

**GSS/SSS MAY 2006 NEWSLETTER**  
**Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections**  
**American Statistical Association**

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**Government Statistics Section**

**INVITED ROUNDTABLE LUNCHEONS FOR JSM 2006 AND ORGANIZING INVITED SESSIONS FOR JSM 2007**

*By Robie Sangster, Program Chair Elect*

Roundtable luncheons are a great way to learn about new topics of research or methods and discuss them with a group of other interested statisticians and methodologists. All four luncheons this year are on very different topics, so you should be able to find one that interests you. It will probably be raining in Seattle, so why not make some plans in advance for lunch?



For JSM 2006, Robie Sangster, the Program Chair-Elect of the Government Statistics Section, has organized four round table luncheons featuring four exciting speakers and topics:

**“Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics,” led by Joan E. Sieber, Editor-in-Chief of JERHRE**

Given the issues of privacy, confidentiality, data sharing, and methodology that accompany human subjects' research, there are many ethics-related problems for statisticians to solve. Solutions need to be shared among the stakeholders concerned with human subjects' protection. A new peer-

reviewed, international nonprofit journal, the Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics (JERHRE) will begin publication in March 2006. Without evidence-based problem solving, many conflicts are unsatisfactorily settled by applying a one-size-fits-all interpretation of principles or regulations. JERHRE will create a forum for collaboration among

stakeholders and stimulating research, and disseminate knowledge to foster intelligent application of ethical principles in research contexts worldwide. Come to this luncheon to learn about the journal and discuss these issues with Joan E. Sieber, Editor-in-Chief of JERHRE.

**“Including Sexual Orientation Questions In Surveys: Issues and Approaches,” led by Sarah Boslaugh, Washington University, St Louis**

There is increasing interest within the social science community in studying sexual orientation as a demographic characteristic analogous to gender or race. However measuring sexual orientation on a questionnaire raises a number of measurement issues, the most important of which is that there is neither philosophical nor practical agreement about what it means to be “gay” or “straight”. The way sexual orientation is defined, and the way the questions are worded, can make a huge difference in what categories people select to define themselves. This roundtable will review differing ways major surveys have measured sexual orientation and some of the ways researchers have been able to glean information about sexual orientation from surveys which did not include questions specifically about sexual orientation.

**“ASA and Volunteerism: New Special Interest Group,” led by Robie Sangster, Bureau of Labor Statistics**

This is your opportunity to learn about an exciting new special interest group (SIG) on volunteerism. You will hear about some of the current projects and how to become involved with the SIG. Current projects include the Innocence Project dealing with analysis of DNA evidence and the death penalty, design of a graduate curriculum for Vietnam, and another group is looking at cross-national comparisons in education. The group is petitioning the ASA to become a new section. Robie is on the SIG steering committee and is filling in for the SIG leader, Jonathan Kurlander who could not attend JSM this year.

**“Katrina: Responding to Unanticipated Data Needs,” led by Christa Jones, U.S. Census**

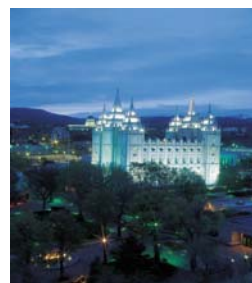
Each year, natural disasters occur, impacting the lives of people in the United States. Hurricane Katrina, however, has caused unprecedented devastation that has presented statistical agencies with new and unanticipated data needs. The disruption of the massive migration of people and the destruction of housing in the wake of Hurricane Katrina have also disrupted ongoing monthly surveys and impacted the assumptions underlying the population estimates. These programs have historically provided federal agencies with the information they need to evaluate and adapt programs to meet the public needs. This roundtable discussion will focus on impacts that hurricane Katrina and other disasters can have on current data and possible approaches that the statistical system can take to adjust for them.

