



# SRM Newsletter

SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS SECTION

ISSUE 5 ■ FEBRUARY 1996



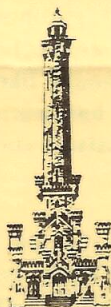
## HIGHLIGHTS

It's time to start planning your summer vacation ... in Chicago! SRM is already gearing up for an exciting program at the **1996 Joint Statistical Meetings** -- see below for a taste of what is to come; also, see page 3 for information on the newest SRM short course. Here's hoping we'll see you there!

**InterCASIC '96** isn't far off! A call for contributed papers is out -- for updated information on the latest SRM-sponsored International Conference on survey methodology, see page 2.

SRM is going electronic! The **SRMSNET** is well underway -- see page 6 -- and we'll soon be on the World Wide Web, as well -- see below. Help us as we move towards the 21st century!

### 1996 JSM in the Windy City



As you surely know by now, the 1996 Joint Statistical Meetings will be held in Chicago, Illinois, August 4-8, 1996. The SRM Program is already shaping up for the occasion. The Section has been awarded 6 invited paper sessions:

- ◆ Time Series Analysis -- Topics in Seasonality and Cointegration
- ◆ Survey Analysis in the Presence of Imputed Data
- ◆ Methods Used in Generalized Systems for Survey Processing
- ◆ New Directions in Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Research
- ◆ After the Revolution: Improving the Use of Cognitive Methods in Survey Research and
- ◆ Metadata: The Last Dimension of Survey Research.

Organization of special contributed, regular contributed, and poster sessions and round table luncheons is now underway. More details will be provided in the next newsletter.

### SRM Joins the World Wide Web

SRM is pleased to announce that this Spring it will become one of the first Sections to join ASA at the new Web site. The Council of Sections, with practically unanimous support from the Sections, has established an Internet node for ASA on the World Wide Web. In conjunction with that effort, SRM is working on its own home page; right now you can reach the ASA Web site by accessing <http://www.amstat.org/>.  
(Continued on page 5.)

### What Is a Survey?



By now all Section members should have received the first three brochures in the newly updated series on survey methodology -- *What Is a Survey?* *How to Plan a Survey*, and *How to Collect Survey Data*. (Additional copies are available from the ASA Office for \$.50 each.) The series is aimed at improving  
(Continued on page 2.)



## InterCASIC '96 ...



SAN ANTONIO

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER!

Dreaming of a warm weather getaway....? **InterCASIC '96** is coming to San Antonio, Texas, December 11-14, 1996! The International Conference on Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection (CASIC) is the sixth in a series of meetings on survey methodology organized and co-sponsored by the Survey Research Methods Section. The focus is being broadly defined to include general applications of computer technology to the entire process of collection, capture, and preparation of survey data.

**The Organizing Committee is now soliciting abstracts for contributed papers and proposals for live demonstrations.** (See Call for Papers on page 7 for specific details.) Suggested topics for papers include:

- ◆ Instrument design for computer-assisted interviewing -- programming/authoring issues; navigation, rostering; testing, debugging instruments; and accessing external data files;
- ◆ Automated survey management systems -- field and office management systems; coding, cleaning, and data entry; and call scheduling and sample management;
- ◆ Data quality issues -- nonresponse, coverage, and measurement errors;
- ◆ Hardware/systemware -- durability and reliability of CAPI hardware; operating systems; and LAN management;

- ◆ New technologies in survey research -- impact of future technologies on data collection; going beyond paper-and-pencil equivalence; GIS, audio-CASI, fax, VRE, and TDE; and handwriting recognition and pen computing;
- ◆ Organizational aspects of CASIC -- costs; staffing, planning, and managing CAI surveys; and making the switch to automation; and
- ◆ Interviewers and respondents -- human-computer interaction issues; hiring, training of interviewers; evaluating interviewers, monitoring performance; and respondent reactions.

The **InterCASIC '96** focus on technology also makes this year's conference a natural as an interactive forum with appropriate equipment for live demonstrations of automated systems. Proposals are, therefore, being sought for those who would like to come and demonstrate hardware or software for computer-assisted survey information collection.

For more information on the conference, itself, contact Mick Couper -- phone: (301) 405-9523; fax: (301) 314-7912; or e-mail: [mcouper@survey.umd.edu](mailto:mcouper@survey.umd.edu) -- or Lee Decker -- phone: (703) 684-1221 x 145; fax: (703) 684-8069; or e-mail: [lee@amstat.org](mailto:lee@amstat.org). See, also, the World Wide Web page at <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~jpsm/casic.html/>.

