

GSS/SSS JULY 2008 NEWSLETTER
Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

GSS web site: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgov/>
SSS web site: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/>

GSS Publications Officer: Sonya L. Vartivarian
(SVartivarian@Mathematica-MPR.com)

SSS Publications Officer: Sharon M. Stern
(sharon.m.stern@census.gov)

Newsletter Editor: Carrie R. Dennis
(carrie.r.dennis@census.gov)

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Don't forget these upcoming events ~~

- **JSM 2008 – August 3rd through 7th**
- **NCHS 2008 Data Users Conference – August 11th through August 13th**
Conference web page: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/events/duc2008/duc_announce.htm

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**Submit to Members Speak Out**

We have a new column in our GSS/SSS newsletter, Section Members Speak Out, which is an occasional series of opinion pieces by you, the members. If you would like to comment on or contribute to this special series, please contact Carrie Dennis ([carrie.r.dennis@census.gov](mailto:carrie.r.dennis@census.gov)).

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GSS Sponsored Activities in Denver 2008

Submitted by Mike Davern, 2008 GSS Program Chair, and Sunghee Lee, 2009 GSS Program Chair

The 2008 JSM program GSS program will be strong this year at JSM in Denver. We have a total of 11 sessions this year. We have 3 invited sessions, 5 topic contributed sessions and 3 contributed sessions. Juanita Lott was also instrumental in organizing the memorial session, "***The Measure Of Mollie Orshansky***," in honor of Mollie Orshansky for her role in the development of the official poverty measure.

Invited Sessions

The three invited GSS sessions all touch on crucial issues to Government Statisticians. The first session, *"Survey Respondent Incentives: Research And Practice,"* organized by Brian Harris-Kojetin (Office of Management and Budget) examines the use of incentives in survey research. The second, *"Helping Data Users Better Understand The American Community Survey,"* organized by Susan Schechter (US Census Bureau) will cover issues concerning the ACS just weeks before the bureau releases the 2007 ACS data and prepares for the December 2008 release of its first three-year data products." The final invited session, *"Would The Real Data Please Stand Up: Data Comparisons For Policy Analysis,"* was organized by Joan Turek (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation).

Contributed Sessions

We have five topic contributed sessions at this year's JSM. Julia Lane (NORC) organized a session on remote access data systems and confidentiality. Mike Weber (Internal Revenue Service) organized a session on IRS data products. Jonaki Bose (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) organized a session on data privacy and confidentiality. James Farber (US Census Bureau) organized a session on the 2010 Census and Stephen Cohen (National Science Foundation) organized a session on developing innovative sample frames.

We also have 3 contributed sessions this year and they are on Census 2010, Issues in multivariate modeling, and new uses for government data.

Business Meeting

At the business meeting relax, grab a quick bite to eat, chat, network, learn about future professional opportunities for your research, arrange for dinner with your colleagues, and more. The GSS business meeting is on Tuesday, August 5, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM and is open to all (members and nonmembers).

Roundtables with Lunch

Finally, we are organizing two stimulating roundtable luncheon sessions at this year's Joint Statistical Meeting in Denver. Participation is limited, so reserve a spot at the table when you register for JSM 2008. The more intimate setting allows for informal discussions, so please join us.

On Monday, August 4th from 12:30 to 1:50 PM, Tom Belin, Professor at UCLA and a member of ASA Census Advisory Committee, will lead a session, "How Should Prison Inmates Be Incorporated in Census Tabulations?" focusing on incorporating specific group-quarter counts into census redistricting count. The Census Bureau has traditionally allocated people to places based on their "usual residence", but when a prison location is far from the former residences of the inmates (as when the prison is located in a rural area but is largely populated by former urban residents), allocation based on "usual residence" can have very different implications for political redistricting than would other allocation approaches. This session will discuss the controversy that has emerged around this issue and will consider the merits of a "federalist" approach that would distinguish federal and state prisoners from other group-quarters residents in tabulations for redistricting purposes, which would allow jurisdictions to tailor policy decisions (including redistricting maps) to judgments.

