WSS NEWS
WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SEMINARS

2014 WSS PRESIDENT'S INVITED SEMINAR

Title: **On Making Inferences from Non-Probability Samples**

Dates/Time: **March 26, 2014**
                     *2:00 pm - 4:00pm

                     *The talk is from 2:00-3:30 followed by light refreshments.
                     Note: video conferencing will **not** be available.

Chair: Nancy Bates, WSS President

Speaker: J. Michael Brick, Westat and JPSM

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Room 3
                     To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor
                     Statistics, e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to
                     wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') **by noon at least**
                     2 days in advance of the seminar, or call (202) 691-7524 and leave
                     a message.
                     Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at
                     2 Massachusetts avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

Abstract: In the last decade with the wide spread use of the Internet, surveys of all
                     kinds have been conducted that try to reduce the ever increasing costs
                     of doing high quality probability sample surveys. In a reaction to this
                     trend, the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
                     set up a task force to examine the conditions under which survey designs
                     that do not use probability samples might still be useful for making
                     inferences to a larger population. Reg Baker and I co-chaired that task
                     force and its final report is available on the AAPOR website
                     (www.aapor.org). A summary, along with commentary of other
                     researchers, was published in *The Journal of Survey Statistics and
                     Methodology.*

                     In this talk, I will begin by reviewing the findings of the task force and
                     some reaction to these findings. I will then suggest potential implications
                     this line of research might have on surveys conducted for government
                     agencies. Hopefully, a lively discussion of the topic will follow.

Biography: Mike Brick is a Vice President and co-Director of the Survey Methods Unit at Westat, and is a research professor in the Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland. He has a Ph.D. in statistics from American University, is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. Mike was President of the Washington Statistical Society in 2010.

Title: **US Census Bureau: DSMD Distinguished Seminar Series: Regression Toward the Mean and Multi-level Modeling**

Dates/Time: **March 6, 2014**
                3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Speaker: Dr. Carl Morris, Department of Statistics, Harvard University

Discussant: Dr. Thomas Louis, US Census Bureau

Chair: Ruth Ann Killion, Chief, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, US Census Bureau

Location: Seminar Room 5K410, US Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, Maryland

Abstract: When one expects forecasts and estimates to be affected by regression toward the mean (RTTM), a two-level hierarchical description of the data offers an excellent model. We start by reviewing how RTTM arises, and misunderstandings about it. As time allows, there will be examples of how RTTM affects rating sports players and teams, ranking of hospitals, determining adequate sample sizes, and accounting for RTTM selection bias. We finish with implications for statistical theory, including hierarchical modeling and the Bayes/frequency interface.

Contact: Cynthia Wellons-Hazer, 301-763-4277, Cynthia.L.Wellons.Hazer@census.gov

CONFERENCES

Event: **FFC/2014: The 20th Federal Forecasters Conference**
                         Theme: The Roles of Government Forecasts

Sponsoring Agencies: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Veterans Affairs,
                         Economic Research Service, Internal Revenue Service, National
                         Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S.
                         Department of Labor

Date/Time: **April 24, 2014**
                         8:00 am - 9:00 am (check-in)
                         9:00am – 4:15 pm (schedule)

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference and Training Center

                         2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
                         Washington, DC 20212

Register Deadline: **April 10, 2014** at http://ffc2014.eventbrite.com

*Abstract Due: **March 15, 2014**

*Contest Entry Deadline: **March 15, 2014**
                         No charge for participation

                         **See page 9 for additional information about the contest and for
                         submitting abstracts.*

Description:

Government forecasts are critical to assessing the future needs of the nation. These forecasts are used by those in the public and private sectors for planning and decision-making in a variety of areas: agriculture, energy, the environment, demographics, geologic hazards, healthcare, job trends, social security, veteran's issues, and more. For example, policy makers use forecasts to create laws, direct resources and establish budgets. Individuals use forecasts of salary and employment trends to make career decisions, and nominal price forecasts and interest rate trends to decide whether to buy a home. Government agencies are also consumers, using forecasts of weather and commodity supply and demand to project crop yield and prices. Labor force projections are also based on government-produced projections of the population.

At FFC/20, presenters from a variety of agencies will share their experience in developing and using forecasts. Add your voice to the conversation! Please join our discussion of the unique role played by federal forecasts, and how forecasts are used by the government, private industry, and the public.

Know Your Power: Enticing, Elevating and Empowering Careers of Women in Statistics

Connect...learn...grow!
You're invited to this new conference highlighting the achievements and career interests of women in statistics. Special sessions focused on career development, work presented by leading researchers, and opportunities to connect with peers will provide unique perspectives on the role of women in today's statistical fields.

When: May 15 -17, 2014
Where: Embassy Suites, Raleigh-Durham/Research Triangle, NC
Program: Click here to review the program and outstanding speakers and researchers.
Note: Registration limited to the first 400 registrants.