## What Is a Survey? (cont'd)

survey literacy for individuals who participate in surveys or use survey results. By promoting an understanding of what is involved in carrying out sample surveys of human populations, hopefully, the series will lead to more and better uses of survey data.

Several more pamphlets in the series are now in the works. They include: *Judging the Quality of a Survey*; *What Are Focus Groups?*; *More About Mail Surveys*; *How to Conduct Pretesting*; *What Is a Margin of Error?* and *What About Surveys in the Media?* The Section would like to continue to produce relevant additions to the series on other topics, in the years ahead. Suggestions for potential future topics -- as well as offers to help in this effort -- are welcome!

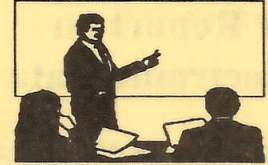
These pamphlets are intended to be a "work in progress." Your feedback has already been invaluable and continues to be needed. Please pass along any suggestions for improving the brochures to Fritz Scheuren at George Washington University -- phone: (202) 994-6358; fax: (202) 994-6917; or e-mail: [scheuren@aol.com](mailto:scheuren@aol.com).

## Treasurer's Report

The SRM treasury remains quite healthy. As of June 30, 1995, we had cash on hand of \$34,394. Our largest source of revenue is from the *Proceedings*, as is the largest portion of our expenses. We have also set aside monies to cover publication of the pamphlets in the series *What Is a Survey?* and to serve as seed money for the **InterCASIC '96** conference in San Antonio. Meanwhile, we continue to receive revenue from past conferences sponsored by the Section. Our dues -- at \$2.00 a year -- remain among the lowest available. Membership figures for the Section were 1,424, as of September 30, 1995.



## List-Assisted Telephone Surveys Short Course Planned



The ASA Committee on Continuing Education has approved a short course on List-Assisted Telephone Surveys: Design, Estimation and Administration, to be offered at the 1996 Joint Statistical Meetings. The course, to be taught by Robert Casady, Bureau of Labor Statistics; James Lepkowski, University of Michigan; and Clyde Tucker, Bureau of Labor Statistics, is the first SRM-sponsored short course to be offered in a few years.

The course will examine sample design and estimation issues for an expanding class of surveys by telephone -- list-assisted telephone sample surveys. Many telephone sampling methods have been employed, with samples being selected either from lists of available telephone numbers or by randomly generating numbers from the conceptual set of all possible telephone numbers. Most list samples have severe coverage problems, while random digit dialing methods have substantial inefficiencies, due to the large number of sample elements that are not working residential telephone numbers. List-assisted telephone sample designs use a list of telephone numbers as a basis for stratifying the conceptual set of all possible telephone numbers; thus, design efficiency is substantially improved, while desirable coverage properties are maintained.

The course will present basic features of list samples, random digit dialing methods, and list-assisted techniques. Several specific design options for list-assisted samples will be considered in detail, including two-stage sampling from directory listings, stratified sample selection from partitioned sets of telephone numbers, optimum allocation of samples across strata, and truncated sample designs. Such estimation topics as nonresponse adjustment and post-stratification will also be addressed. Finally, administrative aspects of sample selection will be covered, as well.

The course is aimed at survey researchers, survey practitioners, and graduate students with prior training or experience in the general area of sample surveys. For more information, look for details in the JSM Preregistration Packet, to be sent out in late Spring by ASA.

## Waksberg Wins Herriot Award!



Congratulations go out to Joseph Waksberg, Westat, Inc., who became the first recipient of the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics! The Award, sponsored by the Social Statistics Section, Government Statistics Section, and the Washington Statistical Society, recognized Waksberg for his recent contributions to improving procedures for rare populations, methods for random digit dialing, and understanding of recall error.

**Nominations are now being sought for the 1996 Herriot Award.**

The award honors individuals who develop unique approaches to the solution of statistical problems in Federal data collection programs. It is intended to reflect the special characteristics of Roger Herriot's career --

- ◆ Dedication to the issues of measurement;
- ◆ Improvement in the efficiency of data collection programs; and
- ◆ Improvement and use of statistical data for policy analysis.

As such, individuals at all levels -- from entry to senior -- from the Federal government, private sector, or academic community may be nominated on the basis of the significance of a specific contribution. For nomination forms or information contact Daniel Kasprzyk -- phone: (202) 219-1588; fax: (202) 219-1728; or e-mail:

[daniel\\_kasprzyk@ed.gov](mailto:daniel_kasprzyk@ed.gov). Completed nominations are due May 17, 1996.

