



WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON
STATISTICAL
SOCIETY

April 2003

HERRIOT AWARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

Nominations are sought for the 2003 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. After the sudden death in May 1994 of Roger Herriot, an Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the National Center for Education Statistics, the Washington Statistical Society, the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association established an award in his memory to recognize individuals who develop unique approaches to the solution of statistical problems in Federal data collection programs.

The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career.

- * 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 at all levels (from entry to senior), Federal employees, private sector employees, and employees of the academic community, may be nominated on the basis of the significance of the specific contribution.

The recipient of the 2003 Roger Herriot Award will be chosen by a committee of representatives of the Social Statistics Section and Government Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association and a representative of the Washington Statistical Society. Roger Herriot was associated with and strongly supportive of these organizations during his career. The award consists of an honorarium of \$500.00 and a framed citation.

Joseph Waksberg (Westat), Monroe Sirken (National Center for Health Statistics), Constance Citro (National Academy of Sciences), Roderick Harrison (U.S. Census Bureau), Clyde Tucker (Bureau of Labor Statistics), Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNSTAT), Donald Dillman (Washington State University), Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF), and Daniel Weinberg (U. S. Census Bureau) are previous recipients of the Herriot Award.

A nomination form can be obtained by contacting Jerry Gates by phone: (703) 763-2515; fax (703) 457-2654; or email: gerald.w.gates@census.gov. All completed nomination forms should be either mailed to Jerry Gates, 8524 Wagon Wheel Road, Alexandria Virginia, 22309 or delivered to Jerry Gates at the U.S. Census Bureau, Room 2430, Building 3, Suitland Federal Center, Suitland, Maryland 20233. Completed nomination forms must be received by May 10, 2003.

WSS and Other Seminars (All events are open to any interested persons)		
April 15	Tues.	Making Sense of Census Data via the World Wide Web: A Case Study Using the 1997 Census of Agriculture
24	Thur.	Quality Review in Sampling Administrative Records
May 14	Wed.	Collecting Sensitive Data Using the 3-Card Method
June 9	Mon.	The Second Seminar on the Funding Opportunity In Survey Research

Also available on the World Wide Web at the following URL: <http://www.science.gmu.edu/~wss>

Announcements

SIGSTAT Schedule: April 2003 to May 2003

April 9, 2003: SAS 9.0 (<http://www.sas.com>)

Linda Atkinson will present a demo of the latest release of SAS.

May 14, 2003: SAS/IML Workshop 2.0 (<http://www.sas.com>)

SAS/IML Workshop is a graphical user interface and extension of SAS/IML software that enables you to explore data interactively using standard statistical graphics and tables. IML Workshop provides an integrated development environment for writing, debugging, and executing IML programs. IML Workshop also implements the IMLPlus programming language, which is an enhanced version of the IML programming language. IMLPlus provides new language features such as the ability to call SAS procedures and external C/Fortran/Java functions. IML Workshop requires a PC running the Microsoft Windows operating system.

SIGSTAT is the Special Interest Group in Statistics for the CPCUG, the Capital PC User Group, and WINFORMS, the Washington Institute for Operations Research Service and Management Science.

All meetings are in Room S3031, 1800 M St, NW from 12:30 to 1:30. Enter the South Tower & take the elevator to the 3rd floor to check in at the guard's desk.

First-time attendees should contact Charlie Hallahan, 202-694-5051, hallahan@ers.usda.gov, and leave their name. Directions to the building & many links of statistical interest can be found at the SIGSTAT website, <http://www.cpcug.org/user/sigstat/>.

WINFORMS SYMPOSIUM

WINFORMS (the Washington DC area chapter of INFORMS - Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences) will hold a symposium on the 22nd and 23rd of April at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Building at 1200 New York Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. (near Metro Center). The theme for the symposium will be "Analysis in our Changing Times." Please mark your calendars. If you are interested in volunteering or presenting a paper, please e-mail winforms@mail.informs.org.

