



The New Zealand Statistical Association

www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/nzsa

Newsletter

Number 58

September 2003

President's Column



There has been a great deal of NZSA activity lately. The Conference at Palmerston North was enjoyable and instructive, and judged a success by all who attended. One of the most enjoyable parts of the Conference for me was the dinner where the Campbell Award

was presented to Harold Henderson, and Life Memberships to George Seber, Alastair Scott and David Vere-Jones.

The question of official recognition within NZSA beyond the Campbell Award and Life Memberships is raised for discussion elsewhere in this Newsletter. The Education subcommittee has been very active, and with their assistance (and as in line with a resolution passed at the AGM) I have sent a letter to the Minister of Education expressing NZSA's concern at the proposed changes to 7th Form Statistics.

The Survey Appraisals and Public Questions Committee has been exploring the need for and cost of Public and Professional Liability insurance, and working on a submission requested by the Review panel for Stage 2 of the current Review of Official Statistics, being undertaken by the State Services Commission, Treasury and Statistics NZ.

The NZSA will be part of a four person joint committee with the Australians through SSAI to look at the question of advantages and disadvantages of electronic only publication of the ANZJS – the NZSA representatives are Russell Millar and Murray Jorgensen.

And the Science Fair season is upon us again, with the considerable organisation that this involves for NZSA, with various people being called to act as judges for the Statistics prizes for the individual Fairs.

All of these issues, with one exception, are running smoothly or are discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this Newsletter. The SAPQC is the possible

exception. The liability insurance question will be reported back to Exec at the next meeting, and the legal opinion recommended at the AGM seems likely to be sought after that meeting.

The other SAPQC matter is our response to the Review of Official Statistics. This review raises a number of issues which, given the percentage of the members of NZSA who are involved directly or indirectly in Official Statistics, will have considerable potential impact. Stage 2 of the Review involves a "Top Down Review of Official Statistics". Changes in technology and in the roles of the various government departments and agencies have led to the need for a thorough review. The draft Review report, on which NZSA has been asked to comment, recommends the formation of an overview body (OSAC). This recommendation is a welcome one. To ensure technical issues are adequately addressed however, it will be imperative that some of the members of OSAC are statisticians experienced in design and analysis of surveys and administrative data collections. The open question is whether NZSA should request that it be officially represented on OSAC. I would welcome your comment on this question and ask that it be sent either directly to Alistair Gray, the SAPQC Convenor, or via me (S.J.Haslett@massey.ac.nz).

Stephen Haslett
29/8/03



Invited speakers Joe Gani, Bruce Weir, Nick Longford and Kerrie Mengersen (left to right), with gifts presented by Steve Haslett in the closing session of the NZSA 2003 Conference

Editorial



The six months since our last newsletter has seen a lot of activity within the Association, highlighted by an extremely successful 3-day conference at Massey University. There was a full programme covering a wide variety of subjects and about 130 registrants, certainly surpassing my expectations. My favourite quotes were Joe Gani's "If you suffer from mathematitis you want to generalize", and John-Paul Praat on precision agriculture, "This tractor is harvesting data".

The conference dinner featured a number of richly deserved awards received with characteristic self-effacement, which are detailed on pages 6-7.

Last issue's feature by Jeff Hunter on employment prospects for maths and statistics graduates brought subsequent diverse comment from Richard Penny and Harold Henderson. See <http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter57/letter.htm>.

Also between issues, the adventures of Len Cook and what happened with the English census were featured in a recent *New Zealand Listener* article, reproduced at <http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter57/LenCook.htm>, with further links to *Guardian* articles.

This issue's special feature concerns the proposal/decision to position the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics as electronic-only. Because this is an important matter in the affairs of our Association a lot of space is given to it here, to try to inform the membership to the greatest possible extent. The online version of the newsletter will carry on-going correspondence on this issue (<http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter58/anzjseop.htm>). Because the key date for deciding on this proposal is February 2004, there may be some form of interim newsletter.

This newsletter also contains excerpts from a letter from Steve Haslett to the Minister of Education concerning the statistics syllabus for senior high school students under NCEA.

Last newsletter I offered a prize for counting the number of babies in the Local News. Congratulations to Lois Curry for her poem "A Bit of Fun in the Process", which she read at the conference dinner, and is on Page 19 of this newsletter. It was written in precisely the spirit I was hoping for. The title refers, of course, to her enjoyment in writing the poem. (The correct answer was $8\frac{1}{2}$.)

Thanks to Rachel Fewster for providing a photo for a caption contest this issue, and to all of you who have contributed to this newsletter.

Roger Littlejohn

Submissions to the Newsletter

The Newsletter welcomes any submissions of interest to members of the New Zealand Statistical Association. News about New Zealand statisticians, statistical meetings, statistical organisations, statistics in education, or statistical curiosities are suitable for inclusion. Letters that raise issues of importance to statistics in New Zealand are also welcomed. Photographs of recent gatherings and new appointees are of particular interest. Electronic submissions are preferred.

Next deadline 27 February 2004.

Advertising In the Newsletter

The Newsletter accepts advertising of interest to statisticians in New Zealand. Advertising is placed subject to space considerations. Personal advertising by NZSA members will be published free. Other advertising is \$250 per page, \$140 per half page, and \$75 per quarter page. Other sizes can be quoted on request. All advertising requests should be directed to the editor.

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NZSA Conference Report

This year's conference at Massey was a great success, with high energy inputs from the invited speakers, a rich variety of contributed talks, and a conference dinner that featured a typically Kiwi awards ceremony. If you missed it, there are in fact many reasons to celebrate the contributions of these leaders of our statistical community, and they are covered in the citations on pages 6-7.

Our thanks to the invited speakers, Nick Longford, Peter O'Hanlon (pictured below with Siva Ganesh) Bruce Weir (see <http://ifs.massey.ac.nz/mathnews/NZMS87/news87a.shtml#centrefold>), Kerrie



Mengersen and Joe Gani (right, with Alasdair Noble's children at the top of the Pahiatua Track the day after the conference, experiencing a touch of the NZ winter).



All credit to the organizing committees led by Mark Bebbington, Duncan Hedderley and Alasdair Noble, supported by Christine Allport and Wendy Browne, for their sterling work. As Duncan summed up, "Wow! Nothing went wrong. And there was even decent vegetarian food. Wow!"



Wendy Browne and Christine Allport enjoy the conference dinner and a bouquet of flowers in thanks for their contribution towards organizing the conference.

NZAMT Conference Report

Over 400 teachers registered for the NZ Association of Mathematics Teachers Conference that was held during the first week of the July school holidays in Hamilton. "Mooloo Mathematics and Magic" was the theme for a very successful gathering of mathematics teachers.

Harold Henderson was honoured as the Bevan Werry Memorial Speaker. He presented an exciting range of data manipulations to entertain, inform and generally encourage teachers to develop their knowledge of statistics. The NZSA sponsored Prof Jeff Witmer from the Department of Mathematics, Oberlin College, Ohio, and were able to promote the Statistics Association with his introduction.

Details of speakers and events involved are available from <http://www.nzamt8.ac.nz>, a site set up for people to access relevant material and presentations this year.

Gwenda Hill

Young Statisticians

A group of young statisticians (pictured below) shared a meal at a local restaurant on the first night of the conference. David Baird, Tim Ball, Siva Ganesh, and Anne Lawrence also gave them some advice on the rigours of working life. Topics ranged from contrary students to the harsh reality that most agricultural experiments revolve around animal droppings (at least in David's experience - but thankfully the speeches did not take place during the meal). Ganesh revealed the perks that we all suspected university lecturers had, but hadn't dared ask about (golf on Fridays, etc., etc...). Tim convinced us that consultants actually do work for a living. Anne took a risk and asked people to think of one of their high school teachers, and then to put up their hands if it was their English teacher, their Geography teacher, and so on. An overwhelming majority had thought of their Maths teacher - so there you go!

