

# STATISTICAL M $\mu$ SINGS

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### NOTE:

The Statistics Department is currently investigating the possibility of offering an on-line version for some of its introductory courses (e.g., Stat 217, Stat 251). If you have any thoughts or opinions or experiences to share on this idea, please contact Beth Chance (bchance@calpoly.edu)!

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR



*Robert Smidt*

Hi again. As you might remember from the last M $\mu$ SINGS, this past year I served as interim department chair, replacing Jay Devore. Contrary to my own expectations, I thoroughly enjoyed the year and have signed on to serve as chair for a full term of three more years. It is great to serve with the statistics faculty; they are hard-working, get along with each other, and, above all, have a sincere interest in the education and well-being of the students. It makes the extra duties of chair worthwhile.

Speaking of faculty, we hired two assistant professors this year (after a futile search the preceding year). One will be familiar to some of you, **Samuel Frame**, as he obtained his undergraduate degree in Statistics from Cal Poly in 2001. He traveled down the road to the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he completed his Ph.D. in 2006. While in Santa Barbara, he served as a statistical analyst for Toyon Research Corporation's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Recognizance Algorithm Team (I think we hired him because he knew what that title meant). Sam taught for us as a lecturer last year, but now has a tenure track position. Less familiar, unless you spend lots of time in Bulgaria, is **Iliana (Lina) Ignatova**. She comes to us after finishing her Ph.D. at the University of South Carolina and impressing us with her teaching skills during a campus visit. Both should fit in nicely with our faculty.

On top of the two new tenure track hires, we also have been joined by a new full-time lecturer, **Olga Dekhtyar**. Olga has a Master's degree from the University of Maryland, and joins us with her husband, Alex (a new Computer Science faculty member) and her two children. **Les Pennelly**, who still holds his position as Vice President of Biostatistics for Clinimetrics, began teaching for us as a part-time lecturer last year and continues to do so this year. **John Coleman**, a recent Ph.D. from the University of Northern Colorado who also started to teach for us last year, will continue through this fall, but will leave after that to pursue a career as a statistical consultant. **Dennis O'Brien**, a retired faculty member from the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, whose Ph.D. is from the incredibly prestigious, challenging, and wonderful University of Wyoming (take a wild guess about who else graduated from there), will also leave after the fall quarter, having taught for us full-time last year. **Mark Rees**, a retired Partner and Chief Research Officer of J. D. Powers and Associates, who taught part-time last year, will teach for us again later this year. And **Becky Ottesen**, **Nina Schleicher**, **Len Deaton**, and **Richard Pollard** continue their exemplary work lecturing and we hope that they will continue teaching at Cal Poly.

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**Robert Smidt Greetings Continued:**

Elsewhere in this newsletter, other faculty members will be describing some of the events and people from last year. One activity that strikes me as noteworthy is the new undergraduate summer research program. In 2006 and 2007, we used funds from our College Based Fee to support students and faculty doing summer research. I think it has been successful, giving the students knowledge, experience, and confidence that they can bring either to graduate school or the work place.

One last thing. I have been really bowled over by the donations that many of you have contributed to the department. When I was the chair back in the mid-90's, the number and amount of financial contributions to the department discretionary fund were minimal. This has changed significantly. This additional funding helps us to go the extra mile for the students and to support departmental activities that otherwise would be impossible. In the past we have used these funds to subsidize student and faculty travel to professional meetings and workshops, pay for guest speakers, sponsor Stat Club activities, purchase equipment and supplies, partly pay for the faculty/student end-of-the-year social, defray recruitment expenses, and to keep the candy jar full. And if the College Based Fee funds ever fall short in crucial areas such as support for student research or senior projects, we can use discretionary funds to supplement the CBF funds and bring these activities to fruition. Your donations help to keep our program, we think, special and vital, and for that I thank you.

If you are in the neighborhood, please drop by and meet the new faculty, students, and trade lies with your old professors. And have a great year!

Best Wishes!

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## JOYCE CURRY-DALY SCHOLARSHIP

### Statistics Department Scholarships

By Jim Daly



The Joyce Curry-Daly Scholarship is named in recognition of Joyce Curry-Daly, a graduate of the Cal Poly Mathematics Department and a lecturer in statistics at Cal Poly from 1970 until her death in September of 1997. During her time at Cal Poly, she was very active as the supervisor of department tutors, and worked for many years with the SMART program, a School of Science and Mathematics program intended to encourage underprivileged students to develop a strong interest in mathematics and the sciences in junior high with the goal that they will have the interest and knowledge to pursue these subjects at the college level.

The scholarship fund, started shortly after her death with the idea of supporting her strong commitment to education, is an endowment with approximately 3% to 4% of the endowment being used each year to support the academic pursuits of worthy statistics majors. At the present time 2-3 majors are selected each year to receive a proportion of the allocated amount. As new contributions increase the size of the scholarship fund, we hope to increase the number of students who receive financial support from this fund.

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# REPORT ON COLLEGE BASED FEES

By Heather Smith

The Statistics Department continues to use students' College-Based Fee (CBF) funds to enhance their educational experience as Statistics majors. In the spring of 2007 a committee of four students and three faculty formulated a proposal for how to spend the department's CBF funds for the upcoming academic year. All proposed items were funded by the College of Science and Math and totaled \$45,000. Below is a summary of these items.

## Course related expenses:

- We will again offer two sections each of our SAS class (STAT 330) and Regression class (STAT 324). These multiple sections afford students greater flexibility in planning their schedules and also produce smaller classes and therefore more student-faculty interaction.
- We will again offer a two-unit course in SAS certification. This class has been very popular and has resulted in many of our students taking and passing the SAS certification exam.
- Both the introductory class for stat majors (STAT 150) and the capstone consulting class (STAT 465) will continue to be funded as team taught courses.



## Summer research experiences:

Summer research provides both students and faculty an opportunity to explore projects of personal interest to them as well as helps to meet the research needs of the greater Cal Poly community. This activity was funded at even a higher level than in past years. Six faculty members working with seven students investigated wide ranging topics. Some of these were:

- Working with Professor Chance, Max Wise performed a literature review and data analysis related to revising an undergraduate introductory statistics course. Max also co-authored a poster on this topic, presented in England.
- Working with Professor Doi, Hank Meisse investigated the coverage probability and expected length properties of a new confidence interval method for a binomial proportion, the mid-p-value based confidence interval.
- Working with Professor Schaffner, Alice Jarvis investigated the relationship between terroir (soil composition) and attributes of cabernet sauvignon must and wine.
- Working with Professor Smith, Mike Kolkowski and Peter Cerussi provided consulting, data management and analytic services to a client from Twin Cities Hospital in Templeton, CA. This client was interested in understanding how hospital staff respond to a change in their work place following a move.

## Purchases for student use:

- Minitab references books
- New chairs for use in the students' STAT LAB
- Color printer for use in the students' STAT LAB

*(Continued on page 23)*

### Current Stat Faculty Directory

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## FOCUS ON FACULTY

### Jay Devore



After 30 years of teaching at Cal Poly, including seven long years as department chair, I officially retired as of September 1, 2006. I am now participating in the Faculty Early Retirement Program, and have opted to teach a full course load during the winter quarter for up to five years (my choice as to when I terminate). I spent the fall of 2006 teaching business statistics at NYU in New York City. My wife and I love spending time in that city, and as an additional bonus, we get to see more of our two daughters who live on the east coast.

Retirement from Cal Poly does not mean retirement from the statistics profession. I am still an Associate Editor for Reviews for the Journal of the American Statistical Association and The American Statistician. The editor periodically sends me books for which I have to find reviewers and then make sure they fulfill their obligation (for example, I assigned a regression book to a reviewer who then after a year refused to produce a review, so I had to read the book and write one myself!). I also continue to be active in textbook writing. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of my first book, *Probability and Statistics for Engineering and the Sciences*, which many of you used in Stat 321-322, was recently published; it has been in print for 25 years. Last year I co-authored a mathematical statistics text. My name is still on several books I co-authored with Roxy Peck, but I have gone inactive on those and let Roxy take full responsibility (and blame!).