## Nine New Fellows!

Nine Section members were inducted as Fellows of the American Statistical Association at the 1995 Joint Statistical Meetings in Orlando. Hearty congratulations go out to Susan W. Ahmed, Kenneth R. Brewer, Brenda G. Cox, Don A. Dillman, Ralph E. Folsom, Richard John Kryscio, Richard F. Potthoff, Keith F. Rust, and Tommy Wright.

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



## New Report on Electronic Data

The Office of Management and Budget's Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology has just released the latest in its Statistical Policy Working Paper series of reports on issues of data quality affecting Federal statistics. The report -- **Statistical Policy Working Paper 24: Electronic Dissemination of Statistical Data** -- summarizes the current state-of-the-art in electronic dissemination of Federal statistical data available for public use. While the report is intended to serve as an aid to statistical agency managers in decision-making about electronic dissemination of publicly-available statistical data, it contains an agency-by-agency summary of current practice, in the Appendix, which might be especially of interest to the survey research community, as a whole.

The 87-page report is available in both hardcopy and electronic versions. For more information on obtaining this or other reports in the series, see the next article.

## Statistical Policy Working Papers Now On-Line



The Office of Management and Budget's Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology is pleased to announce that its Statistical Policy Working Paper series of reports on issues of data quality affecting Federal statistics is now available in electronic format. The first 22 reports (see the box) can be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.bts.gov/statistical-policy>. Reports Numbers 23: **Seminar on New Directions in Sta-**

**tistical Methodology** (1995) and 24: **Electronic Dissemination of Statistical Data** (1995) will be added to this collection shortly.

At this time, most of the tabular and graphical information from the original works only appear in hardcopy form. However, the National Science Foundation has produced an Adobe "Acrobat" version of Report No. 24, which will contain the original graphics. This report can be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/stats.htm>. (For information on obtaining hardcopy versions of these reports, contact M. Denice McCormick Myers -- phone:

(202) 690-0922; fax: (202) 720-8738; or e-mail: [dmmymers@nass.usda.gov](mailto:dmmymers@nass.usda.gov).)

## Quality Journal Wants Input

**Data Quality** journal is interested in producing half-hour educational videos on data quality in Statistics, Quality, Engineering, Social Science, Medicine, etc. Ideas and suggestions are being solicited. Provide input by e-mail to [dataquality@aol.com](mailto:dataquality@aol.com).

### Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Statistical Policy Working Papers

- | No. | Title and Year   |
|-----|--|
| 1.  | Report on Statistics for Allocation of Funds, 1978   |
| 2.  | Report on Statistical Disclosure and Disclosure-Avoidance Techniques, 1978                     |
| 3.  | An Error Profile: Employment as Measured by the Current Population Survey, 1978                |
| 4.  | Glossary of Nonsampling Error Terms: An Illustration of a Semantic Problem in Statistics, 1978 |
| 5.  | Report on Exact and Statistical Matching Techniques, 1980                                      |
| 6.  | Report on Statistical Uses of Administrative Records, 1980                                     |
| 7.  | An Interagency Review of Time-Series Revision Policies, 1982                                   |
| 8.  | Statistical Interagency Agreements, 1982   |
| 9.  | Contracting for Surveys, 1983  |
| 10. | Approaches to Developing Questionnaires, 1983  |
| 11. | A Review of Industry Coding Systems, 1984  |
| 12. | The Role of Telephone Data Collection in Federal Statistics, 1984                              |
| 13. | Federal Longitudinal Surveys, 1986   |
| 14. | Workshop on Statistical Uses of Microcomputers in Federal Agencies, 1987                       |
| 15. | Quality in Establishment Surveys, 1988   |
| 16. | A Comparative Study of Reporting Units in Selected Employer Data Systems, 1990                 |
| 17. | Survey Coverage, 1990  |
| 18. | Data Editing in Federal Statistical Agencies, 1990   |
| 19. | Computer Assisted Survey Information Collection, 1990  |
| 20. | Seminar on Quality of Federal Data, 1991   |
| 21. | Indirect Estimators in Federal Programs, 1993  |
| 22. | Report on Statistical Disclosure Limitation Methodology, 1994                                  |
| 23. | Seminar on New Directions in Statistical Methodology, 1995                                     |
| 24. | Electronic Dissemination of Statistical Data, 1995   |