Maaika Bendall



The Hoare Research Software prizes totalling \$1000 for the best presentations by students were awarded by Ray Hoare at the conference dinner. First prize went to Carole Wright for her talk entitled "Quick Generation of Row-Column Designs", second to Katarina Domijan for "Semi-mechanistic modelling in Nonlinear Regression: a case study", and third to Alasdair Noble for "Small Area Estimation: A GLM Approach".



Ray Hoare (right) presents the HRS student prizes to (left to right) Alasdair Noble, Carole Wright and Katarina Domijan.

ANZJS – The Future

Members of the NZSA, and all recipients of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics (ANZJS), will be interested in the current discussion of its future as an electronic-only publication (EOP). This has been the subject of a substantial amount of thought and behind the scenes work already, primarily by Australians.

The NZSA Executive was only brought in to this discussion on 23 July, and the purpose of this article is, firstly, to inform our members of matters of fact (based on available documentation), and secondly, to indicate the range of opinion that has been expressed about the proposal.

Matters of Fact

At the recent SSAI (Statistical Society of Australia, Inc.) Central Council meeting (see http://www.statsoc.org.au/pdfs/ccaspai_july2003.pdf), the following motion was passed by 9 votes to 3 (unweighted for proxies):

“In principle, that the journal become fully electronic, subject to the reactions of institutional subscribers and a satisfactory business case. The Executive to decide on receipt of this information.”

Neville Bartlett (President of SSAI) comments, “The phrase ‘in principle’ and the caveats provide plenty of opportunity for the idea to be halted but it does indicate an inclination to move towards ‘electronic only’ publication. Hardcopy will continue until the end of 2004 regardless of which way the debate goes, so that there is plenty of time for well-informed discussion to take place.”

Planning has been based on a survey of members conducted by SSAI in 2001, which indicated that 17% of the 160 respondents (out of 915 members (1999 figure)) regarded EOP as an unacceptable inconvenience, 53% preferred the journal to be delivered in hardcopy, while 95% of members had internet access. A 95% confidence interval for the number of SSAI members who would then find EOP unacceptable is 134-178. There are no estimates of non-response bias and corresponding figures for NZSA are unknown.

The current version of the business case for this change, written by Chris Lloyd (managing editor of ANZJS), with assistance from Rob Hyndman, David Scott and Gordon Smyth, can be found at http://www.statsoc.org.au/pdfs/epub_report_july23.pdf.

Currently electronic access to ANZJS is available to NZSA members through a variety of channels (see the box on page 5). The issue in question is whether to, or when to, discontinue hardcopy publication.

Matters of Opinion

Insofar as the EOP proposal/decision represents a change from the status quo, a variety of opinions can be expected. The following have been expressed in the public domain.

“The only thing stopping the inexorable advance of electronic journal publishing and the death of paper publishing are the legacy of established practices...and the ability of publishers to devise business models which ensure the future sustainability of the journals they publish.” David Scott

“(Electronic publishing) .. is faster, cheaper, more distributable and more flexible. I cannot think of any substantial reason NOT to want to exploit the electronic medium where we can.” Rob Hyndman

“The previous low level of consultation is of significant concern to us.” and

“We appreciate that the Society has a good business case for making the transition, which its Council has already approved. However, the Society should have a strong scientific case, highlighting the interests of members and of the profession, before it develops a business case; the latter should not take precedence over the former.” Ray Chambers, Ann Cowling, Daryl Daley, Joe Gani, Peter Hall, Chris Heyde, Alan Welsh, Mark Westcott, Jeff Wood

Those of you who are wondering about New Zealand’s contribution to the decision-making process might note that 9 of Australia’s most senior statisticians express concern over a low level of consultation. Is 160 out of 900+ members of SSAI (not to mention 350 New Zealanders) a suitable sample on which to make decisions? Indeed, would ANZJS publish this survey?

There appear to be two issues, EOP *per se*, and change management. In the long term (20 years, say) EOP is inevitable. In my opinion the transition towards it should be managed in a way that brings the membership along with it, by establishing the added value of the electronic medium, even if that means extra cost and work in the short term; and that the voice of the membership (as well as institutional subscribers) should be respected in developing the time-frame.

Be sure to read the associated documentation. Members are invited to reply to the Editor (roger.littlejohn@agresearch.co.nz). Responses will be included (in full) as an on-going correspondence in the online version of the newsletter (<http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter58/anzjseop.htm>).

Roger Littlejohn

Accessing ANZJS online

StatsWeb

To access full text articles is simple:

- go to <http://www.statsjournalweb.com>;
- click 'Browse Journals and Societies' ;
- locate *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics*, click 'Logon' and enter the password (which has been distributed to members).
- locate the issue and article you require and click on the Article button for the pdf file of the full text.

You may also be able to access ANZJS online through the subscriber-based providers Blackwell Synergy, Ingenta, Ebsco, SwetsWise or OCLC. Check with your library for details.

eNZMJ

In July 2002 the fortnightly *New Zealand Medical Journal* converted from hardcopy-only to electronic-only for compelling financial reasons. Reflecting on a year of EOP, Editor Prof Frank Frizelle comments, "In regard to the NZMJ, going e has been great. It has allowed quicker submissions, review and considerable reduction in time to publication. It has allowed us to expand some articles, and to link to back-up information. We have had more submissions since going e than ever before. The electronic change has given the NZMJ increased vitality and allowed it to develop into a more dynamic and flexible medical journal." Pre-e correspondence indicated that this may be at the cost of losing some membership or readership (see Vol. 115, No. 1156, pp 301-302).

ANZJS-EOP and the Newsletter

The feasibility report of Chris Lloyd (http://www.statsoc.org.au/pdfs/epub_report_july23.pdf) refers to society newsletters in two possible contexts.

"The society could do more to promote upcoming articles in the journal amongst members, perhaps through the newsletter." (bottom P5)

Table of Contents pages could be included in the newsletter, although with 2 issues per year, the NZSA newsletter is out of phase with the journal. It would also take up a fair bit of space (which would not be a concern if it were sponsored by Blackwell). I have been including links to StatsWeb, Blackwell Synergy, etc to orient readers in the electronic direction.

"There are articles of an applied nature that may be of general interest to members, both academic and non-academic, but which will have trouble being accepted by a refereed journal. I believe

that SSAI could encourage submissions of this kind in the newsletter or as a separate non-refereed (electronic) publication." (bottom P7)

This seems to point towards the position "The American Statistician" has in relation to JASA and Amstat News. It might provide a good model for test-driving a fully electronic publication. I would guess that between Australia and New Zealand we have the critical mass to sustain this. Of course this brings us back to the question of the perceived lack of quality in the electronic media..

Roger Littlejohn

Decision Making for EOP

From the SSAI's website <http://www.statsoc.org.au/about.html>, the "Society's [SSAI's] publishing arm is the Australian Statistical Publishing Association Inc. (ASPAAI). SSAI members are also automatically members of ASPAAI. The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics is published by Blackwell Publishers UK under contract from ASPAAI and in conjunction with the New Zealand Statistical Association". Further, "The Society and ASPAAI are governed by a Central Council, consisting of an Executive and delegates elected by branches, with two or more delegates from each branch depending on the size of the branch." The next meeting of the Central Council is scheduled for February 2004.

Our information is that ASPAAI does not have the authority to pass the EOP motion as stated, but that it should also include "*subject to the agreement of the NZSA*".