Notice about Seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics

A new list of attendees of WSS seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics begins April 1, 2003 (the previous list will be discarded). If you plan to attend a seminar at BLS, you will need to do one of the following at least by noon 1 day ahead: (1) e-mail name, affiliation, and name of seminar to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') or (2) call 202-691-7524 and leave a message with this information. Finally, bring a photo ID. NOTE: Once on the list, you need not contact BLS for subsequent seminars through June 27, 2003.

Note from the WSS NEWS Editor

Items for publication in the June 2003 WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than April 29, 2003. E-mail items to Michael Feil at michael.feil@usda.gov.

Conference on Federal Statistics and Counterterrorism

In many ways, at many agencies, the federal statistics community is becoming a key contributor to the war on terrorism. But often our efforts are fragmented, and similar problems are being solved in different ways at different departments. To help us coordinate our efforts and pool our resources, the Washington Statistical Society is sponsoring a conference on statistical issues in counterterrorism. The conference will be held on May 29-30 at the National Academies building (500 Fifth Street NW, near the Judiciary Square metro stop).

The scientific program focuses upon cybersecurity, syndromic surveillance, biometric identification, risk analysis, game theory, record linkage, confidentiality, contaminant detection, and related topics. Speakers include John Bailar, Kathy Wallman, Bill Winkler, Larry Cox, Ed Wegman, Alan Karr, and other important members or partners of the Washington statistical community.

To obtain more information about the program, and details on how to register, please go the our link at the WSS website.

This conference is co-sponsored by the Committee on National Statistics at the National Academies, by the ASA Sections on Government Statistics and Risk Analysis, and by the ASA Committee on Statisticians in National Defense and Homeland Security.

Program Abstract

**U.S. BUREAU OF CENSUS
STATISTICAL RESEARCH DIVISION SEMINAR**

Topic: Making Sense of Census Data via the World Wide Web
A Case Study Using the 1997 Census of Agriculture

Speaker: Irwin Anolik
USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service - Research and Development Division
ianolik@nass.usda.gov

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 15, 2003, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Location: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 4700 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, Maryland - the Morris Hansen Auditorium, Bldg. 3. Please call (301) 457-4974 to be placed on the visitors' list. A photo ID is required for security purposes.

ABSTRACT: This seminar demonstrates ways of enabling our data customers to freely and effectively access and analyze NASS data using a web browser connected to the Internet. We focus on using data from the 1997 Census of Agriculture to demonstrate methods of display and analysis that give a better understanding of inherent patterns and structure in the data. Specifically, we provide the ability to view, analyze, and dynamically interact with summary data at the state and county level. Historically, our customers have had access to this data in tabular form only.

We discuss the relevant concepts and technologies that we considered, and the selection of specific solutions that we currently implement on the NASS web site to give data customers the abilities discussed above. We also discuss our attempt to design a web site so that information of interest to large numbers of customers is easy to access.

While we focus on data from the 1997 Census of Agriculture, the principles and methods discussed can be applied to other sources of survey and census data.

This seminar is physically accessible to persons with disabilities. For TTY callers, please use the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. This is a free and confidential service. Requests for sign language interpreting services or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Yvonne Moore at (301) 457-2540 text telephone (TTY), 301-763-5113 (voice mail), or by e-mail to S.Yvonne.Moore@census.gov.

NCI Statistical Colloquia

The National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Prevention sponsors a monthly Statistical Colloquia Series. This season's schedule should be of interest to many of you. Check the website below for updates including abstracts as they are posted. Address: Executive Plaza North; Conference Room G (usually); 6130 Executive Boulevard Rockville, Maryland. Bring photo ID, and check in with the guards at the entrance.