Poster Session: Looking for an opportunity to share your work or research with other conference attendees? Submit a poster abstract here (after you create your profile or log in).
Travel Awards: Approximately 25 junior researchers with accepted poster abstracts will be eligible for travel awards - click here to apply.

HOW TO REGISTER:

STEP ONE: Click here to register for the conference
which includes all sessions, networking events, poster session, coffee breaks, breakfast and dinner receptions, lunches and Awards Gala Dinner.

STEP TWO: Click here to make your hotel reservations at the special conference rate of $124 single/double is are only available through this link. The group code loads automatically; complimentary in-room Internet included in rate. Rooms are limited and discounted rate only available through April 28 or until sold out.

Early Bird until **March 15**	Regular $349	Student	$199
March 15 to May 1	Regular $399	Student	$225
After May 1	Regular $449	Student	$250

Questions? Visit Women in Statistics, contact us here by email or call Mollie Rasor, conference at 919-234-7036.

Thank you to our sponsors:

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Conference Organizers:
ASA Committee on Women in Statistics Caucus for Women in Statistics
Appreciation to the following organizations for endorsement of the Women in Statistics conference:

- Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies
- NC State University
- Association of Women in Mathematics
- National Institute of Statistics Science
- International Biometric Society/Eastern North American Region
- Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute
- Joint Committee on Women in the Mathematical Sciences
- International Indian Statistical Association
- International Statistics Institute Committee on Women in Statistics
- Institute of Mathematical Statistics

Event: **Frontiers of Hierarchical Modeling in Observational Studies, Complex Surveys, and Big Data**

Location: Marriott Inn & Conference Center

Hyattsville, Maryland at the University of Maryland College Park Campus

Date/Time: **May 29-31, 2014**

Description: This conference is held in honor of Professor Malay Ghosh and his profound contribution to diverse areas of statistics. Distinguished plenary speakers and young researchers will showcase Professor Ghosh's many cutting-edge research projects in the field.

Information about submitting materials for presentation is provided on page 11.

Website: http://www.jointprogram.umd.edu/ghosh/

CALL FOR PAPERS

U.S. Energy Information Administration • U.S. Geological Survey

~ Partnering Organizations ~

Research Program on Forecasting, The George Washington University

FFC/2014: The 20th Federal Forecasters Conference

The FFC Board invites you to present a paper at one of the afternoon concurrent sessions. Please note, papers are not restricted to the official conference theme and may cover any subject relating to forecasting or estimation. Presenters are encouraged to provide written version of their presentation. Individual presentations of the papers will be limited to 15 to 20 minutes in length. Please send your abstract of 100 or fewer words to: woodward.maggie@bls.gov by **March 15, 2014**.

All presenters must provide an electronic copy of their paper in a Microsoft Word file (preferred) or and Adobe Acrobat PDF file by June 1, 2014 to William Hussar (william.hussar@edu.gov) to ensure their paper's inclusion in the conference proceedings. See below for the recommended format. All papers presented in the afternoon concurrent sessions and provided by June 1, 2014 will be published as Proceedings of the 2014 Federal Forecasters Conference. A panel of judges will determine the best paper presented during the concurrent sessions and recognition will be awarded at the following Federal Forecasters Conference.

Title Centered in 12-Point Bold Times New Roman Type

Author and organization centered in normal 10-point Times New Roman

Please compose, format, and spell check your document in Microsoft Word. Format all text in a double-column, normal 10-point Times New Roman font type, and columns should be square. Left and right margins must be 1" and the spacing between the two columns must be 0.2".

Text should be single-spaced, with double spacing between paragraphs. Small tables and figures may be included in the column text, but place all larger tables and figures at the end of the document in single column format.

Refer to the FFC/2012 Proceedings volume for examples of the recommended paper format (available at www.federalforecasters.org).

FFC/2014--- The Federal Forecasters Conference Contest
Official Entry Form
Entries Deadline: March 15, 2014

Name: _____

Agency/Department: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Please write your forecasts in the boxes provided for the following 5 items. Put your forecasts in the same format as the example. The forecasts will be judged by the ranking method (analysis of variance by ranks).

Question	Forecast
1. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the month of March 2014 (**Example:** For September 2013, the national unemployment rate was 7.2%)	
2. Number of privately-owned housing starts, seasonally adjusted, in February 2014 (**Example**: In August 2013 the number of privately-owned housing starts, seasonally adjusted, was 891,000)	
3. Average temperature at Reagan National Airport for April 1, 2014 (**Example:** On September 16, 2013, the average was 70 ºF)	
4. Closing price of the S&P 500 on April 1, 2014 (**Example:** The closing price of the S&P on September 16, 2013 was 1,697.60)	
5. Closing price of Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Inc. on April 1, 2014 (Ticker: **GMCR**) (**Example:** Closing price closed at $84.51 on September 16, 2013)	

We will announce the winner at the FFC/2014 Conference, Thursday, April 24, 2014. All decisions of the contest judges are final. FFC board members are not eligible to participate in this forecasting contest. Each person may submit only one entry. All contest entries are confidential. For more information, please call Brian Sloboda at (202) 693-5904 or e-mail at sloboda.brian.w@dol.gov. Each individual will receive confirmation of receipt of his/her submission.