In my leisure I am hoping to play more tennis and do more traveling. My wife and I have a trip to Southern France planned for May 2007 and then a Northern European cruise in July 2007 to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I will also have more time to correspond with friends, including former Cal Poly students. So please take the opportunity to send me a message at my Cal Poly email address. Best regards to all of you.

### Samuel Frame

It took me about two weeks in Professor Devore's Stat 322 class to realize that I no longer wanted to be a Mathematics major. Rather, I was to become a life long student of Statistics. The decision was based on more than the attractive prospect of not having to take any more Physics. I had a profound realization that I would eventually work in a field and/or industry which would utilize data analysis and computational statistics skills. Hence, Statistics would be my major (Engineering Science was my first major, I think the transition is rather obvious). Moreover, I came to Cal Poly in 1999 as a transfer student with every intention of going to graduate school. As a Statistics major, I had found a field of study which lends itself very naturally to my peculiar obsession with mathematics, problem solving, variation, data modeling, and programming. Solid, why not get a Ph.D. in Statistics as well and see how far the rabbit hole goes?

By graduation in June of 2001, I was admitted to and set to attend graduate school at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) for the Fall of 2001. However, what was I to do with myself over the summer? I got lots of good advice: *go work at your brother's restaurant, go scoop ice cream, and don't do anything at all* were all at the top of that list. "NEVER!!!" I wanted more and to put my newly obtained statistical abilities to the test. I was hired as a Junior Analyst by a small company called Toyon Research Corporation in Goleta, CA. In addition to working that summer, they said I could work part-time during the academic year.



For Toyon, I worked as an Intelligence, Surveillance, and Recognizance (I.S.R.) Algorithm Developer. In short, I researched, developed, implemented, tested, and analyzed statistical algorithms which were applied to image processing, tracking, classification, decision making, and data analysis problems. The combination of working for Toyon and being a graduate student culminated in the Spring of 2003 when I was appointed as a Research Assistant to the Bio-Image Informatics Laboratory which is funded by the National Science Foundation to study *Next Generation Bio-Molecular Imaging and Information Discovery*. Moreover, my Ph.D. dissertation ("Some Contributions to Semi-supervised Learning") is a direct descendant of a project I worked on at Toyon. I left Toyon in the Summer of 2006 as a Senior I.S.R. Analyst.

The experience of working at Toyon while in graduate school was truly unique. In all, it was an invaluable component of my graduate school experience. The most tangible benefit was the five years of industry experience I obtained while in graduate school. This was in addition to being a research assistant and a teaching assistant at UCSB. Few people leave graduate school with such a diverse background. I was armed to make a very informed decision when having to choose between an academic and industry career. I believe I have chosen wisely. Every morning I wake up and say to myself, "I can't believe this is my job."

### Lina Ignatova

Hi everybody! I am proud to be the first Bulgarian woman at Cal Poly. Six years ago I first came to the States. I arrived in South Carolina and got my master's degree in Math from the University of South Carolina in Columbia and just two months ago I completed my PhD degree in Statistics there.

This entire year has been really eventful for me and highly successful – I found my dream job at one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. I traveled 3000 miles further away from my home in Bulgaria all across the country and saw amongst other places the Grand Canyon.

I am very excited about the numerous possibilities for further developing my research interests as well as the interactions with students. It has been several weeks since the academic year started and I am still trying to figure out and learn so many things. Thank you all for trying to make me welcome at the department and for helping me integrate in this new community.

### Ulric Lund



The highlight of my 2006/2007 academic year came in the spring of 2007, when I received word of my promotion to associate professor and the granting of my tenure. I now look forward to many productive years with my truly wonderful colleagues in the Statistics Dept.

Also in the past year, I enjoyed working with several of our majors on their senior projects, and a few master's students from outside of our department. One of our 2007 graduates, Rich-  
ele Benevent, worked on expanding her S-PLUS and R programming skills, while exploring various methods of random number generation, and looking into an algorithm to generate pseudo-random numbers from a spherical probability distribution. I will, with her permission of course, include some of her work in the next version of my S-PLUS/R library of functions that deal with circular (and now spherical!) data. Another of our graduates, Ariel Nikzad, spent his senior project efforts shadowing our department's statistical consultants for a couple of quarters, and then reflecting on the rewards and also frustrations at times of being a statistical consultant for faculty and students from other departments. I don't think that he encountered any data sets or experiments that were of the textbook variety.

The master's students on whose committees I am working on have two very different, but both interesting, projects in forestry and food science respectively. One student is interested in what kind of forest management strategies yield the largest redwood trees in the Santa Cruz Mountains area, while another is looking into the seasonal fluctuation of the protein content of milk. Surprisingly enough, I managed to inject some circular statistics into the latter study, to account for the seasonal aspect of the milk protein data.

**Industry input sought:** We are continually evaluating our curriculum, adding and removing courses that we offer, and altering course content. Some of you, as statisticians working in industry, are hiring individuals such as our graduates, and we would greatly appreciate any input you may have in terms of the courses we offer and their content. We welcome you to visit our current course listings at our department's home page ([www.calpoly.edu/%7Estat/courses.htm](http://www.calpoly.edu/%7Estat/courses.htm)) to peruse our course offerings. If you have any comments or suggestions, please direct them to me ([ulund@calpoly.edu](mailto:ulund@calpoly.edu)), our Curriculum Chair, Allan Rossman ([arossman@calpoly.edu](mailto:arossman@calpoly.edu)), or our Department Chair, Bob Smidt ([rsmidt@calpoly.edu](mailto:rsmidt@calpoly.edu)).

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## Focus on Faculty Cont.

## Andrew Schaffner



Student research in the statistics department is really beginning to take off! Each year our students dedicate a portion of their own College Based Fee money to support student research. This money gives students the summer flexibility to delve deeper into the theory and practice of statistics. Last summer three students (Maria Loper, Casey Word, and Matthew Bowyer) and two faculty (Jeff Sklar and I) were supported. Because of the success and benefits of the program, this past summer the program more than doubled in size.

Some of you might recall from last year's newsletter that Matt's summer research project with me was to develop Bayesian methods for estimating the age of obsidian artifacts (arrowheads and spear and dart points). Matt submitted his research to two large competitions: the California State University research competition and the United States Conference on Teaching Statistics Undergraduate research competition. The CSU competition included both graduate and undergraduate students from a variety of disciplines across all 23 campuses and the USCOTS competition was open to undergraduate statistics students from any university. The entire Statistics Department is very proud of Matt's accomplishments - he was awarded second place and received monetary awards at both competitions. Matt will be beginning his graduate study in statistics this Fall at UCSB.

While not part of the summer research program, it has also been my pleasure this past year to work with statistics major Tommy Garrison and advise his senior project research. Tommy has spent the past few quarters learning about spatial data analysis - in particular variogram estimation and kriging models. The data and motivation for his project comes from Dr. Dean Wendt of the Biology department who is interested in studying the impacts of newly proposed marine protection areas on the fish populations in the coastal waters roughly between Piedras Blancas and Point Sal. Using several years of fish catch data from a variety of locations, Tommy has developed seasonal abundance estimates for these populations. His models will serve as a useful basis for tracking the effectiveness of the new marine protection program. Because of the great skills that he has acquired, Tommy has also worked on a research problem of Dr. Mark Moline's (Biology faculty) to help develop models to estimate scales of oceanographic variation in bioluminescence and other related variables. His work has been accepted for publication in the journal *Continental Shelf Research*. I will certainly miss Tommy when he leaves Cal Poly to pursue his graduate degree in quantitative ecology at the University of Washington this Fall.

