges. It brought survey practitioners together with contributors from a variety of backgrounds in statistics, psychology, sociology, business, quality management, and economics.

Invited papers will be published in an edited monograph; a *Proceedings* volume of contributed papers will also be produced. Information on how to purchase these volumes will be forthcoming.

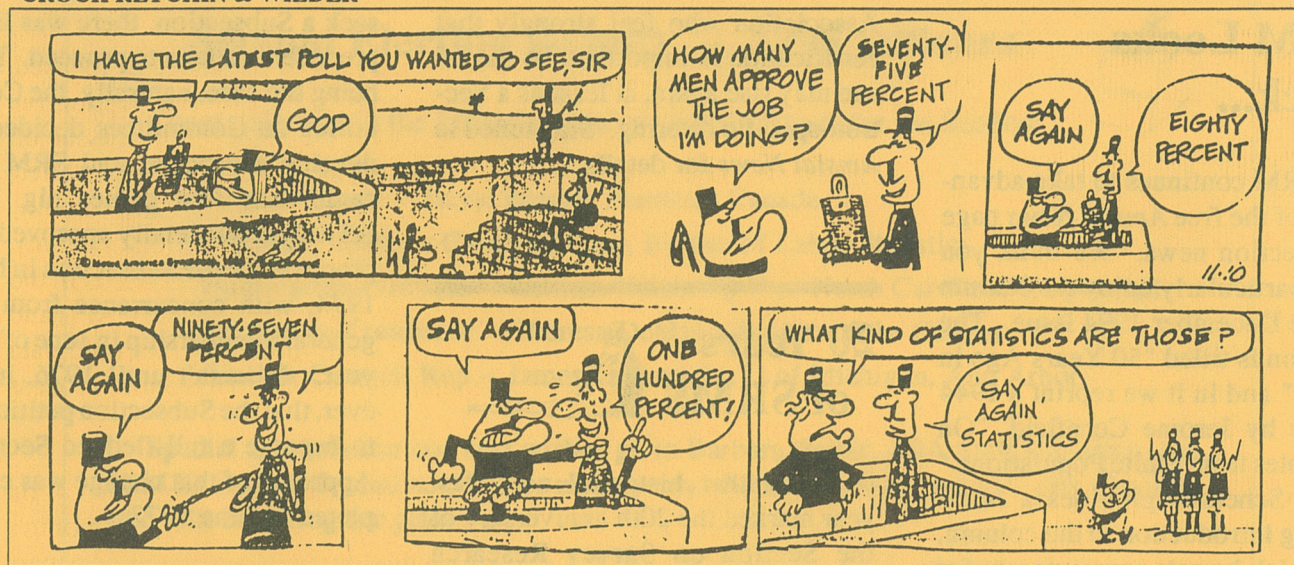
## SRM's ASA Fellows

Six Section members were elected ASA Fellows in 1994. Luigi Biggeri, Denise Lievesley, Mary Mulry, Stanley Presser, C.J. Skinner, and Robert Tortora were honored at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Toronto.

Many thanks to Cathy Dippo (Chair) and the SRM Committee on ASA Fellows for their efforts on behalf of our outstanding Section members.



## CROCK RETCHIN &amp; WILDER



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## Preview (cont'd)

Five luncheon roundtables have been planned by Cathy Dippo for the 1995 JSM. They are--

- Re-engineering Survey Processing Using Generalized Software for Sample Design -- Michael Hidioglou, Statistics Canada
- Survey Metadata and the Internet -- Martin David, U of Wisconsin
- Effects of Introducing Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection (CASIC) on Organizations and Staff -- Mick Couper, Joint Program in Survey Methodology
- Designing Surveys for Public Policy Evaluation-- David Cantor, Westat, Inc.
- Effects of Continuous Measurement on the Design of Ongoing Survey Programs -- Charles Alexander, Bureau of the Census.

It looks like a very full program -- hope you can come and participate!

## Be an Organizer for 1996!

In order for the Program to reflect your interests, we need your input. Believe it or not, it is already too late to organize new sessions for the 1995 Annual Meeting; it is now time to begin planning for 1996! The JSM for '96 will be held in Chicago, IL, August 4-8th. Ideas for both invited and special contributed sessions are welcome for that program.

