

GSS/SSS Newsletter

Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

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



The Year Ahead

Gerald Gates, 2005 Social Statistics Chair

First, let me express my sincere thanks to **Colm O'Muircheartaigh** for his leadership in chairing this section this past year and also for filling in during 2003 when the elected chair couldn't serve. The section is indebted to him, and I personally will value his advice and support as I assume the chair in 2005.

We have plenty of accomplishments to be proud of and plenty of challenges ahead. There are many activities the section will consider in order to ensure that it serves its current members and is able to attract new members:

- First, we need to ensure that we are providing a useful forum for the broad range of ASA members who develop statistical methods or who use statistical data to study social issues or formulate social policy—not only those who have chosen to join our section but also those who don't yet see the benefit. One way to do this is to be proactive in reaching out to our sister organizations (such as the American Sociological Association) and other ASA sections to identify synergies and focus activities toward our common members. As the ASA continues to expand the number of sections, we should try to identify what it is that makes us unique and promote those qualities as part of this outreach.
- Second, we are tasked with reducing the large budget surplus we have built up over the years. This should not be done in a haphazard manner. We need to put strategic goals in place for spending this surplus to strengthen our section and enhance its viability.

- Finally, we will continue to strengthen our program for JSM and support the recognition of those who excel in the field of social statistics.

I look forward to working with the new board to achieve these objectives and welcome your thoughts and suggestions on how the section can better serve your needs.

Invited Sessions for 2005 Joint Statistical Meetings Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 7 - 11, 2005

Using Our Discipline To Enhance Human Welfare

In support of JSM's theme for 2005, our Program Chairs, **Brian Harris-Kojetin** and **Renee Miller** have been hard at work planning the GSS and SSS-sponsored Invited Sessions.

Brian reports that there will be five invited sessions for **Government Statistics**:

- Improving Quality and Access to Federal Data – *Memorial Session in Honor of Pat J. Doyle*

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(Invited Sessions – continued from page 1.)

- The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM): Celebrating Thirty Years of Service to the Federal Statistical Community
- Researcher Access to Confidential Data for Analysis
- Metadata Management in Statistical Agencies
- Q-Bank: An Interagency Database of Pretested Survey Questions

Likewise, Renee is pleased to announce that five sessions have been organized and submitted to ASA for **Social Statistics**:

- Measuring Poverty: New Developments
- Improving the Measurement of Disability
- Measuring Child Well-Being: The Pros and Cons of Composite Indices
- Cross-National Comparison of Classifications of Race and Ethnicity (panel session)
- Communicating Statistical Information to Students and Teachers

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### Viva Social Statistics!

*Jonaki Bose, Program Chair, 2004*

It was a pleasure (mostly!) planning the Social Statistics Section Program for the 2004 Joint Statistical Meetings in Toronto. The truth is, any success I've had is due to my colleagues in SSS – especially the 2003 Program Chair, Susan Schechter; Jana Asher, my counterpart in GSS; the ever-patient conference staff at ASA; and the cheerful chairs and presenters who worked hard to create interesting and successful sessions. I welcome this year's chair – **Renee Miller**, who has already done an outstanding job with the 2004 luncheons, and the 2005 chair-elect, **Juanita Tamayo Lott**, whose energy and enthusiasm for bringing together professionals is well known. And finally, I would like to strongly encourage all SSS and GSS members and other readers of this newsletter to contemplate what they would like to see at Minneapolis. Social Statistics covers a wide swath of topics as evidenced by our charter:

<http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/charter.html>

(Viva Social Statistics! – continued from column 1.)

Often both speakers and session attendees have a better experience in topic-contributed sessions where there is a coherent theme, more time for each presentation, and an opportunity for interaction between presenters and audience members. So let's aim for an increase in our visibility and a positive contribution to the quality of JSM, through greater numbers of topic-contributed sessions and presentations highlighting the breadth and depth that social statistics encompasses.