## FTC Hosts Privacy Discussion Group On-Line

The Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection has established a Privacy Principles Mailing List as a forum for discussing the privacy principles that should be applicable to consumers' use of the Global Information Infrastructure. The Bureau seeks commentary and resource materials from consumers, industry, privacy advocates, and others who are concerned about questions such as the following:

- ◆ What information is routinely gathered on-line now, and what is industry doing with this information? How will the nature of the information gathered or the uses to which it is put change in the next few years?
- ◆ What control should consumers have over personal and transactional information?
- ◆ How should consumers be able to exercise that control?
- ◆ What expectations do consumers have regarding the use of information about them?
- ◆ What are the respective obligations of on-line service providers, content providers, and consumers, themselves, to address these privacy concerns?
- ◆ Should certain uses of information be off limits without the consumer's explicit consent?
- ◆ Under what circumstances should consumers have the ability to access and correct information about themselves?

Additional related topics for discussion are welcome. The dialogue that takes place in response to these

questions will be invaluable to the Bureau. It will facilitate the creation of a set of voluntary principles governing the use of consumer information in transactions in cyberspace. To post messages to this list, simply address your mail to: [privacy@ftc.gov](mailto:privacy@ftc.gov). To subscribe to this list, send a SUBSCRIBE command (in body of the message) to: [privacy-request@ftc.gov](mailto:privacy-request@ftc.gov).

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## World Wide Web (cont'd)

The SRM home page is now being finalized and both suggestions and assistance are very welcome. As it stands now, the SRM Web page will include the following items:

- ◆ Mission statement -- with logo (currently being revised);
- ◆ Section officers -- including contact information and possible links to their own Web pages;
- ◆ Minutes from the last Executive Committee meeting;
- ◆ *SRM Newsletter* -- complete text, plus graphics and illustrations, if feasible;
- ◆ SRM pamphlets from the *What Is a Survey?* series;
- ◆ *SRMSNET* description and subscription instructions; and
- ◆ Journals -- brief descriptions and links to WWW pages for *Survey Methodology* and the *Journal of Official Statistics*.

Other potential items to be added later might be:

- ◆ Preview of the upcoming SRM program for the Joint Statistical Meetings;
- ◆ Upcoming conferences and short courses -- information on availability, scope, etc., of SRM-related events; and
- ◆ *Surveys and Privacy* brochure -- a link can be provided to the ASA

Committee on Privacy and Confidentiality's Web page, which will contain this brochure of theirs.

We are also looking for a permanent "webmaster" to coordinate and update the SRM presence on the Web. All volunteering, information, and comments should currently be addressed to Bill Kalsbeek, who agreed to help us get this effort off the ground (thanks, Bill!) -- e-mail: [bill\\_kalsbeek@unc.edu](mailto:bill_kalsbeek@unc.edu).

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## Looking Ahead -- Your Input is Needed Now!

It is not too early to start planning for the 1997 Joint Statistical Meetings, which will be held in Anaheim, CA, August 10-14, 1997. The first decisions on invited paper sessions for the 1997 JSM will be made at the meeting of the Program Committee in Chicago this August. If you have any ideas for topics or would like to organize a session, please contact Mary Mulry, the Section's 1997 Program Chair. Remember, the more complete the material she can present, the better.

Steve Miller, Chair of the SRM Tutorial Committee, is also looking for your ideas. He is actively seeking suggestions for short courses for the Anaheim meetings. We are interested in both new techniques and more general presentations of current methods. Some of you may have been discouraged by past problems with short courses which were canceled at the last minute. A recent change in policy by ASA now permits the Sections to subsidize under-subscribed short courses which they wish to sponsor. So, do give us a try again -- we would like to see the Section become a bigger part of the ASA Continuing Education program...



## Statistical Methodology at Work



When Canadians in Quebec Province went to the polls last Fall to vote whether to secede from Canada and establish a separate French Canada, many of us watched the results with much interest. The results were an extremely close vote, with 50.6% voting not to secede from Canada and 49.4% voting in favor of a separate French Canada. Derek Leebosh, AAPORNET's Canadian correspondent, commented on the methodology which led polling companies to almost unanimously predict a dead heat in such a hotly contested election -- and that is exactly what happened!

