

Washington Statistical Society

CHAPTER • AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

WSS Newsletter-September 1983

CALENDAR

TOPIC: What's Happening in Computer Graphics
SPEAKER: Roger Moore, Census
CHAIR: Chap Gleason, Department of Agriculture
DISCUSSANT: Arthur Silverburg, Food and Drug Administration
DATE AND TIME: September 14, 1983, 12:30-2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Room GJ-015, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW

TOPIC: Structural-Equation Models: A Case Study
SPEAKER: D.A. Freedman, University of California at Berkeley
CHAIR: Douglas Hale, Energy Information Administration
DATE AND TIME: September 21, 1983, 12:30-2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Room GJ-015, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW

TOPIC: Discrete Sequential Boundaries for Clinical Trails
SPEAKERS: K. K. Gordon Lan, National Institutes of Health (NIH)
DISCUSSANT: Mitchell H. Gail, NIH
DATE AND TIME: September 23, 1983, 12:00-2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Conference Room E, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Bethesda, MD

TOPIC: Hazards in Analyzing Data Using Linear Models
SPEAKER: Douglas C. Montgomery, Georgia Institute of Technology
CHAIR: Seymour M. Selig, Office of Naval Research
DATE AND TIME: September 26, 1983, 12:30-2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Rooms 410-415, Marvin Center, George Washington University, 800 21st Street, NW

TOPIC: What the Swedes, Dutch, British and Japanese Can Teach Us About Social Reports
SPEAKER: Robert Parke, Social Science Research Council
CHAIR: Richard Rockwell, Social Science Research Council
DISCUSSANT: Dave O'Neil, Census
DATE AND TIME: September 27, 1983, 12:30-2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: IRS Auditorium, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW

TOPIC: Occupational Coding-Administrative Record Approaches
SPEAKER: Harry Rosenberg, NCHS, and Patricia Crabbe, IRS
CHAIR: Jacob S. Siegel, Georgetown University
DISCUSSANT: Gilbert Beebe, National Cancer Institute
DATE AND TIME: September 28, 1983, 12:30-2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: 1201 E Street, NW, Room 806B

DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE MEETINGS

TOPIC: What's Happening in Computer Graphics
ABSTRACT: Today, computers are relieving us of the drudgery inherent in producing graphics displays and are giving us time to consider how to better serve our audiences. Forthcoming computer graphics' technology bids to rival the impact of moveable type on communications of all sorts. A number of computer graphics applications are shown and discussed, and suggestions relative to their use in making consumer-friendly statistical graphics are emphasized.

TOPIC: Structural-Equation Models: a case study
ABSTRACT: In 1967, Blau and Duncan proposed a structural-equation model for occupational stratification. This is one of the most successful, and influential, applications of the techniques to social data. A point-by-point critique of the model is offered here, with a view to suggesting that the method of structural equations is not so useful in analyzing complex social phenomena.

TOPIC: Discrete Sequential Boundries for Clinical Trials
ABSTRACT: Repeated significance tests in controlled clinical trials will be discussed. A new flexible method is proposed for constructing boundaries.

TOPIC: Hazards in Analyzing Data Using Linear Models
ABSTRACT: The linear statistical model is widely used in many fields for data analysis. However, the linear model is particularly sensitive to a number of problems that may exist in the data. These problems include outliers, remote or influential observations, multicollinearity or near linear dependencies among the independent variables, and autocorrelation in the errors. This talk focuses on the source of these problems, available diagnostics, and remedial measures for some of these situations.

TOPIC: What the Swedes, Dutch, British and Japanese Can Teach Us About Social Reports
ABSTRACT: Robert Parke has been conducting a study of what makes for good reporting on social conditions and trends in the U.S. and elsewhere. His talk will focus on four rather different social reports that may prove instructive for statisticians responsible for preparing U.S. social reports.

TOPIC: Occupation Coding -- Administrative Record Approaches
ABSTRACT: This session focuses on two current efforts to use information collected for nonstatistical purposes to develop better codes for occupations and industries. The first paper, by Harry N. Rosenberg and Jeff Maurer, describes the NCHS experience in coding occupation and industry from death certificates, as part of a joint effort they are conducting with NIOSH and the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The second paper is by Peter Sailer, Patricia Crabbe and Beth Kilss, and describes a recent study which IRS is conducting in conjunction with the National Cancer Institute, the Social Security Administration and the Census Bureau, to use individual income tax information to code occupation.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, 1982-1983

There were three goals set for the operation of the Washington Statistical Society this past year: to involve more people in the operation of the Board of Directors, to develop closer working arrangements with economists, and to concern ourselves with some of the important organizational questions currently affecting statisticians.

