

**GSS/SSS May 2007 NEWSLETTER**  
**Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections**  
**American Statistical Association**

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**Don't forget these upcoming events ~~**

- **103rd Meeting of the Committee on National Statistics**  
**May 10, 2007; RSVP by May 7, 2007**
- **ICES-III: See website for details: <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm>**  
**June 18-21, 2007**
- **NHIS's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Conference:**  
See website for details: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/nhis\\_fifty.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/nhis_fifty.htm)  
**June 25, 2007**

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**[Let's Do Lunch at JSM 2007!](#)**

Thanks to contributions from Jana Asher, *Social Statistics Section*, 2008 Program Chair and Mike Davern, *Government Statistics Section*, 2008 Program Chair

Only three more months until we converge on Salt Lake City! You are probably already starting to plan your schedule for the Joint Statistical Meetings. Why not attend a Roundtable Luncheon this year? Roundtable luncheons offer the opportunity to explore a topic of interest in a less formal setting. This year, the Social Statistics Section and the Government Statistics Section are each sponsoring three roundtables. Here are six great opportunities to participate in entertaining discussions. Bon Appetit!

**Monday, July 30<sup>th</sup>**

Social Statistics Sections presents "Linking Survey Data and Administrative Data for Policy Research." Michael Davern of the University of Minnesota will lead a discussion on the limitations in survey data that are overcome by use of

administrative data, and how a combination of survey and administrative data are being used to gain insight into enrollment in U.S. public assistance programs.

Government Statistics section presents "Design and Use of the IPUMS-International Data Series." Matthew Sobek, PhD, Research Associate with the Minnesota Population Center will discuss the ins and outs of the IPUMS project. The luncheon discussion will include elements of the IPUMS design, such as the constraints imposed by international statistical offices and the strengths and limitation of the data. His abstract states, "the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series project (IPUMS) is compiling the world's largest public use census database. The data system currently includes 63 census samples from 20 countries, containing the individual-level records of 185 million persons. Samples from another 25 countries will be added over the next three years. The project harmonizes the data and documentation across countries, and the web system produces data extracts that users download for analysis -- all completely free of charge."

## **Tuesday, July 31<sup>st</sup>**

Social Statistic Section is sponsoring Robert Fay's discussion titled "From Soft to Hard Science: Will Survey Research Make the Transition?" Currently Chief Statistician of the U.S. Census Bureau, Dr. Fay has spent multiple years contemplating scientific communication, especially in his role as an editor for *Science*. He will discuss the current state of survey research in terms of its scientific grounding, point to examples of disciplines where the soft to hard transition has occurred or is currently taking place, and contemplate what survey research could learn from those disciplines.

Government Statistics Section is offering two luncheon opportunities on Tuesday.

One option from GSS, is a conversation led by Patricia C. (Patty) Becker from APB Associates/Southeast Michigan Census Council/Association of Public Data Users. This luncheon roundtable entitled "Data User Issues With the American Community Survey" will focus on a data user perspective of the ACS. Her abstract states, "almost a year ago, we saw the release of the first full year of data collection, the 2005 ACS. Data were released in several formats on American FactFinder. What are user experiences with these products? How can they be improved? What should we expect the Census Bureau to do so that the products will work better for us?"

The second GSS option is called "Remote Access to Microdata." Julia Lane, Senior Vice President at NORC, will host this discussion. Her abstract states, "This roundtable will focus on discussing the costs and benefits of providing researchers with remote access to microdata. It will describe the implementation at NORC using NIST's Advanced Technology Program data. It also will describe some of the metrics being developed to measure the impact of the approach on the quality of analysis and the associated risk. "

## **Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>**

The final Social Statistics Section sponsored luncheon will be a timely discussion titled "Media Coverage Regarding Data on Mortality in Iraq." Leslie Roberts of the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health of Johns Hopkins University will share his experiences as an author of a controversial study. He will discuss the media coverage of the Lancet 2006 study which he coauthored. And he will talk about the difficulties in communicating the results of random sample surveys to the public, and the ways in which parties with non-scientific agendas affected the presentation of the Lancet study in the media.

If you want more information about these JSM 2007 roundtable luncheons or have ideas for invited sessions for JSM 2008, please contact SSS 2008 program chair Jana Asher ([jana@asher-resnick.us](mailto:jana@asher-resnick.us)) or GSS 2008 program chair Michael Davern ([davern004@umn.edu](mailto:davern004@umn.edu)). See you all in August!

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## **103rd Meeting of the Committee on National Statistics**

### **Featured Topic – Measuring the Economic Effects of Global Warming: Models, Data, and Policies**

The National Academies, NAS Building, 2100 C St., NW, Washington, DC

Please RSVP to Bridget Edmonds at 202-334-3096 or [cnsstat@nas.edu](mailto:cnsstat@nas.edu) by **May 7th**.

