

ASAP Newsletter



The Philadelphia Chapter of the American Statistical Association

May 2009

<http://www.amstatphilly.org/>

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Many exciting events have occurred since our last newsletter. First, our Spring Short Course, held jointly with the Delaware and New Jersey Chapters, was especially well attended with over 60 participants. The excellent presentation given by Dr. Terry M. Thereau from the Mayo Clinic, illustrated how important not only analysis methods but data preparation and identification of an appropriate “risk set” is in performing a powerful survival analysis involving multiple endpoints. Some approaches like Counting Process, applied to multiple endpoint survival analysis, were also discussed. An extensive slide set, part of which was shown at the presentation, is available on our web page under “Past Notable Events”.

The following day, we had a sizable number of members and non-members contribute their time to judging the Delaware Valley Science Fair. This is a unique experience and a solid demonstration of the creativity that bright young minds in our community can offer. That said, there is a great opportunity to influence our teachers in approaches that can be

taken to teaching statistics in the early grades. Personally, I am sure these young minds, who dream up projects like jet propulsion systems and perform microarray experiments, can be taught a few simple statistical inference procedures (e.g., t-test, chi square). We collected data on each project and observed if there was any use of inferential statistics or if the project only showed means and made conclusion based on these point estimates. As suspected, only a minority of projects (about 1%-2%, data still being examined) that could/should have used some form of inferential statistics to support their conclusions did so. I am convinced all that is needed is for these students to be taught these methods and even further that statistical testing be required for any project entered into the late stages of a science fair. I will aim to push this suggestion in a paper that I am compiling that reviews these data. I will surely recognize in this paper all the judges that contributed to gathering these data.

Finally, time is coming for the election of Chapter Officers for 2009-2010. It is a difficult time for the Chapter as sponsor support has dwindled to about zero and Companies are cutting back on even sending attendees to local meetings. For this reason, several of the Chapter officers feel we need to stay for another year to shepherd the process back on its feet with a few initiatives we have just started that aim at providing more support from Chapter members by increasing the number of members and more extensively advertising the Chapter. To this end, we ask as many of your colleagues as possible to join the Chapter if they have not already done so. We wish to continue offering the high quality short courses we have in the past and holding them in such great venues as the Sedgley Boathouse, ACE conference facility, the Penn facilities and Corporate meeting facilities.

To support this continuation of effort, the following Chapter officers have agreed to offer to serve another term: President – Dennis Cosmatos, Vice President – Charlie Liss, Secretary – David Radley and Treasurer - Alex Hanlon. Of course, this in no way discourages other members from offering to run for these positions as they could contribute alternative ideas. This is a choice to be made by the Chapter membership. Most importantly, **PLEASE VOTE**. Also, we are in need of replacements to two very important non-elected positions: Webmaster and Newsletter Editor. Please consider volunteering for these positions immediately.

Finally, we are planning our next short course/seminar for the second week of September (following Labor Day). The topic being considered is a hands-on demonstration of Bayesian Analysis Methods for a given data set, contrasted to “frequentist” analysis of the same data. This should provide a very interesting discussion as we objectively dissect the pluses and minuses of each approach. We have several candidate speakers we are considering, but please feel free to suggest anyone who can you think can run a productive seminar on this topic.

Dennis Cosmatos, Dr.P.H.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 1-6	Joint Statistical Meetings
Early September	Chapter Meeting - Bayesian Analysis Methods (details to follow)

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR ASAP OFFICERS

Nominations are requested at this time for the 2009 - 2010 ASAP elections, which will be held in June. The term runs from 1 July 2009 through 30 June 2010. Positions up for election are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. In the interests of building some continuity of leadership, all incumbents have offered to stand for re-election: but this does not preclude other nominations from the membership.

Volunteers are also being sought for the important positions of Webmaster and Newsletter editor. The incumbents, Debbie Panebianco and Kyle Matschke, are standing down: we thank them both for their sterling service to the chapter. These are appointed positions, meaning they are not subject to annual elections, and the term of office is not fixed. Guidance/training will be provided from current chapter officers.

Please consider these golden opportunities to serve your profession, develop yourself, and earn an appealing mark to update your resume or CV. Self-nominations are perfectly acceptable. If you nominate someone else, please check with them first. Please direct nomination names and the post desired to our current secretary, David Radley, david_radley@merck.com, by Friday, June 5, 2009.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If you have, please update your records in your profile at the [national ASA website](#), and our periodic emails will reach you. Approximately 10% of our members have an invalid or no email address listed.