This focus on organizational questions led us to presentations from both the House (Congressman Robert Garcia last July speaking on "Impact of Budget Cuts on Federal Statistics") and the Senate (Senator Dan Quayle speaking in August on "The Need for a Two-Year Budget Process"). It also resulted in the presentation of differing points of view from the Administration (Christopher DeMuth speaking in March on "Federal Statistical Policies and Programs") and from the previous Administration's consultant on statistical reorganization (Jim Bonnen speaking in June on "Federal Statistical Policy and Coordination--Who Needs It?"). These sessions and others were planned to emphasize the need for statisticians to be aware of how today's political and economic issues impact on their professional lives as well as technical developments in their fields.

One of the most successful programs of the past year was a three part workshop on Improving Federally Funded Surveys organized by Don King and presented by Charles Turner, Barbara Bailar, and Don. This workshop, which was more than a year in the planning stage, played to standing room only crowds.

A special event held this year was a birthday celebration in honor of W. E. Deming's 82nd birthday in October. This evening event allowed the opportunity for many of his friends and colleagues to reminisce and reflect upon Ed's contributions to the field of statistics.

Nancy Teeters, Governor of the Federal Reserve Board, was the guest speaker for the WSS Annual Dinner. Her chosen topic was "Economic Outlook." The fourth annual Julius Shiskin Award for outstanding achievement in economic statistics was presented in honor of the late Beatrice Vaccara. Also recognized at the annual dinner were the following outstanding graduate students from local universities: Mr. Michael Iyun - Howard University, Ms. Shin-pei Jennifer Liu - American University, Mrs. Anna Nevius - University of Maryland, and Ms. Ellen Lawsky - George Washington University.

There are a number of people I want to thank for making this an interesting and successful year for me and I hope for most WSS members. Maria Gonzalez, Vice President this year and incoming President, was always available with good, solid suggestion and ideas. Our experienced Secretary and Treasurer, Rich Allen and Bennie Clemmer, continued to provide the behind scenes attention to detail which eases the job of any President.

Changes in the economy and in demand for statisticians were evidenced by Evelyn Kay's monthly Employment Column which had 25 announcements of positions available compared to 12 the year earlier. Jeremy Wu took over the duties of Arrangements Chair during the year from Charles Roberts. Likewise, Dhiren Ghosh finally followed through on his desire to "retire" from the Board and Julia Oliver replaced him as Newsletter Editor. Fred Vogel took over Agriculture and Natural Resources in Mid-year from Julia. Doug Samuelson, in his Membership Committee Chair

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role, continued to bring in new ideas on attracting, keeping and better serving members. Jim Carpenter, Program Chair for short courses, organized the short course on personal computing.

Our new two-person team for Economics, Eva Jacobs and Nancy Gordon, was very successful in arranging a full agenda of program sessions and increasing the numbers of economists attending our program offerings. Karen Kafadar as Methodology Program Chair arranged an extremely full schedule (12 sessions). A Statistical Computing Program area was formed this year and was handled by David Morganstein, John J. Miller, and Chap Gleason. Mitchell Gail and Lee-Ann Hayek were in charge of Public Health and Biostatistics and the Social and Demographic programs, respectively. Seymour Selig continued in his role as program chair for the Physical Sciences and Engineering and was instrumental in arranging the birthday commemoration for Ed Deming.

The WSS Board structure provides the President each year with a group of senior advisors, the Representatives at Large. This year's group, Don King, Mary Grace Kovar, and Wes Schaible, provided very good counsel to the Board and tackled the special projects that came along. Another important advisor was Nancy Krikendall, the Methodology Program Chair, who will continue in that role a second year due to Karen Kafadar's move from the area. I also want to recognize Lillian Madow for her input to the Shiskin Award program.

It is with sadness that I now mention the contribution of the Past President, the late Shirley Kallek. Although her health and work schedule did not allow her to attend the monthly Board meetings, she attended the presentation by Senator Quayle and raised questions which focused his attention on the impact his budget proposal would have on the statistical system. Shirley also served as the Shiskin Award Representative from Census and did all of the review of nominees and participated in the award selection just prior to her death.

A new problem that came to the attention of the Board this year dealt with a member who believed he was fired for being a whistle blower. Although this particular situation involved a management or administrative issue rather than a statistical one, the Society needs to assess its proper role in such matters.

Although we had many successful programs, I would be remiss if I did not mention that some programs designed to improve communication between specialists in different subareas of our subject did not draw the attention they deserved. The history of statistics is noteworthy for duplication of research efforts; e.g., the econometricians redeveloped a test for the identity of two regressions that was already in a textbook by Professor C.R. Rao aimed at biometricians. Conversely, research on the effect of "errors in variables" and techniques for correcting the problem, carried on by econometricians and theoretical statisticians are now finding application in other areas. Thus, I hope that next year all of you seriously consider attending one session outside your area of expertise which simply sounds interesting.