All presenters must provide an electronic copy of their papers in a Microsoft Word file (preferred) or Adobe Acrobat PDF by June 1, 2014. Please email the file to William Hussar at william.hussar@ed.gov. Final papers will be published on the Federal Forecasters website as an Adobe Acrobat PDF file.

Your paper may be omitted from the FFC/2014 Proceedings Volume if you fail to conform to these guidelines.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION, POSTERS AND REGISTRATION

ISBA-George Box Research Workshop on Frontiers of Statistics
The George Washington University, Washington DC
May 20th-22nd, 2014

This is the second call for participation for the ISBA-Box Research Workshop. The Organizing Committee invites participants to register for the meeting as soon as possible, and solicits abstracts for poster presentations. As is the norm at Bayesian meetings, the poster session will be a major highlight and a key part of the Workshop. The poster session will be combined with the formal Workshop reception with all participants expected. We particularly encourage new researchers and students to present a poster, to take the opportunity to discuss their work and interact with other participants.

Please submit poster abstracts by March 1st, 2014, to soyer@gwu.edu. Poster presenters will receive email acknowledgement and should register by March 15th, 2014.

Registration is now open for the Workshop. For our planning, we encourage registration as soon as possible. At the Workshop web site you will find a link to Registration through the ISBA system:

http://business.gwu.edu/decisionsciences/i2sds/conferences.cfm

We also note that the all-inclusive registration fees are substantially subsidized (doubly so for student participants).

A limited number of rooms have been reserved at the One Washington Circle Hotel for the nights of May 20-22, 2014 at the rate of $189.00. This rate is available until April 4, 2014. When registering, please contact the hotel directly to reserve your room, and use hotel GROUP ID CODE #1106210.

One Washington Circle Hotel
1 Washington Circle, NW
Washington, DC 20037
http://www.thecirclehotel.com/
Tel: 202.872.1680 or 800.424.9671

SEEKING AWARD NOMINATIONS

2014 Julius Shiskin Award

Deadline: March 15, 2014

Nominations are invited for the annual Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics. The Award is given in recognition of unusually original and important contributions in the development of economic statistics or in the use of statistics in interpreting the economy. Contributions can be in development of new statistical measures, statistical research, use of economic statistics to analyze and interpret economic activity, development of statistical tools, management of statistical programs, or application of data production techniques. The Award was established in 1980 by the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) and is now cosponsored by the WSS, the National Association for Business Economics, and the Business and Economics Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association (ASA). The 2013 award recipients were John C. Haltiwanger, Distinguished University Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland, and Maurine Haver, President and founder of Haver Analytics Inc. for their initiatives to educate users and producers of key federal economic statistics.

The award is in memory of Julius Shiskin, who had a varied and remarkable public service career. At the time of his death in 1978, "Julie" was the Commissioner for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and earlier served as the Chief Statistician at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Chief Economic Statistician and Assistant Director of the Census Bureau. Throughout his career, he was known as an innovator. At Census he was instrumental in developing an electronic computer method for seasonal adjustment. In 1961, he published *Signals of Recession and Recovery,* which laid the groundwork for the calculation of monthly economic indicators, and he developed the monthly Census report *Business Conditions Digest* to disseminate them to the public. In 1969, he was appointed Chief Statistician at OMB where he developed the policies and procedures that govern the release of key economic indicators (Statistical Policy Directive Number 3), and originated a *Social Indicators* report. In 1973, he was selected to head BLS where he was instrumental in preserving the integrity and independence of the BLS labor force data and directed the most comprehensive revision in the history of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which included a new CPI for all urban consumers.

Nominations for the 2014 award are now being accepted. Individuals and groups in the public or private sector from any country can be nominated. The award will be presented with an honorarium of $1000 plus additional recognition from the sponsors. A nomination form and a list of all previous recipients are available on the ASA Website at www.amstat.org/sections/bus_econ/shiskin.html.

For questions or more information, please contact Steven Paben, Julius Shiskin Award Committee Secretary, via e-mail at paben.steven@bls.gov or call 202-691-6147.

Completed nominations must be received by **March 15, 2014**.

Roger Herriot Award

Deadline: April 1, 2014

Roger Herriot was the Associate Commissioner of Statistical Standards and Methodology at the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) when he died in 1994. Prior to his service at NCES, he also held several positions at the U.S. Census Bureau, including Chief of the Population Division. Soon after his death, the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association (ASA) along with the Washington Statistical Society (a chapter of ASA) established the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The award is intended to recognize individuals or teams who, like Roger, develop unique and innovative approaches to the solution of statistical problems in federal data collection programs.

Nominations are sought for the **2014 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics**. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career including:

- Dedication to the issues of measurement;
- Improvements in the efficiency of data collection programs; and
- Improvements and use of statistical data for policy analysis.