Despite Neville Bartlett's statement "that there is plenty of time for well-informed discussion to take place", it appears that the February 2004 Central Council meeting is a key date in the SSAI timeline.

A joint sub-committee has recently been set up to oversee the collation of members' views, including Russell Miller and Murray Jorgensen on behalf of NZSA, along with Neville Bartlett (President SSAI) and Chris Lloyd (Managing Editor ANZJS), who will deal with the Australian perspective. This should ensure the necessary NZSA-SSAI link, and NZSA representation in the decision-making process. This sub-committee has yet to engage. It will report to the February Central Council meeting.

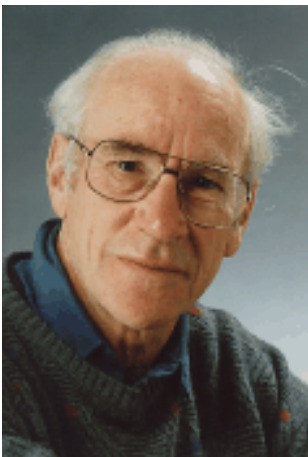
Newsletter on Web

An online version of this newsletter is available at <http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter58/index.htm> It contains full documentation of correspondence about the ANZJS-EOP issue It will be regularly updated with information and your letters.
Email: roger.littlejohn@agresearch.co.nz

Life Members

At the NZSA 2003 Conference dinner, David Vere-Jones, Alastair Scott and George Seber were inducted as life members of the NZSA. David and Alastair were present to receive their awards, with characteristic humility. As Professors at leading New Zealand Universities, all three have made a huge contribution towards fostering the next generation of statisticians, and have drawn visiting academics, practitioners and students to New Zealand, as well as making major contributions of published work in the international statistical community. In presenting the awards, Steve Haslett noted that they were very much overdue, as no life members had been appointed since 1984.

David Vere-Jones



David Vere-Jones is Emeritus Professor of Statistics at the School of Mathematical and Computing Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington. During the course of his long and distinguished career, he has made outstanding and fundamental research contributions in probability, statistics and the mathematical sciences. His contributions are characterised by their clarity, depth and insight, and have typically led to important new research developments. His research in Markov chain and point process theory have led to his path-breaking work on earthquake modeling which is at the forefront of current international research in the area. He has also made important and far-reaching contributions to the directions of statistical and mathematical education both in New Zealand and internationally. The hallmarks are clarity of vision, strong sense of purpose, and a concern that the local mathematical community realizes its proper potential. David served as President of NZSA 1981-83, and takes an ongoing and active interest in statistical education. He has received numerous international awards and has published three books and around 100 academic papers. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand since 1982. A symposium was held in his honour at Victoria University in April 2001, and he was presented with the Festschrift "Probability, Statistics and Seismology" (*J. Appl. Probab.* Special Volume 38A (2001)).

George Seber



George Seber is Emeritus Professor of Statistics at Department of Statistics, University of Auckland. He has written prolifically: ten books, many of which have gone to several editions, and numerous research papers. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Since he began his PhD in

Statistics at Manchester University he has been extensively involved with mathematical and statistical consulting. Over the last 30 years at Auckland he has helped build the Statistics section of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and taken it through to the formation of a separate Department of Statistics. He has had a longstanding interest in the secondary school mathematics and statistics syllabuses. However, despite the breadth of his contribution from linear models, multivariate statistics, linear regression, non-linear models, to adaptive sampling, he is perhaps still best known internationally for his research on the estimation of animal abundance. George has contributed widely to the New Zealand statistical community and to NZSA.

Alastair Scott

Professor Alastair Scott (below left) has been at the Department of Statistics at the University of Auckland since 1972. Previously he had graduated PhD from the University of Chicago, and taught at the London School of Economics. Before and since his return he has written seminal papers on the links between time series and sample surveys, particularly in relation to improved estimators for repeated sample surveys, and on the analysis of survey data. More recently his interest has focused on the design and analysis of retrospective studies, extending classical results for case control studies. Alastair has served on the Executive Committee of NZSA and was President for 1989-90. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, the American Statistical Association and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics.



NZSA Campbell Award 2003



The 2003 Campbell Award was made to Harold Henderson, a statistician at AgResearch, Ruakura Agricultural Centre in Hamilton. Harold is a well known personality in NZSA – usually seen at the working end of his camera during Association functions. He has a BSc with First Class Honours

from Massey University, and a PhD in Biometry, Cornell University, USA with Dr S R Searle. He has worked as Statistician at what is now AgResearch, at Ruakura Agricultural Centre since 1979 (over the period of several restructurings). He retains strong links with Waikato University through the Waikato Centre for Applied Statistics and the Department of Statistics. He has received a range of awards including New Zealand National Research Advisory Council Post-graduate Fellowship, Prince and Princess of Wales Science Award from the RSNZ, and has recently been the Bevan Werry Memorial Speaker at NZ Association of Maths Teachers.

It is not however just the awards and academic qualifications which are the reason that Harold has received the Campbell Award. Harold has been a stalwart in the Association as its President 1993-5, Joint Editor of *Newsletter* 1989-1993, and he continues a very active role within the Executive both as a member and as Membership Secretary. Harold was also General-Secretary for the joint International Biometric Society/NZSA Conference held in Hamilton in 1992.

All this he has carried out willingly and with wonderful spirit. These academic, service and personal aspects taken together are the basis for his Campbell Award.

Proposal to honour members of the NZSA as Fellows (FNZSA)

At the recent AGM a proposal that the Association adopts the principle of electing members “of established reputation who have made outstanding contributions in some aspect of statistical work” as Fellows of the NZSA was presented. After much discussion the motion was modified and the following amended version was agreed to: “That this AGM

1. Adopts the principle of recognising members “of established reputation who have

made outstanding contributions in some aspect of statistical work”;

2. Requests that the Executive of the NZSA draft a set of Rules and Procedures to put this into effect;

3. Requests that the draft rules and procedures of 2 above be circulated to members prior to the next AGM when they shall be considered for adoption.”

In bringing forward the original proposal I was aware that other statistical bodies recognise the achievements and contributions of their members by means of Fellowships, e.g. ASA and IMS. Each year, ASA members nominate their peers as fellows to recognize “members of established reputation who have made outstanding contributions in some aspect of statistical work”. With IMS, candidates “shall have demonstrated distinction in research in statistics or probability, by publication of independent work of merit”, although they may waive this qualification in the case of a candidate of “well-established leadership” whose contributions to the field of statistics or probability other than original research shall be judged of equal value; or “whose work has contributed greatly to the utility of and the appreciation of these areas”. The proposal that was brought forward was to not necessarily regard academic research contributions as a sole criterion for election, but to consider other more general criteria, along the lines of the ASA procedure.

Other NZ societies that honour their members by means of Fellowships include the NZ Mathematical Soc, NZ Computer Society, NZ Inst of Chemistry, NZ Inst of Physics, InternetNZ, NZ Soc of Horticultural Sci, The NZ Inst of Agricultural Sci, Inst of Professional Engineers NZ, Human Resources Inst of NZ, NZ Psychological Soc, Inst of Chartered Accountants, and NZ Inst of Food Sci and Technology.

During the discussion at the AGM it was suggested that the term “Fellow” was sexist. Female fellows have been elected to many of the aforementioned NZ societies in recognition of their “outstanding and significant contributions” and personally I am not aware of any concern outside of NZSA over the use of this well-established terminology.

I would like to raise some discussion on this issue and attempt to get the opinion of members at large as to how best to recognise the efforts and achievements of the Association’s members. If not through Fellowships, then what other mechanism should the Association consider? Once we have some alternatives then one way to progress the matter may be to conduct a poll of members.

Jeff Hunter

springer ad

CensusAtSchool NZ

a statistical experience for school children...