While my role as advisor was to help frame their work and provide direction, the work was theirs and it was truly amazing. I sent them in directions to learn more, to explore areas that I myself did not have time to fully study. These students went out, gathered information, synthesized it, applied it, and finally shared it with me. I am grateful to have learned so much with them.

*“While my role as advisor was to help frame their work and provide direction, the work was theirs and it was truly amazing. .”*

*-Andrew Schaffner*

## Focus on Faculty Cont.

### Heather Smith



It has been a really good year. Teaching the *Survey Research* class and the *Consulting* class are highlights. In these classes the statistics majors and I more fully explore practical applied statistics. This year I also taught the introductory statistics class to Masters students from across the university. It was a lot of fun. I met many interesting students and had the opportunity to work with some of them on their thesis work.

I have had a busy year consulting. As part of the *Statistics Department's Consulting Service* I provided consulting to more than forty clients throughout the university. Two statistics majors completed their senior projects by working with me in providing services to some of these clients. I have also been working on three long term projects, all with health care related clients. These projects involve working with faculty, undergraduate and graduate students from within and outside of Cal Poly as well as with collaborators outside of Cal Poly. This summer, two statistics majors worked with me on one of these projects as part of *The College of Science and Math's Summer Research Program*.

Personally, life is great. My two sons (ages 9 and 11) are busy with their usual sports teams and school projects. This summer they each participated in two great summer camps: the first at the Tech Museum in San Jose (*Crime Scene Investigation Methods* and *Digital Video Production*.) The second camp was a fencing camp at Stanford University. They both had a blast and I enjoyed having time to spend with them. My husband, David, continues to work hard as a research statistician at Westat Inc. He plays ice hockey when he can, playing in the Bay Area and in a tournament in Montreal. Lastly, it was a really good sports year for me, as my alma mater, The University of Florida Gators won the national title in both football and basketball.

### Kent D. Smith

During this last year, Dr. Kent Smith has been working on another revision for one of the texts for which he is a co-author. The book is entitled *Business Statistics A Decision Making Approach*. To accompany this seventh edition, Dr. Smith and his co-authors are also working on the *Student's Solution Manual* as well as an *Instructor's Solution Manual* for the text. Text writing is a never ending project. There are always deadlines to meet, solutions to check, and new material to research. It has kept him (or, perhaps, "rescued him") from a long list of home and garden projects that await.

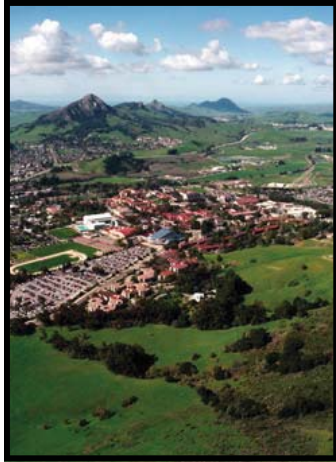
Dr. Smith continues to enjoy traveling, gardening, playing pool, ballroom dancing, and his pets. You may remember from last year's departmental newsletter that, Dottie and he adopted a rescued Kerry Blue Terrier. "Finny" has mellowed considerably. He even allows the cats in the house.

Last year retirement was a small glimmer on the horizon for Dr. Smith. However, this year that image became sharper and larger. Don't be surprised if sometime in the near future brings a notice of his retirement.



## AWARDS & GRADUATES

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### OUTSTANDING STATISTICAL APPLICATION AWARD 2007

(FROM THE AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION PRESS)

Each year, the ASA recognizes a paper what is an outstanding application of statistics in the physical, biological, or medical sciences. The 2007 winners of this award are Jeffrey Grogger, the University of Chicago, and **Greg Ridgeway**, Rand Corporation, in recognition of their paper, *Testing for Racial Profiling in Traffic Stops from Behind a Veil of Darkness*. The paper helped diffuse the contentious battles over racial profiling in two cities where concerns over policing had resulted in court-ordered investigations of profiling.

### MU SIGMA RHO AWARDS FOR 2006-2007

**Mu Sigma Rho is the National Honorary Society for Statistics**

Gabe Becker

Hunter Glanz

Wade Herndon

Richele Benevent

Tristan Grogan

### Recent 2007 Graduates:

Richele Benevent

Zenia Iniguez

Anna Welden

Hagen Von Messenbach

Matthew Bowyer

Andrew Curtis

Thomas Garrison

Maria Loper

Ariel Nikzad

Kendall Roberg





## GUEST SPEAKERS DURING 2006-2007

James Adams, Larry Beeson, Mark Ghamsary—Loma Linda University  
Presentation From Loma Linda University School of Public Health

Rudolfo S. Angeles—Stanford University  
Perspectives From a Statistics Graduate Student: What I Knew Then,  
What I Know Now, and What I Should Have Known.

Arthur Berg—University of California, San Diego  
Density Estimation of IID, Dependent, and Censored Data

Martina Bremer—Livermore, California  
Identifying Regulated Genes Through the Correlation Structure  
of Time Dependent Microarray Data

Ryan M. Brown—AMGEN  
Bioassay Data Analysis Via Robust Nonlinear Regression

John Coleman—Cal Poly State University, SLO  
A Power Study of the Piecewise Hierarchical Linear Model Approach  
to Meta-Analysis of Single-Subject Data

Samuel Frame—Cal Poly State University, SLO  
Generalized Mixture Models

Dan Gillen—University of California, Irvine  
On the analysis of Survival Data—Examples to Illustrate Shortcomings  
of Commonly Used Methodology

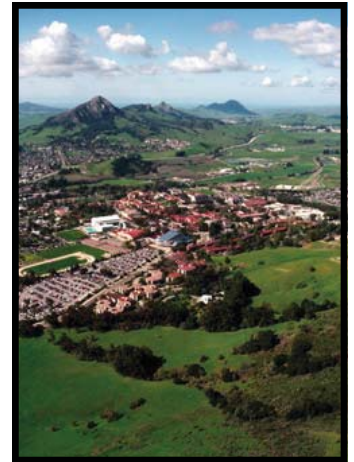
John Holcomb—Cleveland State University  
Forecasting Police Calls During Peak Times for the City of Cleveland:  
A Case Study

Aparna Huzurbazar—University of New Mexico  
Flowgraph Models for Multistate Time-to-Event Data: Extensions and Applications

Iliana Ignatova—University of South Carolina  
Two-Stage Samples and the Minimum Sum Method for Medicare Fraud Investigations

Deniz Yenigun—Bowling Green State University, Ohio  
A Test of Independence in Two-Way Contingency Tables Based on Maximal Correlation

YanYan Zhou—Florida International University  
Baseline Adjustment by Inducing a Partial Ordering When Measurements  
are Ordered Categories



**Interested in being a  
Statistics  
Colloquium guest  
speaker?**

**Contact Ulric Lund at**

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*ulund@calpoly.edu***

## 2007 SABBATICAL LEAVE WINTER AND SPRING QUARTER

BY ALLAN ROSSMAN

I enjoyed sabbatical leave during the Winter and Spring quarters of 2007. This leave enabled me to work on several curriculum development projects. Along with Beth Chance, I finished writing the third edition of *Workshop Statistics* and began work on a new NSF-funded project to design a new introductory curriculum around randomization tests.

My leave also gave me the opportunity to travel around the country and to other countries, collaborating with colleagues and sharing some of my ideas. I attended the Joint Mathematics Meetings in New Orleans and visited the American Statistical Association headquarters in Alexandria and Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. I traveled to Grinnell College in Iowa and Kansas State University. I met with colleagues at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and Saint Lawrence University in New York. I visited UC-Riverside, attended a conference in Columbus, Ohio, and graded Advanced Placement exams in Louisville, Kentucky. I also attended the Joint Statistical Meetings in Salt Lake City, a conference for which I served as the Program Chair. Finally, I ventured to Warwick, England and Lisbon, Portugal for a pair of international conferences to conclude the summer.

