



SILVER STATE-ISTICS

NEVADA Chapter of American Statistical Association



NV-ASA Website has moved!

The NV-ASA website has a new home. It is now hosted by the national ASA
www.amstat.org/chapters/nevada/

Dear Nevada ASA Members and Friends,

Read on for information on what our Chapter has been up to and what we are planning for the future. Please keep an eye on our website for more details on all upcoming events.



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COMING EVENTS

- Annual Meeting and Symposium, Las Vegas, Oct. 16
- Dinner Meeting, Reno, Nov. 18
- Statistics Users Lunch, Carson City, tbd
- Dinner Meeting, Las Vegas, tbd
- Nevada K-12 Poster Competition 2011
- Elections for Southern Vice President, Treasurer, and Chapter Representative

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hokwon A. Cho

Has the time come to look back over our profession? As time goes on perhaps memory fades, but I hope that we will not forget what nearly happened to Statistics last Spring. On March 1, the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) announced a proposal for curricular review that included possible closure of its degree programs in statistics in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. I was extremely surprised and disappointed to read of this possibility. While mindful of the seriousness of State budget deficits and cuts, I was still stunned by the justification: that introductory statistics courses are offered by several departments across campus, and that the upper level courses and graduate programs in the Department have low enrollments and degree production.

We understand that the immediate reason for that proposal was the severe lack of operating budgets from the State of Nevada caused by the national (and international) economic recession. The economic status of Nevada was one of the worst in the nation, and now is even worse than ever before. Of course, Statistics cannot claim an exemption from the budget-trimming considerations, but we were all completely dismayed. A couple of us in our NV-ASA Chapter in Las Vegas and many statisticians including officers in the national ASA sent a bundle of supporting letters to the Provost Office at UNR. Almost two months later, around the end of April, very gladly we received the news that Statistics program at UNR has been saved.

As a statistics practitioner, this incident brought many thoughts to my mind. First, why statistics? It occurred to me that significant gaps might exist between the statistics that others know and the statistics we are doing. Perhaps there is a discrepancy between two perspectives on statistics: as a scientific tool; or as a science in its own right. Others, especially the top decision-makers, may have the first perspective much more than the second.

The first World Statistics Day (Oct. 20) is just around the corner. To encourage our neighbors and the community to come to a more balanced and appropriate perspective on statistics, I would like to urge all of us to willingly take on the role of ambassador for our science of Statistics. ❖

Prior to receiving a faculty appointment with the UNLV School of Community Health Sciences, Sheniz worked

Lively discussion of a variety of statistical and other issues followed their presentations. And, as usual, NV-ASA folks were the last customers to leave the establishment. ☺

My husband decided to accompany me on the trip and we embarked on a road trip from Carson City on Friday, July 30, arriving in Vancouver on Sunday, August 1. The trip up was fun, but the best part of the week was just starting!

The Vancouver Convention Center facilities were amazing. Most of the rooms had gorgeous views of the harbor. Visiting Vancouver so soon after the Olympic Winter Games was also exciting, with the outdoor torch perched just outside the Convention Center and the city still primed for tourism with cheery smiles and lyrical speech.

When I checked in, I was delighted by the thick Program Book I was given. As our work policies require, the accounting technician that had reviewed my travel request had requested an “agenda” for the conference. I chuckled at the thought of dropping this monster “agenda” on her desk! Every evening I spent time pouring through the sessions offered the next day, marking those of interest and debating which ones to attend. There were so many options it was hard to choose! Every session was jam packed with useful information and great ideas on ways to utilize statistics.

The most interesting portions of the conference were the roundtable luncheons. These small group discussions on various topics were a rare opportunity to discuss statistics topics in depth with others who have the same interests and hear their thoughts and ideas. The opportunity to learn and make contacts was extremely valuable. The additional cost of these luncheons was definitely repaid.

I also greatly enjoyed attending the President’s Invited Address where we were treated to a look at the increasing importance of data and analysis by Jim Goodnight, founder of SAS. The Deming Lecture highlighted a fascinating talk about healthcare quality and reform by Brent James of the Institute for Health Care Delivery Research. The awards ceremony and Presidential Address was both heart-warming and drove home the point that much is being done by many gifted statisticians and much still needs to be done.

Walking around the Expo was a lot of fun. Just wandering through the booths, I received inquiries into whether I was looking for a job, free gifts, tons of information about online statistical resources, the opportunity to buy books of interest at discounted prices, and the chance to smell the popcorn many attendees were enjoying.

I greatly enjoyed my time at JSM. On the way home, I considered what I had learned, how I could utilize the information gained back at the office, and why I hadn’t attended before.

I had had the opportunity to attend JSM in cities closer to home (where a passport was not required!), but had never made the time or allocated the money to go. I didn’t really consider the benefits I might gain. Having now attended, I would highly recommend attending JSM to anyone who is truly interested in learning more about

statistics and excelling in their chosen field. The opportunities for learning, networking, and simply being excited about statistics were priceless. It was great to be surrounded by so many people who are fascinated by the beauty and wonder of data. JSM was just what I needed to reignite my passion for statistics.