The award is not limited to senior members of an organization, nor is it to be considered as a culmination of a long period of service. Individuals or teams at all levels within Federal statistical agencies, other government organizations, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and the academic community may be nominated on the basis of their contributions. As innovation often requires or results from teamwork, team nominations are encouraged. Team innovations often are more lasting, resulting in real paradigm shifts, not just one-off improvements. For an example, see the 1998 Herriot (team) and the 2013 project awards.

The recipient of the 2014 Roger Herriot Award will be chosen by a committee comprising representatives of the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association, and of the Washington Statistical Society. Roger Herriot was associated with, and strongly supportive of, these organizations during his career. The award consists of a $1,000 honorarium and a framed citation, which will be presented at a ceremony at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2014. The Washington Statistical Society will also host a seminar given by the winner on a subject of his or her own choosing.

<u>Past Award Recipients:</u>

1995 - Joseph Waksberg (Westat)
1996 - Monroe Sirken (National Center for Health Statistics)
1997 - Constance Citro (National Academy of Sciences)
1998 - Roderick Harrison (U.S. Census Bureau), Clyde Tucker (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
1999 - Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNSTAT)
2000 - Donald Dillman (Washington State University)
2001 - Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF)
2002 - Daniel Weinberg (U. S. Census Bureau)
2003 - David Banks (FDA, BTS, NIST)
2004 - Paula Schneider (U.S. Census Bureau)
2005 - Robert E. Fay III (U.S. Census Bureau)
2006 - Nathaniel Schenker (National Center for Health Statistics)
2007 - Nancy J. Kirkendall (Office of Management and Budget)
2008 - Elizabeth Martin (U.S. Census Bureau)
2009 - Lynda Carlson (National Science Foundation)
2010 - Katharine Abraham (University of Maryland)
2011 - Michael Messner (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
2012 – Paul Biemer (RTI International)
2013 - 1973 Exact Match Project

Nominations for the 2014 award will be accepted beginning in **January 2014**. Nomination packages should contain:

- A cover letter from the nominator that includes references to specific examples of the nominee's contributions to innovation in Federal statistics. These contributions can be to methodology, procedure, organization, administration, or other areas of Federal statistics, and need not have been made by or while a Federal employee.
- Up to six additional letters in support that demonstrate the innovativeness of each contribution.
- A current vita for the nominee with current contact information. For team nominations, the vitae of all team members should be included.

The committee may consider nominations made for prior years, but it encourages resubmission of those nominations with updated information.

For more information, contact John Dixon, Chair of the 2014 Roger Herriot Award Committee, at 202-691-7516 or **dixon.john@bls**.

Completed packages must be received by April 1, 2014. Electronic submissions in MS-Word or as a "pdf" file are strongly encouraged.

Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award

Deadline: April 4, 2014

Nominations are sought for the 2014 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award to encourage the mentoring of junior staff in the statistical community in the Federal, State, or Local government. It is awarded annually to a supervisor, technical director, team coordinator, or other member of the Federal, State, or Local government statistical staff who is nominated by a supervisor and co-workers for his or her efforts in supporting the work and developing the careers of junior staff.

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award was established to honor Dr. Griffith who died in August 2001 after working for more than 25 years in the Federal statistical system. Throughout her career, and especially in her latter senior management positions at the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Science Foundation, one of Jeanne's highest priorities was to mentor and encourage younger staff at all levels to learn, to grow, and to recognize and seize career opportunities as they came along.

Nominations for 2014 will be accepted beginning in **January 2014**. Nominations should be prepared in the form of a letter or memorandum for the Award Selection Committee. The letter or memorandum should summarize the nominee's actions that support and encourage junior staff in the Federal, State, or Local statistical community in developing their careers. Nominations may be accompanied by up to six supporting letters.

The last date for submission of nominations is **April 4, 2014**, and the Award Committee will make its determination of the award winner by **April 30, 2014**. The award will consist of a $1,000, a citation, and a plaque, which will be presented at a ceremony arranged by the co-sponsors in **June 2014**.

For more information about the nominating process for the 2013 award, please go to: http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/JEGform14.doc or http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/JEGform14.pdf.

If you have questions about the award, please contact Rick Peterson at rick@amstat.org (703) 684-1221, and Deborah Griffin at Deborah.h.griffin@census.gov (301) 763-2855.

SHORT COURSES

Introduction to Survey Management
JUNE 10-11, 2014
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Steven G. Heeringa and Nancy Gebler
Payment and Registration Due by May 27, 2014
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=061014

Introduction to Record Linkage
JUNE 19-20, 2014
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Manfred Antoni, Stefen Bender and Joe Sakshaug
Payment and Registration Due by June 5, 2014
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=061914

WSS MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Washington Statistical Society
Member Spotlight

*Introducing your fellow members and
showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership*

MEET WSS MEMBER PAM MCGOVERN...

