



SRM Newsletter

SECTION ON SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS

ISSUE 4 ■ JULY 1995



HIGHLIGHTS

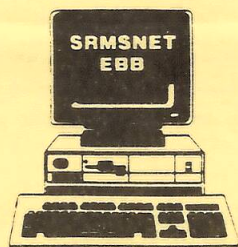
The June 1st deadline has passed for drafts of ASA papers and August is just around the corner. So get those pre-registrations in for the **1995 Joint Statistical Meetings** in Orlando and come on down! SRM has arranged a very full and exciting program — for a summary of the highlights, see page 2.

InterCASIC 96 is coming! A call is out for monograph papers. For full information on the latest SRM see international conference, page 3.

An updated version of *What is a Survey?* will be released in Orlando. For more details on this new SRM series, see page 4.

SRMSNET is Here!

After many promises, SRM is very pleased to announce that you can now join the Section in cyberspace! Thanks to the efforts of Bob Groves and the Maryland/Michigan/Westat Joint Program in Survey Methodology, an important new mechanism has been created to help Section members stay in closer touch with what is happening in survey research. Called *SRMSNET*, it is a recently established electronic bulletin board, that will enable survey research methodologists and practitioners to share information of mutual interest.



Hopefully, *SRMSNET* will become an active vehicle for communications on such topics as:

- Information on activities sponsored by the Section (i.e., conferences, meetings, short-courses, etc.);
- Description of activities of interest to Section members but sponsored by other groups (e.g., AAPOR);

- Research questions from subscribers seeking assistance or discussion from other subscribers;
- Notification of job openings; and
- Other items of general interest to Section members.

How do you sign on? Well, the level of anticipated interest, as well as the design of the list server running *SRMSNET*, make it necessary at the outset to limit subscribership to Section members. Any member wishing to subscribe should send an e-mail message to CS178@UMAIL.UMD.EDU, with "subscribe SRMS-LIST <username>" in the body of the message. (For example, Bob Groves would send "subscribe SRMS-LIST Bob Groves" to the above address.) Once subscribed, members will receive a confirmation message indicating that they are on the subscriber roster. After that, mail can be sent to the bulletin board by addressing e-mail messages to SRMS-LIST@UMAIL.UMD.EDU.

This is your vehicle -- we hope you will access it to post useful information and seek out input from your colleagues. Remember, we're just getting started, so there may not be very much of interest right away. But check back in from time to time -- your participation can help make *SRMSNET* a real success!

ORLANDO, HERE WE COME!



SRM has a great program in store for you! With 39 sessions on the agenda, we certainly can't mention them all here -- see the Preliminary Program in the May issue of *Amstat News* for most of the details -- but we wanted to point out a few special events:

- We kick off **early** -- on **Sunday, August 13, at 4:00 PM** -- with an invited paper session on The American Travel Survey: New Directions in Travel Survey Methodology (SRM #15) and two contributed paper sessions, on TQM Applications in Survey Research (SRM #16) and Variance Estimation for Complex Surveys (SRM #17).
- Other invited paper sessions are:
 - Panel on PC Software for Sampling Errors from Complex Surveys -- Mon., Aug. 14, 8:30-10:20 AM (SRM #39);
 - Gibbs Sampling Applications to Survey Sampling -- Mon., Aug. 14, 10:30 AM-12:20 PM (SRM #62);
 - The National Crime Victimization Survey Redesign -- Tues., Aug. 15, 2:00-3:50 PM (SRM #156); and
 - Panel on Teaching Survey Sampling -- Thur., Aug. 17, 8:30-10:20 AM (SRM #277).
- Special topic sessions have been organized on Design and Estimation Issues for School-Based Surveys (SRM #40), Sample Design and Weighting Research in Panel Surveys (SRM #85), NAEP: Complex Analytic Issues and Findings (SRM #86), Customer Surveys in the Federal Government (SRM #109), Variance Estimation in the Presence of Imputed Data (SRM #133), NSF Surveys: Design, Estimation and Nonresponse (SRM #157), Continuous Measurement Program (SRM #200), State and Local Area Immunization Coverage and Health Survey (SRM #225), Applications of Survey Optimization with Multiple Constraints (SRM #254), The Measurement of Disabilities (SRM #278), Data Quality and Nonresponse in Education (SRM #279), and Coverage Improvement Research (SRM #293).
- SRM Roundtable Luncheons (SRM #139) will be held Tuesday, August 15, from 12:30-2:00 PM. These are fee events, where you can lunch with colleagues while discussing one of the following topics -- Re-Engineering Survey Processing Systems Using Generalized Software for Sample Design, Survey Metadata and the Internet, Effects of Introducing CASIC on Organizations and Staff, Designing Surveys for Public Policy Evaluation, and Effects of Continuous Measurement on the Design of Ongoing Survey Programs.
- Wednesday, August 16, begins with a special non-fee (no food) roundtable discussion on Obstacles to Career Advancement in Survey Research Methods, from 8:30-10:20 AM (SRM #204/3). Come on by and share your perspective.
- Six SRM Poster presentations will be held Wednesday, August 16, from 12:30-2:00 PM (SRM #229 DD-II). Stop by and chat with the authors in a more informal setting.

