

SILVER STATE-ISTICS

NEVADA Chapter of American Statistical Association



Nevada Chapter News Letter

Vol. 1 No. 2

♣ We hope you find it informative and helpful. ♣

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The President's Corner

By Debra Stiver, President

Greetings Nevada Members:

I hope you are considering attending the chapter's upcoming annual meeting, luncheon and speaking event October 22 and 23 in Las Vegas. We are happy to present the new president of the American Statistical Association, Dr. Fritz Scheuren, as the keynote speaker and round table discussion leader. Dr. Scheuren is the VP of Statistics at NORC, a survey research arm of the University of Chicago. He continues to teach at George Washington University and is a Fellow of ASA and AAAS and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. Dr. Scheuren has investigated a wide variety of controversial subjects over his career, including the election vote count problems that occurred during the 2000 presidential election. For the 2004 national election, Dr. Scheuren will be studying the effectiveness and reliability of the newer electronic voting machines, including Nevada's new system that was just used in the state's primary election. His opinions and observations promise to provide considerable food for thought and maybe just a wee bit of controversy. You can read a preview of his work in his editorial that appeared in the latest AmStat News.

In last issue's message, I discussed several important goals that the Nevada chapter would like to tackle during 2004 and 2005. Goal number one addresses the need for

increased membership in our chapter in southern Nevada, and particularly in northern Nevada and the rural areas of the state. Rural cities like Elko, Ely, and Fallon provide higher education for Nevada's populace through community colleges or satellite campuses of UNR and UNLV. And of course, the students that graduate from high schools in the rural areas go on to become students at our universities and perhaps employed in a variety of professions that utilize statistical analysis. The government is a primary employer in rural areas. Many of these employees are extensive users of statistical methodology and analysis. We need to expand our membership in these areas and hopefully grow our educational poster. Eventually, we might be able to conduct annual meetings and/or expand career day activities in our rural cities. It is very important, therefore, that word of our upcoming annual meeting travels throughout the state.

Both the northern Nevada and southern Nevada group held special events in their prospective areas this past spring. In the North, a mixer was sponsored by the chapter in May. The mixer was held on the UNR campus and provided food and libations for members. The main purpose was to introduce members to one another. The statewide poster contest that was held during early spring was very successful, especially for a first-time endeavor. We expect this program to grow dramatically in 2005 now that we've experienced the learning curve. Our other major event, Career Day, will take place separately at both ends of the state during spring, 2005. We ask that you consider offering your time and talent as either a sponsor or speaker. And, of course, we always need hands to cover the physical work. Career Day is a great opportunity to introduce high school and college students to the wide field of statistics. The events can only improve with increased chapter member participation. Look for announcements in future newsletters and flyers. Finally, Nevada chapter representatives participated in presentations at the 2004 national ASA meetings in Toronto. We hope to also contribute some information at next year's annual meeting in Minneapolis. The executive board will continue to look to other chapters and entertain suggestions and advice on worthwhile activities for chapter members.

Do You Have a Newsworthy Event We Need to Know About?

If you have any suggestions for improving the Nevada chapter, sponsoring or holding events, or other information, please do not hesitate to contact me at stiver@unr.edu or 775-784-1124. We'd like to include a "kudos to our members section" in our newsletters and let everyone know of members' accomplishments. Examples include a newly published paper, conference speech, promotions etc. (or just some good old interesting announcements). Send them in and help us grow our chapter! ♦

Sincerely,
Deb Stiver

Upcoming Events:

By Dorothy Wilson, Secretary

1. Annual Meeting

We will be having a fall luncheon in conjunction with our 3rd annual meeting, this October, featuring ASA president-elect Fritz Scheuren.

When: Saturday, 12:00pm-3:30pm, October 23, 2004

Where: Marie Callender's,

4785 W. Flamingo, 89103, Las Vegas

Topic: The Phantom Candidate: The Impact of Voting System Errors on Democracy

Description: Lost, missing, and miscounted votes are referred to as the "Phantom Candidate". In the 2000 election, this "Phantom Candidate" had more votes than all third party candidates combined, including Ralph Nader. In at least 10 states, the margin of error exceeded the margin of victory, potentially affecting at least 105 electoral votes. If the upcoming election is close, we may again see the margin of error exceed the margin of victory. Come join us and gain insight to the following intriguing questions:

- ❖ Does our election system have the accuracy to determine a winner when the votes are close?
- ❖ Could our election be too close to call?
- ❖ What can we do professionally?
- ❖ What steps can be taken to ensure that our leaders are not determined by the ability of our election systems, but determined by the will of the people?