Date	Speaker	Topic
04/02/03	Sue Marcus	Selection bias in the design of randomized clinical trials

For Additional Information: Office of Preventive Oncology 301-496-8640
On the Web: DCP Stat Series: <http://www3.cancer.gov/prevention/pob/fellowship/colloquia.html>

Program Abstract

- Title:** Quality Review in Sampling Administrative Records
- Speaker:** Wendy Rotz and Eric Falk, Ernst & Young LLP
- Discussant:** Jeri Mulrow, National Science Foundation
- Chair:** Alan Jeeves, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Date/Time:** Thursday, April 24, 2003, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Postal Square Building (PSB), Conference Center, Conference Room 10, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. Please use the First Street entrance to the PSB. To gain entrance to BLS, please see Notice at the end of this announcement.
- Sponsor:** WSS Quality Assurance and Physical Sciences Section
- Abstract:** Sand traps and sanity checks in sampling will be discussed from creating a sampling population file, through sample design, selection, and estimation. Samplers heavily rely upon electronic data files to produce their sampling frames but how reliable is that data? What are some simple yet effective checks to avoid pitfalls along the way? When sample results are returned to a statistician for estimation, what could have gone wrong while non-statisticians handled the data? There are errors that are far too easy to make. How can they be caught or even avoided? The Ernst & Young Quantitative Economics and Statistics Group's quality review checks for sampling engagements will be presented.

Notice about Seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics

A new list of attendees of WSS seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics begins April 1, 2003 (the previous list will be discarded). If you plan to attend a seminar at BLS, you will need to do one of the following at least by noon 1 day ahead: (1) e-mail name, affiliation, and name of seminar to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') or (2) call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Finally, bring a photo ID. NOTE: Once on the list, you need not contact BLS for subsequent seminars through June 27, 2003.

Program Abstract

- Title:** Collecting Sensitive Data Using the 3-Card Method
- Speakers:** Judy Droitcour, General Accounting Office
Nathan Anderson, General Accounting Office
- Discussant:** Fritz Scheuren, National Opinion Research Center
- Organizer:** Jonaki Bose, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Date:** Wednesday, 14th May 2003
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Postal Square Building (PSB), Conference Room 9, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. Please use the First Street entrance to the PSB. Use the Red Line to Union Station. To gain entrance to BLS, please see Notice at the end of this announcement.
- Sponsor:** Data Collection Methods Section, WSS
- Abstract:** Collecting sensitive information on, for example, illegal immigration or elder abuse can provide important inputs to the policy process, but is challenging because of privacy issues and the potential for response bias.

The three-card method is a survey-based indirect estimation technique that assures absolute privacy of response. No one the interviewer, data analyst, principal investigator, or anyone else can ever know whether a respondent is in the sensitive category, based on his or her responses. Yet when all data are combined, an estimate of the proportion of individuals in the sensitive category is possible. This method was initially designed to: 1) avoid the "mind-boggling" procedures in a randomized response interview; 2) allow follow-up questions; and 3) estimate all answer categories, including the sensitive category, for the total population and major subgroups. The three card method was originally designed to estimate all categories of immigration status, including the sensitive illegal category. Recent developments include (1) separate estimation of visa overstays within the illegal immigrant category (as this group is of special interest in the post-9/11 environment), and (2) elder abuse (a topic of growing concern as baby boomers age).

The first paper (by Judith Droitcour) discusses the general method, estimation of visa overstays, and the variance associated with a three-card estimate. The second paper (by Nathan Anderson) will present a potential application in the area of elder abuse and plans for new work. Fritz Scheuren will discuss the presentations.

Notice about Seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics

To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to 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. A new list begins on April 1, 2003 and expires June 30, 2003.