JSM 2011... Miami, Florida... I hope to see you there! ★



July 30 - August 4, 2011
Miami Beach Convention Center
Miami Beach, Florida

**NV-ASA Annual Meeting
and Fall Symposium 2010**

The Chapter’s *Annual Meeting* will be held **Saturday, October 16**, along with the *Fall Statistics Symposium* in the **Room 213** at the **Student Union, UNLV**. We will start at 10:00 am, to allow our Reno and Carson City contingent time to make the early morning flight. Lunch will be included (details and costs to follow), along with our usual Annual Meeting. The affair should finish by 3:00 pm.

The Symposium is also to celebrate the first *World Statistics Day* (Oct. 20) that has declared by the United Nations. Speakers for the Symposium will include:

Dr. James Symanowski, Head of Biostatistics at the Nevada Cancer Institute, speaking about statistical issues in clinical trials; and

Dr. Girish (Gary) Aras, Director of Global Biostatistics and Epidemiology at Amgen, speaking about statistical applications in the pharmaceutical industry.

Dr. Charles Davis, Principal Statistician of EnviroStat, speaking about life as a statistical consultant in the environmental regulatory area.

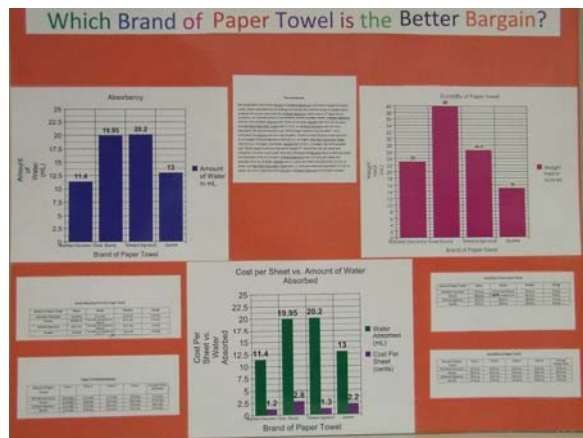
Registration details will be distributed by email and also posted on our website as they are finalized. ♦

2010 K-12 Poster Competition

Nevada continues its national prominence in the Statistics Poster Competition. This year 237 entries were received from 440 students in 17 schools. All posters judged Honorable Mention and above in our State competition were forwarded to the National competition.

The poster shown here, “Which Paper Towel is the Better Bargain” was created by Camryn Wojtowicz, a sixth-grader at Lied Middle School in Las Vegas. This poster won third place in its group in the Nationals.

All NV-ASA prize winners receive a modest cash award and certificate as well, and plaques are given to the schools of the first-place winners. All winning posters can be seen on our website.



***** Fall Dinner Meeting in Reno *****

Our northern group will host a Dinner Meeting in Reno **Thursday, November 18**. Our speaker will be Ania Panorska of the UNR Department of Mathematics and Statistics and our Chapter’s Northern Vice President. She will be speaking on Stochastic Models for Climate Extremes. Details will be distributed via email and also posted on our website as they are finalized. ✱

***** Election 2010 *****

This Fall the Chapter Representative, Southern Vice President, and Treasurer positions are up for election. Our Constitution provides for a staggered election of officers, in order to ensure continuity. The Chapter Representative is the liaison between NV-ASA and the National ASA; this is a three-year term, in accordance with national requirements.

The Southern Vice President’s primary duty is as co-chair of the Program Committee. This is a two-year term. The Treasurer is responsible for the Chapter’s monies and for maintaining the membership roster; this is also a two-year term.

Members (whose dues are up-to-date) are eligible to vote, and will receive ballots shortly. Newly elected officers are announced during the Annual Meeting.

If you don’t receive your ballot, please check with our Treasurer (Kaushik.ghosh@unlv.edu, 702-895-0392) to confirm that you’ve paid your dues for the current year!

***** Joining NV-ASA *****

Only a minority of the people who receive this newsletter are members of the Nevada Chapter of the American Statistical Association (NV-ASA). Dues are nominal: at most \$20 per year, \$10 a year for members of the national ASA, and \$0 for student members of the national ASA.

There are two ways to join. You can join NV-ASA when you renew your national ASA membership (or join for the first time); this can be done on-line at www.amstat.org. Otherwise, whether or not you are a national ASA member, you can join through PayPal on our website www.amstat.org/chapters/nevada/ or by contacting our Treasurer Kaushik Ghosh. Any way you do it, please obtain an information form from our website, complete it, and send it to Kaushik at the address listed on the form.

Why should you join? NV-ASA events provide opportunities for networking and contact with other statisticians working in a wide variety of areas in Nevada. But in addition to that, a major reason is that your dues support the outreach activities of the NV-ASA including the K-12 Poster Competition and Career Days. Our financial needs are not great, so long as we all pitch in our modest amounts. ✂

***** Book Review *****

Charles B Davis

The Predictioneer’s Game, by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita

I hadn’t come across an interesting non-technical book related to statistics in quite some time when this fellow appeared on Jon Stewart’s Daily Show. The cover promises the author’s insights into “Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See and Shape the Future”. The subject isn’t statistics per se, but statistical decision analysis is one of the foundations of game theory. De Mesquita is a Political Science professor at New York University, a Senior Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, and a private consultant. In the latter two roles he often deals with issues in national and