*“I ventured to Warwick, England and Lisbon, Portugal for a pair of international conferences to conclude the summer.”*

*-Allan Rossman*



Among my more memorable experiences were:

- eating at a BBQ restaurant in Roanoke that had "pass the pigs" games on every table;
- seeing Cal Poly alum Katie Tranbarger, currently at Amherst College, in Massachusetts;
- driving through a snowstorm in Lake Placid, even though it was mid-April, on my way to Saint Lawrence;
- chatting with Cal Poly alum Tierra Stimson, who had just taken her Ph.D. qualifying exams in Psychology at UC-Riverside;
- shooting baskets in an arcade game with Cal Poly senior Matt Bowyer, who had just received 2nd place in a national undergraduate competition for statistics projects, at the US-COTS conference in Columbus.



## LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

LEN DEATON, STATISTICS LECTURER

(Adapted from the Santa Maria Times article By Emily Welly/Features Writer. Reprinted by Permission)

Two Santa Maria men, Leonard Deaton, and Les DeGeus, have set out on what some would consider the voyage of a lifetime. And they've done it nearly every year for the past 15 years. The two are canoeing their way down the Mississippi River, a few weeks and a few miles at a time.

Deaton is a big Mark Twain fan, who has retired three times: from the U.S. Navy Reserve as a commander, the U.S. Civil Service with the Navy and the state of California after teaching at Cal Poly and Cal State. He's currently a part time math and statistics lecturer at Cal Poly. After reading Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," an 1883 memoir detailing his days as a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi, Deaton decided it was something he had to see for himself. That was in 1992.

Almost every year since then, Deaton, his stepbrother DeGeus, and a variety of family members and friends have headed down the Mississippi River. The 2,300-mile-long river is the longest and largest in North America. Its river basin, or watershed, extends from the Allegheny Mountains to the Rockies, and it includes parts of 31 states and two Canadian provinces - the equivalent of 40 percent of the United States and an eighth of the North American continent.

Deaton and DeGeus enlist at least one other person to join them each year so that while two paddle down the river, another can drive alongside it, meeting the paddlers at marked spots.

They start their yearly trip from Santa Maria, as they drive across country to the mighty Mississippi. Their trips usually last about three weeks, and typically take place in May or June, before mosquito season is in full swing, and they typically paddle 12 to 20 miles

per day. "When we were younger we were doing 25 to 30 miles a day," said DeGeus. "We're really in no hurry; we just want to see it."

In 1992, they started their voyage at the Mississippi River's headwaters in Lake Itasca, Minn. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the headwaters reach almost 500 miles to St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis, passing through spruce swamps, natural

lakes, extinct glacial lake beds, rapids and dams. "It's real wilderness," Deaton said of the surroundings they faced in Minnesota. "Just you and animals and the weather."

Eventually, the pair developed their own system of navigation: They would still their canoe and study the plants underwater to see which way they flowed, to ensure they were traveling downstream. "We don't need it anymore," he said of the navigation system they used in the Minnesota wilderness. The area they're now navigating is well mapped and heavily trafficked by barges and boats. Plus, since 1992 when they started their voyage, technology has made it easier and more comfortable. Today, instead of a CB radio, they're outfitted with cell phones, GPS devices and digital cameras.



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## LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI—CONT.

LEN DEATON

In addition to other boats, wildlife sightings are common on the river. Deaton recalls counting as many as 40 bald eagles in the Minnesota wilderness, along with deer, turtles and some kind of fresh water seals. They encountered what they think were wolverines that gave them a scare by diving in the water and swimming toward them rather than backing off like most of the wildlife they came across.

And the people they've encountered along the way have become part of the memories they've collected and the stories they tell. "People were helpful to us," said Deaton, remembering a couple in the Minnesota wilderness who gave them a ride back to their car when they got off course on a cold fall evening. Last year, Deaton docked in someone's yard on the banks of the river when the wind picked up, and asked a man who was mowing his lawn if he could wait there, call his driver, and have him pick him up there. The man had a better idea. He reached into his pocket, gave Deaton his keys, and told him to go meet his driver and come back for the canoe.

For Deaton, the magic is in being on the river. "There's sometimes when you're out there on the river and it's so peaceful it's like a mystical experience," said Deaton of his favorite moments on the river.

Deaton and DeGeus have come about 860 miles, so far. "I used to think I wanted to finish it," said Deaton. "I don't know if we're going to live long enough to finish it. But we're going to keep doing it."





## KEEPING IN TOUCH

### Todd Alonzo (Graduated in 1994)

After graduating from Cal Poly in 1994, I went to graduate school at the University of Washington. I really enjoyed my time in Seattle but I was excited to move back to California after earning my PhD in Biostatistics in 2000. I have been working at the University of Southern California ever since then. Some of the projects that I am currently working on at USC as an associate professor of research in the Department of Biostatistics include: design and analysis of clinical trials for kids with acute myeloid leukemia, developing new statistical methodology for assessing the accuracy of diagnostic tests and biomarkers, and teaching Biostatistics to 180 first year medical students.

My two sons (Peyton 7 ½ and Carson 5) keep us very busy. They like all sports and anything that involves climbing, jumping, wrestling, etc. I thoroughly enjoy coaching my boys' teams. I also enjoy playing indoor and outdoor soccer on a co-ed team with my wife. In September 2006 I was fortunate enough to return to Cal Poly for a day to give a seminar in the department. It was wonderful chatting with the students and professors, especially the ones that I had taken classes from. I was amazed how young the students looked (time does fly by). I look forward to my next visit to SLO – next time I will have to bring my family with me so that I can show them the campus, beach, and Farmer's Market.

### Kristin Bishop (Graduated in 2004)

I got a job at J.D. Power and Associates in Thousand Oaks as a programmer analyst right after graduation, working with Marie Westcoat, another CP Stat alum. I worked there for 2 years and then I moved a little further south to Brentwood/Santa Monica and now I am working at a company called Market-Cast, a market research company for the entertainment industry. It's a subsidiary of Variety Magazine, owned by Reed Business Information. It is really interesting doing statistics on movie surveys, especially living in LA where movies are so big. The main part of our business is called ad-testing. We test movie trailers by interviewing people in malls. We show them the trailer, and then ask them questions about it. So what we do is help our clients, the movie studios, decide which content in the trailer is more likely to get people to want to see the movie in the theater. We are also the ones who predict how much money a movie is going to make on opening weekend.

We also do custom projects, like the one I am working on now for Fox home video. It is a study about attitudes and usage of DVD purchasing/renting. The survey is about an hour long, done over the phone, and in 14 different countries. It's the biggest project the company has. I've mostly been working with SPSS and one of their new packages called MR Tables. The company purchased the software right after I started working there and I picked up on it so quickly that

now I am the one everyone turns to for help with it. It's so new that when I call their help line, I end up teaching their people a few things.

I am definitely happier with this company. It is a lot smaller than JD Power and I like fewer office politics. Most of the people are my age too and I've made some great friends. My boss is the head of the company and we only have about 30-40 employees. Another plus is that I get all the perks that Variety employees get, so I get to go to movie screenings and meet actors/directors sometimes. It's been really fun!

I'm also happy with this type of statistics I've chosen as a career. I really like Market Research and I'm thinking of pursuing a Masters in Quantitative Methods of Social Sciences or something similar. Thomas Leung from my class is working here now too and we have one other Cal Poly alum but he was a business major. That is about it for me. I definitely miss everyone in the stat department a great deal.

