Dear friends and colleagues, it’s nice to be writing to you again. What a summer it’s been: hot (parts of the East are still without power and sweltering), sometimes fiery (the footage from Colorado is both terrifying and awe inspiring), and uniquely historic. The United States Supreme Court upheld President Obama’s Affordable Care Act, Mohamed Morsi was sworn in as Egypt’s first democratically elected President, there are murmurings of a “United States of Europe” as Europe wrestles with its debt crisis, and the 2012 United States presidential campaign is everywhere. Whatever your leanings, Great American Society or limited government, “We Live in an Age of Progress”, says Fareed Zakaria. If you’ve not seen it already, I think you’ll enjoy (http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2012/05/text-of-fareed-zakarias-commencement-address/). I hope you’re all having a good summer.

This Chair’s message also arrives in the midst of enjoying one of summer’s best gifts, more time for reading. Mine has not been entirely professional, I confess, but there has been some. A wonderfully accessible and quick read is Charles Seife’s 2010 book, Proofiness: The Dark Arts of Mathematical Deception. I’m considering adding it to my introductory biostatistics class syllabus. And this brings me to TSHS, the 2012 JSM program in San Diego, and the many activities of our section.

Be sure to reserve Monday July 30 5:30-7:30 for our annual open mixer and business meeting, which will be held in the Sapphire IJ Room of the Hilton Hotel headquarters. Tomi Mori (2012 Past-Chair) will be honoring Keith Williams, University of Arkansas Department of Biostatistics, and recipient of the 2012 ASA TSHS Outstanding Teacher Award. She will also be announcing the recipients of our annual awards for best oral and best poster presentations. As you enjoy hors’oeuvres and wine with friends and colleagues, be sure to say hello and thanks to Jeri Forster Harwood (2012 Program Chair) and Felicity Enders (2012 Program Chair-Elect). They’ve put together a terrific program for us (see below, “At a Glance”). I’m also hoping that Miranda Kroehl and Constantine Daskalakis (2010-2011 Secretary/Treasurer) will be able to attend. If you’re not yet familiar, they co-founded the TSHS ASA Member Community Forum “Teaching Statistics in Practice.” This is easily accessed from the home page of our new TSHS website (http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Home/). Last but not least, don’t forget to bring your business card (actually, a scrap of paper will do) and try your luck in our annual book raffle. I also welcome any suggestions for book titles (please send them to me at cbigelow@schoolph.umass.edu.)

Work in Progress: TSHS Resources Portal.

In our Spring 2012 newsletter, I described a new initiative underway by Steve Grambow (2012 Chair Elect) and me, the creation of a TSHS Resources Portal designed specifically for the navigation of the many excellent resources that already exist for teaching statistics in the health sciences. I’m sure I speak for Steve in admitting that this is an intimidating undertaking. Design is everything, in our view, and our goals are two: (1) easy - the end user finds what he/she is looking for simply and quickly; and (2) dynamic - resource links are identified and posted by us, “as we go”. Steve and I will share a draft “wire frame” and timeline for its development at our Monday July 30 open mixer. We will also be soliciting your advice, criticism, and participation.

I look forward to seeing many of you at JSM.
Robert Alan Greevy, Jr, PhD
Assistant Professor of Biostatistics
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Title: Design of Observational Studies [Available in hardcover and Kindle editions]  
Author: Paul R. Rosenbaum  
Publisher: Springer  
Year of Publication: 2009  
Number of Pages: 403  
ISBN-10: 1441912126  
Price: $109 (hardcover list price)