1. Where do you work and what do you do?
I am a Mathematical Statistician at the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). I work in NASS's Methodology Division where I serve as Director of the agency's Quality Management Office. I also serve as one of NASS's representatives on the program committee for the Federal Committee on Survey Methodology Research Conference and have served as conference chair.

2. What attracted you to your current position?
Over the course of my statistical career, I have moved around to various positions of increasing responsibility in an effort to continually learn and face new challenges. This was a new position within NASS's Methodology Division, bringing with it the challenge to develop and lead an agency-wide quality management program. This was an opportunity for me to grow professionally within an organization that was strengthening its operations and expertise. Working with a talented group of colleagues, I enjoy being a part of NASS under the leadership of Dr. Cynthia Clark.

3. Finish this sentence: "I joined WSS to..."
... become connected with the statistical community in the DC area. It is a terrific and inexpensive way to learn and network with others in government, academia, and the private sector.

4. What is your favorite vacation spot?
I love to travel when I have the time. My favorite vacation spot is the Hawaiian Islands. My husband and I have visited four of the islands, each having unique experiences. We did lots of hiking, kayaking, snorkeling, whale watching, and sightseeing. I just wish they were not so far from DC.

5. How do you like to spend your free time away from work?
I enjoy spending time outdoors. My favorite activities are biking, hiking, kayaking, and skiing. I also enjoy spending my free time with family and friends and participating in volunteer activities.

6. Describe yourself in three words.
Reliable, dedicated, and organized.

7. What was your first job?
When I was in college, I worked as an Actuarial Analyst for three summers at a Hartford, CT insurance company. Since I was good at mathematics, I thought I would learn more about the actuarial profession through a summer internship. I was lucky enough to secure one for three summers and passed the first couple introductory actuarial exams. However, through exposure to statistics in the exams and college courses, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in statistics rather than a career as an actuary.

8. What advice would you give to someone entering the statistics profession?
I recommend that they obtain an internship early in their career to gain invaluable experience and meet others in the profession. I also recommend connecting with a mentor or advisor who can provide advice and support. It would also be beneficial to get involved in the statistical community by joining professional organizations, presenting at conferences, and taking advantage of training and on-the-job opportunities to further their career. Volunteering with events or offices in the statistical community is also a great way to get involved.

9. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?
I would like to teach at the college level. During graduate school, I was a Teaching Assistant (TA) for a statistical computer lab course. I had never taught before and initially, did not think I would like it. However, I really enjoyed being a TA and found it to be a rewarding experience.

10. Have you had any great mentors? If so, what made them great?
I have had several terrific mentors while in college and in the workplace. Over the years, these mentors have provided guidance at different junctures in my career path. They provided support and advice, as well as opportunities to grow and advance. I have also served as a mentor to junior staff. I am currently mentoring two undergraduate mathematics and statistics students from the University of Connecticut. I have found great value in mentoring programs, both as a mentee and a mentor.

STUDENT CORNER

I hate cold weather. I grew up in Southeast Texas, and though I love Washington, DC, I always think winter is about a month too long. So I watch for Punxsutawney Phil's prediction every 2 February: Groundhog's Day. The tradition is that if Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow on Groundhog's Day, we will have six more weeks of winter. If he doesn't, we will have an early Spring.

I decided to use my fledgling statistical skills to test whether Punxsutawney Phil had any ability in predicting the weather. So what does "Early Spring" mean, anyway? If it gets warm a day before winter starts, is that an "Early Spring"? I decided that I probably could not test such an ambiguous criterium. Anyone who has lived in DC for a while knows that DC Winters will break your heart. The temperature will suddenly rise into the high 50s; your apartment building will turn off the heat and you'll store your jacket. Then suddenly, the temperature plummets into the 20s for a week. So I made my criteria very exact: "Early Spring" means that I, Tim Allen, can put my winter jacket away two weeks before the start of Spring, and not take it out again. This means there can be no runs of three consecutive days of sub-40 degree F weather.

That decided, my null hypothesis was H_0: {incidence of Early Springs is independent of Phil's predictions}. My alternate was H_a: {incidence of Early Springs is not independent of Phil's predictions}.

As for data, I only care about DC weather. There are existing studies that use the temperature of the entire US, but I don't live in the entire US. So I used weather data from National Airport. NOAA makes that available. And The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club web site has the history of whether Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow going back to the 1800's. I decided to use data from 1936-2013; NOAA didn't have data for National Airport before then. I had to skip a few years; sometimes Phil didn't appear, and NOAA didn't publish a few years. But in the end, I was able to make a list of every year, whether Phil saw his shadow or not, and whether there was an "Early Spring" or not.