This month saw the nationwide launch of CensusAtSchool NZ, an online survey for children to do at school as part of their Maths lessons. The project is educationally motivated and joins an international initiative which is based in the UK but has also happened in South Africa, Queensland, South Australia and is planned for Canada.

The New Zealand project is hosted by the Department of Statistics at the University of Auckland, coordinated by Megan Jowsey, HOD Maths at Birkenhead College, who has a one year NZ Science, Maths and Technology teacher fellowship awarded by the Royal Society of NZ. The publicity and web design is the work of Rachel Cunliffe of the Department of Statistics, with webserver technical work by James McGrail. The project has been supported by academic staff within the Department of Statistics, while Statistics NZ and the Ministry of Education have provided advice and guidance.

The project aims to involve children in the collection of real data that is relevant to their lives, so that hopefully their Statistics lessons will be more meaningful and interesting. The data will form part of the multivariate international data base and provide opportunities for children to compare themselves with their peers from within NZ and the other countries involved. Teaching resources, results and samples of raw data will be available to teachers and students once the census is complete.

In the first 4 weeks over 15,000 students from 350 schools have completed the survey and with one more week to go the projection is for over 20,000 children to be involved. The response from schools so far is very positive!! TVNZ have helped boost the participation rate with coverage on "Holmes". You can visit the CensusAtSchool web page at <http://www.censusatschool.org.nz/>.

Megan Jowsey

New members

A warm welcome to new members of the NZSA

Chungui Qiao	Dominic Lee	Bella Liao
Kristy Su	Craig McKinlay	
Ulhas Dixit	Nigel Grigg	
Adam Smith	Lingyun Zhang	
Gabrielle Davie	Keith McLeod	
Mohammed Tauseef	Rehan Nabi	

Join the NZSA

A membership application form is available at <http://www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/nzsa/form.shtml>

HRS Finance Seminar

Hoare Research Software, in collaboration with The MathWorks, would like to invite members of the New Zealand Statistics Association to attend our Finance Seminars in Auckland and Wellington on the 15th and 16th of September, respectively.

The seminars are called "Financial Modelling and Application Development" and will demonstrate how tools from The MathWorks can help you develop financial models faster. If you are interested in how to develop sophisticated financial applications for trading, risk management, economics or financial modelling in other areas, attend one of our seminars.

To register or to find out more information, go to http://www.hrs.co.nz/finance_seminar. Alternatively, you can register by emailing leon@hrs.co.nz or by calling 0800 477 776.

Please note that seminars are free, but numbers are limited, so register soon to secure a place. Contact me for an information pack if you are unable to attend.

Feel free to pass this notice onto any person that you think would benefit from the finance seminars. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Leon Tepania

Campbell Estate Fund

A reminder that the NZSA were the recipients of a very generous donation (\$48,000) from Professor Campbell's estate.

There is roughly \$1500 funding available each year for special projects that are in the realm of Professor Campbell's interests. Refer to newsletter 56 on the web (<http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter56/campbell.htm>) for more details.

Applications are received twice a year (April/October) and are invited for funding for projects for 2003/04.

Projects funded for 2002/03 were creating electronic copies of back issues of the NZ Statistician and a contribution to Otago University for their survey of statisticians.

There is no formal application process but please supply details of your project, the full project budget, the amount you are requesting, a short statement about why your project is within Professor Campbell's interests, and your full contact details.

Please send your applications to the Secretary, (a.d.noble@massey.ac.nz), New Zealand Statistical Association, PO Box 1731, Wellington.

For more details contact Jennifer Brown (j.brown@math.canterbury.ac.nz) or Harold Henderson (Harold.Henderson@agresearch.co.nz).

Jennifer Brown

Statistics and NCEA

Below are excerpts from a letter from Steve Haslett, President of the NZSA to Rt Hon T Mallard, Minister of Education dated 22 July 2003

Dear Sir

The Association has a strong and ongoing interest in the school Statistics curriculum. We want to ensure that it provides a better basis for addressing the current chronic shortage of Statisticians in New Zealand, that the curriculum content interests students and better reflects what Statisticians actually do, and that it is better able to raise Statistical awareness in the wider community.

The AGM of the NZSA, which was held earlier in July this year, has requested that ... I write to you to raise NZSA's strong concern about current plans for NCEA Level 3 "Mathematics with Statistics". The AGM also requested that the NZSA Education Subcommittee and I seek a meeting with you to discuss this and related matters.

There is some urgency because final decisions on "Mathematics with Statistics" content are due to be made by the Ministry of Education in the next month or so.

The Statistics and Probability parts of Mathematics in the New Zealand Curriculum (and its Addendum to Level 8) are a mixture of 'forward-looking' and traditional aspects. NZSA has provided the Ministry of Education with ongoing input into curriculum and NCEA developments in the past and very much supports the view that NCEA should emphasise the 'forward-looking' aspects in the school Statistics curriculum.

These hopes suffered a major setback a few months ago.

The intended "Mathematics with Statistics" standards were designed in 2000, and widely circulated by the Ministry in 2001 with a thorough process for collecting and implementing feedback. The Ministry sought, received, and implemented NZSA's feedback.

However, without consulting or notifying NZSA, the Ministry made substantive and substantial changes and reductions to the Statistics content of the "Mathematics with Statistics" Achievement Standards in March this year. NZSA's Education Committee only became aware of these proposed revisions recently. The Ministry's revisions were mainly in the "investigation" standard, S3.5, which provides what NZSA sees as the essential practical application of Statistics. Further, within this section the range of Statistical techniques considered, if amended as the Ministry intends, will be so limited

that it is difficult to see how any substantive Statistical investigation can actually be carried out by the students. The credit value under this section has also been so much reduced that it would substantially weaken the 'investigation' component of "Mathematics with Statistics". The "time series" standard, S3.1, has been substantially reduced as well.

We now also have some underlying concerns,

- that the process for producing quality standards can no longer be entirely trusted;

- that the nature of 21st century Statistics, as appropriate at this level, is not acknowledged in the processes that design Statistics standards and their assessments. Indeed it seems to NZSA that the real situation is not properly understood by the Ministry.

We have some long-standing concerns, and the recent events imply that we need to restate them,

- that the paradigm shift away from "algebra with applications from Probability and Statistics" to "useful and enjoyable investigative Statistics" should proceed in fast forward mode;

- that teachers are properly resourced and supported to effect this paradigm shift;

- that schools have the necessary hardware and software to deal with today's Statistical education needs, and that classes can access it;

- that New Zealand's curriculum and assessment machinery properly recognise and adequately support this paradigm shift.

The last recommendation from NZSA is:

- that the time now seems right for a careful and thorough redesign of the Statistics part of the curriculum.

As the Statistics profession's practitioners, it seems to be essential (and it would certainly be wise) that NZSA be actively involved in curriculum redesign and in the adequately resourced development of standards and assessment tools.

In summary, the purpose of this letter is to:

- seek to fix the current problem with NCEA "Mathematics with Statistics", in both the short and long term;

- secure NZSA input into long-term curriculum improvement;

- endeavour to enhance relations with Mathematics educators;

- improve resourcing for school Statistics.

Yours faithfully

S J Haslett

President, NZ Statistical Association

To 28 August, acknowledgment has been received from the Ministers office, but no reply yet to the points raised and no date for meeting. *SJH*

Statistics Education News

International News

Chris Wild is now the President of the International Association for Statistical Education (IASE). He was officially inducted at the recent 54th International Statistical Institute (ISI) conference in Berlin.