Last semester, I taught a new course Matching Methodology for Observational Studies and Randomized Trials (Advanced Methods Modules in Epidemiology). After reading a number of primary research articles, the students and I decided we needed a textbook that would lay the broader foundation of study design facilitating causal inference. Paul Rosenbaum’s Design of Observational Studies proved to be an excellent choice. The text is staged in four sections: Part I Beginnings, Part II Matching, Part III Design Sensitivity, and Part IV Planning Analysis. The book opens with a set of very rich examples that are used throughout the text and nicely illustrate the issues of making sound inferences from observational data. My students remarked on how clearly the concepts of causal inference were explained. Part II teaches the theory and practice of modern matching methods in detail. It includes propensity scores, calipers, optimal pair matching, optimal full matching, generalized propensity scores for multiple exposures, optimal matching with multiple control groups, optimal nonbipartite matching, Mahalanobis distances, customizing distance matrices, exact and almost exact matching, fine balance, risk-set matching, and other modern techniques. It devotes a full chapter to packages available for the free, open source, statistical program R, which implement the methods described. The analytical methods for a study’s sensitivity to unmeasured confounding are taught in Part I. In Parts III and IV, the concept of sensitivity is extended in great detail to the design side of an observational study.

My students and I appreciated the subtle humor the author slipped in throughout the book. It was easy to tell my students had read the material thoroughly when I found them discussing which lines made them laugh. This is not to say Design of Observational Studies is light reading. The chapters are short, but very pithy. We would easily fill a 1.5 hour session discussing three chapters (~60 pages). The mathematics are not burdensome, but cannot be avoided. The math is woven naturally into the writing such that it helps explain key ideas. The philosophy and
designs from Design think class, advanced. His research interests are linear models, longitudinal data methods, and simulation methods. Some of which include clinical, laboratory, and behavioral studies. These collaborations have resulted in over 70 publications. In addition to teaching courses at UAMS, Dr. Williams collaborates with numerous investigators on various research studies, some of which include clinical, laboratory, and behavioral studies. These collaborations have resulted in over 70 publications. His research interests are linear models, longitudinal data methods, and simulation methods.

1 My students all opted for the hardcover edition, while I tried out the Kindle edition. My students expressed a preference for hardcover, especially those that liked making notes in the margins. I enjoyed the portability and text search capability of the Kindle edition. At times, I found it useful to project the full text to a screen via Kindle on my laptop. As of the time of this review, the Kindle is better at enlarging text than figures. Projecting the figures at a larger size requires additional work, such as screen capture to a jpeg, or for those of us who enjoy graphics in R, creating the figures using the data provided on the author’s website: http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~rosenbap/software.htm.

2012 ASA TSHS Outstanding Teaching Award

D. Keith Williams, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Biostatistics, Colleges of Medicine and Public Health, University of Arkansas

D. Keith Williams, Ph.D., M.P.H. is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biostatistics. Dr. Williams joined the Biostatistics department in 1998 and has taught Biometrical Methods I, II, and III during his 14 years at UAMS. He has received the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Public Health Excellence in Teaching Award in 2005 and 2008. He has received the Chancellor’s Faculty Teaching Award in 2005, 2008, and 2011. Dr. Williams enjoys the classroom and is continuously seeking ways to motivate and generate interest in Biostatistics. In addition to teaching, he has served on several M.S. and Ph.D. student committees and is a member of the Academic Standards Committee in the College of Public Health.

Dr. Williams earned a Ph.D. in Biostatistics from the University of Oklahoma in 1997 and an M.P.H in 1994. Before beginning his doctorate studies, he earned a M.S. in Statistics from Oklahoma State University in 1990. Before joining the faculty at UAMS he was on faculty at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma from 1990 to 1998.

In addition to teaching courses at UAMS, Dr. Williams collaborates with numerous investigators on various research studies, some of which include clinical, laboratory, and behavioral studies. These collaborations have resulted in over 70 publications. His research interests are linear models, longitudinal data methods, and simulation methods.
TSHS Activities in JSM 2012 – At a Glance!
Jeri Forster Harwood

Hi, everyone. I think we have an exciting program this year, with something for everyone. We have both breakfast and luncheon roundtables (sign up soon – they tend to fill up!), invited panels on applied regression, online teaching, and models in an intro class, and a variety of other sessions, some of which we sponsor, others co-sponsored. See the list below.

Enjoy (and learn)!

