

**AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
ALASKA CHAPTER
NEWSLETTER**

August, 1993

Fermat's Last Theorem Proved?

Arguably, the most famous mathematical challenge of our time is Fermat's last theorem: there are no positive integers, $n > 2$, such that

$$x^n + y^n = z^n .$$

This seems to have been finally proved by Andrew Wiles of Princeton University; he presented his proof in a series of seminars given at Cambridge University in June of this year. This story made the front page of the *New York Times* (June 24, 1993). It seems to have been eclipsed in the *Juneau Empire* by a story about the guy that ran his car into the side of Donna's restaurant out by the airport. Claims his gas pedal got stuck in the down position.

Fermat was a French judge that lived from 1601 to 1665. He made notes in the margins of his copy of the Greek text *Arithmetica*; a large number of these notes were statements without proofs. Except for Fermat's Last Theorem, all of his statements were subsequently proved, with only two minor errors detected.

Wiles's proof has yet to be scrutinized, and it is reportedly very complex. A number of attempts at proofs have been presented over the last 300 years, but none have held up.

1993 Meeting in Fairbanks

The 1993 regular Chapter meeting will be held at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, September 7 and 8; September 9 is reserved for a chapter-sponsored introductory course on the S-plus package for microcomputers. Noel Cressie, the author of the 1991 book *Statistics for Spatial Data*, is to be the featured speaker. Technical presentations will take place on the first day. The business meeting, including a fourth talk by Prof. Cressie, will take place on September 8.

Jay Ver Hoef has invited everyone in the Chapter and their families over to his house on the evening of September 7. Currently, we are planning some kind of barbecue, similar to the event we had in Juneau--similar, but without the Southeast Alaskan weather.

Registration for the Fairbanks meeting will cost \$50 for members, \$60 for nonmembers; members without institutional sponsorship may register for \$25, and registration will be free for students.

The meeting will begin at 9:30 in the Wood Center Memorial Conference Room on the Campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

CART Video Tape A Big Success

The spring video short course was on classification and regression trees (CART). Twenty-seven people saw the tape in Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Kodiak. The Chapter made \$900, which will be used mostly for new continuing education opportunities. Thanks to Larry Byrne for organizing it, and thanks to Debby Burwen, Steve Fleischman, Ron Barry, Ivan Vining, and Jim Blick for their part on local arrangements. The course was generally well received, and generated some immediate interest. For example, Dave Ackley has been using the S-plus CART-like procedures (their "tree-based models") to look for trends in chinook salmon bycatch data. For those of you wondering how to do CART, Pete Hagen of ADF&G bought a copy of the CART module from SYSTAT, but has not reported yet on how it works. In addition to the benefit of getting the CART message out to all of the people that saw the tape, we acquired two new members as a result of this showing.

George Seber to Visit Alaska

George Seber (from the University of Auckland, New Zealand) is planning a visit to the Last Frontier in May of 1994. He is the author of *The Estimation of Animal Abundance and Related Parameters*, *Nonlinear Regression*, *Multivariate Observations*, and other books, and a recent collaborator with Steve Thompson on research into adaptive sampling. Terry Quinn is arranging his visit, which tentatively includes stops in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Check with Terry at his new phone number, 465-5389 or e-mail JFTJQ@ALASKA for more information.

S-Plus Course Will Be Offered at Fairbanks Meeting

This course will start at 9:00 a.m. in Room 206 of the Butrovich Building on the Fairbanks campus on September 9. Rich Hinrichsen, who is currently finishing up a Ph.D. at the University of Washington, will be our instructor. He is well known to our new members from UW. The cost of the course will be \$150 for members with institutional sponsorship, \$50 for those without sponsorship, and \$20 for full-time students. Contact Hal Geiger (465-6115) for more information.

Five to Attend National Meeting

Pham Quang, Bob Hollister, Jay Ver Hoef, Ron Barry, and B. Alan Johnson will be attending the National ASA meeting in San Francisco during August. Check with one of these guys for the straight dope on what the National Organization is up to. Also, be sure to contact either Jay or Ron (their numbers are on the last page) if there is any issue you wish to have raised at the National business meeting.

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... a pride of lions, a copse of trees, a murder of crows, a covey of quail, an exaltation of larks, a number of statisticians, a pod of whales, a school of fish ...