IASE has a number of forthcoming activities and is calling for participation. First, there is the IASE Research Round Table on “Curricular development in statistics education” at Lund, Sweden, 28 June to 3 July 2004. The Roundtable will bring together a small number of experts, representing as many different countries as possible, to discuss one another’s views and approaches to curriculum for teaching statistics. Mike Camden is on the Roundtable organising committee. Potential participants are invited to submit a three page summary of their paper by October 1, 2003. See conference web page: http://hobbes.lite.msu.edu/~IASE_2004_Roundtable.

Second, at the 10th International Congress on Mathematics Education, July 4-11, 2004, Copenhagen, IASE is collaborating in the organisation of specific education activities. TSG 11: Research and development in the teaching and learning of probability and statistics will be organised by Jun Li, and Joseph W. Wisenbaker (Chairs), Dani Ben-Zvi, Manfred Borovcnick and Maxine Pfannkuch (Panel members). Those who are interested in offering a paper should contact team chairs: Jun Li (lijun@math.ecnu.edu.cn) or Joe Wisenbaker (joe@coe.uga.edu). Statistics education contributions are also acceptable in many other Topic Study and Discussion Groups as well as in Posters. More information is available from the web site <http://www.icme-10.dk/>.

Third, Chris Wild is the IASE representative at the ISI Programme Co-ordinating Committee for ISI-55th Session to be held in Sydney, Australia, April 5-12, 2005. He is also the Chair of the IASE Programme Committee, which is in charge of preparing a list of Invited Paper Meetings to be organised by the IASE alone or in co-operation with other ISI Sections, Committees and sister societies. The list of IASE Invited Papers will be available soon. For more information please contact Chris Wild at c.wild@auckland.ac.nz.

Fourth, preparation for ICOTS-7, 2-7 July, 2006, Salvador, Brazil is already underway. Topic and topic convenors have been selected. John Harraway is the scientific secretary on the International Program Committee Executive. More information from Carmen Batenero at batenero@ugr.es.

Other activities of the IASE include the International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP) and the IASE Statistical Education Research Journal

(SERJ). The ISLP mission is to provide those interested in statistical literacy with information and resources and to aid them in the development of statistical literacy around the world. The ISLP web site is now fully operational at <http://course1.winona.edu/cblumberg/islplist.htm>. The fourth issue of SERJ will be published in November 2003. This is a joint publication of IASE and ISI and is free to everyone at <http://fehps.une.edu.au/serj>.

Details of IASE publications, including proceedings of past conferences, and IASE activities can be found on the IASE web site at <http://www.cbs.nl/isi/iase.htm>. If you want to be engaged in statistics education and want to support international collaboration in this area please join the Association. You can find information about membership at the IASE web page or from Chris Wild at c.wild@auckland.ac.nz.

Local News

New Zealanders recently attended the August 11-12, 2003 IASE Satellite Conference on Statistics Education and the Internet, Berlin. Rachel Cunliffe, Matt Regan, and Chris Wild presented a paper on “Flexible learning and large numbers (a case study)” wherein they described the methods they used to teach Stage One Statistics, including demonstrating their innovative CD-ROM. Many participants at the conference requested a copy of the CD-ROM. At the August 13-20, 2003 ISI-54th Biennial Session Berlin, Maxine Pfannkuch, Chris Wild, and John Harraway presented papers relating to statistics education.

Delta '03 (Fourth Southern Hemisphere Conference on Undergraduate Mathematics Teaching) will be held in Queenstown from 23 to 27 November 2003. A statistics strand is being organised with Chris Wild as plenary speaker. For more information see: www.maths.otago.ac.nz/delta03.

The Stage One Statistics Team, led by Chris Wild and Matt Regan, Dept of Statistics at University of Auckland were awarded a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award at Parliament in June.

The NZSA education committee, mainly through the efforts of Mike Camden, is continuing to represent its concern to appropriate ministerial bodies about the current developments in statistics education in the school sector.

Maxine Pfannkuch

NZSA Sponsorship for Delta '03

The NZSA has approved a grant of \$500 towards Prof Chris Wild’s expenses at Delta '03, and is an official conference sponsor (see <http://www.maths.otago.ac.nz/delta03/>).

Conference Brief

See Gordon Smyth's Australasian conference list
<http://www.statsci.org/conf/index.html>

Details for planned conferences and workshops are given below.

Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute Symposium on Statistical Learning

University of New South Wales

October 2-3, 2003

Web: <http://www.maths.unsw.edu.au/~inge/symp/>

Email: inge@maths.unsw.edu.au

Delta '03 - Fourth Southern Hemisphere Symposium on Undergraduate Mathematics Teaching

Rydgas, Queenstown, NZ

November 23-27, 2003

FROM ALL ANGLES

Web: www.maths.otago.ac.nz/delta03

Email: igoodwin@maths.otago.ac.nz

Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute Bioinformatics Summer Symposium

Centre for Bioinformation Science, Australian
National University

December 1-5, 2003

Mathematical, Statistical and Computational
Challenges in Bioinformatics

Paper Submission: October 1

Web: [http://www.maths.anu.edu.au/events/](http://www.maths.anu.edu.au/events/BioInfoSummer/)

[BioInfoSummer/](#)

Email: BioInfoSummer@cbis.anu.edu.au

International Biometric Society (Australasian Region) Conference

Australian National University

December 3-5, 2003

Early bird registration: 30 September

Abstract submission: 22 September

Web: [http://www.maths.anu.edu.au/events/IBS03/](http://www.maths.anu.edu.au/events/IBS03/template.html)
[template.html](#)

Email: ann.cowling@anu.edu.au

Second Asia Pacific Bioinformatics Conference

Dunedin

January 18-22, 2004

Author registration: November 14, 2003

Web: www.fit.qut.edu.au/~chen/APBC2004

Email: p.chen@qut.edu.au

CART Data Mining'04: First International CART(R) Conferences

San Francisco / Madrid

March 23-24 / 25-26, 2004

Abstract submission: 27 October, 2003

Web: <http://www.cartdatamining.com/>

24th International Symposium on Forecasting

Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney

July 4-7, 2004

Web: <http://www.isf2004.org/>

Email: isf2004@unsw.edu.au

International Biometric Conference and Australian Statistical Conference

Cairns Convention Centre

July 11-16, 2004

Early bird registration: 1 March, 2004

Abstract submission: 1 December, 2003

Web: www.ozaccom.com.au/ibc2004

Email: cairns2004@ozaccom.com.au

Estimating Animal Abundance Workshop

University of Canterbury

July 19-22, 2004

Web: <http://www.ruwpa.st-and.ac.uk/aecourseNZ/>

Email: iwestbrooke@doc.govt.nz



Fourth Southern Hemisphere Symposium on Undergraduate Mathematics Teaching

Rydgas, Queenstown, New Zealand

November 23-27, 2003

FROM ALL ANGLES

Programme includes four panels on the topics of
Bridging Courses, Undergraduate Issues, Teaching
Statistics, and the Uses of Technology.

Statistics Speakers and Panel

- * Professor Chris Wild (U. Auckland)
- * Michael Bulmer (U. Queensland)
- * Megan Clark (Victoria U. of Wellington)
- * Reina Nieuwoudt (U. South Africa)

Web: www.maths.otago.ac.nz/delta03

Email: igoodwin@maths.otago.ac.nz

Conference Details

Biennial Conference of the International Biometric Society (Australasian Region) 2003

Australian National University, Canberra

December 3-5, 2003

Web: <http://wwwmaths.anu.edu.au/events/IBS03/template.html>

Conference Themes

- Air, Earth, Fire, Water
Biometrical perspectives on the landscape
- Healthy populations
Genetics, clinical trials, modelling disease spread
- Biometrics meets Bioinformatics
Design and Analysis of Gene Expression
Microarray Experiments

Talks on these themes or any other are invited, with abstract submission through the web page.