### Catherine (Norris) Demers (Graduated in 1988)

I moved to St. Louis to work for the Army - I did that for 5 and a half years. (The facility I worked for moved to Alabama). I earned my masters in Market Research, a nice addition to the stats. Then I worked for myself for a period of time setting up offices and what not. I met my husband, Jon, who is a LTC in the Air Force currently. And, of course, he grew up in Stockton - I had to find a California boy. He did work for TWA but was laid off from that position.

Then I got involved with the school system. First I was working for a proprietary school in the Marketing Department then I went to work for Saint Louis University in the admissions office handling the reporting and computing things.

Currently, I work for Primerica helping people get out of debt and set up for retirement. I have no desire to ever work another 40 hour work week. I like making my own schedule. As strange as it seems, Jon and I are now working on starting a family - something I have always really wanted.

As for my address, the campus has had my address all along. My email changes now and again and those who know me also know Jon's email which will never change (demersj@aol.com).

I did think about how long it has been since I graduated. I graduated in December of 88 and moved to St. Louis in April of 89. It seems like forever, but as for aging - well, Jon, who graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1980 is only 19 years old now and you know that I could never marry anyone younger than me so I think I stopped aging at 18.



(Continued on page 14)

## Keeping in Touch Cont.

**William T. Doyle, "Tom"** (Graduated in 1982)



I just recently go back from Kabul, Afghanistan where I served as the IT director for the US Army Corps of Engineers. I was deployed for 6 months there and had responsibilities for all wire-line, satellite, data center, and applications for Operation Enduring Freedom reconstruction efforts. It was a fascinating assignment as I was issued uniforms, body armor, and helmet and dressed in a Desert

Battle Dress uniform 7 days a week. We worked 76 hours a week and the work was very demanding but extremely rewarding. Kabul, and Afghanistan in general, is still a very dangerous place where you have rocket attacks, bombing, rioting, and kid-napping going on nearly daily and our compound was not spared from this activity.

I am now safe and sound back in AZ, but life seems to have a whole new perspective now that I have returned from a war zone. Didn't get to use much of my statistics background as I may have wished, but the foundation provided to me by Professor Devore and others help me develop the discipline to get through some of the more challenging days over there. I was proud to serve my country as a Department of Army civilian volunteer and would go again if called upon.

**Laine Elliott** (Graduated in 2004)

I am now in my fourth year of graduate school at North Carolina State University. I will be working on my dissertation in the area of biostatistics. I am really starting to appreciate my choice of NCSU for graduate school, for two primary reasons. It took awhile to discover everything but Raleigh has great food, music, art and cultural opportunities. I recently moved downtown and can walk everywhere. Also, there are many great jobs for statisticians, including students. I have worked at the Duke Center for Human Genetics for the past year. It has been a great place to spread my wings and work on a variety of projects. This fall I will be moving to the Duke Clinical Research Institute which is a non-profit clinical research organization. My friends work at SAS, GlaxoSmith-Kline, Rho, and RTI. I hear nothing but good things about all of their jobs.

I am engaged to Steven (my boyfriend of 7 years) and we are getting married next summer. He is graduating from NCSU this year in biochemistry and considering getting a Masters degree in Statistics. We have been enjoying traveling in NC this summer. My parents came to visit and we spent a week camping in the Appalachians and another week boating and enjoying the warm Atlantic Ocean. I think the California central coast is the most beautiful coastline I have ever seen, but the relaxing warm water here can't be beat!

**Brian Fielder** (Graduated in 1990)

Since I graduated from Cal Poly, I've bounced around within the Bay Area Pharma/Biotech world. I started out as an analyst at Syntex who was then bought out by Roche. I endured layoffs and re-hirings before moving onto MedImmune (formerly Aviron) as a Clinical Programmer. I'm currently a Senior Manager of Clinical Programming at Clinimetrics - a CRO in South San Jose. My job mostly revolves around programming within an Oracle-based tool called Oracle Clinical, SAS programming and various management duties.

On the personal side of things, my family decided to finally pack up last year and move somewhere more affordable than the Bay Area. We now reside in Roseville - a growing suburb northwest of Sacramento. My wife Tammy and I have the cutest and smartest son who just turned 3 (Nate) and another potential prodigy (Drew) who should've made his entrance into the world by the time you read this. At this point I mostly keep myself busy playing 'dad' but I do try and find time to get out and play volleyball as much as possible. When I'm not huddled inside trying to avoid the 100+ degree heat of course. Hope everyone is doing well!

(Brian, who never knew he could wrap up 17 years in 2 paragraphs!)

**Wendy McCormack-Sison** (Graduated in 1995)

I've had quite a few changes in my life since my update last year. I am still with WaMu responsible for evaluating Account Management risk tools and managing vendor relationships. I do miss Jose' Tagunicar who left for another endeavor but I'll leave it to him to provide his news. We finished (for now at least) remodeling our home and have been enjoying it. Last November, we signed up to indefinitely host Rob's family's annual Early Thanksgiving celebration. We bought 7 folding tables and 40 chairs for the event so if anyone in the Bay Area is throwing a party and needs to borrow tables and chairs just let me know. In May, we sold our motorcycles to prepare for the next big change in our lives - parenthood. In June, Emily Logan Sison was born and to everyone's surprise, she was huge - 8 lbs. to be exact. Given that we are both sort of small people, we're not quite sure where she got her bulk but her Dad thinks it was from the daily dose of ice cream in the third trimester. I thought I was just doing my part to make sure that she wouldn't be lactose intolerant. We are still in shock today as she is at the 95% for weight and 75% for height. I don't think we've ever been 95% in anything in our lives. This past summer also marked the big 5-year milestone of cancer remission for me, and we're looking forward to celebrating at the San Francisco Race for the Cure this September. And, this year I don't have to train because I am walking with Emily & Rob instead of running.

## Keeping in Touch Cont.

### Christian Milbank (Graduated in 2006)

I graduated from Cal Poly in June of 2006 and in October began working as an actuarial analyst in the San Francisco office of Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a global human resources consulting firm. I work in the Retirement Practice, where we consult to companies regarding their pension and 401(k) retirement plans. My work involves projects such as plan valuations, non-discrimination testing, and plan design. I have just finished my fourth actuarial exam and hope to become an associate of the Society of Actuaries by next spring. It's not all work, though, as I play shortstop on the company softball team and I also play saxophone and keyboards for Wyatt Riot, the company rock band (yes, we actually have a rock band). I miss San Luis Obispo a ton but am enjoying life in San Francisco.

### Mark Newland (Graduated in 1982)

This year has been pretty good. The coffee house is doing okay, lots of regulars. I'm working with a local startup company that is building an ethanol plant. My responsibility is to help defining the network infrastructure for a Voice over IP phone system, file, terminal and SQL servers, IP camera system, as well as defining and laying the Cat5 and fiber optic cable for connecting all the systems. I will finish up in August and hand off the system to a full time support IT person, while I pursue other interests. My eldest daughter married this summer and will finish up her Fine Arts degree this coming year at Oklahoma State University. My son is finishing his second year at the local community college. Where next for him, I don't know - maybe Cal Poly! My youngest daughter is still at home, in the 8th grade.

**Editorial Note:** *Current and former students as well as faculty are extremely grateful to Mark and Linda for the years of support that helped establish The Newland Family Statistics Laboratory.*

### Susyn Normington (Graduated in 1999)

After 8 years at Fair Isaac in the Custom Analytics Team, I decided to move on to something new. In September I started at Wells Fargo in San Francisco working in the Corporate Credit Modeling and Analytics Team. It is our group's job to validate models and consult with the different lines of business throughout the company. With all the different types of models and products, there is plenty of interesting stuff to keep me busy! On a personal front, it is in complete disbelief, that we celebrate our son's 1 year birthday in a few weeks. Never a dull moment these days!