Program Abstract

- Topic:** The Second Seminar on the Funding Opportunity In Survey Research
- Organizer:** Research Subcommittee of the Federal Committee On Statistical Methodology (Robert Fay; robert.e.fay.iii@census.gov; Monroe Sirken; mgs2@CDC.gov)
- Sponsors:** Washington Statistical Society and Washington DC / Baltimore Chapter of AAPOR
- Date/Time:** Monday, June 9, 2003, 9:00 AM - 4:00PM (NOTE SPECIAL TIME)
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference and Training Center, Rooms 1, 2, and 3, Postal Square Building (PSB), 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC. Please use First St., NE entrance (across from Union Station).
- Abstract:** In 1998, a consortium of 12 Federal statistical agencies in collaboration with the Methodology, Measurement and Statistics Program, National Science Foundation, and with the support of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology initiated a grants program to fund basic survey and statistical research oriented to the needs of Federal agencies. Reports of the principal investigators of the 4 research projects funded during cycle 1 of the Program in 1999 were featured at a first Funding Opportunity Seminar held in Washington during June 2001. The Second Funding Opportunity Seminar will feature the reports of principal investigators of the 4 projects that were funded in 2001, cycle 2 of the program:
1. "Bayesian Methodology for Disclosure Limitation and Statistical Analysis of Large Government Surveys" by Rod Little and Trivellore Raghunathan;
 2. "Visual and Interactive Issues in the Design of Web Surveys" by Roger Tourangeau, Mick Cooper, Reginald Baker, and Fred Conrad;
 3. "Robust Small Area Estimation Based on a Survey Weighted MCMC Solution for the Generalized Linear Mixed Model" by Ralph Folsom and Avinash Singh; and
 4. "Small Area and Longitudinal Estimation Using Information from Multiple Surveys" by Sharon Lohr.
- Federal agency statisticians and survey methodologists will be discussants at each session.
- There will be 3 morning and 3 afternoon sessions. The Introductory Session will be "The Origins of the Funding Opportunity", and the Concluding Session will be "The Benefits and Challenges of the Funding Opportunity."

There will be a continental breakfast, and refreshments at midmorning and afternoon breaks. so we need preliminary counts of the number of attendees. Please call Pat Drummond at 301-458-4193 if you plan to attend. Also, if you haven't attended a seminar at BLS since April 1, 2003, see the "Notice about Seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics" in the newsletter for instructions.

Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS) Confidentiality Seminar Series

The April, May, and June seminars in the BTS series on confidentiality are listed below. Please note that in April we have added a seminar by Dr. Stephen Fienberg, Carnegie Mellon University, entitled "Statistical Disclosure Limitation: Releasing Useful Data for Statistical Analysis." His presentation will be on Monday, April 28. The seminars in this series are open to all. Please direct questions to either Neil Russell (neil.russell@bts.gov) or Virginia de Wolf (virginia.dewolf@bts.gov).

April 28th Seminar

Title: Statistical Disclosure Limitation: Releasing Useful Data for Statistical Analysis

Presenter: Stephen Fienberg, Department of Statistics, Center for Automated Learning and Discovery and Center for Computer and Communications Security, Carnegie Mellon University

Discussant: Nancy Kirkendall, Director, Statistics and Methods Group, Energy Information Administration, US Department of Energy

Date/Time: Monday, April 28, 2003, 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Location: US Department of Transportation, Nassif Building, 400-7th St., SW, Room 3328 (See Notice at the end of this announcement.)

Abstract: Disclosure limitation has often been viewed by statistical agencies solely as a mechanism for "protecting" confidentiality, and not in terms of providing data that are useful for statistical analysis. A true statistical approach to disclosure limitation needs to assess the tradeoff between preserving confidentiality and the usefulness of the released data, especially for inferential purposes. In this presentation we discuss these issues, illustrate them with some recent methods for categorical data, and describe some of the research challenges that remain.

April 29th Seminar

Title: Overview of Statistical Disclosure Methodology for Microdata

Presenter: Laura Zayatz, Disclosure Limitation Research Group Leader, US Census Bureau

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 29, 2003, 1-2 pm

Location: US Department of Transportation, Nassif Building, 400-7th St., SW, Room 3328 (See Notice at the end of this announcement.)

Abstract: An overview of methods used to protect microdata will be presented. Certain methods will be highlighted and explored in more detail as they are applied to Census Bureau microdata.

May Seminar

Title: Statistical Disclosure at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

Presenter: Alvan Zarate, Confidentiality Officer, NCHS

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 20, 2003, 10-11 am

Location: US Department of Transportation, Nassif Building, 400-7th St., SW, Room 6200 (See Notice at the end of this announcement.)

Abstract: This seminar describes how statistical disclosure limitation methods are implemented at the National Center for Health Statistics. The roles that a Disclosure Review Board and a Confidentiality Officer play in a Federal statistical agency will be highlighted.