I realized I was testing independence of categorical data. This would indicate testing my hypotheses using a Chi-Squared test on a two-way contingency table. My contingency table ended up like this:

		Early Spring?	
		Yes	No
Phil Sees his shadow?	Yes	36	26
	No	7	5

Which gave me a Chi-Squared statistic of: $\chi^2 = \frac{(36\times5-26\times7)^2(36+26+7+5)}{(36+5)(7+26)(26+5)(36+7)} = 2.8 \times 10^{-5}$

In order to reject my null hypothesis, I the Chi-squared statistic would have to be greater than 6.314. In fact, under the null hypothesis, the p-value of this Chi-squared statistic is 0.9957777. So I fail to reject the null hypothesis. It looks like Punxatawney Phil is a poor predictor of whether I can put my winter jackets away. Here is the R code I used to figure this out:

```r
cold.stats <- data.frame(year=numeric(0), early.spring=numeric(0))

# Punxatawney Phil did not make predictions for every single year
for (year in c(c(1936:1942), c(1944:1969),c(1973:2013))) {
        # Load each data file with the days between Groundhog's Day and the last
        # day of Winter (21-Mar-2014)
        # Read NOAA temperatures for National Airport
        # [Temperature data from ftp://ftp.ncdc.noaa.gov/pub/data/gsod/
        # National Airport is WOD 724050]
        file.name <- gsub(x="724050-13743-YEAR.op", pattern="YEAR", replacement=year)
        winter <- read.table(file.name, skip=33, nrows=48)[4]

        # Here I need to determine if there was an early spring.
        # "Early Spring" for me means there are not three consecutive days of
        # less than 40 degree F weather in the last two weeks of the Winter.
        # Use rle (Run Lengths Encoded) to detect the consecutive sub-40 degree days
        cold.runs <- rle(winter[35:48,]<40)
        early.spring <- (sum(cold.runs$lengths>=3 & cold.runs$values==TRUE ) == 0)

        # Collect some stats on this year, including the number of days colder than 40
        temp.df <- data.frame(year, early.spring)
        cold.stats <- rbind(cold.stats, temp.df)
}

# Bind on whether Punxatawney Phil saw his shadow
# Data from The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club web site,
# http://www.groundhog.org/groundhog-day/past-predictions/
saw.shadow <- read.table("saw_shadow.txt", header=TRUE)
phil <- cbind(cold.stats, saw.shadow$shadow)
names(phil) <- c("year", "early.spring", "shadow")

# Do a Chi-Squared Count Test
shadow.spring <- length(subset(phil, subset=(shadow==TRUE & early.spring==TRUE))[,1])
shadow.nospring <- length(subset(phil, subset=(shadow==TRUE & early.spring==FALSE))[,1])
noshadow.spring <- length(subset(phil, subset=(shadow==FALSE & early.spring==TRUE))[,1])
noshadow.nospring <- length(subset(phil, subset=(shadow==FALSE & early.spring==FALSE))[,1])

contingency.table <- as.table(rbind(c(shadow.spring, shadow.nospring),
                        c(noshadow.spring, noshadow.nospring)))
dimnames(contingency.table) <- list(shadow=c("Yes", "No"), early.spring=c("Yes", "No"))
contingency.table
```

Run the test
```
(Xsq <- chisq.test(contingency.table))
```

An Apology: Last month, I wrote an article on getting a job with the Federal government. I at one point, I referred to non-government jobs as "real world" jobs. I did not mean to imply that government jobs are lesser than non-government jobs; I've been a government employee for 17 years, having worked for the Department of Defense, the State Department, and currently Homeland Security. I believe federal service is one of the highest callings. My apologies to those who read this otherwise.

~ Timothy Chen Allen (timothychenallen@gmail.com), MS Stats Student, UDC

As promised, here are the answers for last month's Probs & Stats Brain Teaser:

Probs & Stats Brain Teaser

Complete the crossword below and send your results to timothychenallen@gmail.com

			1 d							
	2 r		i							
	e		s		3 d					
4 p	a	r	a	m	e	t	e	r	s	
	o		e		t					
	n		t		5 e	s	t	i	m	a	t	o	r	s
	s		e		r					
	e				m				6 t	

Crossword grid (answers):

Across:
- 4. parameters
- 5. estimators
- 7. chi-square
- 9. continuous
- 11. correlation
- 12. variance

Down:
- 1. discrete (d-i-s-c-r-e-t-e)
- 2. response (r-e-s-p-o-n-s-e)
- 3. deterministic (d-e-t-e-r-m-i-n-i-s-t-i-c)
- 6. tendency (t-e-n-d-e-n-c-y)
- 8. modeling (m-o-d-e-l-i-n-g)
- 10. anova (a-n-o-v-a)