On Wednesday, August 6th from 12:30 to 1:50 PM, Michael P. Battaglia, Vice President at Abt Associates Inc., will host a session titled "Cell Phone Survey Sampling and Weighting." The increasing cell-only population has become a hurdle for landline random-digit-dialing surveys, which led to a growing number of cellular telephone surveys being conducted to supplement traditional landline random-digit-dialing telephone surveys. Those who attend will discuss: 1) cell phone sampling frames, 2) landline to cell ported numbers, 3) trade-offs of screening for cell phone-only household versus using a dual frame sample design that also includes households with landline and cellular telephone service, 4) the two alternative sampling models that have received the most attention -- a household level sampling model versus a person level sampling model, 5) weighting techniques including how the National Health Interview Survey and other surveys such as the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey can be used to develop estimates of the size of the cell phone-only population.

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## **JSM 2008 and the Social Statistics Section – A program you won't want to miss!**

*Submitted by Jana Asher, SSS Program Chair*

This year, the Social Statistics Section will be the primary sponsor for an exciting and diverse set of sessions – including four invited sessions, three topic contributed sessions, and six contributed sessions, making a total of 13. That number may seem familiar—in fact, there are exactly 13 general session slots on the JSM program—and the SSS is the primary sponsor for exactly one session in each slot!

On Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, SSS is sponsoring two contributed sessions – “Linear Modeling Methods for Education Statistics and Other Social Statistics” at 2pm, and “Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Principal Components Analysis” at 4pm. The first of those sessions looks at specific analysis projects related to a kindergarten Spanish immersion program, high school coursework and university student retention, self and peer evaluations in a medical school student survey, and modeling of infant survival rates, among others. The second covers such topics as multiple confirmatory factor analysis, Toeplitz structures, and multi-trait multi-method models.

The next day, Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, is a very full day for the Social Statistics Section, with a topic contributed session on “Value-Added Models for Student Achievements” at 8:30am, a contributed session about “Rethinking Established Practice” at 10:30am, a roundtable luncheon at 12:30pm, an invited session titled “To the Nth Power: Younger Statisticians Taking the Lead” at 2pm, and our open business meeting and social at 5:30pm that evening. The first of these sessions, at 8:30am, includes both the study of teacher effects on student learning and also test-score ceiling effects on teacher and school rankings, among other topics. The second session, at 10:30am, looks at many different problematic aspects of established statistical practice, from potential dependency issues in meta-analysis, to the use of physics-based models for social science applications, to the real beginning of the “baby boom” generation. The roundtable lunch that follows will focus on methods for analyzing the relationship between Korean-American students’ achievement and their family background. After lunch, the invited panel of “To the Nth power” discusses how younger statisticians and non-traditional statisticians are increasingly leading new initiatives within the profession. And you won’t want to miss our social hour and business meeting, where you can voice your opinion on SSS initiatives and activities while enjoying some delicious munchies.

If Monday doesn’t exhaust you too much, check out the SSS offerings on Tuesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. At 8:30am, an invited session titled “Statistics Can Help Reduce Child Mortality” challenges us to improve monitoring and evaluation of aid programs. This session is sponsored by eight committees and sections in total, and promises to be a popular and important event. At 10:30am, the winners of the Joint Student Paper Competition (sponsored by SSS, GSS, and SRMS) will receive their awards and present their papers in a topic contributed session. Topics discussed during that session will include an approach to dual system estimation for the Census via local post-stratification and the calculation of cell bounds and disclosure risks in contingency tables. After lunch, at 2pm, SSS is sponsoring a contributed session titled “Bayesian Methods for the Social Sciences,” which will present Bayesian methods for a diverse set of data, from crop insurance contracts to electoral vote totals.

Our jam-packed schedule continues on Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning with a topic contributed session titled “Recent Developments in Transportation Statistics” at 8:30am. That session is followed by an invited session titled “Measuring Health Care Disparities” at 10:30am, which explores the relationship between geographic area, race/ethnicity and health care disparities, discrimination in cancer screening, weight loss interventions for African American women, and the need for reference value studies specific to different ethnic groups for diagnosing lung disease. A roundtable lunch focused on an online data dissemination tool and led by Kathleen S. O'Connor, our Program Chair-Elect, follows. At 2:30pm, the contributed session “Modeling of Migration and Social Networks” will bring together papers that explore respondent-driven sampling, the relationship between home ownership and neighborhood stability, modeling of migrations flows, and social network models.