Cost: (i) Chapter Members - \$25 (ii) Non-Chapter Members - \$30, including chapter membership - \$35 (iii) Students will receive a \$10 discount

Please reserve your spot by registering online by Wednesday, October 20th at <http://www.nevada.edu/~nvasa/register.html>

2. Friday Night Mixer

The chapter will also host a Friday night mixer with Fritz Scheuren on October 22nd, where you will have the opportunity to participate in a discussion of "the phantom candidate" issue and how it relates specifically to Nevada. More details including time and location will be coming soon on e-mail.

📅 Please mark on your calendar 📅

ASA President-Elect Sheds Light on Phantom Voting at Annual Meeting

By Carol Thompson, Program Committee

Dr. Fritz Scheuren is playing a double-header for NV-ASA October 22-23, 2004. Although the timing fits a discussion of statistics on the World Series, this is your opportunity to hear perspectives on the question: "Does our election system have the accuracy to calculate a winner when vote totals are close?" Dr. Scheuren will kick off the annual meeting at the Friday evening mixer with an impromptu discussion/panel of "the phantom candidate" issue in the upcoming election nationally and in Nevada. As the keynote speaker at the Saturday luncheon and business meeting, Dr. Scheuren will discuss the impact of voting system errors on democracy, where efforts and energy need to be focused to lesson the errors, and what role statisticians can play. Both events will be open to members and the public.

Dr. Scheuren is President-Elect for the American Statistical Association (ASA), and the VP for Statistics at NORC, a survey research arm of the University of Chicago. He has been a principal at Ernst and Young, LLP, and before joining NORC, was a Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute working on welfare reform, following a long career of public service.

Dr. Scheuren presently focuses as much as possible on human rights activities, working right now on projects for the Commission on International Religious Freedom, on Native American Trust Fund issues, and most recently, on improvements in vote counting for the 2004 presidential election. He continues to teach at George Washington University where he set up a graduate certificate program in survey sampling that he continues to manage. Dr. Scheuren is a Fellow of ASA and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. ♣

Southern Nevada Spring Seminar and Dinner Party

By C. L. Cross, Ph.D., NCC, Southern Vice-President

Southern Nevada region of the Nevada Chapter of the American Statistical Association hosted a seminar and dinner party on May 4, 2004. Seventeen members and guests dined at Marie Callendar's restaurant and were treated to a lecture by Dr. Eric Renshaw of the University of Strathclyde entitled: "From Killer Bees to Saddles and Quantum Optics – A Random Meander through Markov Populations and Forests." Dr. Renshaw provided an introduction to space-time stochastic processes and stochastic approximation theory. Specifically he discussed a predator-prey modeling processes, showed details of a simulation of a foot-and-mouth disease epidemic in the UK, and showed examples of his ongoing work using space-time lattice structures and marked point processes. Everyone's attendance and participation at this event was greatly appreciated. ♥

Membership Directory Coming!!!!

By Dorothy Wilson, Secretary

To promote professional contact between members of NV-ASA, we are planning to put together a membership directory to be used only for this purpose. The first directory will likely be sent out via email in pdf format in late fall. To allow members to include only the information they want to share with other members, an email will be sent from the NV-ASA secretary in late September to early October to each member with the information currently available. Adjustments can be made and returned to the secretary. The types of information considered for inclusion in the directory are:

- (1) Name (minimum to be included)
- (2) Company/Affiliation
- (3) Mailing Address (member can choose home or work)
- (4) Phone Number
- (5) Fax Number
- (6) Email Address
- (7) Statistical Interests or Areas of Expertise

Any questions regarding the directory can be directed to Dorothy Wilson(dwilson@harrahs.com).

Treasurer's Notes

By Paul Nakayu, Treasurer

The annual treasurer's report will be presented at the Annual Meeting, but there are several items related to

Chapter finances that we would like to bring to your attention right away.