**Luncheon tickets can be purchased starting May 1<sup>st</sup> when the registration materials and hotel reservations are available on the JSM web site. Tickets can also be purchased at the on-site registration desk.**

**ORGANIZING A PROPOSED INVITED SESSION FOR JSM 2007 IN SALT LAKE CITY**

It is never too early to start pulling together a proposal for an invited session for JSM. The GSS represents many aspects of survey research, so finding a topic fairly easy. It is organizing the session that is the challenge and it takes time to proposal. Starting now would be a good idea.

So please, start thinking about organizing an invited session for JSM 2007. Feel Robie Sangster at [Sangster\\_R@BLS.GOV](mailto:Sangster_R@BLS.GOV) for further information.



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**Social Statistics Section**

**LOOK TO THE FUTURE AT JSM 2006**

*Beth Kilss, Publications Officer, and Allen Schirm, 2007 Program Chair*

This month's article focuses on some exciting offerings from the Social Statistics Section (SSS) for this next August's Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle. In three Roundtable Luncheons and a Short Course, you'll have the opportunity to learn about and

discuss important future -- and current -- problems in social statistics. The discussion leaders of the Roundtable Luncheons will explore with you the future of U.S. income statistics, telephone surveys, and privacy protection. In the Short Course, which is cosponsored with the Government Statistics Section and the Section on Survey Research Methods, the instructors will show how statistical extensions of classical mathematical demography can be applied to solve important demographic problems.

Read on and learn the details, as you won't want to miss signing up for these excellent activities when planning your schedule for JSM 2006.

### **EXPLORE THE FUTURE AT JSM 2006 ROUNDTABLE LUNCHEONS**

The Social Statistics Session is pleased to sponsor three forward-looking roundtable luncheons with visionary discussion leaders: **Connie Citro**, **Clyde Tucker**, and **Jerry Gates**. The three roundtables will explore substantive and methodological topics that are central to our work in social statistics, specifically, the future of income statistics, telephone surveys, and privacy protection.

**The Future of U.S. Income Statistics.**--Connie Citro, Director of the Committee on National Statistics, will lead a discussion about needed improvements to the U.S. income statistics system, exploring the role of surveys, possible uses of administrative records, and the role of indirect estimation methods.

**Telephone Surveys: Where Do We Go from Here?**--Clyde Tucker, Senior Survey Methodologist at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and co-chair of the organizing committee for the Second International Conference on Telephone Survey Methodology (TSMII), will lead a discussion highlighting some of the major themes to emerge from TSMII pertaining to multi-mode data collection, adapting surveys to cell phones, response rates, and nonresponse bias.

**The Next Survey Imperative: Being Proactive on Privacy.**--Jerry Gates, Chief Privacy Officer at the U.S. Census Bureau, will lead a discussion about the broad range of approaches used by survey organizations to address growing public concerns about privacy while facing increased pressure to halt declining survey response rates.

If you want more information about these JSM 2006 roundtable luncheons or have ideas for invited sessions for JSM 2007, contact our 2007 Program Chair, Allen Schirm ([aschirm@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:aschirm@mathematica-mpr.com)).

### **SHORT COURSE ON STATISTICAL DEMOGRAPHY WITH APPLICATIONS**

Demographic problems are intensifying world wide. Sustainability of pension systems, intergenerational fiscal equity under population aging, and accounting for health care benefits for future retirees are examples of problems that cannot be solved without understanding the nature of population forecasts and their uncertainty. Similarly, the accuracy of population estimates directly affects both the distributions of formula-based government allocations to subnational units and the apportionment of political representation.

#### **Overview of the Course**

This course will focus on central concepts of demography from the viewpoint of statistical theory, drawing on material in the book by Alho and Spencer, *Statistical Demography and Forecasting* (2005 Springer). Topics to be covered will include data sources; classical mathematical demography and its relation to pension funding and aging; stochastic demographic forecasting and its applications; and census error and its effects. Technical details will be avoided; material is selected so that heuristic arguments can be presented.

After the course, participants should understand:

- sources of demographic data and their major sources of error;
- statistical optimality of classical demographic measures;
- basic mechanics of population renewal and its effect on, e.g., pension systems; and
- interpretation of stochastic population forecasts.