If you are still with us on Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, two excellent sessions are planned. The first, at 8:30pm, is the invited session “Statistical Measures Can Help Restore Confidence in U.S. Elections.” That session will include a look at the first poll on the experience of voters during the voting process as well as information on how ASA members are helping the

process of voting reform. Finally, at 10:30am, a contributed session on “Causal Inference and Factor Analysis in the Social Sciences” will complete the SSS program.

As well as being the primary sponsor for all of the activities described above, the Social Statistics Section is also a secondary sponsor of many other exciting sessions. This means that if one of the topics above is not appealing, chances are that the SSS is co-sponsoring a different session that is of interest to you. Check out the entire JSM 2008 program at [www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main](http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main), and we'll see you in Denver in August!

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Maximizing Your JSM Experience: A Checklist for JSM 2008

Time for our annual checklist to help you get ready for the 2008 meetings in Denver. Now that the Joint Statistical Meetings are right around the corner, you're probably in the middle of making your plans for Denver -- right? If you're like a lot of us, you keep meaning to make your plans and start working on the slides for your presentation, and, oh, yes, sign up for that Roundtable Luncheon. The list goes on and on....

So, it's a good thing you're reading this article, because the GSS and SSS Executive Board members believe that your JSM experience should be enjoyable, stimulating, and stress-free. To help you achieve this goal, once again we offer ten suggestions for getting the most out of your 2008 JSM experience:

1. **Prepare Ahead of Time** – For those who are session chairs, authors, discussants, or poster presenters, the American Statistical Association's (ASA's) Web site offers excellent, useful guidelines for preparing for your role. Don't wait until the last minute, but, rather, take advantage of the material available to prepare yourself. The following link leads you to information that will help you prepare for any role you may have this year: <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/index.cfm?fuseaction=speakers>.
2. **Be Informed** – Being a member of ASA and one or more sections will be a much more rewarding experience if you know what's going on. One way, of course, is to go to ASA's Web site at www.amstat.org. Another is to regularly read ASA's monthly membership magazine *Amstat News*. When you do, be sure to check under the Section News each month for the GSS and SSS articles. The May 2008 issue also includes a lot of useful information about JSM 2008 (pages 34-36).
3. **Plan Your Schedule for JSM 2008 in Advance** – Because the program for JSM is online, you don't have to wait until you get to Denver to decide on which sessions you want to attend. There is so much to choose from that you may run into conflicts, but doing a careful review of the sessions, business meetings, luncheons, and special events you want to attend will allow you to maximize your participation. In fact, ASA offers a function online called “My Program” to help you create and prioritize a virtual program of the things you want to attend. Check out: <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main>.
4. **Know Your Section's Sessions** – The Section's Program Chairs for 2008 and 2009 have worked very hard to put together an exciting group of sessions, roundtables, and other activities for this year's program. In the most recent GSS-SSS Newsletters and columns in *Amstat News* issues, you will find details about the invited sessions, roundtable luncheons, and topic contributed and contributed sessions.
5. **Know Your Section's Activities** – Both Sections have an annual Business Meeting and Mixer. The Social Statistics Section Business Meeting will be on **Monday, August 4, at 5:30 pm** in the HY-Granite C room. The Government Statistics Section Business Meeting will be on **Tuesday, August 5, at 5:30 pm** in room CC-202. At the Business Meeting and Mixer, you'll get a chance to meet your fellow section members and hear what's been going on over the past year, as well as look ahead at what's coming. And last, but not least, you'll be able to enjoy food and drink in a very relaxed atmosphere where we can all get to know each other a little better.
6. **Meet the Section Officers** – If you come to number 5 above, you'll get to meet the current officers in person.

Current officers for the GSS include: Carol House, Chair, 2008; Stephen Cohen, Chair, 2007; Robert Lussier, Chair, 2009; Michael E. Davern, Program Chair, 2008; Sunghee Lee, Program Chair, 2009; Lester R. Curtin,

Secretary/Treasurer, 2007-2008; Carolee Bush, Council of Sections Rep, 2007-2009; Sonya Vartivarian, Publications Officer, 2007-2008; Chet Bowie, COPAFS Rep 2007-2008; Stephanie Shipp, COPAFS Rep, 2008-2009; Carrie R. Dennis, Newsletter Editor; Bill Wong, Assistant Editor, *Amstat* Online; Tai Phan, GSSLIST Coordinator; and Monica Clark, ASA Ex Officio.