NV SALES & USE TAX EXEMPTION

In July the Chapter applied for sales/use tax exemption. The Nevada Department of Taxation found that as a professional or trade association we do not qualify for tax exempt status as a religious, charitable or educational organization as described in NRS 372.3261. We did not appeal the decision.

PAYPAL CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

We have received notification of a pending class action settlement regarding PayPal. We opened a PayPal account in March 2003 and are thus members of the class entitled to receive a portion of the settlement payment if it is approved.

In order to receive a cash payment from the settlement, we would need to submit an online claim form by October 23, 2004, the date of our annual meeting.

As I understand it, we would not be Dispute Resolution Claimants because we were not directly affected by the issues in the litigation. Rather, if we choose to participate in the settlement we would be seeking recovery under the Statutory Damage Fund. That fund would distribute one million dollars equally among those who make timely, valid claims.

If anyone has information regarding reasons we might not want to submit a claim, please contact me directly at nakayu@nevada.edu.

More information on the proposed settlement is available at

<https://www.paypal.com/settlement/>

PROPOSED CHANGES TO DUES STRUCTURE

Two changes to the current dues structure are being considered by the Chapter officers.

The first change involves an increase in dues for Associate chapter members, those who are not also members of the national ASA. Many benefits from the national association, including grants for speakers, traveling courses and career day support, are funded at least in part from dues paid by ASA members. The argument, then, is that it is in our best interest to promote membership in the national association, and that Associate members should be willing to provide some additional financial support for the Chapter and its programs in lieu of providing it indirectly through membership in the ASA. In addition, students who join ASA would receive membership in the Chapter at no additional cost.

The second change involves an approach to raising money for the Nevada Statistics Poster Competition prize fund. Rather than solicit Chapter members directly for donations as was done this past year, members would be asked whether they wanted a fixed portion of their dues earmarked for the prize fund when they join and each time they renew their membership. In this way the membership as a whole will help determine the level of support our Chapter provides for this annual event, and it will help raise awareness, particularly among new members, of the importance of this outreach effort. This approach would be supplemented by fund raising efforts in the community.

Please contact any of the Chapter officers if you have input regarding these changes. The Chapter officers will notify the Chapter membership of any changes they wish to recommend two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. The changes would then need to be approved by a majority of members voting at the Annual Meeting. ♥

Paul Nakayu
nakayu@nevada.edu

Chapter Rep's Corner

By Hokwon Cho, Chapter Representative

One of the main jobs of the Chapter Representative is to promote the chapter's interests at the annual meetings of the Council of Chapters (COC) of the ASA held during JSM. The other is to submit financial and annual reports on the activities of the chapter to the Council and the Board of Directors of the ASA. Happily, I have been doing my job (with the help of the other executive officers) since August 2002.


This summer, for JSM 2004 (held on Aug. 8-12 in Toronto, Canada), Sandra Catlin, Chapter Past-President, participated in the Annual meeting on my behalf. (Thanks, Sandra.) At the COC Workshop and Reception, she gave a presentation on the two career days that have been held by our chapter and participated in a three-person panel discussion. Presentations were given by the other two panel members on chapter involvement in local science fairs and the ASA K-12 Poster Competition. Our chapter was one of just a few chapters recognized by the K-12 Poster Competition speaker. In February 2004, David Thiel, Education Committee, helped coordinate our chapter's first participation in this national competition.

At the COC Business Meeting, the new affiliate chapter status for Mu Sigma Rho, the national honorary society for statistics students, was introduced. The new "affiliate" status makes it easier to start a local chapter. ASA Chapters (and hence our members!) were encouraged to look into this possibility. It was also

suggested that ASA members might consider becoming involved with judging local science fairs and encouraging a stronger emphasis on statistics. For more details about the COC business meeting, you can visit the web at www.amstat.org and click on "Chapters". COC is planning to start posting more information (e.g. minutes) on the web for Chapter members. Thus, much information was gleaned at JSM this year. ♠

Hokwon Cho
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Request for Submissions

If you would like to contribute to our website or newsletter, please email Debra Stiver (stiver@unr.edu) or Alicia Chancellor Hansen (aliciah@unr.nevada.edu).


Check our website:

<http://www.nevada.edu/~nvasa/>