Leebosh noted that all of the polls gave the **yes** side a lead of between four and seven points among decided voters, with **yes** hovering around 47-48% and **no** around 40-41%. However, pollsters forecasted a dead heat, because they all used formulas to allocate the undecided voters on a disproportionate basis. Among their assumptions were that undecided voters would be inclined to err on the side of caution on an issue of such great consequence -- caution, in this case, being the status quo; that the undecided voters tended to be among groups that were more likely to vote **no** -- such as women and older people; and that French speakers may have responded to pollsters with "politically correct" **yes** votes, when, in fact, they were intending to vote **no**, leading to slightly inflated **yes** counts during the final days of the campaign. Leebosh concludes that in this election it was the pollsters who clearly won!

## REMINDER



Remember, all presenters must submit a draft by June 1, 1996, in order to remain on the program. A lot of effort goes into developing interesting and homogeneous sessions and trying to minimize the subject matter and person conflicts which inevitably arise. Please bear in mind that withdrawing a paper after it has been scheduled often upsets the delicate balance which has been achieved. This is a particularly serious problem when papers are withdrawn after the program has gone to press. So, if you have submitted an abstract for the Chicago meetings, try to keep your research on track and the Program Chair-- Cathy Dippo -- informed.

## SRMSNET is Up and Running!

The **SRMSNET** went on-line this past summer, thanks to the efforts of Bob Groves and the Maryland/Michigan/Westat Joint Program in Survey Methodology. Since July 1995, 126 subscribers have signed up and 21 messages have been sent out, including the text of the last *SRM Newsletter*.



Needless to say, we are a little disappointed with the limited use of the bulletin board that we've seen so far. The intent was for the **SRMSNET** to be an active vehicle for communication of such topics as:

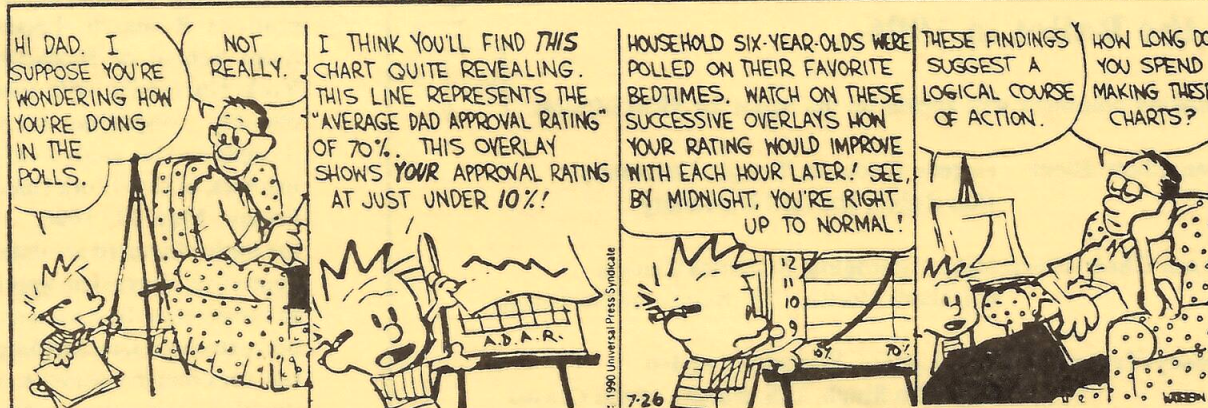
- ◆ Upcoming events of interest to Section members;
- ◆ Job openings and award opportunities;
- ◆ Research questions; and
- ◆ Other items of general interest to Section members.

We invite you to try out the **SRMSNET** to post useful information and seek input from your colleagues. Recently a request went out for a dialogue on methodological issues pertaining to analysis of longitudinal survey data -- what kinds of questions can be better answered by longitudinal surveys and what methodological difficulties have been encountered? If you are not a current user of the **SRMSNET**, sign on and join us in this and other exchanges.

To subscribe to the **SRMSNET**, send an e-mail message to [cs178@umail.umd.edu](mailto:cs178@umail.umd.edu) with a message to "subscribe SRMS-LIST <username>" in the body of the message. Once confirmation is received, mail can be sent to the bulletin board by addressing e-mail messages to [SRMSNET-LIST@umail.umd.edu](mailto:SRMSNET-LIST@umail.umd.edu).

Your participation can help make the **SRMSNET** a real success!