In addition to these featured events, there will be about 20 regular contributed paper sessions covering a full range of methodological issues -- from sample design and questionnaire development, to variance estimation and measurement errors -- on a broad range of topics -- from establishment surveys to customer surveys, the decennial census to state and local area health surveys, longitudinal studies to "hard to enumerate" populations. The Section is also co-sponsoring a host of sessions containing papers of interest to SRM members -- check, in particular, the Social Statistics Section and the Government Statistics Section programs for these jointly-sponsored events.



InterCASIC 96 ...



SAN ANTONIO

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER!

Remember the Alamo? Well, San Antonio, Texas has been selected as the site for the International Conference on Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection (CASIC), to be held December 11-14, 1996. The conference is the sixth in a series of meetings on survey methodology, organized and co-sponsored by the Section on Survey Research Methods. Given the rapid development in CASIC methods in recent years, this conference will give researchers and practitioners an opportunity to look at past accomplishments in the automation of survey data collection and related processes and to focus on future research and development needs. CASIC is defined broadly to include not only computer-assisted interviewing (CATI and CAPI) and other data collection methods (touchtone data entry, voice recognition entry, electronic data interchange, etc.), but also the more general application of computer technology to the entire process of collection, capture, and presentation of survey data.

The Organizing Committee is now soliciting monograph papers for InterCASIC 96. As in the past, monograph papers will be presented at the conference and will be published in an edited volume which will be distributed to all attendees.

To have a paper considered, send a 500-700 word abstract **no later than August 1, 1995**, to Dr. Mick Couper, Joint Program in Survey Methodology, 1218 LeFrak Hall, College Park, MD 20742, USA. Please include the name, address, telephone number, and work affiliation of the author(s) and identify the contact person for communicating with the Organizing Committee. (A call for contributed papers will be issued shortly.)

Suggested topics for **InterCASIC 96** include the following:

- Instrument Design for Computer-Assisted Interviewing -- programming/authoring issues; software systems for CAI; navigation and rostering; testing and debugging instruments; accessing external data files; and dependent interviewing;
- Hardware and Systemware -- durability and reliability of CAPI hardware and components; operating systems; and LAN management;
- Automated Survey Management Systems -- field and head office management systems; coding, cleaning, and data entry; call scheduling; sample management; transmission and control of cases; disaster prevention and recovery; and handling data and metadata;
- New Technologies in Survey Research -- future technologies and their potential impact on survey data collection; going beyond paper-

and-pencil equivalence; GIS, Audio-CASI, FAX, VRE, and TDE; handwriting recognition and pen computing;

- Organizational Aspects of CASIC -- costs; staffing, planning, and managing CAI surveys; and making the switch to automation;
- Data Quality Issues -- nonresponse errors; measurement errors; and efficiency; and
- Interviewers and Respondents -- human/computer interaction issues; hiring and training of interviewers; evaluating interviewers and monitoring performance; and respondent reactions.

For more information, contact Mick Couper by phone at (301) 405-9523; by fax at (301) 314-7912; or by e-mail at mcouper@survey.umd.edu.

Newsletter Deadline...



Items for publication in the Fall 1995 *SRM Newsletter* should be submitted no later than September 29, 1995. Send items to Wendy Alvey at Statistics of Income CP:R:S:P, PO Box 2608, Washington, DC 20013-2608; phone: (202) 874-0455; fax: (202) 874-0922; or e-mail: wla@soino.rp.irs.gov.