Quick Search on the Activity Number for Details: http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2012/onlineprogram/

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Invited Panel</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Applied Regression: Perspectives from Teachers and Students</td>
<td>Mon 7/30</td>
<td>8:30-10:20</td>
<td>CC-31B</td>
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<td>306</td>
<td>Contributed Paper</td>
<td>Various Topics in Teaching</td>
<td>Tues 7/31</td>
<td>8:30-10:20</td>
<td>CC-22</td>
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<td>565</td>
<td>Topic Contributed Panel</td>
<td>Teaching Statistics to Nursing Students</td>
<td>Wed 8/1</td>
<td>2:00-3:50</td>
<td>CC-31B</td>
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<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>AM Roundtable</td>
<td>Teaching Epidemiological Thinking</td>
<td>Mon 7/30</td>
<td>7:00-8:15</td>
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<td>263</td>
<td>AM Roundtable</td>
<td>Observational Studies and Epidemiological Thinking: Interpreting Health Studies Based on Observational Data</td>
<td>Tues 7/31</td>
<td>7:00-8:15</td>
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<td>369</td>
<td>PM Roundtable</td>
<td>Jumping to Statistical Conclusions? The Antidote Is Pre-Analysis Data Preparation</td>
<td>Tues 7/31</td>
<td>12:30-1:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>434</td>
<td>AM Roundtable</td>
<td>Wanted: Statistics Classroom Examples</td>
<td>Wed 8/1</td>
<td>7:00-8:15</td>
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## Co-Sponsored

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<td>10</td>
<td>Invited Panel</td>
<td>Models and Modeling in Introductory Statistics Classes</td>
<td>Sun 7/29</td>
<td>2:00-3:50</td>
<td>HQ-Sapphire H</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Contributed Paper</td>
<td>Various Topics in Statistical Education</td>
<td>Sun 7/29</td>
<td>4:00-5:50</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>The Rise and Fall of Value-Added Models for Teacher Evaluations</td>
<td>Sun 7/29</td>
<td>4:00-5:50</td>
<td>HQ-Sapphire H</td>
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<td>128</td>
<td>Contributed Paper</td>
<td>Assessing Student Attitudes and Student Understanding</td>
<td>Mon 7/30</td>
<td>8:30-10:20</td>
<td>CC-28B</td>
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<td>156</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Statistical Literacy 2012</td>
<td>Mon 7/30</td>
<td>10:30-12:20</td>
<td>CC-28B</td>
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<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Look Who’s Talking</td>
<td>Mon 7/30</td>
<td>2:00-3:50</td>
<td>CC-31B</td>
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<td>316</td>
<td>Invited Panel</td>
<td>Making the Transition to Online Teaching</td>
<td>Tues 7/21</td>
<td>10:30-12:20</td>
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<td>459</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Publishing Your Statistics Education Research</td>
<td>Wed 8/1</td>
<td>8:30-10:20</td>
<td>HQ-Sapphire H</td>
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<tr>
<td>611</td>
<td>Contributed Paper</td>
<td>Using Data Sets, Technology, and Activities to Teach Statistics</td>
<td>Thu 8/2</td>
<td>8:30-10:20</td>
<td>CC-29A</td>
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</table>

* CC = San Diego Convention Center; HQ = Hilton San Diego Bayfront

**All this and.....**

- San Diego zoo
- San Diego Museum of Art
- Balloon rides!
- San Diego Historic District
- Beaches, mountains…
- Friendly TSHS members!
- And more!
FROM THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICER
Robert A. Oster, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham

I look forward to seeing many of you in a few weeks at the JSM in San Diego. I perused the online version of the TSHS JSM program and can see that our Program Chair, Jeri Forster Harwood, has an excellent program planned for us. I look forward to actively participating in our activities.

I would appreciate it if you would keep me informed of the following.

- Any teaching or mentoring awards that you have won at your respective institutions. I will make sure that you and your achievements are recognized in this newsletter.
- Any of your own publications, both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed, that fit in with the TSHS mission statement (“This Section is devoted to excellence in teaching statistical methods and basic epidemiology and in statistical consulting within the health sciences”). I will make sure that these are recognized in this newsletter.
- Any comments on our proposed changes or additions to our new section website, which is now found at http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Home/. Our Section Chair, Carol Bigelow, introduced the new website to you in the last issue of this newsletter. We also have a Section Webmaster, Constantine Daskalakis, who has done most of the hard work of getting the materials on our former website transferred over to the new website. I will share your comments with him and the rest of the TSHS Executive Committee as we try to complete the transfer of information and add new materials and features. Thanks, Constantine, for all of your work on the new website!