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"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers..."
Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1899

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### Government Statistics Section

#### *Mission Statement*

*The special interests of the Section on Government Statistics are in the production and use of statistics by the governmental bodies at all levels of government -- federal, state, and local -- and in the practice of statistics in the public sector. These interests include concern with statistical policy issues, quality and usefulness of governmental data products, special problems of state and local data, and the role of professional statisticians in public programs.*

### 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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## Call for Topic-Contributed Sessions for JSM 2005

***Start Planning Your Topic-Contributed  
Session Today!***

**DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1**

Be bold and start organizing a topic-contributed session for Government Statistics or Social Statistics for the 2005 Joint Statistical Meetings. Topic-contributed sessions have several appealing attributes that might be just right for your area of focus. Specifically, topic-contributed sessions include 5 presentations instead of the 6 or 7 presentations of the regular contributed paper session. This translates into more time for each presentation or more time for question and answer interactions with presenters and audience members. There are three format options available:

- Five papers
- Four papers and one discussant
- Three papers and two discussants

It is also possible to organize a topic-contributed panel with 5 panelists. Often, the result of all these attributes is that topic-contributed sessions are more focused, cohesive, and can cover more depth than regular sessions. To top that off, the sessions are often given better time slots and are better attended. Whichever option you chose, each presentation must be 20 minutes, with 10 minutes at the end for floor discussion and concluding remarks by the session chair.

If you are thinking about organizing a topic-contributed session or are already planning one, please contact the following people:

**Brian Harris-Kojetin**  
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202-395-7314

**Renee Miller**  
Social Statistics Section  
([renee.miller@eia.gov](mailto:renee.miller@eia.gov))  
202-287-1718

Brian and Renee would like to talk to you first, as early as possible, then you may submit the abstracts using the online submission system,

which opened **December 1**. But be sure to submit your abstract no later than **February 1**.

Thanks for your interest. Brian and Renee are looking forward to hearing from you!

## Other JSM 2005 Information

If you are planning to attend the 2005 JSM and are interested in chairing a contributed paper session, we welcome your help. Please contact **Renee Miller** ([renee.miller@eia.doe.gov](mailto:renee.miller@eia.doe.gov)) for Social Statistics sessions. Interested in chairing a Government Statistics session? Contact **Brian Harris-Kojetin** ([bharrisk@omb.eop.gov](mailto:bharrisk@omb.eop.gov)).

### *The Government Statistics Section Appreciates Its Corporate Sponsors!*

*Internal Revenue Service  
Social Security Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau  
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

## Awards and Scholarships

### **2005 Student Paper Competition**

The Government Statistics, Social Statistics, and Survey Research Methods Sections are co-sponsoring the annual Student Paper Competition. The application deadline was **December 15, 2004**. At least five awards will be granted. Winning papers are presented by the authors at a session of the 2005 JSM and are recognized at the Sections' business meetings. A subsidy of up to \$800 is provided to each winner in order to cover JSM 2005 expenses. Winners from this year's competition will be announced sometime in early January 2005.

### **The 2005 Roger Herriot Award**

The Social Statistics Section, the Government Statistics Section, and the Washington Statistical Society are seeking nominations for the 2005 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The annual award is pre-

(2005 Roger Herriot Award – continued from page 3.)

sented to a statistician who exemplifies the qualities of Roger Herriot, who was the Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) before he died in 1994. The award recognizes the recipient's unique contributions to solving difficult statistical problems in Federal data collection efforts—a key trait of Roger's. Last year's recipient was Paula J. Schneider. **Submit nominations by April 15, 2005.** Electronic submissions, via pdf, are permissible. For more information, contact Marilyn M. Seastrom at [Marilyn.Seastrom@ed.gov](mailto:Marilyn.Seastrom@ed.gov).

### ***The 2005 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship***

The Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections are pleased to announce the availability of a scholarship in memory of Wray Jackson Smith, a founding member of the Section and long-time contributor to Federal statistics. The Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship is co-sponsored with the Washington Statistical Society, the Caucus for Women in Statistics, Harris-Smith Institutes, Mathematica Policy Research, and Syntectics for Management Decisions, Inc., and is intended to reward promising young statisticians for their diligence, thereby encouraging them to consider a future in government statistics. **Apply by April 1, 2005!** For the current year's form, go to <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/> or for more information contact Sameena Salvucci at [sams@smdi.com](mailto:sams@smdi.com).

### ***The 2005 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award***

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award was established to encourage the mentoring of younger staff in the Federal statistical system. It is presented annually, beginning in 2003, to a supervisor who is nominated by co-workers and supervisors, and chosen by the Award Selection Committee. This award is co-sponsored by the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy, the Council for Excellence in Government, the Washington Statistical Society, the Government and Social Statistics Sections, and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS).