Technical Presentations at the Annual Meeting

Tentatively, we have nine talks scheduled for the annual meeting, and we still have plenty of room for more. If you are interested (even if you are not sure, but you want someone to help talk you into it) give Hal Geiger a call (465-6115). The list right now looks like:

<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
Jay VerHoef	Empirical Bayes in Wildlife Population Estimation
Mark Udevitz	Survey Design for Mobile Wildlife Populations
Bob Southerland	Locating Hot Spots
Ron Barry	Earthquake Prediction
Craig McKinstry	Forecasting Run Timing and Abundance of Pink Salmon Using Sex Ratio Information
Hal Geiger	Some Aspects of Effective Population Size in Pink Salmon
Ivan Vining	Functioning in S-plus
B. Alan Johnson	Quality Control of Urchin Roe Using a Color Wheel and Discriminant Analysis
Kelley Pace	Parametric, Semiparametric, and Nonparametric Estimation of Mass Assessment and Hedonic Pricing Models

Life With Lawyers Dept. (from Feb. '93 issue of *Harper's*) . . .

[Legal Notice]

A NEW KIND OF WEDDING SUIT

From a letter sent last August to Maria Dillon, a hostess at an Italian restaurant in Chicago, by Frank D. Zaffere III, a Chicago lawyer. Dillon and Zaffere were engaged in November 1991; last June, Dillon broke off the engagement. Four days after Zaffere sent the letter below, he sued Dillon for breach of contract, demanding that she repay the \$40,310.48 that he spent on their courtship. The case was dismissed last November.

Dear Maria:

This notice—given on the two-month anniversary of the date when you broke your promise to marry me, and six days prior to the date we were to be married—is provided to you in accordance with the provisions of the Illinois Breach of Promise Act. As required by that section, please be advised as follows:

1. I asked for your hand in marriage, and you agreed to marry me, on November 2, 1991. I proposed to you, and you accepted my proposal, at the Pump Room in Chicago. At the time of our engagement, I placed upon your finger, and you accepted, a 1.06-carat diamond engagement ring.

2. The date for our marriage ceremony, set by you, was August 9, 1992.

3. As a result of your breach of your promise to marry me, I have suffered significant actual damages, in excess of \$40,000, relating to monies expended and financial accommodations made by me for your care, welfare, and happiness, in each case in reliance upon your promise of marriage. My expenditures and financial accommodations for you included, without limitation: (a) your living allowance; (b) medical and dental treatment; (c) vacations; (d) entertainment; (e) clothing; and (f) jewelry.

4. I am still willing to marry you on the following conditions: (1) we proceed with our marriage within forty-five days of the date of this letter; (2) you confirm to me in a solemn oath (which will be private between us) that you have been since August 3, 1991, and will forever be, faithful to me; (3) you promise in a solemn oath (which will be private between us) that you will never lie to me again about anything; (4) you agree in a solemn oath (which will be private between us) that you will use your best efforts to resolve and reconcile all differences between you and my daughter, Althea (subject, of course, to her willingness to engage in a meaningful dialogue with you).

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the matters addressed herein.

Sincerely,
Frank D. Zaffere III

New Officers Wanted

Linda Brannian announced that she is ready to retire as secretary-treasurer at the end of her term. This vital, but little-appreciated post was manned by Don Marx for many years before Linda took over in 1991. The Chapter will also be electing a new vice-president to assume the duties of president for the 1995 term.

Consider who you would like to see in these posts, and discuss their possible nomination with them before the meeting.

Chapter Dues Alert

The number next to your name on the mailing label is the last year we have received your dues; the letter represents the type of membership (R=Regular, S=Student). Please renew your membership. Dues may be sent to Linda Brannian, ADF&G, CF, 333 Raspberry Rd., Anchorage, AK 99518 or included with your membership dues for the National Organization. Regular annual membership is \$10 and \$1 for students. Make checks payable to AK ASA.

Your dues pay for the annual business meetings, newsletters, and some costs of continuing education. Remembering to pay dues is easy when attending the annual meeting, but the Chapter needs your dues whether you attend the annual meeting or not. If you cannot attend the annual meeting, send your dues directly to Linda or indirectly to the Chapter as part of your dues to the National Organization.

Alaskan Chapter of the American Statistical Association Officers for 1993:

President and Newsletter Editor: Hal Geiger. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, P.O. Box 25526, Juneau AK 99802-2000, (907) 465-6115

Vice-President: Ronald Barry. Department of Mathematical Sciences, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Fairbanks, AK 99775-1110; (907) 474-5375

Sec.-Treas.: Linda Brannian. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, 333 Raspberry Rd, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599, (907) 267-2118.

Executive Committee: Doug Pengilly. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, 211 Mission Rd, Kodiak, AK 99925-0101, (907) 486-4791.

Executive Committee: Sam Thiru. Department of Mathematics, University of Alaska, Anchorage, AK 99508, (907) 786-1742.

Council of Chapters Representative: Jay M. Ver Hoef. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 Collage Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701-1599; (909) 456-5156.