

**Editorial Address:** Dr. Mary H. Regier, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 44106, USA. Telephone: 1 216 572-2710; FAX: 1 216 368-5163. E-mail: mhr@po.cwru.edu

**President of the Association:** Professor David S. Moore, Department of Statistics, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1399, USA. Telephone: 1 317 4946050; FAX: 1 317 4940558; E-mail: DSM@STAT.PURDUE.EDU

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

When the IASE was launched as a new Section of the ISI two years ago, it was equipped with only a set of statutes and a caretaker team - the Interim Executive Committee. Since then, the Association has acquired a solid base of founding members, elected its first Executive Committee, and held a well-attended and productive scientific meeting prior to its first General Assembly in Italy last August. It is well on its way to being an important forum for interaction among those statisticians who are interested in the educational aspects of their subject. That such a forum is very welcome by many statisticians was much in evidence during the various discussions that took place at the meetings in Italy.

### First Scientific Meeting

The meeting was held on August 23-24 at the Department of Statistical Science, University of Perugia, in the picturesque town of Perugia, Italy. Thanks to an efficient (and very hospitable) local organizing committee, headed by Professor Giuseppe Cicchitelli, the 160 or so participants enjoyed two full days of a well organized and smoothly running program, which included: 14 invited papers, 36 contributed papers and 13 posters. The papers covered - in addition to classroom and curriculum problems in schools and universities - such topics as: training of government statisticians, the use of videos, training in consultancy, electronic communication as a tool, and statistical education in developing countries. Among the participants were 30 school teachers from various parts of Italy, and one session was devoted to the teaching of statistics in Italian schools.

Proceedings of the conference will be published in the next few months and will be mailed free of charge to the authors. Others will be charged only the cost of postage and handling.

The conference ended with a lively forum on Future Directions for the IASE. Among the many suggestions put forward by members were calls for regional meetings, coordination with national statistical groups, and identifying different interest groups within the membership.

### First General Assembly

The first General Assembly of the IASE was held on August 27 during the 49th biennial Session of the ISI in Florence, Italy.

The Assembly confirmed the election of the new IASE Executive Committee for a two-year term of office. The officers are: David Moore as President, Anne Hawkins as President-Elect, and Giuseppe Cicchitelli, Annie Morin, Brian Phillips and Richard Scheaffer as Vice-Presidents.

As a first step in keeping the channels of communication open between the membership and the Executive Committee, Professor Moore promised an early mailing of an information package to all members with details about ICOTS 4, available publications and their cost, and other factual information for reference. A membership directory will be distributed at a later stage, the next few months being a period when new members would be joining. It was pointed out that one can become a member now by paying the 1994 dues and not be liable for additional dues for the balance of 1993.

## UPDATE ON ICOTS 4

The program for the fourth International Conference on Teaching Statistics (ICOTS 4) will include invited and contributed papers organized in 20 scientific sessions, with topics ranging from Statistical Literacy of Citizens, through the teaching of statistics to various specialized groups, to Data Analysis for the Elementary Curriculum. In addition, there are plans for several working groups, which will provide the opportunity for in-depth discussion of certain specialized topics. Three of these, for instance, will separately discuss the development of educational statistics software in Arabic, French and English.

A complete list of topics for the scientific sessions and the workshops, as well as the names and addresses of their organizers, are given in the first conference bulletin, which was recently mailed to all IASE members. Bulletin II, which will carry more details, will be ready for distribution in December. Anyone who has not received the first bulletin (whether an IASE member or not) and is interested in getting more information about the conference should contact the chair of the Local Organizing Committee;

Mr. Abdel Aziz El-Ghazali, I.N.S.E.A., P.O. Box 6217, Rabat-Institut, Rabat, Morocco,  
or the chair of the Program Committee,  
Professor Yves Escoufier, Université Montpellier II,  
Science et Technique du Languedoc, Place E Bataillon  
34095, Montpellier, Cedex 5, France.  
E-Mail: [yes@helios.montpellier.inra.fr](mailto:yes@helios.montpellier.inra.fr)

The conference is sponsored jointly by the ISI and Morocco's l'Institut National de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (INSEA) and will be held at Congress Palace in Marrakech, Morocco, from 25 - 30 July, 1994. If you wish to present a paper at one of the scientific sessions, or take part in one of the working groups, please contact the organizer of that session or group before December 30, 1993.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

This fast growing medium for the exchange of ideas and information, though not yet universally available, promises to become so in the near future as more and more sites in old and new locations join the networks. No longer confined to transmitting a message electronically from one individual to another, e-mail now serves a multitude of purposes - and the possibilities appear to be limitless. Since our latest newsletter went to press, we have received: an announcement of a new electronic forum on statistical education in the health sciences, an announcement of the inaugural issue of the Journal of Statistics Education (JSE), and an announcement of a new venture in "distance learning", using e-mail for assignments and tests. Below are some details about the health sciences forum and the JSE. We hope to have more on distance learning programs in a future issue of the newsletter.

### Medstated-research:

#### A Royal Statistical Society Research Forum on Statistical Education in the Health Sciences

This is an electronic subscriber list intended to encourage discussion among subscribers to further:

"(i)synthesis and critical appraisal of existing research in statistical education which, even if derived from other contexts, may still be of relevance to statistical educators within the health sciences, and

(ii)new research and publication initiatives in the field, and the development of appropriate research methodologies."