Use of formulas is kept to a minimum. No prior knowledge of demography is required. Familiarity with basic statistical modeling including regression, generalized linear models, time series analysis and maximum likelihood inference is assumed.

#### **The Instructors**

**Juha M. Alho** is Professor of Statistics at the University of Joensuu in Finland. **Bruce D. Spencer** is Professor of Statistics at Northwestern University, U.S.A. The two presenters have taught courses based on material in the book to university students in the U.S. and Europe. They have also contributed extensively to statistical demography and served in advisory roles and as statistical consultants to government agencies concerned with stochastic forecasts and census accuracy.

## More Details

This course is unique in presenting the demographic problems from a statistical point of view and using the language of statistics. The statistical foundation for addressing such issues will be explained and illustrated with applications of classical demographic measures, event history methods, multi-state methods, stochastic population forecasting, sampling and census coverage, and decision theory. The course will be explanatory rather than technical, and emphasis will be devoted to heuristic arguments and real examples from Europe and the U.S.

Particular attention will be paid to variability in populations and demographic processes. The course will show how stochastic forecasts can be produced using simulation methods, and the mechanics will be illustrated using free, specialized software developed by the instructors. A widely held view is that population phenomena are slowly changing and predictable. However, the course will demonstrate that the volatility of demographic processes is commonly underestimated.

## Organization of the Course

The course is organized into four sessions:

- **Data Sources and Quality** will discuss concepts of open and closed populations; data sources including samples, registers, censuses; sources of uncertainty in demographic data; and dual systems estimates to estimate population size. Particular attention will be paid to use of a post-enumeration survey in census undercount estimation and total error modeling as applied to undercount estimates.
- **Concepts and Applications of Waiting Times** will focus on hazards and survival probabilities; life expectancies; stable populations; basics of pension funding; fertility and reproduction; period and cohort fertility.
- **Multi-State Demographic Models** begins with the introduction and application of loss functions and decision theory for understanding statistics and the allocation of government funds, and then will present the framework for multi-state demographic forecasts, matrix formulation of multi-state models, cohort-component forecasts, functional demographic forecasts, and stable population theory.
- **Demographic Forecasting** will discuss point forecasts and prediction intervals; propagation of error in forecasts: analytics and simulation; simulation in practice; examples of forecast databases and their use.

For more information about the course, contact Bruce Spencer ([bspencer@northwestern.edu](mailto:bspencer@northwestern.edu)).

## ~~~~~ COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL STATISTICS CELEBRATES ITS 100<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

### ALL ARE INVITED!!

**When:** Thursday, May 11, 2006

**Where:** National Academy of Sciences Main Building, 2100 C St, NW – Auditorium

**Time:** 3:15 pm (coffee and cookies available in Great Hall beginning at 2:45 pm)

**RSVP:** Bridget Edmonds by **May 8, 2006: 202-334-3096, or [cnstat@nas.edu](mailto:cnstat@nas.edu)**

The seminar program includes:

**Katherine Wallman, U.S. Chief Statistician,  
“Recent Developments at the OMB Statistical and Science Policy Office”**

**Tim Holt, President, Royal Statistical Society,  
Former Director, UK Office for National Statistics,  
“The Official Statistics Olympic Challenge: Wider, Deeper, Quicker, Better, Cheaper”**

**Janet Norwood, Former Commissioner, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Discussant**

***Discussion from the floor***

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## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS ECONOMICS STATISTICS (NABE) SEMINAR**

University of Maryland, Adelphi, Maryland, May 21-23, 2006

NABE's Statistics Professional Development Seminar will be held on May 21-23, 2006 at the University of Maryland Conference Center located at 3501 University Boulevard East, Adelphi, MD, just outside Washington, DC on the Washington Metro.

The seminar, "How to Find and Use Economic Statistics," will present a wide range of Federal Government economic statistics and some private sector statistics. It will explain what they measure, what questions they can answer, and how they can be accessed. Attendees will meet and learn from senior government officials who produce the data and the business analysts who use the data professionally.