- Invited paper sessions are generally on a particular topic with broad appeal to the Meeting's attendees. They have speakers and formal discussants and the distribution of time for each speaker is determined by the organizer. Drafts of invited paper sessions -- as complete as possible -- should be sent to Cathy Dippo, SRM Program Chair for 1996, by July 1, 1995, so that she can present her recommendations at the Program Committee Meeting in Orlando. Each Section has only a limited number of invited paper sessions, so if the topic is of interest to several Sections, it stands a better chance of being accepted. (Invited papers receive 10 pages in the *Proceedings*.)
- There's a little more lead time for special contributed paper sessions. These are sessions which revolve around a common topic. They are limited to five speakers -- either five papers or four papers and a discussant -- with twenty minutes (instead of 15) for each presentation. To organize such a session, simply contact the Section Program Chair for 1996 -- Cathy Dippo -- prior to Feb. 1, with a draft of the session line-up, and inform each author to check the special contributed paper session box, when submitting the abstract. (Special contributed papers receive 6 pages in the *Proceedings*.)

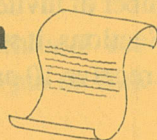


## SRM Looks Back...

SRM continues to take advantage of the free *Amstat News* page for Section news. We think you will particularly enjoy the column in the December 1994 issue. The column is titled "50 Years Ago in *JASA*" and in it we reprint a 1944 paper by Jerome Cornfield, "On Samples from Finite Populations." Fritz Scheuren provides a fascinating introduction to the column, in which he sets some context for the state of statistics and the world at the time the paper was written. Cornfield's now classic paper describes an approach to the derivation of expected values, using an indicator variable, that still can be profitably used today.

We plan to continue the "50 Years Ago in *JASA*" column once a year, reprinting important papers of interest to the SRM members. If you have any suggestions for that column, or for other *Amstat News* columns, please contact the SRM Publications Officer, William D. Kalsbeek.

## Certification Update



The latest news on certification is that, as of the December 1994 meeting of the ASA Board of Directors, further discussion of ASA establishing a certification process for statisticians has been postponed indefinitely. While SRM members were overwhelmingly opposed to the initial certification proposal, there are still groups within the

Association who feel strongly that certification is important, so the issue may rise again, at least as a Section-specific offering. Stay tuned to *Amstat News* for details.

## 20 Years of SRMS



In another historical note, last year marked the 20th anniversary of the Section on Survey Research Methods. A brief history of the Section's first 15 years, by Irene Hess (the Section's first Program Chair and unofficial historian), appeared in *The American Statistician* in May 1990. Since then, some more details on the Section's early formation have surfaced.

For instance, did you know that efforts to establish a Section -- or first, a Subsection of the Social Statistics Section -- were initiated by an informal group of academic researchers calling themselves the Academic Survey Research Interest Group? Their push for formal recognition arose from frustrations at not being able to organize their own invited paper sessions for the ASA Annual Meetings -- Social Statistics was only allotted 10 invited spots for 1974. (Today, SRM has one of the largest allotments, with 5 invited sessions!)

In January 1974, Dan Horvitz (the 1973 Program Chair of the Social Statistics Section), wrote a letter to Fred Leone (Executive Director of ASA), requesting that this group receive formal recognition as the Social Statistics Section's "Subsection on Survey Research Methods." Since this was only the second Section to

seek a Subsection, there was little precedent on how to proceed. That being the case, naturally, the Committee on Committees decided to develop a process, and SRM became their first guinea pig. The ASA Board formally approved the proposal for the Subsection in May 1974, with concurrence from the general membership in June of that year. It wasn't until 1976, however, that the Subsection petitioned to become a full-fledged Section. Approval of that change was completed in June 1977.

Thanks to Irene Hess for bringing this to our attention and setting the record straight!

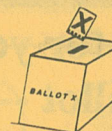
## Treasurer's Report

The SRM treasury continues to be quite healthy. As of September 30, 1994, we had cash on hand of \$43,129, up \$3,606 from last year. Our total revenue was \$18,166 and total expenses were \$14,560. Our largest source of revenue is from the *Proceedings* (\$15,800), as is the largest portion of our expenses (\$11,831). We also continue to receive a substantial amount of revenue from conferences co-sponsored by the Section. Meanwhile, our dues -- at \$2.00 a year -- remain among the lowest available. Membership figures for the Section were 1,456, as of February 2, 1995.





## Section Election Results -- 1995 Officers



Congratulations to the following newly-elected officers for the Section:

**Section Chair** -- David Binder, Statistics Canada

**Program Chair** -- Cathryn Diplo, Bureau of Labor Statistics

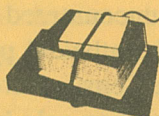
**Publications Officer** -- William Kalsbeek, U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

**Secretary-Treasurer** -- Theresa DeMaio, Bureau of the Census

**Section Council Rep** -- James Lepkowski, U of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Special appreciation and best wishes go to Barbara Bailar, ASA Staff Liaison to the SRM Executive Committee, for her many years of service. Welcome to Cathy Crocker, who will be filling her place.