(2005 Griffith Mentoring Award – continued from column 1.)

Nominations for 2005 will be accepted beginning in February 2005. The last date for submission of nominations is **April 1, 2005**, and the Award Committee will make its determination of the award winner by May 1, 2005. For further information on the award, contact Ed Spar, COPAFS, at [copafs@aol.com](mailto:copafs@aol.com).

### **New Officers for GSS and SSS**

The Government Statistics Section is pleased to welcome:

- **Chair (2006)** – Stephanie Shipp, National Institute of Standards and Technology
- **Program Chair (2006)** – Michael P. Cohen, U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- **Publications Officer** – Robert Lussier, Statistics Canada
- **Secretary/Treasurer** – John W. Hall, Mathematica Policy Research

The new officers for Social Statistics Section are:

The Social Statistics Section winners are:

- **Chair (2006)** – Susan Schechter, Office of Management and Budget
- **Program Chair (2006)** – Juanita Tamayo Lott, U.S. Census Bureau
- **Publications Officer** – Beth A. Kilss, Internal Revenue Service

Congratulations to you all!

### **2004 JSM Proceedings**

Each year, the American Statistical Association publishes the JSM Section Proceedings. The 2004 Proceedings will be available on CD-ROM in January. The CD-ROM will contain the proceedings for GSS and SSS, as well as ALL other sections, and is very moderately priced at \$35. Go to the ASA Web site at <http://www.amstat.org/publications/> and order your copy today.

## Join the GSSLIST To Keep Informed

GSS has established a listserve for GSS members and friends. The GSSLIST provides an opportunity to communicate with other list members easily – ask a question, seek a reference, publicize a conference... It's our own Chat Room!

To join,

- Send an e-mail message to:  
[listproc@inet.ed.gov](mailto:listproc@inet.ed.gov)
- Leave the subject line blank
- In the message type: *Subscribe GSSLIST (first name) (last name).*

The computer will then process the subscribe command using the sender's e-mail address. (To unsubscribe send the message *SIGNOFF GSSLIST* to [listproc@inet.ed.gov](mailto:listproc@inet.ed.gov).)

## Planning Ahead in 2005

Here are some important dates to keep in mind as you begin planning your JSM and GSS/SSS activities for 2005:

### Dec-04

- 1 Online Submission of Abstracts Opened
- 15 Applications Due for 2005 Student Paper Competition

(Planning Ahead in 2005 – continued from column 1.)

### Feb-05

- 1 Deadline for Online Submission of Abstracts for JSM 2005 (including roundtable luncheon discussions)

### Apr-05 1-29

Online Revisions to Abstracts for Final Publication

- 1 Deadline for Applications for the 2005 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship

- 1 Deadline for the 2005 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award Nominations

- 15 Deadline for Nominations for the 2005 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics

### Jun-05 1

Draft Manuscripts Due to Session Chairs

### Aug-05 7-11

Joint Statistical Meetings in Minneapolis, MN

### Nov-05 14-16

FCSM (Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology) Conference

### Dec-05 15

Applications Due for 2006 Student Paper Competition

## Fellows Night at JSM 2004

In 2004, some 14 of our section members were elected Fellows of the American Statistical Association. Two of them, Tom Petska and Susan Hinkins, are shown below with their spouses, following the 2004 Award Ceremony.  
(Left to right: Barbara Petska, Tom Petska, Susan Hinkins, and Richard Gillette.)





**Statistics Canada's Information  
Technology (IT) Conference 2005**

***"Balancing Value and Investment in  
Information Technology"***

April 6 and 7, 2005  
Ottawa Congress Centre  
55 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Statistics Canada will be holding its third information Technology Conference. This conference seeks to build on initiatives and efforts that have focused on evaluating the information technology (IT) function and the use of its resources within organizations. For more information on this exciting event please visit our Web site at

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/conferences/it2005/index.htm>

**Statistics Canada's Economic  
Conference 2005**

***"Growth, Wealth and Sustainability"***

May 9 - 10, 2005  
Ottawa Congress Centre  
55 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Statistics Canada's annual Economic Conference provides a forum for the exchange of empirical research to shed light on current economic and social issues. The theme for this year focuses on economic growth, the creation of wealth and sustainable development.