### Jessica Oltmanns (Graduated in 2003)

I am currently working as an epidemiologist for Santa Cruz County after getting my Masters of Public Health (MPH) in epidemiology at Emory University in 2005. Prior to working in Santa Cruz, I was the temporary San Luis Obispo County epidemiologist for about six months—a connection that was made through one of my favorite people, Mary Mortlock, while I was a student at Cal Poly. I would love to hear from anyone at anytime, my email is slojessica@gmail.com.

### Bernice Palos Franklin (Graduated in 1980)

I have worked as a Systems Engineer in the Bay Area since graduating in 1980 - 16 years with GTE in Mountain View and now 11 years part-time with Lockheed Martin in Sunnyvale. It has been a wonderful career choice for me because it has used a cross section of skills learned in all those Math, Computer Science, Statistics, Business, Industrial Engineering, and English classes. Cal Poly gave me a great well-rounded education. The most fun assignment I had was doing timeline analyses of existing and proposed systems using simulation languages. These days I spend more time using the DOORs requirements management tool. In our spare time, my family runs a small haunted house make-up/movie special effects company, FaceFX. We provision haunted house make-up departments and train make-up teams. My husband Ken (CSC '78) and kids Chuck (22) and Vicki (15) are all involved in the business. It kind of fits with being a Statistics major - most people think Statistics is scary.

### Laura Patnode (Fay) (Graduated in 1998)

Well, 06-07 has been another great year for the Patnode Family household. Isabella Ann Patnode joined our family with a loud cry on June 19th, 2007 at 7lbs 15 oz. Isabella is our first child. It's been a whirlwind of fun, crying, and lack of sleep, but she is a joy to have with us.

Last November, after my 5-year anniversary with Wells Fargo Co., I moved to the corporate headquarters, working for the Chief Credit Officer. I now get the opportunity to work with industry analysis and rating agencies as well as the majority of our individual business, which is a great opportunity. My husband, Mike Patnode (Computer Science 1989) has continued his tenure at Centrifly, a Silicon valley start-up focused on user software security. We are both enjoying our time in San Francisco and our new baby girl. We spend most of our free time at the beach in the Santa Cruz area, where we hope to move closer to one day and maybe raise one or two beach volleyball stars.

(Continued on page 16)



**Greg Ridgeway** (Graduated 1995)

I've been working at RAND in Santa Monica, CA for seven years now mostly working on public safety and criminal justice issues. RAND is a non-profit research firm that studies public policy issues on topics such as public safety, health, education, and defense. One of the more prominent projects I've been worked on looks at police-community relations in Oakland and Cincinnati. We've gathered data on encounters with the police and investigated whether racial biases play a role. I coauthored a JASA paper on this topic and this summer the ASA awarded it this year's Outstanding Statistical Application. Most recently I've been working with the NYPD on officer firearms training and shooting investigations as well as an analysis of patterns in their pedestrian stops. I'm also now Associate Director of RAND's Safety & Justice Research program so I've been doing a little bit of management, although most of my time is spent doing data analysis, writing reports for stakeholders, and developing new studies.

**Rebecca Sermer** (Graduated in 2006)

After graduating from Cal Poly last year, I returned to the Bay Area and started working for Hitachi. After spending four months as a analyst/SAS programmer at Hitachi, I was presented with an opportunity to work for Apple. For the last 10 months, I have been working for the Apple Online Store doing customer analytics. My SAS training has been put to good use, and I recommend current students to take advantage of the courses made available at Cal Poly. In addition to getting a new job, I also got myself a husband. Last November, Peter (my 6-yr boyfriend) and I got married in Lake Tahoe!

Many thanks and warm thoughts go out to the statistics department for being such a supportive family, I miss you guys!

**Kristen Sharp** (Graduated in 2006)

Only two weeks after graduation, I started working at Gap Inc. as a distribution analyst managing all inventory for Old Navy's Baby Girls department. To my surprise, Amanda King (fellow Stats grad from 2005) worked on this same team and actually trained me to take over her department as she moved on to the Inventory Strategy team. Quickly adjusting to the work life, I found myself missing stats and searching for a new, more challenging role. Through seeking out side projects that I could apply my stats knowledge and networking with people on strategy teams, I found other opportunities within Gap Inc where a stats background was highly valued. After about 10 months at Old Navy, I moved to Gap Inc's Operating Strategy team. I am one of three in the metrics division where our efforts focus

on measuring the impact and benefit of new company initiatives. All my good old stats books sit on my desk and I constantly look up SAS syntax and sometimes even open up Devore's Probability & Stats book.

I definitely miss the academic environment and have spent a lot of time thinking about returning to school. This fall I am taking an advanced SAS course through UC Berkeley Extension and in the winter, I hope to start taking classes toward a masters in Statistics at CSU Hayward. I am grateful for my time at Cal Poly – the people, the education and the incredible memories. I hope to make it back to SLO for a visit soon!  
KristenASharp@gmail.com

**Mickey Stuewe (Michelle Radtke)** (Graduated 1994)

It is amazing to me how our lives can change so much. I remember being told how many people would change their careers in their lifetime. I never thought I would be one of those people. While I graduated with a Statistics degree, I also left Poly with an Art minor. A minor I never thought I would be able to leverage until I retired from the corporate world. I am now proud to say that I am a very happy ARTIST. I left my computer programmer job (and salary) 2 years ago. I now spend my time hand crafting jewelry and fused art glass. You can check my company, Mique Designs, on my website: [www.miquedesigns.com](http://www.miquedesigns.com). I would love to see you show up at one of many Fine Craft shows that I participate in throughout the year.

On the home front, Dan (ME 1992) and I have two beautiful daughters. Victoria is 9 and Natalie will be 6 in December. We live in Costa Mesa, CA. You can reach me at [mickey@micndan.com](mailto:mickey@micndan.com) or [mstuewe@miquedesigns.com](mailto:mstuewe@miquedesigns.com).

"Art is one of those things we simply must do so that our spirit may continue to grow." Jeffery Manpearl

**Sarah Teitt** (Graduated in 2004)

I just finished my Master's of Statistics with a Biomedical Statistics Concentration from North Carolina State University. I will start working for Campus Crusade for Christ as a Statistical Analyst this summer. I'll be analyzing data about students and events to make campus movements more efficient and effective. I've also enjoyed traveling this year with trips around the East Coast and a trip to London at Christmastime.

I took a Design of Experiments class here at State this year, and it was nice how much I remembered from the Design class I took at Poly.



## STATISTICS DEPARTMENT SUMMER RESEARCH PROJECTS

BY JEFF SKLAR



It was a busy year and summer for me, taking on new responsibilities, projects, and teaching new courses. I became more involved with the statistics majors, teaching some upper level courses and supervising two senior projects. My first student's project was a continuation of her 2006 summer research in structural equation models. My second student investigated some nonparametric regression techniques, including regression splines and locally weighted regression. I also served on the MA thesis committee for a student from the biology department who participated in a large-scale rat-eradication program on Anacapa Island.

In addition to teaching multivariate statistics, I also co-taught a special topics course in survival analysis and Bayesian statistics with Dr. Schaffner. I taught the survival analysis topics the first half of the quarter, and Dr. Schaffner covered Bayesian topics during the second half. These topics are not typically covered in courses offered by the department, so it was a great chance for students to learn a variety of new techniques and software implementation in R and WinBUGS.