The conference will be held in conjunction with the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) "Summer Symposium in Bioinformatics" (<http://wwwmaths.anu.edu.au/events/BioInfoSummer/>), which will run over 1-5 December. On Friday, 5 December, one strand of the IBS conference and the Symposium will combine for invited and contributed paper sessions on the "Design and Analysis of Gene Expression Microarray Experiments".

Provisional Programme

Wednesday

9am-5pm Invited & Contributed talks
1pm AGM: Australasian Region of IBS
7pm Conference dinner

Thursday

9am-5pm Invited & Contributed talks

Friday

9am-5pm Invited & Contributed talks
(one strand jointly with Bioinformatics Symposium)

Invited Speakers (see website)

David Lindenmayer, Ross Cunningham (ANU)
David Baird, Harold Henderson (AgResearch, NZ)

Registration fees

(includes session entry, lunches, tea/coffee, conference bag)

	until 30/9	after 30/9
Members of IBS	\$A200	\$A250
Non-members	\$A250	\$A300
Student members	\$A75	\$A125
Student non-members	\$A125	\$A175

XXIInd International Biometric Conference in parallel with Australian Statistical Conference

Cairns Convention Centre,
Queensland, Australia

July 11-16, 2004

It is expected that the joint conference will attract over 700 delegates and include eminent international speakers, leading researchers and participants from both Australia and overseas. Delegates will be able to attend sessions of either conference, ensuring a rich and varied scientific program.



Cairns has been chosen as the venue as it is the central hub of beautiful North Queensland, and an array of social events and tours will be arranged to take advantage of this.



Check <http://www.ozaccom.com.au/Cairns2004/program.html> for the list of Invited Speakers

NOW OPEN!

Register for the conference or submit an abstract for presentation at
www.ozaccom.com.au/ibc2004

We look forward to seeing you in Cairns in 2004!
IBC & ASC 2004 Congress Secretariat
cairns2004@ozaccom.com.au



Local Scene

Crop and Food Research

Many of you will have heard about the tragic plane crash in which seven of our managers died. They were Howard Bezar, Katherine Carman, Alistair Clough, Richard Finch, Desma Hogg, Andrew Rosanowski, and Margaret Viles. The crash was a great shock to all of us, especially those at Lincoln, where they had worked. I first heard the news the night the plane went down, but all they could say was that there had been a crash. My first thought was that Pete Jamieson (the biometrician's manager) was probably on that flight. As more details came through, I was relieved to find it was a chartered flight (so Pete wasn't on it). But then I saw in the newspaper the next day that the downed plane had been chartered by Crop and Food.

It was difficult to comprehend that all seven people were gone, especially when we had seen them in Palmerston North on the day of the crash. It was a very sad time, but we were overwhelmed by the messages of support from all over the country, and overseas. Crop and Food is making new appointments, mostly from within the company. Our team leader, Prue Williams, has taken up the role of General Manager, Science, so the biometricians, Pete Jamieson, and the rest of team are awaiting the appointment of a new team leader. Work life is returning to normal, but we'll always remember those who lost their lives on June 6th.

Maaïke Bendall

University of Otago

Richard Barker enjoyed two trips to Melbourne, especially the local hospitality revolving around good food and wine. To justify the trips he has been consulting with biologists monitoring the state of native fish communities in the Murray-Darling River system and the response of the fish to increased river flows following proposed reductions in the amount of water being abstracted from the river system.

Jorge Navarro Alberto has just finished his PhD. Some months ago, he went back to Mexico. Now, together with his pregnant wife, he came back to present his main results in a seminar about "The generation of diversity in systems of patches and ranked dominance".

Earlier this year, for personal reasons, David Fletcher decided to stay part-time at the University as well as continuing working for Proteus Research and Consulting with Darryl MacKenzie. He is looking forward to travelling to Germany in October, where

he and Richard Barker will attend EURING, the main conference on mark-recapture methods, and also visit Jean-Dominique Lebreton at CNRS in Montpellier, France. Richard is to give an invited talk on the 'Mother of all models'.

In November David is giving an invited talk, "Population Modelling in Ecology", at the New Zealand Ecological Society Conference in Auckland. He is looking forward to this, as it is exactly the sort of "coal-face" work that he enjoys.

Laimonis Kavalieris and Markus Neuhäuser will fly to Europe, too. Laimonis will be attending a workshop about "Econometric Time Series Analysis - Methods and Applications" at the Johannes-Kepler-Universität in Linz (Austria). Markus will travel to the annual conference of the GMDS (Society for Medical Informatics, Biometry, and Epidemiology) in Münster, Germany.

John Harraway is already away on conference leave in Germany. He visited the ISI in Berlin. He met Roswitha Senske, one of our students. Roswitha grew up in Berlin and is currently on leave. Together they visited some parts of Berlin away from the usual tourist destinations. They also went to Potsdam to see Schloss Sanssouci, a former castle of Prussian kings. After the conference he will meet a former student, Stefan Brager, who now works in Hamburg. Together with Stefan, John will visit Helgoland, a small island in the North Sea. Earlier this year, Bryan Manly, our former Chair in Statistics was on Helgoland to perform research about increasing sea temperatures. After that trip he visited our department for several weeks. During that time, he presented his recent research in an evening seminar.

In mid August, Doug Stirling from Massey University presented a seminar on CAST, the web-based resource for teaching statistics.

Markus Neuhäuser

Massey University

Massey, PN, hosted the NZSA2003 Conference in early July. After months of careful planning, we decided to let our Institute's Office Manager and Secretary (Christine Allport and Wendy Browne) do all the work. This turned out to be a successful strategy, resulting in what we felt was a quite successful conference. We hope the attendees enjoyed themselves. Greg Arnold is presently balancing the books, having surrendered his passport.

Mark Bebbington has been off to the northern hemisphere again, this time to Charleston, where he picked up a 'suthen' drawl in only 4 days, and then to Banff, outside of the ski season! Was this a) a response to the demands of parenthood (times 2), b)

a cunning management strategy to allow his committee to organize the NZSA conference without interference, or c) the residual influence of having David Vere-Jones as a mentor?

Ganesh was on a short sabbatical to Thailand and Sri Lanka in August. He was invited by the Department of Mathematics at Naresuan University in Thailand to present a 5-day workshop on 'Practical Data Mining'. Although most of the 40 or so participants were academic staff and senior students in statistics, computer science and information systems from Universities around Thailand, there were some from business and government organisations. The workshop was a success, in that plans are underway for further workshops (including advanced topics) in 2004 and beyond. The visit to Sri Lanka was, he reports, a delightful event. Besides being able to spend some time with family, Ganesh made a short 'Data Mining' presentation at Department of Statistics, University of Colombo. There was plenty of time to catch up with some old (academic) friends too!

Chin-Diew Lai was an invited speaker for the International Conference on Reliability and Survival Analysis 2003 (ICRSA2003) held at Columbia, Ohio in May.

Alasdair Noble gave a well-received workshop on 'Statistical Thinking' at the NZAMT conference in Hamilton. He has also been busy coordinating the judging of the local Science Fairs. Highly trained teams of statisticians went as far as Masterton and Wanganui to award statistics prizes on behalf of the NZSA. While the level of statistical thinking at these events is not always high, there are invariably a few gems to be discovered.

Doug Stirling is continuing his work on the web-based Statistics tutor, CAST. Early in the year he visited the University of Nairobi to discuss the possibility of an African version. Expressions of interest in translating CAST into other languages have also been received from Italy and Germany. This should keep him in sabbatical destinations for some time to come.