7. c h i - s q u a r e
8. m ... n
9. c o n t i n u o u s
10. a ... d ... s
    n ... e ... t
11. c o r r e l a t i o n
    v ... i ... c
12. v a r i a n c e
    g
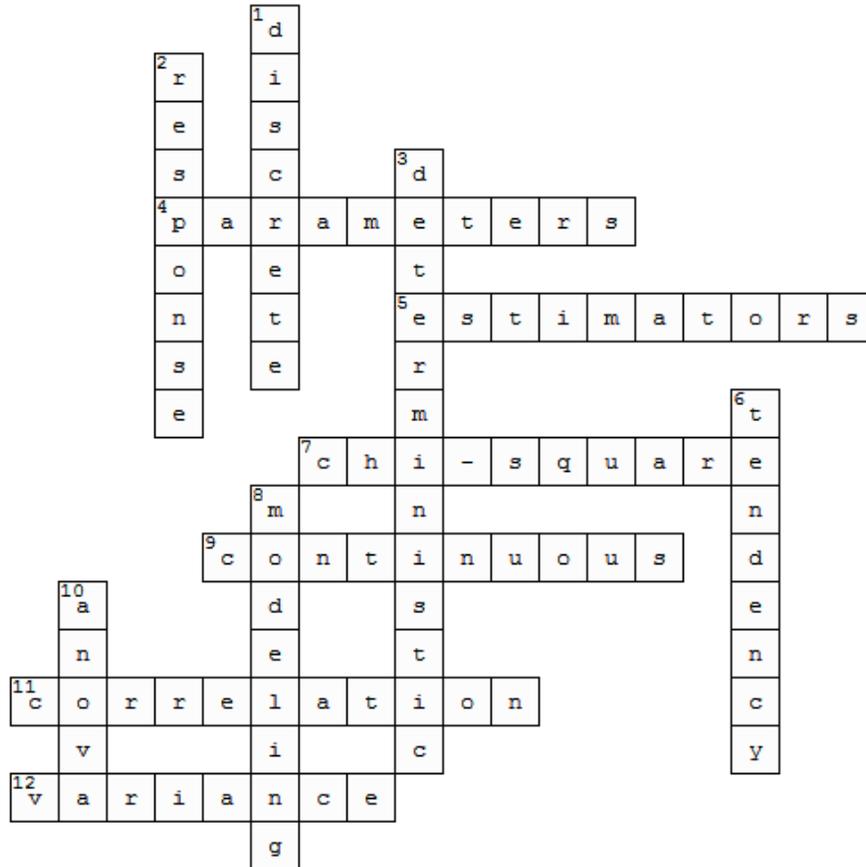
Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across
4. Samples have statistics, populations have _____ (**parameters**)
5. These can be for points or for intervals (**estimators**)
7. F Statistic is a ratio of two _____ distributions (**chi-square**)
9. Gamma is a _____ distribution (**continuous**)
11. R is Pearson's coefficient of _____ (**correlation**)
12. A measure of how far the data is spread out (**variance**)

Down
1. Poisson is a _____ distribution (**discrete**)
2. A dependent variable is also known as a _____ variable (**response**)
3. If a process is not probabilistic, it is _____ (**deterministic**)
6. Mean and median are measures of Central _____ (**tendency**)
8. Statisticians and pretty people do this (**modeling**)
10. Fisher's tabular test (**anova**)

Conference on Hierarchical Modeling in Observational Studies, Complex Surveys and Big Data

Financial Support for Students and Young Researchers

We are pleased to announce a limited number of awards to assist young researchers who graduated no earlier than 2009 and students currently enrolled in a graduate degree program in statistics, biostatistics, survey methodology or a related area in a U.S. university to attend the conference on *Frontiers of Hierarchical Modeling in Observational Studies, Complex Surveys and Big Data* that will be held **May 29-31, 2014**, at the University of Maryland, College Park campus. The conference is hosted by the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM). The awards, funded by the National Science Foundation (upon final approval), Westat, and the Washington Statistical Society (WSS), will support about 14 travel awards to cover registration and travel expenses up to a maximum of $800 and, in addition, about 14 registration waivers. **Applications must be received no later than April 15, 2014.**

Please visit http://www.jointprogram.umd.edu/ghosh/default.aspx for details about the conference and instructions on the application procedure. Applications must be sent to Prof. Yan Li at yli@survey.umd.edu no later than April 15, 2014.

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION CHECKLIST

	Eligibility	Application checklist
Travel award funded by NSF or WSS	Graduate students and young researchers	• Electronic copy of poster or a brief description of the poster to be presented • A personal statement that explains expected benefits from the conference attendance • A letter of recommendation from a research advisor/supervisor that describes applicant's research interests
Travel award funded by Westat	Current Master's students	• Undergraduate and Master's transcripts • A letter of recommendation from the student's professor that describes the student's interest in any area of applied statistics relevant to the design and analysis of problems in the socio-economic, health, or agricultural sciences.

Name: _____

Department: _____

Mailing
Address: _____
_____

Email: _____   Phone: _____

Degree: _____   Graduation date: _____

Are you presenting a poster at the conference?   YES   NO

Are you a local (within 50 miles of University of Maryland, College Park)   YES   NO
applicant?