**For more information:**

Telephone: (613) 951-1135

Fax: (613) 951-5544

E-mail:

[economic.conference@statcan.ca](mailto:economic.conference@statcan.ca)

**The Fourth Francophone Conference on  
Surveys  
(Colloque Francophone sur les sondages)**

May 24-27 2005  
Quebec City

The conference is being held in North America for the first time and constitutes a major event in the world of survey taking. Organizers include the French Statistical Society, the Quebec Statistical Institute, and Laval University in

*(Francophone Conference – continued from column 1.)*

collaboration with Statistics Canada, the Quebec Association of Statisticians (ASSQ), the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC), the Mathematical Research Centre of the University of Montreal, and the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS).

The conference will concentrate on the impact of new technologies, automated data editing and imputation, international comparisons, repeated and longitudinal surveys, confidentiality and analytical use of survey data and will offer workshops. **Papers can be submitted until January 28, 2005.**

The scientific program chair is Louis-Paul Rivest ([lpr@mat.ulaval.ca](mailto:lpr@mat.ulaval.ca)) and the local arrangements committee is chaired by Louise Bourque ([sondages2005@mat.ulaval.ca](mailto:sondages2005@mat.ulaval.ca)). More information can be obtained at:

<http://www.crm.umontreal.ca/sondages2005/>

***Survey Methodology Journal***

*Survey Methodology* is a refereed journal dedicated to the theory and practice of survey-taking. Published twice a year, this Statistics Canada journal provides a unique medium for experts. For sharing the ongoing research that is done on topics that span the survey process from data collection to analysis and evaluation, *Survey Methodology* is the designated tool.

*Survey Methodology* presents the reader with carefully selected articles that combine in-depth evaluations and readability and draw from the expertise of statisticians from around the world. It contains forward-looking studies that discuss emerging issues in the field and tools that can be applied to survey development.

Subscriptions to *Survey Methodology* (Cat. No. 12-001-XPB) are \$58 for one year. To order, contact:

**Tel: 1 800 267-6677, Fax: 1877 287-4369**

**E-mail: [order@statcan.ca](mailto:order@statcan.ca)**

**Address: Statistics Canada, Dissemination  
Division, Circulation Management  
120 Parkdale Ave.**

**Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6**

## **JOS** **Journal of Official Statistics**

*An International Quarterly published by SCB,  
Statistics Sweden*  
<http://www.jos.nu>

**The JOS 20th anniversary will be celebrated at Statistics Sweden, August 31- September 2, 2005. More information will be available in February.**

The *Journal of Official Statistics* is published by Statistics Sweden, the national statistical office of Sweden. The journal publishes articles on statistical methodology and theory, with an emphasis on applications.

JOS encourage articles on the following topics: Methodologies and policies for the collection, processing, analysis, presentation, and distribution of statistical data. Articles may present theoretical contributions, interesting applications of existing methods, comparisons of different methods, or authoritative reviews. The journal also includes the following other sections -- *Letters to the Editor*; *Special Notes*; and *Book and Software Review* -- and an *Index* that appears at the end of every volume.

**Subscription rates:** Price USD 100 worldwide. Current single copy price USD 30. For members of the American Statistical Association, the journal is available at USD 75.  
**Subscription address:** [jos@scb.se](mailto:jos@scb.se)

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ASA Membership Initiatives for 2005 ***Excerpts from "The Membership Seven"*** ***By Fritz Scheuren*** ***Amstat News, October 2004, #328, p. 15***

At the Open Meeting at JSM 2004 in Toronto, President-Elect of ASA, Fritz Scheuren, spoke about membership and the professional statistical community -- "...ways to make the ASA more of a place that a statistician would want to call home for his or her entire professional lives..."

Fritz articulates what will be an emphasis in his presidency in an article titled "The Membership Seven," *Amstat News*, October 2004, #328, p. 15. The article describes seven teams that he is

setting up that will look systematically at ways we can collectively improve the --

- Welcoming we provide new members at all levels;
- The nurturing and mentoring of continuing members;
- Self-awareness we have of who we are as members;
- Recognition of the professionalism of those in business practice;
- Respect and reinforcement of the interlocking roles of government statisticians, business practitioners, and academic toolmakers;
- Use of our discipline to better enhance human welfare; and
- Looking forward to see what is coming or could be created to grow the ASA and the statistical profession into an ever more effective community.

The article provides much more detail about these teams and goes on to suggest what you can do as part of this effort to make the ASA a stronger community of service. If you have ideas for improvement, Fritz would like to hear from you. His email address is scheuren@aol.com.