Ganesalingam has finally returned after two years at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, so we once again have a full complement of staff. Not only that, we currently have two academic visitors. John Haslett from Trinity College, Dublin is here to work on some research projects with Steve Haslett. Nick Longford arrived from De Montfort University in Leicester, UK to lead a pre-conference workshop on Small Area Estimation, and is also helping with the delivery of one of our First Year Stats courses. Both are enjoying the balmy Palmerston North winter.

Geoff Jones

University of Auckland, City Campus

Our biggest event has been the success of the Stage I Introductory Statistics teaching team. The team won no less than two of the University's five new Distinguished Teaching Awards, for Sustained Excellence in Teaching and for Collaboration in Teaching. On a roll, it then went on to the national round and won one of nine awards across the whole tertiary sector for Tertiary Teaching Excellence in the Excellence in Collaboration category. The \$20,000 award was presented by Helen Clark in Parliament (see page 19) in a ceremony on 23rd June (pictured below), also attended by Steve Maharey and Marian



Hobbs. The team consisted nominally of 14 members of staff who had contributed to the course since 1998, but just as important have been the invaluable contributions of many other PhD students, lecturers, and tutors over the years. Congratulations to all involved!

Members of the department have travelled far and wide in the last few months, in a bid to clock up as many cryptic acronyms as possible on the conference round. Chris Wild, Alastair Scott, Maxine Pfannkuch, and Rachel Cunliffe, together with Tamaki friends Alan Lee and Matt Regan, braved the European heatwave in August to attend the conference of the International Statistics Institute (ISI54) in Berlin, and all came back looking suspiciously as if they had enjoyed themselves (see contribution from the Tamaki campus!) Most also stayed for the satellite conference of the International Association for Statistical Education (IASE), and Chris Wild was later inducted as President of the IASE. In July Chris Wild also gave a plenary talk at the Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI) conference in Rio, Brazil.

On sabbatical leave, Ilze Ziedins spent 5 weeks at the University of Cambridge, and came back via the 5th International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) in Sydney. Arden

Miller spent a month at Simon Fraser University in Canada, travelling also to the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) annual conference in Halifax, and, continuing on the Canadian theme, Paul Murrell is currently spending 6 weeks at Toronto. Mik Black attended the 7th Purdue International Symposium on Statistics (um, PIS...?) at Purdue University in Indiana, and gave an invited talk on multiple comparisons procedures for microarray experiments. And Brian McArdle is luxuriating once again in the Tropics, working on the impact of village fisheries on tropical reef systems. This work has already involved four weeks in New Caledonia, and now — apparently — needs another two months in American Samoa. Poor old Brian....

On the student front, Ru-Shuo Sheu successfully defended his PhD thesis, supervised by Ilze Ziedins and Geoff Pritchard, and he has now returned to Taiwan to take up a lecturing position. Carl Donovan and Monique McKenzie have both taken up lecturing positions at the University of St Andrews, in Scotland. James Russell won a competition to represent Auckland University at the 4th Doctoral Students Conference of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities in Mexico in August, and he took the opportunity to spend three weeks beforehand training at a top fencing school in Colorado. I shall be asking him to mend my fence too when he returns. And at the September Graduation Ceremony, a total of 40 students (including 11 postgraduates) will be celebrating their new qualifications in Statistics and Operations Research.

Finally, we officially welcome Yong Wang as our new lecturer in Statistical Computing. And have you been puzzled by your electricity bill recently? Geoffrey Pritchard and colleagues in Engineering Science have been modelling the market and have just formed a new company, SOL (Stochastic Optimization Ltd), to keep the country empowered. Find out more at <http://www.esc.auckland.ac.nz/Organisations/EPOC/>.

Rachel Fewster

University of Auckland, Tamaki Campus

Truck loads of building is going on at the Tamaki Campus. Landcare's new super-green building is about half completed in the SW corner of campus, and the Public Health building in the NW corner of campus is starting to dwarf the existing buildings. Meanwhile, we are all snug and happy in the 723 building. The few mathematicians on campus recently moved in with us so we now fill up the entire top floor.

The comings and goings that I can recall include

Marti Anderson zooming off to Italy (again), Sweden and Norway to give workshops on permutation methods in multivariate statistics. Thomas Yee has taken leave without pay for 12 months to work at a university in Singapore.

On the conference front, Matt Regan, Alan Lee and Alastair Scott (and some city folk) just got back from a conference in Berlin. They didn't tell me what the conference was about, but they did mention how impressed they were with the red-light district of Berlin, and with the amount of meat and number of steins of beer that were consumed.

On the kudos front, our Stage 1 Introductory Statistics team won a most excellent National Teaching Excellence Award. This team includes Matt Regan, Ross Parsonage and Mike Forster (and some city folk). They were recently hob-nobbing it down in Wellington with the PM at the award dinner.

On the relationship front, Marti Anderson and yours truly were wed in April. We are having a postponed honeymoon in Tonga, leaving in a couple of days.

On the rockstar front, Megan Jowsey (Census at School NZ Co-ordinator) has recently been on TV news and the Holmes program over the Census in Schools initiative. You can read more about this elsewhere in this newsletter.

Russell Millar

AgResearch

The statistics/bioinformatics group (pictured below) had a fruitful 3-day annual gathering in Hamilton in April, taking in the Trevor Hastie workshop, a day of talks within our group, half a day of strategic planning, and half a day of team building. The latter consisted of ten-pin bowling, a sport designed to bring out the participants' most competitive instincts, with fierce rivalry between the teams. Naturally the overall purpose was statistical, with the event designed as a practical demonstration of the Central Limit Theorem. The result: "there was a wide range within each team, but the means were surprisingly similar!" (Barbara



Dow and Katarina Domijan are in action below.)



Ken Dodds and Benoît Auvray went to the International Congress of Genetics and the Association for Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics (AAABG) conference in Melbourne in July. Ken gave a talk at AAABG entitled “The number of markers required for parentage assignment.” Several of the group attended the NZSA Palmerston North conference in July. Roger Littlejohn gave a talk entitled “Modelling the hiding place of red deer calves using an inhomogeneous spatial Poisson process with hotspots”, Martin Upsdell a talk on “A Bayesian smoother/mixed model approach to estimating spatial patterns in kiwifruit orchards” and Katarina Domijan on “Semi-mechanistic modelling in nonlinear regression: a case study.” Katarina also attended the Summer Institute of Statistical Genetics in Melbourne in July where she took the microarray module. Wow, July was a busy month for conferences!

Harold Henderson was awarded the 2003 NZSA Campbell Award as well as the 2003 Bevan Werry Memorial Award, delivering the memorial lecture at the NZ Association of Mathematics Teachers Annual Conference held in Hamilton. Also, Katarina Domijan took second place in the Hoare Research Software Student prizes at the NZSA Conference.

Dave Saville has had an unusually busy 12 months running statistics workshops for applied researchers covering the basics of experimental design, analysis and interpretation, regression and ancova, and the mathematical basis for these methods. He ran a total of 21 one-day workshops, at Lincoln, Dunedin, Palmerston North and Hamilton, with an average attendance of 18 per course (377 attendee-days in total). Attendees were about half from AgResearch and about half from Landcare, Crop and Food, HortResearch, other research organisations, the universities and the regional councils. He’s ready for a stint at home now!

At Palmerston North Fred Potter and Zaneta Park-Ng have also been busy with training courses. This August they ran two “Introduction to GenStat”

one-day courses and invited John Koolaard (Crop and Food) to AgResearch to run his 3-hour “Introduction to SigmaPlot” course. In April 2002 Neil Cox ran his 1-day Excel course three times. In Oct/Nov 2002 Dave Saville ran five of his one-day workshops (above). In April 2003, Peter Johnstone ran his 3-day course on “Planning and Managing Experiments” (Peter also ran this course at three other locations during the year).