Anyone interested in joining this subscriber-list can do so by sending the e-mail message:

*join medistated-research Firstname Lastname,*

where "Firstname Lastname" is replaced by the subscriber's first and last names, to the following e-mail address:

*mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk*

There is no charge for subscribing.

### The Journal of Statistics Education

Volume 1, Number 1, of this electronic journal, dated July 1993, contains articles by David S. Moore, George Cobb, Joan B. Garfield and J. Tim Arnold, a column entitled "Teaching Bits: A resource for Teachers of Statistics" edited by Joan Garfield and J. Laurie Snell, and a column entitled "Data Sets and Stories" edited by J. Tim Arnold and Robin H. Lock.

Two types of subscriptions to the JSE are available: "jse-announce" and "jse-talk". Subscribers in the first category receive announcements of new issues, tables of contents, abstracts of articles, and instructions on how to retrieve materials. Subscribers in the second category, in addition to receiving the above information, participate in a discussion group related to the journal. There is no charge for subscribing. Just send one of the two messages:

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Articles may be submitted for publication via e-mail, or on paper or diskette, and will be reviewed by three referees. High quality articles on any subject related to the teaching of statistics are welcome. Before submitting an article, please consult the Guidelines for Authors by sending the message:

*sendjse/author.guide*

to the e-mail address:

*archive@jse.stat.ncsu.edu*

or by writing to Jacqueline Dietz, Editor, JSE, Department of Statistics, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-8203, USA.

## A UNESCO PROJECT

### Computer-Aided Undergraduate Mathematics at Arab Universities

A team of four professors at the University of Jordan is currently working on a UNESCO project on computer-aided instruction in the undergraduate mathematics curriculum. The project is administered by UNESCO's Regional Office for Science and Technology in the Arab States (ROSTAS), which is based in Cairo. The first phase of the project deals with Calculus, which makes it of value to students in a wide variety of disciplines in addition to those majoring in Mathematics and Statistics.

The aim of the first phase is to develop computer-aided teaching methods for the calculus course sequence. The team's work is based on MATHEMATICA software, with some modifications to suit the mode of presentation adopted by the team. The final report of the team will consist of three parts. One is a "Student's File", which represents material for students' self-learning through working and interacting with the computer. Another is a "Teacher's File", which represents material including instructions for the teacher with delineation of common difficulties which the student may face and suggested methods for overcoming these difficulties. The third part is an "Evaluation File", which includes indicators for measuring students' learning and achievement.

The team consists of Professors Mohammed A. Hamdan (Team Leader), Adnan Awad, Ghazi Hamzeh, and Mr. Turki Said.

## BOOK REVIEW

Chance Encounters: Probability in Education. Ramesh Kapadia and Manfred Borovcnik (eds.). Mathematics Education Library Series. Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991. Reviewed by Margaret Rangelcroft.

The world of statistical education has been crying out for a book of this type. As the authors point out in their preface, there have been many papers in the area of probability teaching and learning but there has been no authoritative overview. I therefore had high hopes of this text.

It consists of seven chapters (each divided into subsections) on: The Educational Perspective, A Probabilistic Perspective, Empirical Research in Understanding Probability, Analysis of the Probability Curriculum, the Theoretical Nature of Probability in the Classroom, Computers in Probability Education and Psychological Research in Probabilistic Understanding.

The authors are all major figures in this field and so there is a wealth of worthwhile material included in the thirty-one sections. It is intended that the book should be "accessible to a broad audience", including teachers and teacher trainers. I must admit to serious misgivings about the realization of this aim. I suspect most teachers will find it far too theoretical and some of the suggestions that topics should be discussed in class are totally unrealistic.

Much of the material is fascinating if you are a serious scholar of the subject, but you do need to be highly motivated to cope with the complexities of the exposition particularly in the early chapters. I personally felt at times that I was reading a rather difficult academic paper, the drawback being that this particular "paper" consists of more than 250 pages of very small type. I suffered from mental indigestion before I reached chapter 3! However, I soldiered on and did find much of great value. Had I not had this review to write I suspect I would have given up, and that would have been a great pity in view of the overall quality of the material. I can only hope that prospective readers are prepared to persevere because the rewards are there for the tenacious.

The problem is mainly one of style. The sentence construction is at times both complex and laboured,

requiring mere mortals like me to read each one through several times in order to grasp the point, and therefore very quickly losing the flow of the whole piece. The incidence of errors, particular in the examples, did nothing to help. for example (page 84);

"No. 3: The six children

Item. Shaughnessy (1981) posed 70, college students (in an introductory course in probability) the following question thereby varying an experiment by Kahneman and Tversky (1972).

The probability of having a baby boy is about 1/2. Which of these sequences are more likely to occur for having six children?

(A) BGGBGB (B) BGGBGB (C) about the same chance for each

|         |     |     |        |
|---------|-----|-----|--------|
| Result. | (A) | (B) | (C)*   |
|         | 70  | 3   | 27 % " |

This is followed by two pages of discussion of the implications of this finding!

Mistakes such as these are easily spotted and it is, perhaps, unfair to highlight them, but they do detract from the overall impression of the content.

In conclusion, this is not a book for the fainthearted, but for those who are willing to persevere there are rich rewards. I am glad that I did in the end manage to read it and I am sure that it will be a text which I will dip into frequently as I pursue my own studies in the area.

Margaret Rangelcroft  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Sheffield S11 8HD, UK

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