I am currently a ____ Master's student ____ PhD student ____ Young researcher
Signature of Applicant   Date Submitted

Please send your complete email application **in a single pdf file** to Prof. Yan Li, 1218 LeFrak
Hall, University of Maryland-College Park, MD 20742, Phone: (301) 314-6570
Email: yli@survey.umd.edu

Applications for these Awards must be received by April 15, 2014.
Washington Statistical Society

2014 JSM Student Travel Award Application

The Washington Statistical Society (WSS) is offering a Student Travel Award for a local area student in a degree program (bachelors, masters, or doctoral) in the areas of statistics, survey methodology, or allied survey research disciplines. Support is offered for students to attend the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM), to be held in Boston, Massachusetts (USA) August 2-7, 2014. Applications must contain a letter of support either by a current member of the WSS or a faculty advisor (see below).

One award will be granted to a student attending a school local to the DC, MD or VA area. The award will cover conference hotel and travel expenses up to $800, early-bird student conference registration ($95), and a one-year student membership to the WSS.

In addition to attending the JSM sessions, the winner is expected to attend the Survey Research Methods Section Business Meeting in order to be recognized by the WSS. The winner is also expected to prepare an essay on his/her experience at the JSM to be published in the WSS Fall Newsletter.

Applicant Name: _____ Full time student [ ] Part-time [ ]
Department: _____
University _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Degree: _____ Anticipated graduation date: _____

Are you presenting a paper or poster at JSM?   YES   NO

Have you previously attended any professional meeting on statistics, survey research, or a related discipline?

If YES, please describe (meeting, location, dates):

YES   NO

Signature of Applicant   _____ Date Submitted _____

As a current WSS member and/or faculty advisor, I endorse this student's request:

Signature _____
Printed Name _____
Date _____

APPLICATION CHECKLIST – PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING:

[ ] Copy of most recent transcript or advising report from your university.
[ ] Double-spaced essay, no more than two pages, describing your interest in
      statistics/survey research methods and your interest in attending JSM.
[ ] Letter of support from a current WSS member or faculty advisor.

Application materials should be sent to Nancy Bates (nancy.a.bates@census.gov) by email.
Phone: (301) 763-5248.

<u>Applications must be received by **May 1, 2014.**</u>

BE INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED!

Volunteers Needed for the ASA Booth at the
USA Science and Engineering Festival

Volunteers are needed to assist with the staffing of the American Statistical Association booth at the 3rd USA Science and Engineering Festival on Friday, April 25 (from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, April 27 (from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day) at the Washington Convention Center. The basic duties are to help with several hands-on activities that emphasize important statistical ideas in an informal setting and to answer questions from the public. An ASA staff member will also be at the booth most of the time. However, having 2 to 3 additional volunteers there will help immensely since the organizers estimate that around 10,000 people will visit each booth over the three days. Plus, it's fun!!!!

If you can volunteer for two or more hours on any of these days, please contact Carol Joyce Blumberg by April 16 at cblumberg@gmail.com. Please specify which hours you can volunteer.

The festival itself will have more than 3,000 exhibits, stage shows, a book fair with author presentations, a career pavilion and much more. Friday is a sneak peek day (attendance by invitation only). Saturday and Sunday are open to the public and the entire festival is free of charge. Even if you cannot volunteer, bring your family and friends and give your future and current scientists the experience of a lifetime. For more information, the festival website is at http://www.usasciencefestival.org/

Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.
1. Your name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be great be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to, John Finamore (jfinamore@nsf.gov), member of the WSS Board.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Washington Statistical Society - DC/AAPOR Joint Happy Hour at FedCASIC!

Join your colleagues for happy hour during FedCASIC. The Washington Statistical Society and DC-AAPOR invite you to **201 Bar** from **4:45 – 6:30 on Wednesday March 18th**.

The **201 Bar** is located at 201 Massachusetts Ave N.E., within walking distance of the FedCASIC conference being held at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Happy hour will be held in the "State Room": http://www.201bar.com/gallery.html). Participants of FedCASIC, students, and members (and non-members) of WSS and DC-AAPOR are all welcome to attend. Stop by to socialize with friends and while you're at it, find out more about the activities and opportunities within WSS and DC-AAPOR!

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

HIRING SENIOR EXECUTIVES
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington D.C.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), is currently seeking high performing professionals to join its senior executive team in the following Senior Executive Service (SES) positions:

- Associate Commissioner for Administration
- Associate Commissioner for Employment and Unemployment Statistics
- Assistant Commissioner for Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections

If these opportunities interest you, please apply through the vacancy announcements on the USAJOBS website at: www.usajobs.gov. These vacancy announcements will be open from **Monday, March 10 – Wednesday, April 9, 2014**.

The announcements describe the technical and managerial experience required for effective performance of the jobs. No prior Federal experience is required.
U.S. Citizenship is required.
BLS is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

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FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

Items for publication in the **April, 2014** issue of WSS NEWS will be accepted thru the **15**th of **preceding month**.

Email items to wss.editor@gmail.com.

The authors are responsible for verifying the contents of their submissions. Submissions requiring extensive revisions on length and/or contents will be returned.

Please submit all materials as an attachment in **MS WORD** or **plain text**. Submissions in any other format will be returned.

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ITEMS IN PDF OR IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL.

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