Reserve your space today for registration and hotel savings. For program, speaker list, and registration, visit:

<http://www.nabe.com/stats2006/>

## **THE NATIONAL HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY (NHIS) WORKSHOP**

National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, Maryland, July 13, 2006

The Division of Health Interview Statistics will conduct a seminar on the NHIS on July 13th following the 2006 National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Data Users Conference. The seminar will be held at the NCHS in Hyattsville, MD (located in the Washington, DC Metro area).

The target audience for the seminar is beginning and intermediate users of the survey data.

A preliminary agenda includes:

- Overview of the NHIS
- Accessing data through the Web
- Sample design issues
- Analytic examples
- Co-sponsoring questions on the NHIS
- New on the NHIS

Please mark your calendars now and expect registration information to be available in May. You may contact Peter Meyer [pmeyer1@cdc.gov](mailto:pmeyer1@cdc.gov) to be put on the Workshop mailing list.

For additional information about

- the NHIS, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/hisdesc.htm>
- the NCHS 2006 Data Users Conference to be held July 10-12, 2006, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington D.C, go to [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/events/duc2006/duc\\_announce.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/events/duc2006/duc_announce.htm) or [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/events/duc2006/duc\\_announce2006.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/events/duc2006/duc_announce2006.htm)

## **GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICANS**

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS)

The NASS would like to make qualified U.S. citizens of Asian-Pacific descent aware of the following scholarship program. NASS is the primary data-gathering agency within the USDA. Most of our statisticians work on surveys or in geographic-information systems.

The Graduate Scholarship Program provides funding for graduate school as preparation for a career in government service. The program is designed to recruit U.S. citizen, Asian-Pacific Americans to work for USDA after completion of

graduate course work in particular disciplines, and will be administered under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).

In 2006, twelve scholarships will be awarded to students enrolled in Master's or Ph.D. programs. Generally, a maximum of two (2) years of funding will be provided for a Master's degree and four (4) years of funding will be provided for a Ph.D. degree.

Recipients of the scholarships enter into an agreement with USDA and receive full-tuition scholarships. Prior to graduation, recipients intern at USDA for a minimum of 640 hours. The internships are paid in addition to the scholarship funds.

After graduation, recipients are required to work for USDA one year for every year of financial assistance received from USDA.

**The awards include the following:**

- Full-tuition scholarships: tuition, mandatory university fees and books;
- Paid internship (minimum 640 hours) leading to permanent employment;
- Employee benefits; and
- Mentoring, career development, and leadership training.

**Sponsoring Agency**

Several of the scholarships will be sponsored by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

**Eligible Fields of Study:**

- Geographic Information Systems
- Mathematical Statistics

**Contacts:**

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Hubert Hamer, (202) 720-8092, [Hubert\\_Hamer@nass.usda.gov](mailto:Hubert_Hamer@nass.usda.gov)

**Eligibility Criteria:** Each applicant must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Possess a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, or be a graduating senior, with at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average based on a 4.0 scale;
- Be accepted into or enrolled in an accredited institution as a graduate student, seeking a Master's or Ph.D. degree in a field as defined above;
- Have a strong interest in a career in public service with USDA; and
- Is not a current USDA employee.

**For further information**, please direct inquiries to the contacts listed above.

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**THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ESTABLISHMENT SURVEYS (ICES-III) –  
CALL FOR CONTRIBUTED PAPERS**

Montréal, Québec, Canada, June 18-21, 2007

The Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-III) will be held on June 18-21, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Montréal in Montréal, Québec, Canada. The GSS is one of the sponsors of ICES-III.

The program committee for ICES-III began accepting proposals for contributed papers (including topic contributed sessions) beginning on April 13. **June 15, 2006 is the submission deadline.** The ICES-III Program Committee will review the proposals and notify the organizers if their proposal has been accepted.

Contributed sessions are divided into five segments. These will be used for four 20-minute presentations, followed by a 10-minute formal discussion, and a 10-minute floor discussion.