Let me close by thanking the Board and you the Members for the interest you have shown in the Society and its programs which contributed in making my year as President both interesting and enjoyable.

JOSEPH L. GASTWIRTH
WSS BOARD PRESIDENT, 1982-1983

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS SEMINAR

TOPIC: Use of Existing Computerized Medicaid Data Bases for Evaluating Drug Induced Disease
SPEAKER: Robert T. O'Neil and Stephen W. Van de Carr, National Center for Drugs and Biologics
DATE AND TIME: September 22, 1983, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Center Building, Room 7-32, 3700 East-West Highway, Hyattsville, MD
ABSTRACT: An epidemiologic study of drug induced diseases in the cohort of about 1.5 million patients covered by the Medicaid Programs of Minnesota and Michigan. Design and analysis of the study will be discussed relative to patient selection, matching criteria, choice of control groups, separation of prevalence from incidence, construction of events from drug and disease code information, and multivariate risk function describing the drug-disease association.

WASHINGTON SAS-USERS GROUP MEETING

SPEAKERS: J. Harvey Trimble, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jesse Gary, ORI Incorporated and Richard Collins, IPA Fellow with AID
DATE AND TIME: September 21, 1983, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
LOCATION: George Washington University (Building C), 2201 G Street, N.W., Main Entrance (follow signs to lecture hall)
ABSTRACT: A Poster Session following the format of SUGI (SAS Users Group International) meetings will be presented. Topics are: (1) New SAS Macro Facility, (2) PROC Tabulate, and The IBM-PC Interface to SAS. Call Marilyn Sorensen (226-6272) for more information.

CALL TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FOR PROBLEM FOR COMPETITION IN DATA ANALYSIS

The Methodology Section of the Washington Statistical Society is planning a competition in data analysis. If a suitable problem can be identified, it will be made available to interested analysts in the Washington area. Upon submission, given an adequate response, the analyses will be judged and the winners announced and given the opportunity of presenting their results at a joint meeting of the WSS.

We are asking government agencies to provide the suitable problem. This problem must be typified by the analysis of a data set with fewer than 250 observations and six variables per observation so that the data set can be entered by hand into a computer system.

As a result, we expect that a government agency will receive a well-thought-out answer to an interesting problem and some analysts will receive recognition for their efforts in solving the problem.

Send problems to: Michael Cohen
Applied Management Sciences
962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 701
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Problems should be received by November 31, 1983.

EMPLOYMENT COLUMN

Deadline for inserting notices is the 1st of the month preceding the publication date.

Send notices and requests to:
Evelyn R. Kay
520 - 22nd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037 (202) 331-1153

JOB OPENINGS

Computer Programmer/Statistician GS-9/11 . The U.S. Information Agency has a full-time temporary (one-year) position for a Computer Programmer in its Office of Research. The incumbent plans and builds databases for statistical analysis of data from large scale foreign social surveys having diverse content and complex machine-readable formats. Applicants must have a working knowledge of at least one of the following: SPSS, OSIRIS, DATA-TEXT, or SAS. Send SF-171 to Kathy Butler, USIA, 400 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20547 and refer to vacancy number (PDP-241A-83).

Applicants to the following three positions should send SF-171 and education transcripts to Dr. Bert Levy, Director, Mathematics and Statics Division; Science and Food Safety Inspection Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 612 Annex; Washington, DC 20250.

Mathematical Statistician GM-1529-13 Position is located in the Experimental Design Branch and requires an expert consultant who has excellent knowledge of a wide range of mathematics and statistical procedures. Special emphasis is placed on statistical inference, modeling, and sampling. Excellent communication abilities are essential.

Mathematician-GM-1520-13 or Math. Stat.-GM-1529-13 Main duties are the planning, coordinating, and use of a Science-wide ADP for the analysis and processing of scientific data. Duties include planning and developing data bases which are compatible with major statistical analysis packages. Good knowledge is desired of most of the following: FORTRAN, BASIC, SAS, SPSS, Minitab, and data base management systems.

Mathematician-GS-7/9 or Math. Stat.-GS-1529-7/9 Main duties are assisting with the planning, coordinating, and use of a Science-wide ADP system for the analysis and processing of scientific data. Part of these duties include assisting with the planning and development of data bases which are compatible with major statistical analysis packages. Familiarity is desired of most of the following: FORTRAN, BASIC, SAS, SPSS, Minitab, and data base management systems.

(Mailed 8/26/83)



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