**Thursday, May 10, 2007, Open Session – Public Seminar and Reception – Agenda**

**2:30 pm** – *Coffee and Cookies for Seminar Guests* – NAS Great Hall Seminar (Auditorium)

**3:00** – *Welcome and Introduction* – William Eddy, Carnegie Mellon University and CNSTAT Chair

**3:05** – *Developments at the OMB Statistical and Science Policy Office* – Katherine K. Wallman, Chief Statistician

**3:20** – *Featured Topic – Measuring the Economic Effects of Global Warming: Models, Data, and Policies* – William Nordhaus, Sterling Professor of Economics, Yale University

*Abstract:* William D. Nordhaus, member of the National Academy of Sciences and former member of CNSTAT, will present an overview of the current state of research in the field of measuring the economic effects of global climate change and challenge the federal statistical and research communities to develop the data, statistics, methodological research, and analyses needed to help us chart our future course. Specifically, he will discuss “integrated assessment” and other economic models of global warming; present results of recent modeling efforts attempting to identify the relative efficiency of different policy objectives; assess the major uncertainties that limit our modeling efforts and, in turn, our understanding of the issues; and offer recommendations for improving statistical data that would improve our models, projections, and policy assessments.

**4:00** – *Discussion* – Howard Gruenspecht, Deputy Administrator, Energy Information Administration  
J. Steven Landefeld, Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis

**4:30** – *Floor discussion*

**4:45** – *Reception* – Great Hall

**5:45** – *Adjourn*

*Note: All venues are handicapped accessible.*

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### **Mollie Orshansky, Statistician, Dies at 91**

Fellow Statistician, Mollie Orshansky, passed away December 18, 2006. For the full obituary, please see the following New York Times Article:

<http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0817F83A5B0C748DDDAD0894DF404482&showabstract=1>. If you are not a member of the Times Select, but would like more information, please email [Carrie.R.Simon@census.gov](mailto:Carrie.R.Simon@census.gov). Mollie is also recognized on Social Security Administration’s web page at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/history/orshansky.html>.

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### **Start Thinking About JSM 2008 Invited Sessions**

Please start thinking about GSS and SSS Invited Sessions for the 2008 JSM meeting in Denver. Submissions will be due sometime in June or July of 2007. The GSS and SSS memberships are doing a great variety of innovative things and now is the opportunity to organize a session to let everyone know about it at JSM in 2008. The guidelines from the JSM web site say that “Invited sessions are **110 minutes in length**, can take a variety of formats, and **typically include from two to six participants**.” GSS and SSS will each receive an allocated number of invited sessions plus members will have the opportunity to compete for a selected number of open invited sessions to be chosen by the JSM 2008 program committee. Feel free to contact Michael Davern ([davern004@umn.edu](mailto:davern004@umn.edu)) or Jana Asher ([jana@asher-resnick.us](mailto:jana@asher-resnick.us)) for more information.

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### **ICES-III: The Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys: Focuses on Survey Methods for Businesses, Farms, and Institutions**

ICES-III will take place June 18–21, 2007 in central Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The conference promises to be a stimulating and full examination of the current state of the art for surveying businesses, farms, and institutions. Both the invited and contributed programs cover a spectrum of interesting and applicable subjects.

The invited program includes the following 23 sessions: Steps To Provide Quality Industrial Coding for a Business Register, Surveys of Environmental Protection: Experiences and Challenges, Efficient Use of Administrative Data in Business Surveys, Commodity Flow Surveys, Editing & Imputation Strategies to Improve Statistics Using Tax Data, The New Direction of Business Surveys: the Integrated Approach, Advances in Disclosure Protection – Releasing More Business and Farm Data to the Public, Outliers and Influential Observations in Establishment Surveys, Use of Metadata for Establishment Surveys, Targeting Intensive Follow-up of Nonrespondents in Establishment Surveys, Building and Updating Establishment Registries in Developing Countries, The Influences of K.R.W. Brewer on Establishment Surveys, Collecting Data Electronically from Businesses: the Dream and the Reality, Improving Statistics on the Subnational Public Sector, Challenges and Strategies in Implementing Quality Management Programs, A Global Path to Standards in Questionnaire Design, Methods Addressing Agricultural Statistics Issues, Goals and Issues in the Development of the Services Producer Price Index, Getting Response: the Respondent's Perspective, Usage of Linearization Variance Estimators for Survey Estimates, Improving the Measurement of Service Sector Statistics: Challenges and Achievements, Generalized Survey Processing Systems – An Update, and Towards a Better Understanding of the Response Process in Surveys of Businesses and Organizations

Introductory overview lectures cover topics not included in the invited program to fully round out the invited schedule. Housing registration through the ICES III web page is also open. The entire program along with additional information is available on the ICES III web site: <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm>

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### **Happy 50th Anniversary, National Health Interview Survey**

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), which is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) in 2007; the NHIS has been fielded continuously since 1957. To mark the occasion, NCHS is holding a one-day conference on June 25, 2007 at its home site in Hyattsville, Maryland (in Metropolitan Washington, D.C.). Watch the NHIS Web site for further information on registering for the anniversary celebration: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/nhis\\_fifty.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis/nhis_fifty.htm)

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## GOVERNMENT STATISTICS SECTION

*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

*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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