Proposals for contributed papers must be submitted on the **template** on the ICES-III web site:  
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm?fuseaction=contributed>

In 1993, ICES-I convened more than 400 experts in the area of surveys of businesses, farms and institutions. It set the stage by formally documenting the state of the art in 1993. In 2000, ICES-II took a forward look at methods for surveying businesses, farms and institutions. ICES-III will explore the current state of the art.

The Conference also will include:

- Four short courses on Monday, June 18,
- A keynote speaker and reception on Monday evening,
- Poster sessions and software demonstrations throughout the conference,
- A closing dinner followed by a panel discussion, and
- Following the conference, a CD-ROM of all presented papers will be sent to all Conference participants.

Montréal is a city rich in history, art, culture, and learning and sports. It combines the hustle of North America with the ambiance of Europe. The city's architecture, too, is an artful mix of old and new, with graceful historic structures lovingly preserved and merged with the cool lines of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The visual arts flourish here at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, the Musée D'art Contemporain, and hundreds of top-notch local galleries.

All Conference activities will be held at the Hyatt Regency Montréal. The Hyatt Regency Montréal web site is <http://montreal.hyatt.com/>. **(Hotel reservations will be open on March 1, 2007.)**

Further Conference information can be accessed on the ICES-III Web site:  
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm>

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**OBITUARY: ROBERT MUGGE, HEALTH STATISTICIAN STUDIED PRIVACY ISSUES**

*Editor's Note: The following obituary appeared in The Washington Post on Thursday, April 20, 2006:*

"Dr. Robert Herman Mugge, 84, a former assistant to the director of the National Center for Health Statistics in the Department of Health and Human Services, died of dementia April 11 at Eden Homes, Inc., an assisted living facility in Silver Spring, MD. He was a longtime Silver Spring resident.

Dr. Mugge was born in Tampa and graduated with honors from the University of Florida in 1943. During World War II, he served in the Army in Germany, attaining the rank of first lieutenant in field artillery.

After his discharge from the Army in 1946, he received a master's degree in sociology from the University of Florida in 1947 and a doctorate in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1957. His dissertation explored the lives of African American migrants in Atlanta.

He served as director of research and statistics for the North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare from 1952 to 1959, when he moved to the Washington area to take a position with the U.S. Bureau of Family Services. He became director of the National Center for Social Statistics, Social and Rehabilitative Service, in 1968.

In 1971, he was named assistant to the director for federal-state activities at the National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics. He later joined the National Center for Health Statistics, retiring in 1989 as assistant to the director.

During his career, Dr. Mugge was active in issues surrounding privacy protections, freedom of information, confidentiality, civil rights, and systems security.

In retirement, he worked as a part-time consultant to the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academy of Sciences. He worked on confidentiality and data-access issues.



He also served on several local and national boards and committees of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and was particularly interested in missions, world hunger, race relations, and establishing a pension plan for ministers and teachers. A longtime member of the Lutheran Church of St. Andrew in Silver Spring, he sang in church choirs all his adult life.

Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Elizabeth Mugge of Silver Spring, four children, Robert E. Mugge of Jackson, Miss., John A. Mugge of Phoenixville, Pa., Paul R. Mugge of Silver Spring, and Frances E. Gill of High Point, N.C.; and seven grandchildren."

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## **Government Statistics Section**

### *Mission Statement*

*The mission of the Government Statistics Section (GSS) is to promote the use of sound statistical theory and methods in the production of data at all levels of government – be it Federal, State, local, or international; assist in the broad dissemination of those data; and encourage good statistical practice by all users. Areas of interest for the Section include all that involve the production, dissemination, and application of governmental statistics, including concern with statistical policy issues, quality and usefulness of governmental data products, special problems of State and local data, comparability of data among different countries, and the role of professional statisticians in the public sector.*

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## **Social Statistics Section**

### *Mission Statement*

*The Social Statistics Section seeks to advance research in social statistics, both in areas which involve the use of methods of statistical inquiry, and in those which involve the use of statistical data and the development of statistical measurement. This section will also plan for active participation in the affairs of the American Statistical Association by those interested in these matters and for representation of activities in this major field in the program of the ASA.*

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