As a reminder, your executive committee would like to facilitate communication and exchange of materials among section members as much as we can!

Stay cool in the record-breaking temperatures that many of us are seeing this summer. You will hear from me again in the fall 2012 issue of this newsletter, when I hope to have some interesting stuff to share with you from this year’s JSM.
Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences (TSHS):

20+ Years of History

Constantine Daskalakis and Bob Oster

Last year, the section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences counted 20 years as an independent ASA section. Between 1970 and 1990, TSHS operated as a subsection within the Section on Statistical Education, and its early history during that period was traced by Beth Dawson-Saunders, Paul Jones, and Steven Verhulst in a 1990 article in The American Statistician (“The History of the Subsection on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences”, The American Statistician, 1990, 44(2):101-103). TSHS eventually became an independent section in 1991. Those were the days of no cell phones, no messaging, no internet connectivity. Email was a new thing even in academic environments, and commercial email was in its infancy (MCI Mail and Compuserve appeared in the late 1980s, and America Online in the early 1990s).

The section started with about 500 paying members but initially struggled to gain traction. In those early years, the section's newsletter was painstakingly published on paper by Steven Verhulst and mailed to members (check out scanned old newsletter issues on our website, http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Announcements/Newsletters/ — they do show their age!). Yet, interactions among section members were difficult and section activities very limited. There were years when the section had difficulty fielding any JSM sessions or even individual presentations, and consequently faced the danger of losing its independent status.

In the mid-1990s, however, a number of dedicated colleagues became involved and shaped the section’s trajectory in the years to come. With the section essentially inactive at JSM, Stephen Looney as 1995 program chair undertook a number of initiatives, including helping boost JSM submissions and inaugurating awards for JSM presentations and posters. Todd Nick, Ralph O’Brien, and Bob Oster continued these efforts as program chairs in subsequent years, and helped stabilize the section’s participation at the JSM. For example, Ralph O’Brien organized and often co-taught section-sponsored continuing education short courses at the JSM over a number of years (unfortunately, we have not followed up on his efforts in more recent years but we hope to reinstate such activities).

Other concerns in the late 1990s and early 2000s included the section’s mission and direction, governance, and membership issues, and mirrored to some extent issues that the ASA as a whole was grappling with. As a consequence of many discussions both within the section and the ASA, substantial revisions to the section charter were undertaken in 1999 and again in 2005 (with further minor revisions taking place since then). The section’s finances have also been monitored and reviewed periodically to ensure our fiscal health. And membership has been slowly but steadily increasing. The establishment of ASA Communities is one recent effort to boost member communication and interaction (the TSHS Community site is available here: http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/).
Although hard to believe now, in the mid-1990s, there was substantial controversy over a number of website issues—what content to include, who would have access, what security issues might arise, etc. Ralph O’Brien took the initiative and was almost single-handedly responsible for setting up and overseeing the section's first real website, which was hosted at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation (where Ralph was employed at the time) for more than ten years. With so much changing over time, our website has recently undergone a substantial facelift and is now hosted by the ASA (http://community.amstat.org/TSHS).

In the late 1990s, Todd Nick was instrumental in modernizing the section’s newsletter, and was then succeeded by Stephen Looney. By the early 2000s, a revamped newsletter was being emailed to members through a section distribution list. Around 2005, Renee Stolove helped define the roles and responsibilities of publication officer and newsletter editor, and those two positions were then taken up by Bob Oster and Ed Gracely, respectively, who still serve in those roles. At about the same time, the newsletter became available on the section’s website.