Dave Saville



Robert Davies and Peter Johnstone in conversation at the Trevor Hastie workshop

Statistical Research Associates

SRA continues to have a slightly bipolar existence; on the one hand the Associates meet sedately once a week for sandwiches and tea in the Royal Society’s premises; on the other hand they are rushing to and from meetings in many parts of the world. The polarities are linked by an agreeable freedom from bureaucracy, for which the price is a not quite so agreeable element of financial uncertainty.

Statistical seismology took the two Davids to Mexico in early May, a meeting significantly affected by the SARS scare since several delegates were due from China (not allowed to fly without special permission from Chinese Government) and Taiwan (no restrictions on personal flights at that time). Earlier, David Harte had been on an extended visit to Europe, as a guest lecturer on fractals and stochastic models in seismology at the Institute for Geophysics and Vulcanology in Rome, and as a presenter at the International Geophysical Union Meeting in Nice.

Peter Thomson in the meanwhile attended a conference in Japan on financial modelling, and has just returned from the ISI meeting in Berlin, where he met up with old friends and colleagues, including Len Cook and Denis Trewin, who between them have both British and International Statistics pretty well sewn up. He was particularly impressed by a talk by Ivan Fellegi on the role of trust in the activities of a national statistical agency, and a talk on environmental statistics by Peter Guttorp.

David V-J also returned recently from a meeting

at Banff celebrating David Brillinger's 65th Birthday; he extolled the facilities for mathematical meetings at the Banff Centre. This, incidentally, is run by Pacific Institute for Mathematics and Statistics - so perhaps an outstanding location for a joint meeting between the NZ and Canadian Statistical Societies?

On the local scene, consulting projects continue to come in at a sufficient if not a torrential rate, mainly from Government Departments. Both Peter and David V-J are involved part-time in teaching at the University, Peter on financial modelling in the Commerce Faculty, and David on statistical seismology (special topic for honours) in the Science Faculty. Alistair Gray and Peter gave a course on seasonal adjustment to the Reserve Bank, which was followed by an excellent overview provided by Richard Penny (SNZ) on operational seasonal adjustment within SNZ. Robert Davies, Alistair and David have been kept busy on projects with Opus International Consultants, the Ministry of Health and the Department of Conservation.

David Vere-Jones

Department of Conservation

There is plenty happening for those with statistical and ecological/conservation interests. The NZ Ecological Society conference (Auckland, November 16-20) has one focus on the role of modelling (see <http://www.sbs.auckland.ac.nz/ecolsoc2003/>). The International Wildlife Congress is in Christchurch 1-5 Dec (<http://wildlife2003.landcareresearch.co.nz/>). There is a pre-conference workshop on Model Selection and Multi-model Inference with David Anderson on 30 November, and a number of statistically oriented sessions.

The International Biometrics Conference in Cairns will feature an invited session on new developments in wildlife population assessment, with Byron Morgan and Steve Buckland (United Kingdom). To follow that I am organising a post-conference 4-day workshop



Ian Westbrooke and colleague Adam Smith at NZSA 2003

(19-22 July 2004) at University of Canterbury on *Estimating Animal Abundance*. It will be presented by Dr David Borchers, head of RUWPA at U. St Andrews and Prof Walter Zucchini (U. Göttingen). Full details are available at <http://www.ruwpa.st-and.ac.uk/aecourseNZ/>.

Ian Westbrooke

University of Waikato

University of Waikato "scooped the pool" at the recent NZSA Annual Conference in Palmerston North. Carole Wright, a current PhD student, was the winner of the Hoare Research Software prize (page 3) for the best student paper. Second place went to Katarina Domijan, who graduated with a Masters degree in October 2002 and now works as a statistician at AgResearch in Hamilton. Harold Henderson, Biometrician at AgResearch and Honorary Lecturer in the Stats Dept at Waikato, added to the accolades, receiving the Campbell Award. This is the second time the award has come to Waikato, as it was presented last year to Murray Jorgensen, also from the statistics department. Also attending the conference was Judi McWhirter.

The "One-Day Workshop on Popular Methods for Supervised Learning" by Prof Trevor Hastie (Stanford University) in April was well attended (picture below), with over 50 participants from all over New Zealand.



Murray Jorgensen travelled to Antwerp, Belgium, where he attended the International Conference on Robust Statistics 2003. Lyn Hunt was an invited speaker at the International Meeting of the Psychometric Society 2003 in Cagliari, Italy. James Curran was an invited speaker at ISI2003 in Berlin. Nye John attended the 12th International Workshop on Matrices & Statistics, in Dartmund, Germany.

PhD student, Khangelani Zuma has returned to South Africa to take up an appointment with the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria. He is planning to submit his thesis by the end of September. Bill Bolstad and James Curran have both returned from leave. Bill's book "Introduction to Bayesian Statistics" should be published soon.

Judi McWhirter

A Bit of Fun in the Process

I've got this little theory
that I really want to show,
It's all to do with sun and sons
and parents need to know.

I'll test for independence
of gender and of sun,
and use the dear old chi square
to show it's not a run.

The collection of my data
will not be all that flash,
I'll scan the local news for births
And mark them with a slash.

NIWA will be useful
to find my sunshine hours,
I'll take the mean of sunshine
And forget about the showers.

I'll classify them low or high
Arbitrary divisions of course
And draw a two way table
Cell sizes could be worse!

First of all there's Mark with two
A medal to his wife
He teaches them seismology
And point processes for life.

But he doesn't tell me gender
Missing data is a pain
So I'll assume there's one of each
And she'll be right as rain.

Tamaki welcomed Prasitt,
a baby boy in blue
While in Auckland City, Timothy
made the Auckland boy count, two.

The cold Otago weather gave
another boy, groan, groan
For senior student Lisa
and partner, name unknown

The little girls come later
from places further north
Baby Reale in Christchurch
made her entry count of course.

Waikato produced Fiona,
a farming lass no doubt,
She added to the female tally,
That's really worth a shout!

And finally there is Helen,
the highlight of John's life
Showing Wellingtonians can do it
too
without a lot of strife.

Eight newcomers make their mark
(I'll forget about the half)
Is this a record for the News
Or a ploy to increase staff?

Eight little babies, that's a fact
A sample size so small
That testing my hypothesis
Might not be valid at all.

Never mind, I'll do it
A chi-square test of course
To test for independence
With data from the source.

Abandon independence!
Evidence was found
That girls are much more likely
Where sunshine hours abound.

So parents there you have it
Statistics proves it well
If little girls you want to have
In sunshine you should dwell.

Lois Curry



Lois Curry provides the after-dinner entertainment at the NZSA conference dinner, reading her prize-winning response to the Editor's challenge in Newsletter 57.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

Royal Society Alert 273 22 May, 2003

Items for inclusion in "Royal Society Alert" should be directed to: alert.editor@rsnz.org. Please keep them short (about 200 words or less).

6. NEW ZEALAND SCIENCE REVIEW: MATHEMATICS RESEARCH

The New Zealand Association of Scientists recently published an edition of the New Zealand Science Review (Vol. 59 (3 & 4), 2002) which is devoted to mathematics and theoretical physics research in New Zealand. This edition gives a wonderful account of the world class theoretical work going on in New Zealand's universities and research organisations.

This edition will be of interest to all scientists, science students, schools, libraries and the interested public. Copies are available at \$20 each. Contact David Lillis at: 04-498-9828 or at: david.lillis@maf.govt.nz.

Caption contest



What is Chris Wild explaining to Helen Clark? All entries will be placed on <http://nzsa.rsnz.govt.nz/Newsletter58/caption.htm>. Enter by email to roger.littlejohn@agresearch.co.nz.

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