June Seminar

- Title:** The OMB's Interagency Confidentiality and Data Access Committee (CDAC)
- Presenters:** Jacob Bournazian, Chair of CDAC (2002-2003), Energy Information Administration, US Department of Energy, and Mark Schipper, CDAC Member, Energy Information Administration, US Department of Energy
- Date/Time:** Wednesday, June 11, 2003, 12:00 - 1 pm
- Location:** US Department of Transportation, Nassif Building, 400-7th St., SW, Room 6244 (See Notice at the end of this announcement.)
- Abstract:** The activities of CDAC will be described. The presentation will highlight products created by CDAC members, including its "Checklist on the Disclosure Potential of Proposed Data Releases" and the auditing software for tabular products.

Notice about BTS Confidentiality Series Seminars

The Department of Transportation's Nassif Building, 400-7th St., SW, Washington, DC, is located at the L'Enfant Plaza Metro Stop (follow signs to the Department of Transportation exit at 7th and D Streets, SW). All visitors should enter at the Southwest entrance. Please bring a photo ID (federal employees must have federal ID). Procedures differ depending on the employer:

1. For federal employees: Please show your federal ID to the guard at the Southwest entrance, go through security, and then proceed to the seminar room (the first number indicates the floor on which the conference room is located).
2. For non-federal employees: DOT security procedures require BTS to provide a list of attendees who are not federal employees prior to the seminar. Therefore, if you plan to attend the seminar and are not employed by the federal government, please provide your name, name of employer, and phone number to either Neil Russell (neil.russell@bts.gov) or Virginia de Wolf (virginia.dewolf@bts.gov) by COB of the week before the seminar, i.e.,
 - Monday, April 21st for the April 28th seminar;
 - Tuesday, April 22nd for the April 29th seminar;
 - Tuesday, May 13th for the May 20th seminar; and
 - Wednesday, June 4th for the June 11th seminar.

On the day of the seminar, please report to the Southwest entrance of the Nassif Building 15 minutes before the start of the seminar so that you can be escorted to the seminar room. That is, be in the lobby of the Southwest entrance at 1:15 pm for the April 28th seminar, 12:45 for the April 29th seminar, 9:45 am for the May 20th seminar, and 11:45 am for the June 11th seminar.

Employment

As a service to local statisticians, *WSS News* provides notification of employment opportunities and description of those seeking employment here in the Washington, DC, area. Readers are encouraged to take advantage of this feature of the newsletter. The deadline for inserting notices is five (5) weeks before the publication date. Those interested should email or call Anne Peterson, at apeterson.ipr@verizon.net or (703) 979-1191.

STATISTICIANS www.rti.org

The Statistics Research Division of RTI International seeks statisticians at the MS level with 3+ years experience to work on educational, health care, epidemiological, and probability-based surveys/studies in their Washington, DC office.

Candidates must have SAS programming, oral communication, writing, and analytic skills. Experience in contract research, SUDAAN programming, surveys, telephone or web surveys, or sampling experience is desirable.

RTI offers a comprehensive package including 4 weeks paid time off, 10 paid holidays, tuition reimbursement, medical/dental benefits, and a generous retirement plan.

EOE/AA/M/F/H/C

Mathematical Statistician U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO)

The GAO performs studies for the Congress that evaluates federal programs for the purpose of improving government operations and assisting the Congress in its oversight responsibilities.

GAO is seeking applicants for a Mathematical Statistician position to be filled at either the GS-9/11/12 levels. This position has promotion potential to GS-13. This position is located in the Management and Program Analysis Unit, Chief Mission Support Office, in Washington, D.C. This unit conducts GAO-wide studies in support of mission and mission support services and operations. Assignments involve statistical analyses of GAO's workforce to provide input for management decisions affecting GAO policy and operations. The salary range is \$39,597 to \$74,648 per annum depending on relevant education and experience. Your education must have included a minimum of 12 semester hours in mathematics and 6 semester hours in statistics. At least 1 year of experience must have been equivalent to the next lower grade level to which you are applying. U.S. citizenship is required.

To start the application process, you must access the vacancy announcement that lists all requirements by going to www.gao.gov. Reference announcement number **GAO-400-CMSO-2003-19** on your resume and supplemental information. The announcement for this position closes **April 18, 2003**. For questions, please call (202) 512-6092.



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