## Continuing Education



The Section on Survey Research Methods has, in the past, been active in the presentation of short courses, tutorials and workshops for ASA members. We have had a Tutorial Committee which promotes these activities. This committee solicits, screens, evaluates and facilitates the development and submission of short course proposals to the ASA Advisory Committee on Continuing Education (ACCE).

In recent years, we have had some difficulty providing courses and workshops for our members. For example, all of the courses that we initially submitted to the ACCE for the 1994 meetings were rejected. The 1994 Chair (Lessler) was successful in getting one course reinstated as a workshop. Thus, SRM is considering options for the future and would like to hear from the members about this issue.

The ACCE, appointed by the ASA Board of Directors, acts on

recommendation of a 6-person Evaluation Committee -- appointed by the Council of Sections and the Council of Chapters -- to review the continuing education proposals. The ACCE then selects courses, which they deem are of interest to the general membership -- i.e., courses must currently draw a minimum of 10-12 preregistrations by a specified date. (In the past, 35 registrations were required and some SRM courses have failed to meet that criterion.)

Recent action by the ASA Board should alleviate problems with meeting minimum enrollment standards. However, our Section is still at a decided disadvantage, in that currently SRM has no representative on the ACCE committee or the Evaluation Committee and only ACCE-approved short courses can be offered at the Joint Meetings. Thus, we have no opportunity for input to the evaluation process -- a probable reason that our short course proposals have been rejected -- and no alternative to arrange our own short courses on the side, should our proposals be rejected.

The SRM Executive Committee, along with the Tutorial Committee, is continuing to consider options for continuing education activities. We urge all SRM members to let us know what types of continuing education activities they would like and to suggest vehicles for providing these events.

## Newsletter Deadline....

This newsletter came out a little later than we had hoped -- our apologies! We expect to have the Spring 1995 *SRM Newsletter* to you in early summer. Therefore, if you have any items to be included, please send them to Wendy Alvey at Statistics of Income (CP:R:S:P), P.O. Box 2608, Washington, DC 20013-2608; Phone (202) 874-0455; Fax: (202) 874-0922; e-mail: wla@soino.rp.irs.gov.



## Look for your Ballot --

### Vote for 1996 Officers!

#### Section Chair-Elect

Richard Kulka

Kirk Wolter

#### Program Chair-Elect

Mary Mulry

Elizabeth Stasny

## Thanks for Your Feedback!

We really appreciate your input! A list of the Executive Committee members is provided at the end of each newsletter — feel free to contact us with your comments, suggestions and recommendations. And remember — we are always on the lookout for energetic and enthusiastic volunteers!

## REMINDER



- Remember -- Technical sessions start at 4:00 pm on Sunday.
- Don't forget to attend the SRM Business Meeting at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Orlando. All Section members are urged to come and participate. Afterwards, you are also welcome to join a group of us who are going out to dinner.

## Herriot Award



The Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics has been established by the Washington Statistical Society and the ASA's Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections. It is to honor the memory of Roger Herriot, Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), whose untimely death last spring robbed the Federal statistical community of a creative intellect who always tried to "reinvent" the ways and methods of the statistical system.

Herriot's Federal career was marked by his unique and innovative approaches to the solution of problems encountered in Federal statistics data collection, data analysis, and statistical program management. Examples include his work at the Census Bureau in the area of income statistics, where he played a leading role in improving the measurement and analysis of economic well-being in the March Current Population Survey and in the Survey of Income and Program Participation; at NCES, he made significant contributions to improving public access to education data on the Nation's school districts.

Nominees for this award should be noted for their innovative and unique approaches to problems of the Federal statistical system, such as proposing new methods for a Federal statistical data program; conducting especially insightful analysis of Federal statistical data; demonstrating improved understanding of issues in measurement -- particularly for income measurement; and providing creative management of Federal statistical programs, aimed at reducing bureaucratic impediments. The award is open to ASA members at all levels -- from entry level to senior executive, Federal employees, the academic community, and private sector researchers.

A \$500 honorarium will be presented to the award winner at the Memorial Session in honor of Roger Herriot at the 1995 JSM. The session, entitled *Overcoming the Bureaucratic Paradigm*, features papers on "Time/Space Sample Design," by Leslie Kish, and "Out of the Box: Again and Again," by William Butz. Timothy Smeeding, University of Syracuse, and Clifford Clogg, Pennsylvania State University, will be discussants.

Nomination forms can be obtained from Daniel Kasprzyk -- Phone: (202) 219-1588; Fax: (202) 219-1728; e-mail: [daniel\\_kasprzyk@ed.gov](mailto:daniel_kasprzyk@ed.gov).



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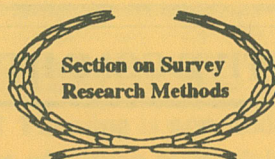
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## Mission Statement

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 relating to survey conduct and standards for survey practice.



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