Stephen, Ralph, Todd, and Bob filled various section offices through the years, and were all elected section chairs in the late 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s. Ruth Mickey and Walter Ambrosius also gave generously of their time and served in various capacities during that period. But beyond their direct contributions to the section, these colleagues were the ones who enticed a new crop of us to become involved in section activities—Cyndy Long, Ed Gracely, Patrick Arbogast, Jodi Lapidus, Scott Evans and many others took up some of the section’s work in the mid-to-late 2000s.

Cyndy Long was one of the first organizers of the section’s roundtables at the JSM which soon proved to be very popular with section members (we are still going strong with both breakfast and lunch roundtables at the JSM). Bob Oster and Cyndy Long were involved in the establishment of the section’s major awards which include the *Distinguished Achievement Award*, the *Outstanding Teaching Award*, and the *Young Investigator Award* (details about them can be found on our updated website, http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Awards/).

Ed Gracely has been successfully editing the section’s newsletter for almost a decade. Cyndy, Patrick, and Jodi all have served as both program chairs and section chairs. Cyndy and Patrick, in particular, focused on building stronger connections between the section and other ASA entities and initiatives. Scott led the section in support of two excellent webinars in 2008 (this is something that we hope to follow up on). And more recently, Miranda Kroehl started *Teaching Statistics in Practice*, a new ASA Community for students and recent graduates, available here.

Today, the section numbers over 600 paying members from more than two dozen countries; 85% of those members reside in the United States and about a fifth are students or recent graduates. The section has a constant presence in ASA activities, including the JSM and the Education Council, and is also involved in non-ASA activities, such as the International Biometric Society’s ENAR meetings.

All of us who are engaged in section activities in one way or another enjoy what we do. We serve you, the members, but we also learn from our section work and our interactions. We are not a closed clique—we always welcome new volunteers and we look forward to meeting you. If you find yourselves at the JSM, do show up at the TSHS mixer (*Monday, July 30, 2012, from 5:30-7:30 PM, in the Sapphire IJ room of the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel*). If you cannot make it, feel free to send an email to any of the section’s officers with your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions.
[We recognize that this brief tracing of more than two decades of the section’s history is incomplete, and almost certainly does not fully capture all the initiatives and dedicated efforts of numerous colleagues who have volunteered their time over the years, both in official and unofficial capacities. Any omissions were not intentional. We apologize for them and would welcome additions or corrections. Please share with us your own recollections of section activities or individual contributions by emailing Constantine Daskalakis (c_daskalakis@kimmelcancercenter.org) or the Newsletter Editor (Egracely@DrexelMed.edu).]

History of TSHS: http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/AboutUs/History/

Today, the section numbers over 600 paying members from more than two dozen countries … The section has a constant presence in ASA activities, including at the JSM and in the Education Council … All of us who are engaged in section activities in one way or another enjoy what we do. … We are not a closed clique—we always welcome new volunteers and we look forward to meeting you.

Screenshot of Teaching Statistics in Practice. Pay it a visit! Here.
Section Officers and Officers-Elect for TSHS (as of July 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Editor's note

I finally competed my travel plans for JSM. Looks like mostly cool and foggy weather in San Diego (at least for now… who knows what August will bring?). JSM in Anaheim a few years ago was like that -- pleasant weather throughout. Not to mention lots of good sessions. I hope all of you have found one or more sections or committees to be active in. There's nothing like having people you know and work with at the meeting and in the ASA to enrich your participation. I've been active with TSHS for many years -- I like the newsletter job, since I can do it from my office or at home. I'm also active in Statistics Without Borders and was on the Committee for Scientific Freedom and Human Rights. Committees in the ASA are by appointment only with a term that expires. Sections will all welcome you if you offer to join them. Of course most readers of this message are TSHS members. We'd love to see you at the mixer, or involved in other ways! There are always jobs to do. Write ups of interesting and relevant sessions you attended are welcome for the newsletter! Short (maybe a page) and including actual lessons learned is ideal. Send 'em!

Ed

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Section on Teaching Statistics in the Health Sciences
Section web page: http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Home/
Links to all newsletters: http://community.amstat.org/TSHS/Announcements/Newsletters/