**CALVIN AND HOBBS** BILL WATTERSON


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## Call for Papers

- **InterCASIC '96** -- Contributed papers and demonstration proposals are now being accepted for the International Conference on Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection (CASIC), to be held in San Antonio, TX, December 11-14, 1996. Presentations on current and future CASIC methods are being solicited. Send abstracts (300-500 words) with \$100 submission fee\* to Lee Decker, Conference Planner, American Statistical Association, 1429 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3402 by May 1, 1996. Demonstration proposals should also include an abstract (with submission fee\*), describing the proposed demonstration content and any hardware and software requirements; clearly indicate it is a *demonstration*. All abstracts should include name, address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, work affiliation of author(s), and primary contact person. Be sure to indicate that the submission is for **InterCASIC '96**. For more information on the conference, see the feature article on page 2.

\*Send check or money order in USD payable to the American Statistical Association or contact

Lee Decker to pay by credit card. If abstract is accepted, fee will be applied to conference registration fee; if not accepted, submission fee will be returned. Contributors will be notified of acceptance by June 15, 1996.

- **Satellite Meeting on Longitudinal Studies** -- The International Association of Survey Statisticians and the International Association of Official Statistics will sponsor a Satellite Meeting on Longitudinal Studies in Jerusalem, August 27-29, 1997, following the International Statistical Institute's biennial meetings in Istanbul. The conference will cover aspects of design and analysis of sample surveys (prospective and retrospective), in which the same units are investigated with respect to several points in time or over periods of time. This includes fixed or rotating panel surveys and longitudinal studies based on administrative data or censuses. The Organizing Committee is Lidia Barreiros, David Binder, Steve Cohen, Jean-Claude DeVillie, Graham Kalton, Susan Linacre, Gad Nathan, Danny Pfeffermann, Fritz Scheuren, and Chris Skinner. For more information, contact Gad Nathan, Central Bureau of Statistics, 91905 Jerusalem, Israel; phone: +972-2-6553-371; fax: +972-2-6553-319; or e-mail: gad@olive.mssc.huji.ac.il

## Orlando JSM

The SRM Program for the Orlando Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) was a great success! We sponsored 5 invited sessions, 12 special contributed sessions, 20 regular contributed sessions, 5 poster presentations, and 6 round table sessions. Attendance was also strong at Section sessions throughout the meetings. Thanks, especially, to Nancy Mathiowetz, for her outstanding efforts as the Section Program Chair!

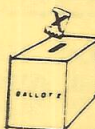
## Newsletter Deadline...



Items for publication in the Spring/Summer issue of the *SRM Newsletter* should be submitted no later than June 1, 1996. Items should be sent to Wendy Alvey at Statistics of Income, PO Box 2608, Washington, DC 20013-2608; phone: (202) 874-0455; fax: (202) 874-0964; or e-mail: wendy.alvey@wpgate.irs.gov.



## On the Ballot in 1996...



The following nominees will appear on the ballot for SRM officers:

**Section Chair-Elect:** Eugene Ericksen, Temple University  
Don Rubin, Harvard University

**Program Chair-Elect:** Mike Hidioglou, Statistics Canada  
Elizabeth Martin, U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Secretary-Treasurer:** Lars Lyberg, Statistics Sweden  
Rajendra Singh, U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Publications Officer:** F. Jay Breidt, Iowa State University  
Charles Proctor, North Carolina State University

**Council of Sections Representative:** Ralph Folsom, Research Triangle Institute  
Colm O'Muircheartaigh, London Sch. of Economics

Look for your ballot in the mail this March and don't forget to vote!

## Upcoming Conferences



phone: (301) 457-2308; or fax: (301) 457-3682.

- **ARC 1996** -- The Bureau of the Census will hold its 1996 Annual Research Conference and CASIC Technologies Interchange at the Key Bridge Marriott Hotel in Arlington, VA, March 17-21, 1996. The theme for this year's conference is *Survey of Methodologies for the 21st Century* and it will feature invited and contributed presentations (with discussion) on methodologies and technologies for improving surveys and censuses. Among the topics on the program are disclosure avoidance methodologies, longitudinal data, reduction of respondent burden, small area estimation for labor force programs, use of administrative list data, automated coding, generalized tools and systems, record linkage issues, electronic data dissemination, and metadata. For further information, contact Maxine Anderson-Brown, Conference Coordinator, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233;

- **Data Editing Workshop and Exposition** -- The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Joint Program in Survey Methodology, and the Washington Statistical Society will jointly sponsor a one-day workshop and exposition on editing survey data at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Conference and Training Center in Washington, DC, March 22, 1996. The event will feature both formal presentations and informal demonstrations of data editing -- those procedures designed and used for detecting erroneous or questionable survey data, with the goal of correcting the data or identifying potential estimation problems which can be handled by such means as reweighting. For more information, contact Mark Pierzchala -- phone: (703) 235-5218; or e-mail: [mpierzchala@ag.gov](mailto:mpierzchala@ag.gov) -- or David Pierce -- phone: (202) 452-3895; or e-mail: [m1dap00@frb.gov](mailto:m1dap00@frb.gov).