You may also be interested in...

Another insightful article from the October 2004 issue of *Amstat News*: "The Wise Speak to the Young," by Gladys H. Reynolds, on ideas for continuing to benefit from the exceptional contribution and experience of statisticians "who have made wide-ranging and lasting contributions to statistical theory, methodology, and applications, and who have influenced and helped shape science and public policy." One of Ms. Reynolds' suggestions is for senior members to arrange roundtable discussions and sessions that would highlight some of this experience and knowledge.

This is something for GSS and SSS members to consider if you are contemplating organizing a roundtable for JSM 2005. **Juanita Tamayo Lott** (juanita.t.lott@census.gov) and **Michael Cohen** (michael.cohen@bts.gov) are working on organizing the SSS and GSS roundtables, respectively, and would welcome your input and ideas.

Call for Monograph Papers

Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys

International Conference
University of Essex, Colchester UK
July 12-14, 2006

Conference website:

<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/mols2006>

Submissions are invited for monograph papers to be presented at the conference, Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys (MOLS 2006). The conference is sponsored by the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS).

Monograph papers should address an important topic in the design, implementation or analysis of longitudinal surveys. The focus is primarily on surveys that involve collecting data from subjects on multiple occasions. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following: Sampling for longitudinal surveys; Methods for minimizing sample attrition; Methods for estimating measurement error that are unique to panel data; Use of administrative data to enhance longitudinal surveys; Analysis of longitudinal survey data under complex designs and informative sampling; Nonsampling and sampling errors in panel data analysis;

Submissions should consist of an abstract of approximately 500 words, describing clearly the topic that will be addressed and the material that will be drawn upon. Please also include the names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of all authors. Informal inquiries regarding possible submissions are also welcome to this address.

Abstracts should be submitted to p.lynn@essex.ac.uk by January 24, 2005, preferably as a Word document.

Authors will be informed whether or not their submission has been accepted by **March 18, 2005**. Details of the process for drafting and revising papers will follow. Monograph authors will present their paper at the conference. The conference registration fee and three nights accommodation and meals will be provided for one author of each monograph paper. Unsuccessful monograph submissions will be treated as submissions for contributed papers unless the authors indicate that they do not wish this.

Call for Contributed Papers

TSM II

2nd International Conference on
Telephone Survey Methodology

January 2006
Florida

Conference website:

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/tsmii/2006/>

In 1987, the 1st International Conference on Telephone Survey Methodology generated a widely read book on telephone survey methodology (Groves, Biemer, Lyberg, Massey, Nicholls and Waskberg, 1989). Although that book continues to be a standard reference for many professionals, the rapid changes in telecommunications and in telephone survey methodology over the past 15 years make the volume increasingly dated.

The goal of this second conference will be to bring together survey researchers and practitioners concerned with telephone survey methodology and practice in order to stimulate research papers that (1) contribute to the science of measuring and/or reducing errors attributable to weaknesses in telephone survey design, (2) provide documentation of current practices, and (3) stimulate new ideas for further research and development. A monograph that presents state-of-the-art research and practices related to telephone survey methodology will be prepared based on papers presented at the conference. It is expected that the edited monograph will be published by Wiley.

Although not exhaustive, the following is a list of possible topics for contributed papers:

- **Sampling Design** (e.g., frame construction; noncoverage; sampling rare populations)
- **Data Collection Issues** (questionnaire development and testing; CATI software; longitudinal studies, for example)
- **Operational Aspects of Telephone Surveys** (such as cost-benefit analysis; interviewer recruitment and turnover)
- **Estimation Issues** (e.g., Post-stratification; time series)
- **Nonresponse** (public perceptions of telephone surveys; methods to reduce nonresponse)

(continued on page 10.)

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TSM II Call for Contributed Papers – continued from page 8.)

The selection of monograph papers has been completed. At this time, the TSM II Program Committee invites all interested researchers to submit abstracts for consideration for presentation at the conference. **The abstract should be no more than 500 words.**

The deadline for submitting abstracts is March 15, 2005, and final selections will be made by April 30, 2005.

Abstracts should be submitted through the conference website (given above) after January 15, 2005.

<p>The Government Statistics Section and the Social Statistics Section express their thanks to Laurie Logan for publishing the GSS-SSS Newsletter .</p>