This past summer I had the pleasure of working on another research project with statistics student Tommy Garrison on some ideas I had for modeling discrete-time survival data (there is a difference between discrete-time and continuous-time survival models). We were interested in modeling the effects of time and covariates on the hazard probability (the conditional probability that an individual experiences an event of interest in the current time interval given that the individual has not experienced the event prior to this interval) using an innovative *semi-parametric* approach. In a fully parametric model, the form of the (partial) effects of the covariates on the logit hazard is usually assumed to be known, e.g. linear, quadratic, etc., and the effects of time on the logit hazard are modeled with indicator variables. Standard logistic regression software is used to estimate the parameters of the model. In the proposed semi-parametric model, the functional form of the relationship between the covariates and logit hazard is assumed unknown and nonparametric regression techniques (e.g. smoothing splines) are used to approximate the form of the relationships. Specialized generalized additive model (GAM) software is used to fit the semi-parametric models to our data. We compared the performance of semi-parametric hazard models to fully parametric hazard models for discrete-time survival data using some heavy-duty simulation routines. In addition to discovering favorable results for the semi-parametric model, we also discovered some interesting connections between lifetable quantities and logistic regression (the fully parametric model) results.

I am also still collaborating with a professor from the Graduate School of Education at UC Santa Barbara on the National Science Foundation sponsored ITEMS (Instructional Tools in Educational Measurement and Statistics) project. We have now finished developing and evaluating three Web-based presentations to assist teachers correctly interpret standardized test scores. Look for a complete description of the project and results from the evaluations of the modules in a paper to appear in the journal *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*.

\*

## POLY STATISTICS CLASS WANTS TO 'HOLD YOUR HAND'

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BY: [SAMANTHA FREITAS](#) ISSUE DATE: 2/8/07

Who said statistics had to be boring? Four Cal Poly students took a creative approach to their **Statistics 217** final by playing the "hold my hand" game in downtown San Luis Obispo last quarter.

The class was assigned to come up with a question and statistically find an answer. This group chose to randomly approach strangers on a busy intersection and ask them to hold their hand while crossing the street.

To ensure consistency of their data analysis, the group had to ask each stranger the exact same question: "Excuse me; will you please hold my hand while I cross the street?"

Psychology sophomore Ashleigh Droz volunteered to brave the strangers and do the asking. "It was extremely nerve-racking and intimidating," she said.

The group filmed their downtown antics and posted the video on YouTube, the popular self-broadcasting Web site.

"I originally posted the video thinking it would be an easy way to share it with family and friends. I think it was the Cal Poly and San Luis 'tags' that attracted other viewers,"

said graphic communication sophomore Aileen Carroll.

Over 500 people have since viewed the creatively edited video, which was Carroll's first. It's set to The Beatles' "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

The strangers reacted in a variety of ways; some willingly took Droz by the hand and walked her across the street, while others looked at her as if she was completely crazy and walked away.

"My favorite response was from a guy who completely looked Ashleigh up and down after she asked him. He got a smile on his face and was like, 'Are you serious? Sweet!'" said political science



freshman Jamila Saqqa, a fellow group member.

Some people were hesitant to hold Droz's hand across the street. "One guy said, 'do you want people to think we're dating?' Then he ended up turning her down," Carroll said.

Apparently, concern over significant others was somewhat of a trend. "One man asked me to act nonchalant in case his wife drove by," Droz said.

Another common concern was that they were being framed on a "Candid Camera" inspired show.

The information from the project turned out to be statistically insignificant: "About half of the people agreed and half didn't. There wasn't a significant

difference between males and females," Carroll said.

The group, which also included communication studies freshman Alison Kendall, only focused on gender, ignoring age and other factors.

They got their idea with a little bit of help from a book: "Our teacher wanted us to do something that wasn't boring, and this was a dare from a book at Urban Outfitters, so we decided to do it," Carroll said.

Their group wasn't the only creative one in the class - another group smoked inside public buildings to see how long it would take for people to ask them to stop. They dressed up as three different social classes to see if that had any impact on the amount of time it took.

Check out the video on YouTube.com titled "Wanna Hold my Hand?":

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjZ52w1c34I>

Note: The imaginative professor who taught the class was Beth Chance

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A RETIRED STATISTICS PROFESSOR

BY Y. LEON MAKSOUDIAN

It was the fall quarter of 1954 when I first arrived in San Luis Obispo. I was a sophomore transfer student pursuing a degree in engineering. I had previously been attending a university in another state, but when I came to California that summer to visit some friends, they recommended Cal Poly so strongly, that I checked it out and decided to stay. At that time, Cal Poly had an all male student body with 3,500 students. The classes met in army barracks, which were located where the current Computer Science, Mathematics, and Architecture buildings are.

Most of the required classes in the School of Engineering were sequential and it was difficult to enroll in all of them. However, the Mathematics and Science Departments had plenty of available classes. So, by the end of my sophomore year, it became apparent that I could graduate at least one year earlier if I changed my major to Math, which I did and I've never regretted my choice!

The Mathematics Department was a great place to be a student. In those years, the Math Club sponsored and led student Math Labs. During my senior year, I became president of the Math Club, and it was then that I became very interested in pursuing graduate studies with the goal of teaching Math on the university level. In the summer of 1958, I began my graduate studies at the University of Minnesota. While attending there, I had two part time jobs, one teaching at a small private college, and the other working at the Scientific Computing section of Honeywell. After completing my Master's degree and studying towards my Ph. D. in Statistics, I came to visit Cal Poly and met with my former professors in the Mathematics Department. When they learned that I had earned my Master's and was working on

my doctorate, they encouraged me to consider joining the faculty at Cal Poly. In the fall of 1963, their suggestion became a reality.

When I was hired in the Mathematics Department, it was the home of four disciplines: mathematics, statistics, computer science, and philosophy. In the late sixties, statistics, computer science, and philosophy formed their own new Department with Dr. Curtis Gerald as the Department Head. After just one year, the philosophy faculty separated and formed a new department of their own, leaving the computer scientists and statisticians to form the Computer Science and Statistics Department.

Nearly a decade later, the Computer Science Department joined the School of Engineering as a separate department and the Statistics Department became its own entity in the School of Science and Mathematics. The department was rather small in number, both in terms of faculty and students. The faculty in the newly formed Department included Professors: Sing Chou Wu,



John Groves, Jim Daly, Joyce Curry-Daly, Jay Devore, Robert Smidt, Kent Smith, John Rogers, Roxy Peck, and myself. In 1994 I took my Faculty Early Retirement and continued to teach until 1999 when my full retirement became effective. When I arrived in San Luis Obispo as a transfer student, I never dreamed that I would go on to become a Cal Poly professor for 36 years, a time I look back on with fond and wonderful memories. As a member of the graduating class of 1957, I look forward to this fall's Home Coming events, and I hope to see many of you there.

\*

## Outstanding Statistics Major Award Recipients

BY JIMMY DOI

One of the recipients of the 2006-2007 Outstanding Statistics Major award was Richele Benevent. Richele entered Cal Poly in 2002 as a Biology Major. While taking her statistics support classes she fell in love with the field of Statistics and decided to pursue it as her major. Upon her entrance into Statistics, Richele became an active part of the department; she joined the Statistics Club and by her senior year was Co-President. She was also inducted into Mu Sigma Rho, the National Statistics Honors Society, after her first year. Furthermore, she was a supplemental workshop leader for the Stat 252 course, Statistics Inference and Management II, where she prided herself in her ability to get non-majors excited about the field of statistics.

Richele also received an award for her Service to the Students of the College of Science and Mathematics. This award is in appreciation of her ongoing involvement in the College. During her years in Biology she was an active part of Tri Beta Biological Honors Society, Wildlife Club, Marine Mammal Center and the Morro Bay Monitoring Program. As a Statistics Major she has been active in the Statistics Club and the College Base Fee Committee. She also served the College through leadership positions in COSAM Ambassadors and COSAM Council.

In June 2007, Richele started her career at Thomson Medstat as a SAS Programmer/Analyst. In the winter she will continue her studies at UC Santa Barbara, where Thomson will be supporting her in her goal of obtaining a PhD. in Statistics and Applied Probability. After graduate school, Richele will continue to work at Thomson as a Statistical Consultant.