Current officers for the SSS include: Linda Gage, Chair, 2008; Jennifer H. Madans, Chair, 2007; Allen Schirm, Chair, 2009; Jana L. Asher, Program Chair, 2008; Kathleen O'Connor, Program Chair, 2009; Dawn Haines, Secretary/Treasurer, 2008-2009; Daniel Weinberg, Council of Sections Rep, 2007-2009; Sharon M. Stern, Publications Officer, 2007-2008; and Monica Clark, ASA Ex Officio.

7. **Express Your Opinion** – We welcome your thoughts and ideas about the Sections' sessions, activities, newsletter, *Amstat News* column in Section News, the GSS/SSS portion of the ASA Web site, or anything else on your mind that relates to our organization. We want to better serve our membership well, but we need your input to help us do that. To contact the GSS officers, go to ASA's Web site at: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/>. To contact the SSS officers, go to ASA's Web site at: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/>. At both sites, click on "Officers" to view contact information. We're looking forward to hearing from you!
8. **Find Out What Your Association Is Doing** – Attend the ASA Open Meeting, the President's Address, and any other open meeting sponsored by a section you may be interested in joining. Check the online program for dates and times: <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/index.cfm>.
9. **Do Something New** – If you're not a member of the Government Statistics Section or the Social Statistics Section and are interested in learning more, plan to attend the Business Meeting and Mixer to find out what we're all about. We welcome your attendance. Or, attend the Student Paper Awards Session to be held **Tuesday, August 5, at 10:30 am** in room CC-712. Take a closer look at the program this year and plan on doing or attending something you've never done or attended before! Try it! You'll like it!

And last, but not least –

10. **Make Your Travel Plans** – By now, you should at least have made your hotel reservations if you're planning to stay in the conference hotels, as they are the most convenient to the meetings. And don't wait till the last minute to make airline reservations, because August is a busy time for vacations and flights are often booked months in advance. Pick up the phone now!

See you in Denver!

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### **Plan to Attend the Section Business Meetings**

*Updated from 2007's submission by Steve Cohen, 2007 Chair, Government Statistics Section*

ASA is mostly a volunteer organization with a professional staff handling finances, logistics, coordination, etc. Without volunteers ASA would not function—No JSM 2008, no special topic ASA Section sponsored conferences such as the International Conference on Establishment Surveys III. Do you want to get involved with shaping ASA and the statistical profession? Have you wondered how the sections operate? How they sponsor conferences and events? Do you know how the sections were involved in the JSM 2008 program? Do you want to have input in how your section is run? Want to get your ideas heard? Want to network? Plan to attend the section business meetings at JSM. The meetings are open to all members and nonmembers:

- Social Statistics Section Business Meeting, Monday, August 4, at 5:30 pm in the HY-Granite C room
  - Government Statistics Section Business Meeting, Tuesday, August 5, at 5:30 pm in room CC-202
- \*\* Check the final program for last minute room changes.

At the business meeting relax, grab a quick bite to eat, chat, network, learn about future professional opportunities for your research, arrange for dinner with your colleagues, and more.

*What's the agenda at the GSS business meeting?*

At 6 pm Carol House, the Section Chair, will bring the formal program to a start by introducing the GSS executive board. (The section's elected leadership votes on the direction over the year.) This is the formal mechanism to be heard though we always appreciate input from our members. We meet at the annual meeting plus at ASA offices in December and March. We will review the accomplishments of last year, the status of the section's finances, honor members who have received awards, discuss upcoming conferences, and poll the audience for upcoming events, ideas, etc.

*What's the agenda at the SSS business meeting?*

Following a similar pattern, Linda Gage, the Section Chair, leads the business meeting. She introduces the Board members and several make presentations on the status of the budget, the programs, the scholarship and award committees, and publications.

So come on out to the meetings. Introduce yourself to the sections' Executive Board members and let us know what you want from your section. And if you'd like to be involved, just let us know. We are always looking for members who want to volunteer their time and energy---including running for an elected office.