NEW LOOK FOR *WHAT IS A SURVEY?*



Fifteen years ago the Section on Survey Research Methods and ASA joined forces to produce *What is a Survey?* -- a pamphlet on survey methods for the general public -- by Robert Ferber, Paul Sheatsley, Anthony Turner, and Joseph Waksberg. Since then, the public's exposure to and familiarity with survey techniques has grown considerably and survey methods have changed immensely. So, we decided to take another look at the brochure and see what was needed to bring it up to date.

This year, at the Joint Statistical Meetings the Section will unveil the newly revised version of *What is a Survey?* -- updated by Waksberg and edited and coordinated by Fritz Scheuren, under the general direction of Seymour Sudman and Bill Kalsbeek. Special appreciation also goes to all of those in the statistical community who have helped review the material. The new version has been divided into a series of pamphlets. As with the original, the audience is the general public. The overall goal of the series is to improve survey literacy among individuals who participate in surveys or use survey results. The series is designed to promote a better understanding of what is involved in carrying out sample surveys of human populations -- especially aspects that have to be taken into account in evaluating the results of surveys.

The first three pamphlets in the series are:

- *What is a Survey?* which focuses on overall information about surveys -- why they are needed, what types of surveys there are, even what sorts of people work on surveys; confidentiality and integrity are included and information on how to learn more about surveys is provided.
- *Planning a Survey*, which covers the major survey planning steps, including time- and cost-budgeting; the requirements of in-person household surveys are highlighted, but mail and telephone surveys are covered, as well.
- *Conducting a Survey*, which presents descriptions of some of the more technical processes in conducting a survey, primarily drawing on in-person household samples and particularly emphasizing operational issues, like quality control and data editing, as well as recent changes arising through the advent of survey automation.

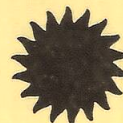
All members of the Section will receive copies of *What is a Survey?* Two more pamphlets are also in preparation. For more information or suggestions for potential future topics in the new *What is a Survey?* series, contact Fritz Scheuren at George Washington University (via e-mail: Scheuren@aol.com).

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to **Nanjamma Chinnappa** for her election as President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians. Chinnappa, formerly Director of the Business Survey Methods Division, Statistics Canada, just recently retired..

All the best to **Fritz Scheuren**, who received the Julius Shiskin Award for Economic Statistics. The award, sponsored by the Washington Statistical Society, ASA, and the National Association of Business Economists, is presented in recognition of unusually original and important contributions to the development of economic statistics and for use of economic statistics in interpreting the economy. Scheuren was cited for his contributions to statistical uses of administrative data.

GOING TO ORLANDO?



- Stop by the SRM table at Sunday evening's mixer!
- Come to the Section's Business Meeting -- Wednesday, August 16, at 6:00 PM in the Dolphin, Salon 4! Refreshments will be served!
- Join the SRM Executive Committee for an informal social after the Business Meeting!

SHOE JEFF MacNELLY

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SSC Session at JSM



Can't make up your mind which session to attend? The Survey Methods Section of the Statistical Society of Canada invites you to their invited paper session on New Surveys -- New Approaches, in which David Dolson, Marie Brodeur and Jean-Louis Tambay will describe three new longitudinal surveys initiated recently by Statistics Canada. Howard Hogan, of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, will discuss their papers. The session -- to be held Monday, August 14, from 8:30-10:20 AM, in the Dolphin, Oceanic 2 -- is guaranteed to make the early Monday morning rise worthwhile!

on Missing Data in the Social Sciences on Friday, September 8, 1995, in New York City. The Workshop will focus on recent advances in methodology for handling missing data problems, especially as related to psychology, sociology, education, and economics. Among the featured speakers are Roderick J. A. Little, Daniel Heitjan, and Donald Hedeker. For information, contact Mark Handcock -- Phone: (212) 998-0475; fax: (212) 995-4003; or e-mail: workshop95@stern.nyu.edu.

- **Symposium 95** -- Statistics Canada will sponsor its 12th international symposium on methodology issues -- *From Data to Information: Methods and Systems* -- November 1-3, 1995, in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Through a series of invited papers, Symposium 95 will explore issues and experiences in providing information to users from many sources of statistical data. Topics to be covered include integration of both micro- and macrodata; access to and control of data, including confidentiality issues; quality of data and statistical information; data analysis; and warehousing and dissemination of data. For more

information, contact Jean-Louis Tambay at Statistics Canada -- phone: (613) 951-6959; fax: (613) 951-3100; or e-mail: tambjea@statcan.ca.