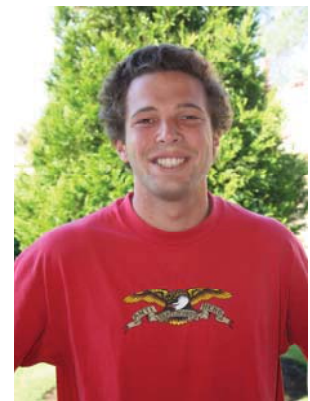
\*\*\*\*\*

The other recipient of the Outstanding Statistics Major award was Tommy Garrison. Tommy began his career at Cal Poly as a math major and switched into the statistics department in fall of 2005. He quickly found a home in our small department from, using his words, "*likeable inspiring professors*". Through his course work, he found the opportunity to apply his mathematical skills to real life problems. Recently he has been working with Dr. Andrew Schaffner assessing spatial and temporal fish abundance patterns for proposed marine protection and surrounding areas along the central coast.

In the fall, he will continue studying environmentally focused applications at the University of Washington, where he will be getting at least his Master's in Quantitative Ecology and Resource Management, a unique program that applies statistical, mathematical, and decision sciences to a broad array of terrestrial and marine ecology, natural resource management, and mathematical biology problems. After graduate school, he hopes to "*move back to a place where the ocean water is warmer and the surf is firing and then take things real easy.*"



Richele Benevent



Tommy Garrison

\*





Your support  
is truly  
appreciated  
by faculty,  
staff, and  
students!



# DONORS, WE THANK YOU!!

We wish to extend a sincere “Thank You” to the following contributors who gave to the Statistics Department and/or the Joyce Curry-Daly Endowment Scholarship fund from July 2006 through June 2007. Because of your generosity, we’ve been able to provide scholarship support for three Statistics majors, as well as keep the Newland Family Statistics Laboratory equipment and software updated and running properly. Your support is truly appreciated by faculty, staff, and students.

## July 2006 through June 2007

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| <i>Leonard Deaton</i>                   | <i>Daniel Quinn &amp; Cindy Rusler</i> |
| <i>Donald Delay</i>                     | <i>Gregory Ridgeway</i>                |
| <i>Jay &amp; Carol Devore</i>           | <i>Glenn Roiz</i>                      |
| <i>Reed Elliott</i>                     | <i>Richard &amp; Erin Schimke</i>      |
| <i>Edward Ellis Jr.</i>                 | <i>Elisabeth Smith</i>                 |
| <i>Fair Isaac &amp; Company</i>         | <i>Subway #1035</i>                    |
| <i>Samuel Frame</i>                     | <i>Katherine Tranbarger</i>            |
| <i>Kevin &amp; Tonya Gregory</i>        | <i>Washington Mutual Inc.</i>          |
| <i>Michael Han</i>                      | <i>Wells Fargo &amp; Company</i>       |
| <i>David &amp; Julie Hosford</i>        | <i>Wendy Winkler</i>                   |

If you are interested in making a tax-deductible contribution to the Joyce Curry-Daly Memorial Scholarship Fund or to the Statistics Department, please contact:

College of Science and Math  
Director of Advancement  
(805) 756-7375

**Note:** Every effort has been made to ensure the completeness & accuracy of the listing of contributors from July 2006 through June 2007. If you do find an error, please e-mail Carol Morris at [cmorris@calpoly.edu](mailto:cmorris@calpoly.edu).

# STAT Club News

By The Statistics Club

This year has been a big success for the Statistics Club. The Stat Club members began our activities before the start of school with contacting our “buddies”, the incoming freshmen. We wanted to answer any questions from them or their parents, and encourage their choice of the Cal Poly Statistics Department. We also attended the WOW Week Block Party where we had a booth to welcome those incoming Statistics majors. At the beginning of the quarter, we set a goal to participate in one hour of community service for each Statistics major. We exceeded this goal by nearly 15 hours! Community service activities ranged from picking up trash at local beaches to walking abandoned dogs from the County Animal Shelter. Needless to say, the Statistics Club members really came together to give back to the community this year.

Another goal of the Stat Club this year was to have more faculty/student activities. We met this goal by planning a Bowling Night, nights at The Shack, beach bonfires, and several “Taco Nights” throughout the quarter. It was really fun to get to know the faculty outside of the campus setting. We are also very proud of the two T-Shirt designs of the year. We designed one with the Top Ten Reasons to be a Statistician, and one for a Valentines Day fundraiser. This T-Shirt was designed with “Kiss me I’m Statistically Significant”; it has become very popular!

Finally, one of our biggest accomplishments of the quarter was for Open House. We were able to revamp the Plinko board and had a great time with our *Price Is Right* booth. We were blown away by the popularity of the game and had so much fun.

On behalf of the Stat Club officers, we are so proud of the club this year. With the help of our very enthusiastic members, we were able to spread word of the club as well as come together to meet our goals. The graduating seniors are finding it very difficult to face the end of such a good year!

To continue the momentum from this year, there is much more planned for the statistics club in the coming 2007-2008 school year. The officers plan to reinstate old, uphold current, and create new traditions.



First, the club will continue the Buddy Mentor program over the summer as a way to welcome the new statistics majors and help with their transition to being college students before they step foot on campus. Once the year begins, the Statistics Club will try its hardest yet to recruit statistics majors, minors and enthusiasts to join in the fun for the year, beginning with a Welcome

Back camping trip. Other social events for the year include student/faculty sporting events, picnics in the park, beach bonfires, and many more! To continue our service to the community, we will make trips to local high schools to talk about the joy of statistics and Cal Poly, have a canned food drive, participate in beach clean-ups, team up against cancer by doing Relay for Life, as well as volunteer at the local animal shelter, homeless shelter, and retirement homes. Lastly, we will be doing our own fundraising by playing the game Plinko from the hit game show *The Price is Right* at Farmer’s Market and Open House!

STAT Club 06-07

# Statistics Fun and Family

By Carol Morris

Each June the Statistics Department organizes a fantastic End-of-the-Year Social. All faculty, their families and significant others, and Statistics Majors (and their guests) are invited. This year the turnout



was excellent (64+) because everyone has so much fun together.

This year we went to Cuesta Park, here in San Luis, and had a giant barbecue. It was a pot-luck dinner and the food was wonderful. We barbecued hamburgers (both meat and veggie), buns, sausages of all kinds, and enjoyed all the great pot luck dishes including desserts.

It was great fun to visit with everyone and their families, and to see how the kids have grown since last year, and enjoy one another's company. There were horseshoes, football, a creek for the little ones to play in, a play ground, etc. We also had an awards ceremony.

All of the faculty, their families, and the Stat majors and their friends worked together to get everything cooked and ready to serve, then pitched in to clean-up.

I was impressed with how much the Stat Majors worked to make the Barbecue a great success. One thing about the Statistics Department and our Majors, we know how to have FUN!!



\*

## CBF continued from page 3

### Student activities :

- Travel to professional conferences and career fairs
- Membership in ASA
- Reimbursement of the SAS certification exam fee,
- Payment of miscellaneous summer research and senior project expenses

### Other selected items:

- Partial funding for faculty travel for professional development. Specifically, this August several faculty members attended and participated in the Joint Statistical Meetings in Salt Lake City.
- An honorarium to faculty who conduct special topics workshops of interest to (and proposed by) students.
- Purchase of video equipment for use in STAT 465.

\*

# ALUMNI – WE’D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Tell us about your career, family, etc. via e-mail at [cmorris@calpoly.edu](mailto:cmorris@calpoly.edu), or complete the “Statistics Alumni Update” form and mail to the address listed below.



## Statistics Alumni Update Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Year/Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer and Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

News and Activities:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

May we include your update in our next newsletter? (circle one)      YES      NO

E-mail information to [cmorris@calpoly.edu](mailto:cmorris@calpoly.edu) or mail form to:

**Statistics Department  
Cal Poly  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407**

**California Polytechnic State University**

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