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NCHS 2008 Data Users Conference

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) 2008 Data Users Conference is being held from August 11 through August 13 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. This **free** conference is held biennially to bring the latest information on NCHS data to researchers and other data users from around the country.

This year we are excited to have Dr. Peter Orszag, Director of the Congressional Budget Office as our keynote speaker on Monday morning. We've asked him to reflect on emerging challenges in health policy that require new data or new uses for existing data, both from NCHS and other organizations.

All of the NCHS data systems will be represented with informational sessions, hands-on workshops and exhibits.

There is no charge for the conference, but registration is required. Sessions are filling up rapidly. You'll find all you need to know at the conference website: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/events/duc2008/duc_announce.htm.

If you are coming from out of town and need a room, please contact the OMNI Shoreham directly at (202) 234-0700. They have a block of rooms reserved at the government rate for the conference. However, rooms are filling up fast.

If you need more specific information, you can contact the conference co-chair Mary Moien at mxm3@cdc.gov. Please circulate to any interested colleagues.

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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.*

## OFFICERS AND CONTACTS

**Carol C. House**

Chair, 2008

[carol\\_house@nass.usda.gov](mailto:carol_house@nass.usda.gov)

**Robert Lussier**

Chair-Elect, 2008

[robert.lussier@statcan.ca](mailto:robert.lussier@statcan.ca)

**Stephen Cohen**

Past-Chair, 2008

[scohen@nsf.gov](mailto:scohen@nsf.gov)

**Michael E. Davern**

Program Chair, 2008

[daver004@umn.edu](mailto:daver004@umn.edu)

**Sunghee Lee**

Program Chair-Elect, 2008

[slee9@ucla.edu](mailto:slee9@ucla.edu)

**Lester R. Curtin**

Secretary/Treasurer, 2007-08

[lrc2@cdc.gov](mailto:lrc2@cdc.gov)

**Carolee Bush**

Council of Sections Rep, 2007-09

[cbush2000@aol.com](mailto:cbush2000@aol.com)

**Sonya Vartivarian**

Publications Officer, 2007-08

[SVartivarian@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:SVartivarian@mathematica-mpr.com)

**Chet Bowie**

COPAFS Rep, 2007-08

[bowie-chet@norc.org](mailto:bowie-chet@norc.org)

**Stephanie Shipp**

COPAFS Rep, 2008-09

[stephanie.shipp@nist.gov](mailto:stephanie.shipp@nist.gov)

**Carrie R. Dennis**

Newsletter Editor

[carrie.r.dennis@census.gov](mailto:carrie.r.dennis@census.gov)

**Bill Wong**

Assistant Editor, *Amstat Online*

[bjwg@yahoo.com](mailto:bjwg@yahoo.com)

**Tai Phan**

GSSLIST Coordinator

[tai.phan@ed.gov](mailto:tai.phan@ed.gov)

**Monica Clark**

ASA Ex Officio

[monica@amstat.org](mailto:monica@amstat.org)



## 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.*

## OFFICERS AND CONTACTS

**Linda Gage**

Chair, 2008

[Linda.Gage@dof.ca.gov](mailto:Linda.Gage@dof.ca.gov)

**Dawn Haines**

Secretary/Treasurer 2008-09

[dawn.e.haines@census.gov](mailto:dawn.e.haines@census.gov)

**Allen L. Schirm**

Chair-Elect, 2008

[aschirm@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:aschirm@mathematica-mpr.com)

**Daniel Weinberg**

Council of Sections Rep, 2007-09

[Daniel.H.Weinberg@census.gov](mailto:Daniel.H.Weinberg@census.gov)

**Jennifer H. Madans**

Past-Chair, 2008

[Jennifer.madans@cdc.hhs.gov](mailto:Jennifer.madans@cdc.hhs.gov)

**Sharon M. Stern**

Publications Officer, 2007-08

[sharon.m.stern@census.gov](mailto:sharon.m.stern@census.gov)

**Jana L. Asher**

Program Chair, 2008

[jana@asher-resnick.us](mailto:jana@asher-resnick.us)

**Monica D. Clark**

Staff Liaison

[monica@amstat.org](mailto:monica@amstat.org)

**Kathleen S. O'Connor**

Program Chair-Elect, 2008

[kdo7@cdc.gov](mailto:kdo7@cdc.gov)