- **Symposium on Recent Developments in Sampling Methods** -- The

Department of Statistics and Operations Research, Leonard N. Stern School of Business, New York University will sponsor a one-day symposium on sample designs and the analysis of resulting data, at New York University, Friday, May 17, 1996. Among the topics featured are data confidentiality, Bayesian approaches to survey sampling, adaptive sampling strategies, resampling methods for complex surveys, and estimation for longitudinal surveys. For more information, contact Mark Handcock -- phone: (212) 998-0475; fax: (212) 995-4003; or e-mail: [symposium96@stern.nyu.edu](mailto:symposium96@stern.nyu.edu).

- **Kullback Memorial Research Conference** -- The Department of Statistics, George Washington University, will sponsor a two-day research conference in memory of Solomon Kullback, at the Washington Marriott Hotel, May 24-25, 1996. The Conference will focus on applications of the Kullback-Leibler (K-L) information measures in statistical research today. For more information, contact the Dept. of Statistics -- phone: (202) 994-6356; fax: (202) 994-6917; or e-mail: [statp1@gwvm.gwu.edu](mailto:statp1@gwvm.gwu.edu).

## Section Election Results



Congratulations and best wishes to the following newly-elected officers of the Section:

**Section Chair (in 1997)**  
Kirk Wolter  
National Opinion  
Research Center

**Program Chair (in 1997)**  
Mary H. Mulry  
Bureau of the Census.



## RIC Statement of PROFESSIONAL & ETHICAL STANDARDS for Marketing and Opinion Research

Properly conducted, marketing and opinion research has great value to its sponsors -- and to the public, as citizens and consumers. The value rests, in the end, on the intelligence, creativity and technical skills of research practitioners and, most critically, on their integrity and ethical standards.

No code can cover all of the ethical issues for all research activities. But, regardless of the technique or the nature of the problem, certain rules describe good research practice. The rules relate to:

- How research should be done;
- How it should be reported;
- How the public ought to be treated; and
- How the business of research should be conducted.

What follows are recognized standards for good practice in each of the four areas.

### ◆ How Research Should be Done:

- Have well defined, clearly stated objectives -- and an honest purpose.
- Follow an orderly research approach and methods appropriate to the objectives.
- Collect information carefully, without bias or distortion.
- Provide data representative of a defined population or activity and enough data to yield stable results. Projectability may not be a relevant standard for qualitative research or other exploratory, experimental, or observational studies.
- Critically examine the collected information. Process and refine it. Analyze it thoroughly. Search it for meaning.
- Check and verify each step in the research process.

### ◆ How It Should be Reported:

- Present the results understandably and fairly. Fully report the relevant findings, including any that may seem contradictory or unfavorable.
- Separate any conclusions from the factual findings. Be sure the conclusions and the findings are consistent.
- Describe how the research was done, in enough detail that a skilled researcher could repeat the study. (If any trade secrets or other procedures are not disclosed, these should be identified, with a statement that the research cannot be replicated independently.)
- Explain the applicability and the limitations of the research and provide information users need to judge for themselves the usefulness of the research and its quality.

### ◆ How the Public Ought to be Treated

- If research is meant to represent the public and its thinking, make certain that what is said is justified by the research design, the sample and the findings.
- Avoid wasting the time or goodwill of the public. Treat with respect those who are asked to give information. Free respondents from embarrassment and pressure. Recognize as absolute the right to refuse or terminate participation.
- Assure the privacy of respondents. Do whatever is necessary to keep collected information anonymous. In the verification of information, protect the identity of respondents from outside disclosure.
- Avoid undisclosed observation or recording of the participants in research, except for internal quality control or in places where observation by strangers or monitors is expected.
- Unmask those who disguise as research their efforts to get money from people or influence their thinking.