EDUCATION

Drexel Now Offers M.S. in Biostatistics

The Drexel School of Public Health, the only accredited School of Public Health in Philadelphia, now offers an MS degree program in Biostatistics. In keeping with the Drexel tradition of practice-based learning, the program includes a capstone biostatistical analysis project based at a biomedical research, health services, or public health field setting. Field settings can be healthcare delivery facilities, government agencies, non-profits, health insurance companies or pharmaceutical companies. The goal of the MS program is to prepare graduates for successful careers in a wide range of work environments. Graduates have a unique advantage in that their degree combines methodologically rigorous statistical training, exposure to other core public health disciplines, and field experience. Faculty in Drexel's Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics have been trained at the nation's leading universities and are actively engaged in statistical, public health, and biomedical research (http://publichealth.drexel.edu/Departments/Epidemiology_Biostatistics/61/).

The 48-credit MS degree program involves course work in the fall, winter and spring of the first program year as well as the fall and winter of the second program year. Each student conducts their analysis project in the spring of the second year. During terms involving coursework, between nine and eleven hours per week are spent in the classroom. For more information see <http://publichealth.drexel.edu/MSBiostat/> or email EPIBIOSinfo@drexel.edu. Competitive scholarships and need-based financial aid are available.

TREASURER'S REPORT

BALANCE FORWARDED (12/19/08):		\$3,439.29
<i>INCOME:</i>		
ASA Chapter Dues		
	November, 2008	\$218.00
	December, 2008	\$137.00
	January, 2009	\$274.00
	February, 2009	\$290.00
	March, 2009	\$272.00
<i>Subtotal</i>		\$1,191.00
Other Revenue Sources		
	MWG+Spring Reg Fees	\$5,477.32
	Newsletter Ads	\$650.00
<i>Subtotal</i>		\$6,127.32
<i>TOTAL INCOME:</i>		\$7,318.32
<i>EXPENSES:</i>		
	MWG Speaker Expenses	\$240.29
	Sedgeley Club Rental for MWG	\$650.00
	MWG Catering	\$3,023.25
	DVSF Awards	\$750.00
	Spring Traveling Course fees to ASA	\$1,475.00
	Upenn Conf Svs for Spring Meeting	\$1,101.00
<i>Subtotal</i>		\$7,239.54
<i>TOTAL EXPENSES:</i>		\$7,239.54
BALANCE FORWARDED (05/19/098):		\$3,518.07

ASAP CHAPTER OFFICERS

<p><u>President:</u> Dennis Cosmatos Parexel International, Inc. 1415 Washington Lane Rydal, Pa. 19046 (215) 885-8021 voice dennis.cosmatos@parexel.com</p>	<p><u>Vice President:</u> Charlie Liss Merck and Company, Inc. UG1D38 P.O. Box 1000 North Wales, Pa. 19454-1099 (267) 305-7538 voice (267) 305-6538 fax charles_liss@merck.com</p>
<p><u>Secretary:</u> David Radley Merck and Company, Inc. UG1CD38 P.O. Box 1000 North Wales, Pa. 19454-1099 (267) 305-7436 voice (267) 305-6538 fax david_radley@merck.com</p>	<p><u>Treasurer:</u> Alexandra Hanlon University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing 418 Curie Boulevard, Room 479 Philadelphia, PA 19104-4217 (215) 898-4581 <i>office</i> (215) 204-1854 <i>fax</i> alhanlon@nursing.upenn.edu</p>
<p><u>Newsletter Editor:</u> Kyle Matschke Wyeth Research 500 Arcola Road Collegeville, PA 19426 (484) 865-4233 <i>voice</i> (484) 865-0058 <i>fax</i> MatschK@Wyeth.com</p>	<p><u>Web Master:</u> Debbie Panebianco Merck and Company, Inc. P.O. Box 4 West Point, PA 19486-0004 (267) 305-6776 <i>voice</i> (267) 305-6408 <i>fax</i> deborah_panebianco@merck.com</p>
<p><u>Educational Outreach:</u> Cindy Gargano Merck and Company, Inc. P.O. Box 4 West Point, PA 19486-0004 (267) 305-7758 <i>voice</i> (267) 305-6412 <i>fax</i> cynthia_gargano@merck.com</p>	<p><u>Past President:</u> Bill Pikounis Centocor, Inc. 200 Great Valley Parkway MailStop C-4-1 Malvern, Pa. 19355 (610) 240-8498 <i>voice</i> (610) 951-6717 <i>fax</i> pastpresident@amstatphilly.org</p>
<p><u>Chapter Representative:</u> R. Mac Turner 218 Kline Hall University of the Sciences in Philadelphia 600 South 43rd St. Philadelphia, Pa. 19104 (215) 740-7812 voice r.turner@usip.edu</p>	<p><u>Vice Chair, District 3, Council of Chapters:</u> Thomas H. Short Depart. Of Mathematics and Computer Science John Carroll University 20700 N. Park Boulevard University Heights, OH 44118 (216) 397-1626 voice tshort@jcu.edu</p>