- **Conference on New Approaches to Defining Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Areas** -- The Office of Management and Budget will sponsor a two-day seminar on the development of new definitions for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in the U.S. on November 29-30, in Bethesda, MD. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum for evaluating alternative definition approaches and for OMB to hear the concerns of the user community. Subjects covered will include definition of geographic units; criteria for aggregating; hierarchies for areas; data needs for defining areas; frequency of updating; and discussion about whether the concept of metropolitan areas should be eliminated. For more information, contact Ed Spar or Susan Cohen at the COPAFS office -- phone: (703) 836-0404; or fax: (703) 684-2036.

(Continued on page 6.)

Upcoming Conferences



- **Workshop on Missing Data in the Social Sciences** -- New York University and the ASA's Social Statistics Section will sponsor a one-day Workshop

Roger Herriot Memorial Session



A memorial session in honor of Roger Herriot will be held at the Joint Statistical Meetings on Wednesday, August 16, from 10:30 AM-12:20 PM, in the Dolphin, Salon 3. The session, entitled Overcoming the Bureaucratic Paradigm, features presentations by William Butz and Leslie Kish. Timothy Smeeding will be the discussant. The session will also be the occasion for presentation of the first annual Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. Herriot's career, both at the Census Bureau and at the National Center for Education Statistics -- where he was Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the time of his accidental death -- was often marked by his unique and creative approaches to problems in the Federal statistical system. The Award is sponsored by the Government Statistics Section, the Social Statistics Section, and the Washington Statistical Society.

of the American Association of Public Opinion Researchers (AAPOR). Once again, it is published in two volumes. The *1994 Proceedings* can be ordered from ASA for \$55 for members and \$78 for nonmembers (plus \$7 shipping and tax for Virginia residents).

Also, while you are thinking about it, why not sign up to get the *1995 Proceedings* now, when you register for the Joint Statistical Meetings?! Just fill in **PR 11** on page 2 of your blue registration form and you can obtain the 1995 two-volume set of Survey Research Methods and AAPOR papers for the pre-publication price of \$45 -- a bargain which is only available for books ordered prior to August 17, 1995....

Upcoming Conferences (cont'd)

- **ARC 1996** -- The Census Bureau will sponsor its 1996 Annual Research Conference on March 17-21, 1996, at the Key Bridge Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. ARC 1996 will comprise a mix of topics, such as on-line dissemination and tabulation of data, small area methods, metadata collection and dissemination issues and practices, on-line data security issues and practices, human/computer interface issues, methods of testing and evaluating on-line data collection or dissemination applications, and unique data collection applications for methodologies, technologies, and results. Abstracts of papers for consideration for the ARC 1996 program are due by August 15, 1995. For further information, contact Maxine Anderson-Brown, ARC Conference Coordinator, Office of the Director, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233;

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

- **Data Editing Workshop and Exposition** -- A call for papers has gone out for a one-day workshop and exposition on editing survey data. The meeting, to be sponsored by the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Joint Program on Survey Methodology, and the Washington Statistical Society, will be held in Washington, DC on March 22, 1996, following ARC 1996. For more information, contact David Pierce by phone at (202) 452-3895 or e-mail at M1DAP00@frb.gov.

SRM Proceedings....



Hot off the presses -- the *1994 Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods* are now available! In keeping with a joint effort begun for 1993, the collection includes papers from both the Joint Statistical Meetings in Toronto and the 1994 meetings

New IRS Methodology Report



Statistics of Income (SOI), Internal Revenue Service is pleased to announce the release of *Statistics of Income: Turning Administrative Systems into Information Systems -- 1994*. The report contains 31 selected papers on methodological changes to SOI programs, most of which were presented at the 1994 Joint Statistical Meetings in Toronto. Two special features included this year are a reprinting of a 1963 paper by W. Edwards Deming, evaluating the design of the SOI sample, and a special memorial section, dedicated to a long-time friend and colleague of SOI, Roger Herriot.

The report can be ordered free from SOI -- by phone: (202) 874-0410; fax: (202) 874-0922; or e-mail: wla@soino.irs.gov.

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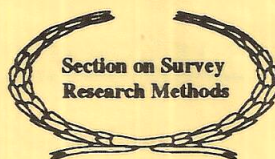
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Mission Statement

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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