### ◆ How the Business of Research Should be Conducted:

- Be highly principled and rigorously fair in all business dealings. Treat this research and its practice with the respect due a responsible and professional activity.
- Refuse assignments that cannot be handled successfully with the time, skills and resources available.
- Compete for research assignments on competence and value, not with secret deals or illicit financial arrangements. Claim only legitimate academic degrees, clients and other qualifications.
- Protect the confidentiality of anything learned about a sponsor's business. Honor the sponsor's rights of ownership and access to the research they have purchased.
- Give sponsors the right to validate research done for their use. Welcome professional review of any research released outside of the sponsoring organization.
- Challenge any badly done or dishonest research. Defend good research that is attacked unfairly.

Underlying each set of standards -- for how research should be done, how it should be reported, how the public ought to be treated and how the business of research should be conducted -- is a basic principle:

- Do good research, for an honest purpose.
- Describe it clearly and report it objectively.
- Represent the public well; guard its interests and its privacy.
- Be professional and fair in doing business.

These principles cover the most basic of the responsibilities of those who do marketing, opinion and related research. They are the ethical foundation for research practice.



## Research Industry Coalition Establishes Professional and Ethical Standards

At the 1995 Joint Statistical Meetings, the Survey Research Methods Section, on behalf of the American Statistical Association, endorsed a Statement of PROFESSIONAL & ETHICAL STANDARDS for Marketing and Opinion Research put forward by the Research Industry Coalition (RIC). (See page 9.) The RIC has membership from:

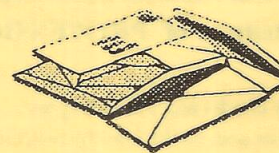
Advertising Research Foundation  
American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Marketing Association  
American Statistical Association  
Council of American Survey Research Organizations  
Marketing Research Association  
Market Research Council  
National Association of Broadcasters  
National Council on Public Polls  
Newspaper Association of America  
Professional Market Research Society  
Qualitative Research Consultants Association  
Society for Consumer Psychology  
Travel and Tourism Research Association.

One of the goals of the RIC is to raise public consciousness of poor survey practice. The Coalition meets several times a year. Our current representatives are Chuck Cowan and Warren Mitofsky. Innis Sande had been one of our representatives up until this year.

Although some of us might find that the code is not worded strongly enough, it was felt that endorsing this code would be better than not giving it any endorsement at all, as it was unlikely that a more strongly worded code would have been acceptable by all the Coalition members.

Maybe this code will generate some discussion on the *SRMSNET*!! (See **Letters to the Editor** for further discussion of the RIC Guidelines.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The following exchange pertains to the SRM decision to support the new Professional and Ethical Standards for Marketing and Opinion Research, recently drafted by the Research Industry Coalition (RIC).

*SRM has, in accordance with its charter, taken some moderately specific positions on what may and may not be done "with integrity" in survey research. Examples may be found in the brochure, **What Is a Survey?** (citing examples on page 11). When asked to endorse the ethics statements of any other group which does survey research, SRM should make certain that suitable equivalents are contained in such documents, so as to cover the ethical principles to which SRM has publicly committed. It is up to the [SRM Executive] Committee, with input from members of the Section, to make judgements about the adequacy of the alternative wordings contained in any ethical documents we are asked to address. SRM does not seek to impose specific wording or specific statistical methodologies on any other research organization.*

--- John S. Gardenier  
Chair, ASA Committee on Professional Ethics

*John, I appreciate your concerns and share completely your desire that we strive for the most useful ethical statements possible. I, as well as AAPOR, have struggled over these issues for decades. The tension is always between general statements such as those in the current ASA, AAPOR, and RIC codes, that, then, require interpretation and may allow some practices to slip through that many may consider unethical and much more specific statements that result in significant disagreements that they are universally applicable.*

*The RIC code clearly comes down on the side of the more general statement of ethics. As a coalition of some 26 organizations, it is hard to see them doing otherwise. We, as ASA, may well have a more specific ethical code, but even here you will quickly find that, if you try to be very specific, you will run into major opposition and the result will be not an ethical code that you think is perfect, but no code at all or the current code.*

*I believe that the current RIC statement is a valuable contribution to efforts to raise ethical standards in the field, and is superior to a hypothetical ideal statement that would not be endorsed by RIC.*

--- Seymour Sudman  
Chair, Survey Research Methods Section

Further discussion of these issues appears on the *SRMSNET* -- join us there with your comments.



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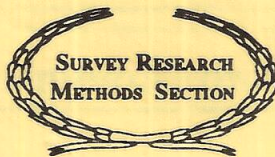
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## Mission Statement

The mission of the Survey Research Methods Section 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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